

USE AND MISUSE OF THE LITERATURE IN INTERPRETING RESEARCH

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1. Introduction

Quoting authors and studies from the literature is one of the most fundamental norms in academic research. In principle, this is a reflection of the collective nature of science: scientists do not start from scratch, they draw on other scientists' work and interact with them. Operationally speaking, bibliographical references have the following 'positive' functions:

They show, especially in theses and dissertations, that the author knows the literature. This is more a conventional, didactic function than a truly operational one.

They back the author's statements by referring to previous findings or to authoritative opinions. This is not the only way: statements can also be backed by the author's personal experience, or clearly presented as a hypothesis or idea yet to be tested, the important thing being that readers know what the status of the statement is, and on what basis.

They refer the reader to further relevant studies. This can be done in order to avoid having to sum up a vast amount of work in a given publication if not enough space is available, or in order to give pointers to readers who wish to advance further beyond the framework of the topic addressed in the publication at hand.

On an ethically different level, they also serve other purposes and/or have different effects. For instance, frequent references to a particular author strengthen his/her status in the relevant scientific community. Such references are sometimes used as a friendly or 'political' gesture towards a fellow-researcher, a 'master', clan or school of thought. In the same way, the lack of references to particular authors or ideas can be used to help fight their influence though this is ethically more than questionable.

To readers, bibliographical references in a publication can also provide useful information about the author, the paradigm s/he belongs to, the authors s/he is inspired by, his/her knowledge of the field, etc. Beyond references in individual texts and in the texts of individual authors, the overall patterns of references in a particular discipline provide interesting information on that discipline, including its productivity; its makeup in terms of research types (theoretical, empirical, etc.), its social structure and relative openness or lack

thereof, its geographic and linguistic extent. Close scrutiny of the references found in publications also provides clues as to the quality and maturity of the work of authors and editors of journals and collective volumes. In other words, bibliographical references are important quantitative and qualitative indicators of the scientific status of authors, groups and institutions. And yet, in interpreting research (IR), they have not been used for analysis.

This paper illustrates with a few examples from IR texts some weaknesses frequently found in the use (and misuse) of the literature. It explains their nature and their potential effects. It will be claimed that such weaknesses in an author's texts may influence not only the credibility of the ideas and facts presented, but also the perception of the author by readers. It is hoped that this analysis will help raise the community's awareness of the matter and contribute to raising standards with respect to this issue, which has been neglected so far.

2. Issues in the use of the literature

2.1. Missing references

2.1.1. Selective strategies

The absence of references to existing (and relevant) work in a given text can be due to several 'legitimate' reasons, and does not necessarily reflect weaknesses. For instance, lack of space often makes it impossible to cite all previous studies on a particular theme, and choices must be made in favor of the most important ones, or the first ones, or the most recent ones, or the ones most easily accessible to readers. Besides lack of space, readers cannot always be expected to check out all references provided to back a statement. The author may legitimately decide to cite only a small number of what s/he considers the best references under the circumstances (s/he may for instance refer the reader to a study in a language that will be easier of access rather than to the first or best or most important studies). While critics may not agree with an author's precise choice of references in a given text, the case for a selection in principle is strong.

2.1.2. Ignorance of relevant work

A second frequent case where relevant references are absent reflects the author's ignorance of their existence. This may be due to technical difficulties, such as difficult access to the texts. In IR, the most frequent obstacles to access are:

- linguistic (which is obvious as regards 'exotic' languages, but which also applies, somewhat surprisingly in the eyes of outsiders who believe translators and interpreters speak many languages, to French, German and Spanish);

- logistic, insofar as there are few libraries that offer a wide selection of IR-related texts, and most unpublished theses and dissertations remain in the libraries of the universities where they were completed.

The 'objective' nature of these difficulties in some cases does not justify the lack of research into the literature in other cases, where it is clear that the author had access to the documents and did not do the background research properly.

One should also stress that planning is part of the research process. A researcher who undertakes a study without making sure that s/he has access to the necessary literature also displays poor scholarship.

Besides technical difficulties, there are institutional and disciplinary barriers, in particular between interpreters and non-interpreter researchers (NIRs) such as linguists, psychologists and neurophysiologists. While interpreters seem to have come a long way in reaching out towards NIRs (see for example the successive issues of *Interpreting*, as well as Shlesinger 1995a and Setton 1999), developments have not been as positive the other way around: papers written by NIRs on interpreting seldom refer to relevant texts by interpreter-researchers.

