

# EMPIRICAL PAPER EDIT 1

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In a copyediting course, I edited another student's paper, "Editing Clarity versus Politeness: Studying Editor-Writer Relationships within the Online Writing Community." Her research was aimed at helping other editors to effectively communicate corrections in their suggestions to authors while still being polite. In my edits, I paid particular attention to clarity and fluency. I also focused on small details such as punctuation and grammar errors.

**Editing Clarity versus Politeness:  
Studying Editor-Writer Relationships within the Online Writing Community**

ELANG 350: Basic Editing Skills

May 20, 2019

**Commented [EE1]:** Name removed from paper for author's privacy.

## Introduction

For an editor to have work, there must be a writer. This means that an editor's job ~~includes~~ not only ~~limited to~~ editing, but also maintaining a good relationship with the writer. This presents an interesting dynamic within an editor's job, especially when opinions differ or the writer is resistant to change. Thus, editors must practice a balance of being both polite and clear. This balance has been discussed many times in the editing world, especially among freelance editors. There is a delicate balance in pleasing the client (especially in building up future freelance clientele) ~~and, but also~~ giving clear, efficient edits that reflect the editor's skill. This balance is explored in a study by Jo Mackiewicz and Kathryn Riley called "The Technical Editor as Diplomat: Linguistic Strategies for Balancing Clarity and Politeness," which lists different strategies to achieve both politeness and clarity in editorial comments. Their study ~~has~~ provided a basis for my own research ~~into~~ the editor-writer relationship within the dynamics of clarity versus politeness.

I've had to navigate this balance myself as a freelance editor, and I've also been on the receiving end of editorial comments as a young adult fiction writer. As an editor, I want to represent my editorial knowledge by providing accurate, clear edits, but I also want to maintain a good relationship with the writer. As a writer, I want my work to become better, but often find it hard to see an editor dissect and edit my hard work. I've also been frustrated when an editor would vaguely, though politely, suggest edits that left me more confused. A balance of politeness and clarity is essential ~~in creating~~ for a polished finished product.

## Research Question

**Commented [2]:** "Balance" is repeated a lot. Consider changing this use to "There is a delicate line between pleasing . . ."

**Commented [3]:** Use of "especially" repeated close together. Consider changing one of these to "particularly" or reword in order to avoid repetition.

**Commented [4]:** Explain more about why this is more relevant to freelance editors than to other editors.

**Commented [5]:** Consider moving some of this information to a footnote, rather than in the body of the text. One solution would be to change the beginning of the sentence to "One study explores this balance by listing different strategies..."

**Commented [6]:** Consider starting the paper with this experience. It helps frame why you are focusing on freelance editing.

**Commented [7]:** Could be ambiguous. Young adult writer or a writer who writes young adult fiction?

**Commented [8]:** There are a few line spaces between these sections, but no lines between the Research Question section and the Methods section. For consistency, consider deleting the spaces here, or adding some later on.

As a writer and reader with an online presence on Instagram, I've noticed that many writers **in my generation** are turning to self-publishing. This rise in self-publishing greatly affects freelance editors, who are often hired before a writer makes the plunge to self-publish their work online. Because I'm also a freelance editor, I've often wondered about the **freelance-writer** relationship, especially when it comes to writers not yet published or not employed in writing-focused occupations. I have thus focused my study on this niche of writers for the purpose of discovering what kind of editor they prefer, and what kind of editorial comments **they find** are helpful. **This** will aid me as I begin to establish my own freelance editing business among the online writing community.

**Commented [9]:** What is your generation?

**Commented [10]:** Is this talking about freelance editors and their relationships with writers? This could be confusing as it could be read as talking about freelance writers. Maybe delete "freelance-writer" and replace with "the relationship between freelance editors and writers" or something similar.

**Commented [11]:** This is a little vague. Consider placing a noun after.

### Methods

To gather my data for this study, I created an online, seven-question survey to distribute to my friends on my Instagram writing community. These friends are mostly between the ages of seventeen ~~and~~ thirty, and all are avid writers **with a goal of future publication**. I hope that targeting this specific age group and niche ~~of an online writing community~~ will focus my data to help freelance editors (who **they** are most likely to hire before self-publishing, or before submitting to an agent).

**Commented [12]:** Could make more active: "who have a goal of publishing their work in the future."

**Commented [13]:** Is "they" referring to the writers in the online community? Change to "these writers" for a more clear referent.

~~In order to get an idea of how many writers hire freelance editors, in the survey,~~ I asked ~~the survey respondents~~ **them** if they had ever hired an editor before and if they would hire an editor in the future. ~~in order to get an idea of how many writers hire freelance editors.~~ I then asked them to rank eight editorial comments (focusing on changing chapter heading font size) from the most clear to the least clear, and then rank them from the most polite to the least polite. These sentences are similar to Mackiewicz and Riley's survey sentences **to keep the integrity of the study**. At the end of the survey, I asked the participants which kind of editor they would

**Commented [14]:** I moved this sentence up to the top in order to avoid ambiguity as to if this was part of one of the questions you were asking.

**Commented [15]:** To make it clearer that this is modifying the whole sentence and not just "survey sentences," you could move the phrase to the beginning of the sentence.

**Commented [16]:** Add footnote

prefer: (1) clear and direct—getting straight to the point, (2) polite—focusing more on complimenting and not offending, (3) suggesting—all editorial comments are suggestions or personal opinions, or (4) a combination of all three—an editor who is polite, gets straight to the point, and offers suggestions. This was perhaps the most important question of my survey because it helped me know which kind of editor writers prefer.

**Commented [17]:** Make sure all of the items in this series are parallel