A Review of Graeme Porte and Kevin McManus's Textbook Entitled "Doing Replication Research in Applied Linguistics" Published by Routledge

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Book Summary

Resorting to Sagan's, an astronomer, quote in which the science is considered as "a way of thinking; a way of skeptically interrogating the universe with a fine understanding of human fallibility" the authors try to highlight the importance of replication in research in the introductory chapter of the book. They eloquently declare that the book is about honing the questioning to what we read, and then acting upon any aroused doubts to get to resolution and vivid results.

The remarkable fact about this book is that the authors aptly try to indicate the circulatory nature of research starting from identifying a research area of interest, followed by designing a study, carrying it out, analyzing the results, and finally announcing the outcomes. They rightly maintain that in this five steps of research the one who wants to conduct a research has to consider the outcomes of the previous study and reenter into the cycle from the beginning again. Therefore, the circulation goes on. This, clearly, depicts the significance of replication in research, the fact that might not be noticed by researchers – especially by novices who might think that they are looking for new and intact subjects and explorations.

Other factors such as the attraction by previous studies and the generalizability of the findings also are stimulus to replication indicating that it is an unavoidable and inseparable part of our enterprise. Besides, they enlighten the history of replication in the introductory chapter verifying that these debates about the feasibility, acceptability, and necessity of replication lead to little uptake.

Background Information

What makes this book worthy of reading is the fact that the authors neatly start from the aim and reasons of replication to establish theoretical background of this venture and precisely explain the practical way to replication of a study in the following chapters including: finding a study to replicate (Chapter 2), planning a replication project (Chapter 3), the kind of replication from insider and outsider perspectives (Chapters 4 and 5), executing phases (Chapters 6 and 7), and disseminating a study (Chapter 8).

Content Evaluation

Using Ronald Reagan's adopted maxim "Trust, but verify" they buttress the theoretical underpinning of their claim in Chapter 2. They contend that accumulation of research data continually refine our theories believing that this accumulation of data should not originate from

a set of loosely connected "one-off" research studies. On the other hand, flaws, biases, and limitations in studies necessitate replication to iron out such inconsistencies.

They, aptly, drew upon some foremost assumptions existing in the literature of applied linguistics such as target language use, meaningful exposure, grammar acquisition, strategy use … to indicate that these assumptions may be in contrast with one's own experiences and beliefs – and to the best of our (reviewers') knowledge and experience they certainly are, as we are permanently in the state of disequilibrium and doubt about the veracity of these assumptions in our career.

Consequently, they recommend toselect an area based on one's own interest. As such, the researchers, novices more specifically, will help move forward both their own research practice and interests and give service to current knowledge in the field. To this end, they suggest four routes as: rereading any experimental research which you came across in your course reading, using Google scholar, reading state-of-the-art reviews for critical analysis of research, and drawing on customized calls for replication. They discuss them in detail in the rest of the chapter.

Once you select a study to replicate, it provides you with some guidelines to plan your research project in the beginning of Chapter 3. Nonetheless, its encouragement to take notes at the either sides of a study report tends to be trivial and commonplace.

Using a tangible example (an article from a highly – respected journal) and analyzing it through the previously mentioned technique, they indicate that even good research articles are not infallible of flaws and deficiencies in terms of all aspects of a study, even in their operationalization of the concepts. They reiterate some ignored facts and information about the participants, sample size, length of treatment, and other aspects of a study that we may overlook unintentionally and even deliberately. This is where replication merits. Going through this chapter, we reckon, one will permanently be aware of the false perceptions and negligence at each steps of a study and will pay more heed and regard during the projection process.

Their pre-posed questions, however, are beneficial and conducive for commenting technique in Chapter 4 as the authors may arouse our awareness to what is going on and what we are going to do. By dividing replication into two types: internal and external one – the former is done by the researchers themselves through revisiting and cross-validating, they advise us to give a good account of ourselves prior to the others' judgments. Their recommended questions to verify a research project in Chapter 4 will certainly facilitate our task and will make it more systematic and schematized, then internally more reliable. These questions also provide us with a yardstick to mete other works to know whether or not they need to be replicated.

In Chapter 5 the writers caution us against making confusion between *extension* or *follow-up* studies and the *replication* ones – in the former case the comparison between the two studies would be peripheral to the objectives. Using polio 2012, they refer to degrees of replication say, *close*, *approximate*, and *conceptual* one and expound each in detail. Their critical reading of a substantive study to analyze it to find a justification for replication is not only meritorious for objectifying of the materials but also led them to propose four variable modifications that could be

implemented in a close replication: (1) participant status, (2) amount of time spent in the host country, (3) motivation, and (4) L2 proficiency

In Chapter 6 they illuminate some overarching facts about the research questions and the methodology of a replication. They restate that there should be a rationale for our replication and it should be as close as to the target study. Through some questions they demonstrate the extent to which a certain study is replicable. Moreover, they depict that how the reflection on a study leads to the execution of their replication study's research questions and methodology as well.

Chapter 7 also extends the execution and writing up of a replication study to the analysis, results, discussion, and conclusion. Their propellant questions such as "How does the original study justify its analyses? What are the assumptions of the tests carried out? Are there other, more appropriate alternatives to the original study's coding procedures?" again pave the way for analyzing the rest part of a paper. In fact these questions are the cornerstones of this book and create a conceptual framework in the mind of a researcher to be aware of what, why, and how to do a replication.
In the rest of the chapter, they analyze a specific paper in terms of its result reporting and analysis revealing that there are still gaps in their work that needs more heed and attention.

In the dissemination section of Chapter 8, the authors shed light on the publication policies and provide information on the three types of replication including: theoretical, technical, and concept replication which are are sought by journals. Moreover, they provide some information about the procedure of publishing and some guidelines for replicated authors.

Overall, the book is recommended to be gone through even by professionals in order to avoid unwanted, unintentional, and unforeseen mistakes as it re-mentions some facts about writing up a research. Re-mentioning previously learned materials will certainly arouse our awareness in researching which is a complicated field in nature. The authors direct us to be inquiring and methodical.

Their concrete exemplifications and designed activity practices for each of the subjects presented in the book makes the materials embodied and more appreciable for readers. However, the downside of the book is that the authors are not laconic and to the point. There seems to be a superfluity in their language to convey their meanings. Inordinate expatiating of the materials in a somewhat complex language might be tedious and burn out the readers.

References

Porte, G., & McManus, K. (2019). *Doing replication research in applied linguistics*. Oxford: Routledge.