

# Exploring the ethical dilemmas regarding replication of empirical research in Translation and Interpreting Studies

**Christian Olalla-Soler**

*Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain*

The concept of replication, broadly defined as the repetition of methods that led to a finding reported by a researcher (Schmidt 2009), is a central concept in the scientific method and a key for scientific progress (Popper 1959; Kuhn 1962). However, scientists from many disciplines have expressed their concern about the low replicability of science (Baker and Penny 2016), leading them to consider the existence of a replication crisis closely related to the engagement of scientists in unethical research procedures in terms of transparency and integrity, and in questionable research practices (Fiedler and Schwarz 2016). In Translation and Interpreting Studies (TIS) several authors have also raised concerns about the lack of replication of empirical studies (see, for example, Hurtado Albir and Alves 2009 and O'Brien 2013) and about the lack of transparency when reporting methodological decisions in publications (Li 2004). Are TIS thus submerged in a replication crisis? How does research ethics affect replicability of empirical studies? In this presentation the results of an investigation on the practices and attitudes toward replication in empirical research in translation and interpreting studies will be discussed by focusing on the ethical considerations that foster replication and those that hinder it. Fifty-two researchers with experience in empirical research in TIS completed a survey which was designed to collect data on practices related to replication (number of studies replicated, type of authorship, type of replications, ways to disseminate replications, and engagement in questionable research practices) and on attitudes towards replication (reasons not to replicate, the concept of replication and its need in TIS, and the likelihood of adoption of several mechanisms to enhance replicability). This presentation aims at providing evidence-based arguments for initiating a debate about the existence of a replication crisis in TIS and its implications for an ethical development of the discipline.

## References

- Baker, M. and Penny, D. (2016) 'Is there a reproducibility crisis?', *Nature*, 533(7604), pp. 452–454. doi: 10.1038/533452A.
- Fiedler, K. and Schwarz, N. (2016) 'Questionable Research Practices Revisited', *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 7(1), pp. 45–52. doi: 10.1177/1948550615612150.
- Hurtado Albir, A. and Alves, F. (2009) 'Translation as a cognitive activity', in Munday, J. (ed.) *The Routledge Companion to Translation Studies*. London: Routledge, pp. 54–73.
- Kuhn, T. S. (1962) *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Li, D. (2004) 'Trustworthiness of think-aloud protocols in the study of translation processes', *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 14(3), pp. 301–313. doi: 10.1111/j.1473-4192.2004.00067.x.
- O'Brien, S. (2013) 'The borrowers: Researching the cognitive aspects of translation', *Target*, 25(1), pp. 5–17. doi: 10.1075/target.25.1.02obr.
- Popper, K. (1959) *The logic of scientific discovery*. London: Hutchinson.
- Schmidt, S. (2009) 'Shall we really do it again? The powerful concept of replication is neglected in the social sciences.', *Review of General Psychology*, 13(2), pp. 90–100. doi: 10.1037/a0015108.