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Aspects of Author Queries and the Role of Library Resources in Manuscript crafting

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ASPECTS OF AUTHOR QUERIES AND THE ROLE OF LIBRARY RESOURCES IN MANUSCRIPT CRAFTING

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Abstract

Manuscripts sent to editors are often in different states of crafting or drafting. It is the task of the editor to help the author by polishing the manuscripts to the acceptable standard. Editors may seek clarifications from the authors about the missing links in the drafts. They may ask for references of strong claims, improvement of the draft, refinement of the argument, adjustment in tone, chapter re-organisation, fixing grammar points, among others. Editors raise these *flags* in the editorial process through *author queries*. The nature of queries written by the editor for the author differs from the ones written by the authors or literary agents themselves to editors or publishing houses. This paper examines the various aspects of author queries and the diverse library and information resources at the disposal of an author in resolving the queries. It examines the modes and patterns of author queries across fiction and non-fiction. Above all, the paper gives practical examples and useful tips on the craft of writing author queries and how the author could fix them by the use of library resources.

Key words: Author Query, Editing, Library Resources, Publishing, Writing

Introduction

Writing is a challenging task. In spite of its challenge, writing still comes naturally to some, though there are many whom the task of writing does not come naturally. In any case, the art or science of writing is a skill that can be acquired and mastered through learning, practice and mentoring.

What makes writing a daunting challenge, however, is the investments of time and energy it demands from the writer, researcher, scholar or student. In writing a paper, essay, book, dissertation, thesis, speech, personal letter or any other written communication, the writer uses many hours trying to put down his or her thoughts. However, possessing a novel idea does not translate into an excellent piece of written composition. Many factors could prevent the writer from producing a neat and satisfactory draft.

No matter the carefulness of a writer, constraints of time, accidental language slips, insufficient data, family distraction, work pressure, emotional instability, material want and absence of library and information sources often exact a tremendous influence on the quality of a piece of writing. As a result, some writers end up dishing out works filled with errors—ranging from inconsistent arguments, disorderly analysis, unreferenced claims, unsuitable style, sloppy punctuation, unacceptable grammar, inappropriate tone and odd logic. Olaofe (2010) notes that lumping what is relevant and what is not relevant is at the very easy nature of a hasty, unorganised and unplanned writing. (p.120). While good writing takes time, Oryila (2015) observes that the difficulty to write effectively for many relates to bad writing habits, inability to know what to write, how to write, how to form sentences and how to organise the work (p. v). All these make the role of the editor and a functional library vital to the writer.

From the evaluation of the manuscript's potentials, the editor generates comments or notes by way of author queries—identifying the missing gaps which ought to be filled. Some editors are concerned that many authors show a lack of understanding of the nature of author queries and how to handle them. The assumption is that author queries are diverse and didactic and, in spite of the usefulness of library resources, many authors still do not know where to start when they go through author queries. It is in the light of this that this paper examines the nature and dimension of author queries across genres, and how a functional library repository provides a rich source of information for the author to solve the queries.

Editing and the Editing Process

Author queries are generated through the editing process. The term *editing* is used in a professional and non-professional sense. It is fashionable to hear people who go to computer centres to *proofread* typewritten works calling what they do 'editing'. If they possess the right *knowledge* and *skills*, there is nothing wrong with referring to the task they are engaged in as 'editing'. By the way, editing is done in the modern age with the aid of a computer and, if someone sits in front of the computer running his or her pair of eyes from left to right and up and down fixing errors, what stops him or her from being called an 'editor'?

However, editing is a profession undertaken by those with requisite knowledge, skills and ability, and it does not matter whether one does it for free or for a fee. It is a professional engagement whether one does it full-time or part-time—what is elegantly called 'freelance'. It is a profession even though the training that produces editors lacks standards or higher courses and much of it is based on personal intuition and apprenticeship. Besides, editing satisfies the requirement of a profession because, as noted by the *Oxford Advanced Learner's*

Dictionary (2005), a profession is 'a type of job that needs special training or skill, especially one that needs a high level of education' (p.1159). But, this paper is least concerned with the lay services of someone whose only qualification to sift the pages of a computer or pages of paper for errors and fix them is the possession of a pair of eyes!

Editing is hard to define. One definition which captures what editing *is* is Sharpe and Gunther (1994, p.1) who state thus:

> Editing is a broad-ranging concept, an art as well as a craft. In crossword puzzles, the word 'edit' is the answer to a whole list of clues: review, revise, alter, redact, refine, emend, correct. The craft can be learned fairly easily by diligent attention to the rules of grammar and the conventions of usage and style. To master the art, however, rules are not enough; this mastery requires a special sensibility, a finely tuned ear, and an instinct that comes only with years of experience.

Editing is any activity undertaken to shape and fine-tune a manuscript. Editing encompasses all activities carried out to fix errors in a manuscript by someone who possesses the requisite knowledge, skills and capacity, such as reviewing and improving all aspects of grammar, language usage, punctuation, spelling, diction, style, methodology, theory, characterisation, organisation, discussion, facts and general problems of craft intended to give the manuscript a presentable and publishable outlook. Editing is a process—and not a single event. Editing is a recursive process that begins with the evaluation of a draft or manuscript submitted by an author or publisher to the editor to the actual behind-the-scene mechanical and surgical operation carried out on the draft to give it a publishing shape, fitness and taste as well as attending to the author's or publisher's feedbacks until the final fine-tuning of the draft to the acceptable standard.