Such omissions are understandable, insofar as most IR texts are prepared in the framework of Translation and Interpretation schools and departments and published in T&I journals, and such material seldom finds its way into university libraries serving departments of linguistics, psychology, neurophysiology, etc., or into bibliographical compilations and other tools in these disciplines. In that respect, NIRs who use bibliographical tools available in their home universities cannot be blamed for their ignorance of the very existence of a body of literature produced by interpreter-researchers. It is hoped (see Fabbro and Gran 1997) that as the quality of IR studies by interpreters improves, they will be published in the journals of the relevant cognate disciplines and generate more two-way interaction between the communities.

2.1.3. Ignoring relevant work

Besides this 'objective' lack of familiarity, subjective elements also come into the picture in terms of wilful discrimination in the citations. Both personal and 'clan-based' opposition can make an author decide not to include specific citations in his/her work. In IR, the most striking example is probably ESIT's systematic policy of quoting almost exclusively each other's work and of ignoring the work of NIRs and other interpreter-researchers. In this case, the attitudinal component involved is clear. Various pieces of evidence, for instance the proceedings of a conference on interdisciplinarity where some of them were invited (see Gerver and Sinaiko 1978), shows that they were aware of existing work outside ESIT. The group's leader Seleskovitch also repeatedly criticized

the NIR's paradigm as being inadequate for research into interpreting. However regrettable this attitude may be, at least the reasons for ignoring such work are clear, and are motivated at least partially by paradigmatic objections.

The situation is ethically more complex when a review or statement clearly calls for a citation, and when it can be assumed that the author is aware of the relevant studies and yet does not include them in his/her references, with no apparent reason. In one case, an NIR¹ explained "what interpreters probably mean" when they refer to 'bilinguals' without quoting any of the interpreters' publications devoted precisely to the subject, including a PhD dissertation (Thiéry 1975). The same NIR wondered in a publication whether regression in production in one's native language could occur under the conditions of simultaneous interpreting, and yet did not quote a study conducted on precisely this topic, the only one in the literature. One reader suggested that these references be added, and the NIR refused without giving any explanation. Another NIR claimed in a paper that "concurrent listening and writing of notes might well cause interference", but failed to quote and discuss an interpreting model which she knew and which provides a tentative explanation of the phenomenon, and similarly ignored an experiment that actually strengthened her hypothesis, again, the only existing empirical study on the subject. One possible explanation would be the authors' assessment of the studies under consideration as of such poor quality that they did not deserve to be quoted. While this explanation cannot be ruled out in general, in the above-mentioned cases, it is unlikely at least as regards the meaning of bilingualism, since the NIR could only have gained from citing an interpreter's text which states explicitly what interpreters actually mean when they refer to bilinguals, especially in view of the fact that the suggested reference supported her claim. As to the model and relevant experiment, they could have been mentioned and criticized for their weaknesses. The real reason for ignoring them may have been personal hostility of the NIRs towards the readers who suggested them and/or the interpreter-researchers involved. Be that as it may, ethically speaking, this attitude is questionable insofar as it withholds relevant information from readers, and reflects a rather unpleasantly non-objective attitude on the part of the researchers who, by definition, strive to be as objective as possible in their scientific endeavor.

Sometimes, other studies in the field contradict rather than support an author's findings. If the author is aware of them, s/he should address the contradiction, just as s/he should not disregard direct empirical evidence in his/her own study. In a recent book, Setton (1999) concluded from a corpus study that "syntactic structure ... does not of itself constitute an obstacle to SI"

1 In this and a few other cases, for obvious reasons, precise references will not be given.

(p. 270). Findings of a study by Tommola and Niemi (1986) suggest the opposite. Setton also stresses repeatedly the role of pragmatic markers and of the mental model of the situation being built in the interpreter's mind, and attributes many failures in interpreting to an insufficient grasp of the pragmatic meaning of the speech as it unfolds (see for example pp. 259-260). On the basis of this assumption, one would expect interpreters who have previous knowledge of the content of a speech to do better than those who do not. In her experimental M.A. thesis, Anderson (1979) did not find any significant difference between the two conditions. One may wonder why Setton did not address these contradictory findings in his book, although he is aware of both studies, which are listed among his bibliographical references.

