

Considering the scholarship of editing: developing a typology of research about editing practice

Justine McNamara

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Research questions

- **What is the scope of editing research, in Australia and internationally?**
- **How can this research be categorised and understood?**

What is a typology?

'an analysis of a diverse range of objects or phenomena into distinct classes or types' (Macquarie Dictionary Online)

Why and how?

- There is significant theoretical and empirical literature on the development of typologies, and classification systems more broadly, especially in the social sciences (see, for example, Bailey (1994); Kluge (2000); Aron (2003)).
- Purposes for developing a typology can include to develop theory, understand a phenomenon better, develop a common terminology, promote the use of knowledge.
- My aims for this typology include identifying gaps in knowledge and promoting understanding of the nature and breadth of research relevant to the editing profession. The typology may also facilitate the translation of editing research into editing practice.
- Many different approaches to typology development exist, both quantitative and qualitative.
- Some sort of basis for classification is always required and classifications or 'types' should be mutually exclusive and exhaustive.

Methodology

I identified suitable electronic databases for searching, then narrowed down appropriate search terms. I examined the results, identifying items that could broadly be considered 'editing research'. I largely focused on scholarly journal articles. I then examined these (abstracts and some full texts) and classified them into groups, with significant instances of reconsideration and reclassification as the exercise progressed.

Search terms – I had to reduce the number of false positives (especially articles that were about other sorts of editing entirely):

Editing NOT motion picture, film, video, music, sound, gene, genome, RNA, software, data.

('Digital', 'image' and 'statistics' also generated a lot of false positives, but excluding these risked narrowing too much).

Subjects terms for relevant articles included:

Informit: Editing, proofreading, manuscripts – editing, editing – studying and teaching, journalism – editing, writing improvement, book editors, periodicals – publishing.

Academic Search Premier: Editing, technical editing, manuscripts, proofreading, journalistic editing, periodical publishing, copy editing, copy editors, scholarly electronic publishing, editors.

Key journals (to date) based on searches of Informit (Australian focused) and Academic Search Premier (last five years) included:

- Journal of Scholarly Publishing
- Publishing Research Quarterly
- Medical Writing
- Technical Communication.

I did not include in the typology:

Articles focused on translation or writing more broadly, book reviews or books, or research on wider issues in scholarly publishing such as open access, peer review and predatory journals.

The typology in progress

The table on the right shows the typology so far. Three broad categories have emerged, within which numerous smaller categories are nested.

Big picture (Big E)	Publishing	Scholarly journal editing	What is editing/the editing profession	Teaching editing
How to... (Little E)	The art of editing Second language editing/teaching	Literary editing Indigenous literature editing	Thesis editing Newspaper and magazine editing	Copyediting Editing historical manuscripts
Other issues	Digital issues	Ethics of editing	Editors' lives/experiences	Researchers as editors/ writers as editors

Limitations

- Some pieces seemed to cover more than one category, creating classification challenges. I need to develop a clearly articulated methodology for allocation to a category.
- Fascinating typology possibilities are present within categories, which I have not yet explored
- The main focus so far has been on topics. I could narrow the task further and examine similarities and differences in more depth, including how methodological approaches vary.

Next steps

- More searching, possibly using different techniques (e.g. identifying key researchers and examining their output as a starting point).
- Not all the items I've identified are strictly 'research'. Possibly need to narrow down to 'research'.
- Grapple further with the 'so what' question – how does the typology add to knowledge and help editors and editing researchers? For example, it can be used to identify gaps in the editing evidence base.
- Write up and publish!

References

- Aron, L.Y. (2003) *Towards a Typology of Alternative Education Programs: A Compilation of Elements from the Literature*. The Urban Institute, <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/59371/410829-Towards-a-Typology-of-Alternative-Education-Programs.pdf>.
- Bailey, K.D. (1994) *Typologies and Taxonomies: An Introduction to Classification Techniques*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Kluge, S. (2000) 'Empirically grounded construction of types and typologies in qualitative social research', *Forum: Qualitative Social Research, Vol 1, No. 1*, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.17169/fqs-1.1.1124>.