2.1.4. Failing to provide references as evidence

A third type of weakness occurs when no references are given to back statements which require them. For instance, in Gernsbacher and Shlesinger (1997: 133), the claim that the "interpreters' output appears to reveal a high proportion of calque-like equivalents" is phrased as a finding from a study. If it is to be taken seriously, it needs to be substantiated by empirical studies, or at least by provisional observations which should be spelled out. And yet, neither backing is given to the statement in the paper. Similarly, a claim that in student interpreters the degree of semantic-oriented translation and automation and the quality of interpreting performance increase over time (Kalina 1996: 183ff.) is far from trivial and requires some kind of backing. Again, no reference to findings or specific studies is given.

In such cases the status of the claim is not clear, since other scholars cannot find the information required to study the method used, the evidence obtained or the inferences made to justify the statement. In established empirical disciplines, such weaknesses occur relatively rarely, and are generally attributable to a lack of attention on the part of the author(s) on one hand, and of the team in charge of the publication on the other. In IR, they are numerous, which may reflect insufficient awareness of at least this fundamental criterion for scientific quality.

2.2. Over-abundant and unselected references

A diametrically opposed problem is that of over-abundant and unselected references. Although at first sight it might seem desirable to have as many references as possible to back a statement, this entails disadvantages as well.

As explained earlier, long lists of references take up much space, and their contribution may not be worth the space. As also explained above, if there are

too many references, readers may not be able to read all of them. It is sometimes more appropriate to list a few references which are better than others in terms of scientific quality or easier to access.

This is where selection comes in, admittedly with a major subjective component, which depends on personal and institutional alliances and feuds (I have heard reports of supervisors forbidding students to introduce particular citations into their thesis or dissertation), as well as on personal strategies. For instance, an author may choose to give some publicity to the work of an unknown scholar despite its lack of access due to linguistic or logistical barriers, rather than quote well-known names for the umpteenth time. The choice can be challenged by critical readers, but at least it is strategy-driven.

From time to time, however, names and studies appearing on lists of references indicate an author's ignorance of the field or carelessness, to say the least. For example, when raising the issue of the language-specific (or language-non-specific) nature of interpreting, one author X quoted a single author Y as saying that simultaneous interpreting between two specific languages was impossible because of the different word order. It happens that author Y is not an interpreter, and lives in a country which was cut off from the literature and from other scholarly contacts for many years. The fact that author X chose this reference but did not refer to any other of the numerous discussions of this issue in this literature shows that he was not familiar with the field, and reduces his credibility accordingly. Another example is that of a technical issue: answering methodological criticism of empirical studies in IR, where the selection of subjects is non-random and can therefore not guarantee the absence of bias, Dillinger replied: "the consequences of non-randomness are well known and many statistical techniques are insensitive to all but very gross deviations" (Dillinger 1990: 42, reproduced in Dillinger 1994: 158). What he may have meant (hopefully) is that many statistical techniques are insensitive to all but very gross deviations from Gaussian (or 'normal') distribution. What should have been a minor incident of a slip of the pen is quoted time and again in the literature as a pending issue, without any attempt simply to ask a statistician and settle it once and for all. Again, this shows something about the authors who quote it.

As is the case for other text elements in scholarly publications, references should be carefully weighted and selected on the basis of a gain-to-space-taken ratio. Only those references which are deemed necessary and truly useful to back statements or those most useful as further recommended readings should be listed. When points are not polemical, a short list with an indication that references are only a sample, for instance using the wording "see X, Y, Z", can be appropriate. When various references have equal substantial value, they can be selected by language, access, date of publication, etc., possibly with an

indication explaining the main criterion accounting for their selection: "for a readable account, see ...", "for a review in English, see ...", "for an up-to-date explanation, see ...", etc.

2.3. Misrepresentation of facts and findings from the literature

Interestingly, while most authors in IR are reasonably careful when presenting their own findings, many are much less careful when presenting other authors' findings.

In the sentence "Motivated by the quantitative research carried out by such pioneers as Barik, Goldman-Eisler, Treisman, Gerver, Seleskovitch, ..." (unpublished manuscript by author X), the implication is that Seleskovitch has conducted quantitative research. The fact is that nowhere in the literature can any report on such research be found, and that Seleskovitch has often spoken against quantification (a recent example is found in Seleskovitch 1997: 27-28). In this case, not only are the facts misinterpreted, but the very image and viewpoint of the person referred to is distorted.

This error may be due to a possible misperception reflected in the following reference in the same manuscript by X:

Seleskovitch (1965) found that 100 to 120 words/minute is comfortable.

Seleskovitch (1965) is an old AIIC symposium report in French that is difficult to find. In a somewhat more recent publication (AIIC 1979), there is a report on this same symposium, which suggests that it was a teachers' prescriptive-oriented meeting, rather than a scientific one. It also happens that this same Seleskovitch (1965) reference is found in Gerver (1976), on page 172, which says:

Seleskovitch (1965), for example, suggests that an input rate of between 100 and 120 words a minute is a comfortable one for simultaneous interpretation, ...

Taking into account the fact that author X does not understand French, it is likely that he found the reference to Seleskovitch in Gerver (1976) – note the similarity between Gerver's wording and his own wording – and that he incorrectly assumed on this basis that Seleskovitch had conducted quantitative research, and consequently put her in the category of "pioneers in quantitative research".

These examples show clearly how far a lack of careful attention to references can lead.

In a more subtle way, references can be misleading because the context and/or their wording imply something which is not true. Consider the following excerpt from a paper (Massaro and Shlesinger 1997):

The number of omissions and of incorrect inferences in simultaneous interpreting has been shown to be highest in the beginning of the discourse (Shlesinger 1995b)

Actually, Shlesinger (1995b) was conducted with students, not with professional interpreters. Extrapolating from findings on students to findings on professionals is a problematic issue, as stressed repeatedly in the literature. Saying that something has been shown in simultaneous interpreting on the sole basis of this reference is therefore misleading. A second problem with the same reference is that the study looked at cohesion shifts and the omission of cohesive devices, not at errors and omissions. Again, why omissions of cohesive devices and cohesion shifts are tantamount to or indicate 'omissions' or 'incorrect inferences' remains to be demonstrated. Readers are left with the misleading impression that Shlesinger actually tested interpreters and measured omissions and incorrect inferences.

In another extract from Massaro and Shlesinger (1997), Shlesinger writes:

The interpreter's own language combination has also been shown to affect both speed and accuracy of perception. In a study of speech perception errors among non-native listeners, Voss (1984) found an underlying perception strategy of processing the input somewhat independently of the acoustic information...

Actually, Voss (1984) was conducted with non-interpreting subjects, which makes the statement "The interpreter's own language combination has...been shown to ..." a misrepresentation of the facts. Here, the problem lies with the unsubstantiated extrapolation from findings on non-interpreting subjects to interpreters. When I asked for clarifications from the author, her answer was that since the finding holds for humans, and since interpreters are humans, it also holds for them.²

Another case is Setton's repeated claim (1999) that "IP-oriented authors" (the Information-Processing paradigm is the prevailing approach in cognitive psychology) have not produced corpus studies (see for example p. 256). This is somewhat surprising insofar as in his list of references, Setton includes 6 references by cognitive psychologist David Gerver, including at least 4 texts

2 Which is like claiming that since the mean height of men worldwide is say 170 cm, this is also the mean height of Scandinavian men and of Portuguese men, since Scandinavian men and Portuguese men are part of the population of human men.

reporting empirical studies, one reference reporting an empirical study by Gerver's student, cognitive psychologist Sylvie Lambert, and one reference to Linda Anderson's empirical M.A. study, which was conducted within the IP paradigm. Looking for an explanation for the apparent contradiction, one finds that in his book, Setton mentions explicitly as belonging to the 'IP-oriented authors' group' only Dominic Massaro, Barbara Moser-Mercer, and Daniel Gile. One might therefore interpret his 'IP-oriented authors' group' as only referring to those authors who proposed IP-inspired models of interpreting (he was probably not familiar with Akira Mizuno's model – see Mizuno 1994, 1995). This still makes the statement puzzling insofar as he includes in his references two empirical studies on a corpus by Gile as well as a book which reports further empirical studies (Gile 1995a). What he probably means is that Moser-Mercer and Gile do not report any empirical studies directly testing their respective models, which is closer to the truth.³

2.4. Misrepresentation of opinions, statements and arguments

While the potentially deleterious effect of introducing incorrect facts in a scientific publication is clear, misrepresenting the opinions of other authors is also a breach of the scientific approach, with its (theoretically) systematic, careful and rigorous procedures.

Cox (1998: 28) reports Gile as defining deverbalisation as the stage where "only the meaning remains in the interpreter's mind without any trace of its linguistic vehicle" (Gile 1990: 33), thus implying that it is an operational concept he uses. Looking at the reference, one finds the following statement:

Seleskovitch's idea (1975) that a "deverbalization" stage occurs somewhere between the perception of the original speech and the reformulation of the "message" into the target language by the interpreter (a stage at which only the "meaning" remains in the interpreter's mind without any trace of its linguistic vehicle) is far from proven.

3 Interestingly, after the first version of this paper (before submission for publication) was completed, further clarification was received from Setton: what he meant in his statements is that IP-tradition authors have not conducted studies in which they took into account not only speech extracts that they worked on, but the speech as a whole as well as the situation, in linguistic and extra-linguistic terms. Setton's use of the word 'corpus' in an unusual, restrictive sense, made it difficult to interpret his statements correctly. I decided to leave this section in the paper anyway, and to add this footnote, so as to show the potential effect of such non-standard use of terms.

Clearly, this extract is not a definition by Gile, but his interpretation of a concept coined by Seleskovitch that he has reservations about. Cox's statement is seriously misleading.

In her doctoral dissertation, Kalina (1996: 66) presents Gile (1991: 21) as considering that the second step of consecutive is more difficult than the first, since it involves long-term memory plus a note-reading effort.⁴ The actual text she quotes reads:

Step two seems more complex than step one, with its long term memory operations...and note-reading... However, if notes are good, they help in Rem operations and may actually reduce Rem capacity requirements ... This is why in terms of processing capacity, only step one seems to pose a problem to practitioners.

In this case, Kalina attributes to Gile a view opposite to the one he expresses.

Beyond these 'local' errors, there may be distortions of a whole paradigm. In his book, Setton (1999) repeatedly contradicts the claim that syntactic structures in the SL force corresponding syntactic structures in the TL, what he calls the "structure-driven account of SI", the "strategies-for-structure account", etc., implying that such an account is actually proposed in the literature by "IP-oriented" authors. However, he fails to locate and indicate any such account in the writings of the two authors he refers to (see above) in spite of his claim that such an account is an implication "of the suggestion that [he] believe[s] to be implicit in some writing [no specific reference is given] that an SI strategy can be an operation on syntax." (p. 126). In this case, readers not familiar with the two authors may get the mistaken impression that there is a strong "structure-driven account" trend in IR as represented by Gile and Moser-Mercer.

Yet another serious distortion of opinions is Messina's (1997: 34) report that Linda Anderson (in Lambert and Moser 1994: 101-120)

finds no justification in the recommendation that interpreters receive the texts in advance. She claims that it is only in special cases, for instance when presentations are particularly complex, that interpreters gain real benefit from reading the speeches in advance ...

Checking the reference, one finds that having found the counterintuitive result that previous knowledge of/about the speech did not improve her subjects' performance, Anderson wonders whether

It may be that it is only when formal presentations are particularly complex, technical or scientific, which was not the case in the present

⁴ *"Hierbei betrachtet Gile den zweiten Schritt als den schwierigeren, da sowohl das Langzeitgedächtnis belastet wird als auch die Notizen gelesen werden müssen"*

experiments, or differences in delivery particularly great that interpreters gain real benefit from reading copies or précis of speeches ahead of time. Future research could be usefully geared toward elucidating this question (Anderson 1994: 109)

Far from claiming that texts are not useful, Anderson only wonders what could explain the fact that they did not seem to be in her experiment. If professional interpreters who read Messina 1997 take his report of Linda Anderson's position at face value, this could result in some undeserved embarrassment for her.

Finally, here is a piece of criticism found in Setton (1999: 260) regarding an empirical study and referring to Gile (1995a: 82-85), who, he says,

rules out the (rather sweeping objection) that the interpreter is 'incompetent', on the grounds (also rather sweeping), that she 'enjoys a good reputation'

Certainly, the explanation as presented above is insufficient. Actually, Gile argues in the same book, in a chapter on quality, as well as in a number of other papers, that quality perception is unreliable. The problem is that Setton misrepresents the argument, fully spelled out on the same page, to the effect that not only did this interpreter enjoy a good reputation among his fellow interpreters and among his clients, but ten other interpreters interpreted the same speech segment and made a similar number of errors and omissions (p. 82). There is no reason to believe that Setton deliberately chose not to present the stronger part of Gile's argument, but this misrepresentation entails some risks both for the misrepresented author and for the misrepresenting author.

2.5. Abuse and self-abuse

It is indeed important to stress that beyond theories, people and their image are at stake, especially in a field where so little empirical research is done and where the general level of research expertise is still rather low (in the natural sciences, in the medical sciences, in mathematics, in cognitive psychology, etc., the stress is on findings, on theories, on methods, and less on personal opinions, and researchers are generally more rigorous in their work). When a young interpretation school graduate writes in his MA thesis about the well-known author George Miller and a famous 1956 paper of his which has inspired generations of psychologists:

in this article I found no substantiation for such a claim beyond an airy comment that ...

chances are that he misread the article, and that most readers will consider him arrogant and not take his statement seriously. Another young graduate quotes

and comments on a statement by Charles Fillmore, another well-known author, with the following words:

... fluency is an ability to fill time with talk, in other words fluency refers to an ability to talk without significant pauses for an extended period of time, which means that quantity overrules quality

In view of Fillmore's status in the scientific community, a less naive researcher might have considered that Fillmore possibly referred to correct speech being produced without significant pauses or referred to fluency in a context where 'quality' was not relevant, and would have built a strong explicit case to present his criticism if he found this were not so, rather than bluntly claiming that for Fillmore "quantity overrules quality" and exposing himself to strong criticism for poor scholarship.

One last example will show how far such misrepresentations can go. In an article on the epistemology of translation theory, Garcia-Landa (1995) refers to "Gile's disappointment with Seleskovitch's seminar", and reports: "He [Gile] told me at the time he was dissatisfied with the lack of scientific panache of that bunch of people." (p. 392). If Gile actually made such comments, this would mean that he assessed research work on the basis of "panache" and that he scorned the people involved in the seminar. While it is true that I have been critical of attitudes and research at ESIT, I respect the colleagues who work there, and consider the very concept of "scientific panache" an oxymoron. The reported statement was never made. Before misquoting someone in such a way, if only with the sole intent of writing in a lively style, authors should think of the potential consequences of the misquotation, both for the misquoted authors and for themselves.

Conclusion

These are just a few examples from the literature. Many more can be found easily. Interestingly, some are found in beginners' theses, but some in texts by more experienced authors, which leads to intriguing questions. Why do these weaknesses crop up ? Do the authors work under difficult conditions, possibly without enough time to finalize their texts ? Is there something lacking in their training as researchers ? Does IR not have sufficient institutional quality control in the literature so as to generate the necessary corrections, and what can be done about it ? A full analysis of the situation is beyond the scope of this paper, but a few ideas may be worth suggesting here:

Very few interpreter-researchers have received training in research methods with actual hands-on work, including repeated correction. The evidence tends to

suggest that even if they are intellectually aware of the requirement for rigorous work in research, the principle has not been solidly integrated into their actual work.

There is indeed insufficient quality control in the selection procedures by journals and editors of collective volumes, which is probably due partly to the lack of a sufficient number of conscientious and competent readers, and partly to the supply-and-demand situation in the field, with much publication space to fill and insufficient production.

The researchers' unconscious bias in favor of their pet hypotheses and theories is a well-known and documented fact. It is interesting to note that some of the distortions and misrepresentations presented here tend to follow the direction most 'favorable' to their author's endeavor.

Clearly, if we want IR to be taken seriously in the world of research, it is highly desirable that something be done about this situation in terms of training and quality control. In training, rigorous thinking should be given higher priority, and in publications, quality control should be conducted more systematically and much more rigorously, without excluding the hitherto neglected use-of-the-literature component. In fact, supervisors may find it easier to use this component to teach rigorous work to their students, since it requires essentially an alert mind and some familiarity with the literature, rather than the knowledge and understanding of complicated theoretical constructs. It should of course be stressed to students that ethically, it is a researcher's obligation to report truthfully and in a representative way not only facts found in their experiments or naturalistic studies, but also relevant facts, statements and opinions from the literature. Showing how its misuse can destroy the author's credibility in spite of his/her use of advanced research methods or theories can be a powerful didactic tool as well.

As regards quality control in publications, it may be more difficult to achieve much as long as there is such imbalance between supply and demand, but if a few editors decided to be very strict in their selection procedures (and made sure they have qualified referees, which, in IR, is not necessarily easy), a healthy quality tradition could start.

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