Manuscript Evaluation and the Role of the Editor

Once manuscripts are received, the editor initiates the editing process. The editor carries out a general check on the potentials of the draft, scope of the subject, length of the work, format of the work and category of the work. Where the manuscript is certified as suitable, the editor calls for a review of the work. The review ascertains the value of the work, its contributions, theoretical or conceptual framework, methodology, presentation, result, discussion and analysis, conclusion and recommendations. The reviewer finds out if the work meets acceptable research or writing standards and writes an objective comprehensive report to the editor about the assessment of the manuscript.

The editor thus performs a variety of functions, which leads to making vast author queries. The editing functions include:

Editor as a Reviewer: One of the major roles of the editor is reviewing the quality and potential value of manuscripts before publication. This task is essentially carried out by the editorial review committee or board before a particular manuscript is accepted and accordingly allowed to pass through the editing process. The editor filters the paper or manuscript and determines whether the manuscript makes any substantial contribution to knowledge. The author determines what type of editing a work needs and the strength and weaknesses of the author.

Editor as a Grammar Police: The most important function an editor performs is that of acting as a grammar police in all matters of language usage, punctuation, spelling, style, tone, among others. The editor detects errors in the draft and raises flags on any aspects of grammar that would affect the understanding of the publication. The editor has eyes for details and easily identifies aspects of the manuscript that violate rules of grammar, usage, style, punctuation, among other.

Editor as a Writer: Even though editing skill is different from writing skill, being an editor implies a regular or occasional scribbling of sentences or written composition. Much of what editors do with manuscripts is to write and re-write sentences, sometimes running into paragraphs upon paragraphs. As they routinely work on drafts, the build their writing skills. In the case of poor constructions, editors try to sift the sense the author is trying to make, and they re-write the sentences while retaining the author's original sense. Editors find better ways of expressing ideas and making meaning. In short, no one who is not himself or herself a writer is an editor. But, this is not to say that every editor writes with the same ease like an author.

Editor as a Reader: Editors are avid and prolific readers. Editors are people who develop love for reading books. But, editors read not just with the eyes. What Vaughn (1980) says of writers can also be said of editors since in reading editors put their other senses such as hearing, touch, taste, smell, specific, general, history, scepticism, people, self, implication, problems, solution, reading, involvement, detachment, curiosity, irony, form and words into function (pp.37-49). An editor reads, listens and smells the draft *intently* to uncover all aspects which may not be apparent to the untrained mind or eyes. No one can be a good editor that does not read *critically* before making corrections on a draft.

Editor as a Proof-reader: One of the functions of the editor is to ensure that edited manuscripts are free from errors before printing or publishing. Thus, after the usual behind-the-scene work on the draft, the editor moves to proofread the draft over and again to fix minor remaining issues which might escape the editing tools. Note that, in strict editorial

process, proof-readers are not considered as editors, but it is their duty to find errors of consistency, style, grammar, among others, which might have been overlooked by the editor.

Editor as a Mentor or Teacher: The editor is a teacher in his or her own right. The editor nurtures young authors into the craft of profitable writing. Some editors spend time coaching the young on how to write. They hold seminars, webinars and classes on how to write and self-edit or self-publish one's work. With the coming of the internet and social media, many freelance editors now offer free writing tips to individuals or groups on their blogs or social media platforms.

Editor as a Thinker: The editor is a thinker. An editor needs to think to be able to edit another writer's draft. An editor employs the principles of logic to be able to make sense of troubling senses in a draft. An editor divines the intention of the writer and effects corrections appropriately. Where the editor is not able to make sense of the work, he queries the sense the author is trying to make in series of flags.

Editor as a Learner or Student: The editor is also a learner. He is a student of knowledge. Many times editors come across new words, information, or facts never known to them in the past. In order to be properly guided, the editor goes to the dictionary in case of a strange word, to the archives in the case of a new information or to the internet for fact-checking in the case of facts. By doing so, editors enrich their knowledge and capacity to carry out their job.

Editor as a Decision Maker: The editor manages and takes a variety of editorial decisions. The editorial process requires getting a reviewer, sending out manuscripts for reviews, issuing letters to authors on the status of their manuscripts, determining manuscripts' publishable or unpublishable fitness, setting publishing dates, enforcing journal ethics and policy, receiving feedback from reviewers and queries from authors and agents, among others. The decisions of the editors help in sustaining a high editing and publishing culture.

Editor as a Publisher: Some editors are responsible for publishing the manuscripts they work on. In some cases, editors arrange with a publisher to publish the manuscript. Some editors have set up their publishing firms after working as sub-editors in some organisations. The experience they acquired in practice and work help them in setting up a good publishing brand.

Editor as a Censor: By detecting what should go into manuscripts and publications, the editor serves as a censor of publishable and unpublishable content. An editor always ensures that what is publishable does not give rise to action in piracy, copyright infringement, libel or any criminal or civil litigation.

Editor as a Library: An editor is a repository of ideas, knowledge and expertise on a wide variety of subjects. By working on dozens of jobs, the editor is exposed to a vast plane of knowledge. This gives the editor currency about the subjects even outside his or her field of training. The editor knows a little about everything. In some cases, the editor seeks additional information about a subject before going fully into working on the drafts.

Editor as an Organiser: The editorial process requires effective co-ordination of activities requiring commitment, time, money and energy. Only those who can efficiently organise and co-ordinate editing tasks that are fit to work in the editorial department. The editor is an organised person who does not allow laziness and procrastination to interfere with the line of his or her job. Timely delivery of jobs is the hallmark of an editor who knows his or her onions.

Classification of Editing

Author queries are generated by different types of editing. Many authors classify editing in their own ways, but the classification is more or less the same. Weber (2002), for instance, classifies editing according to types and levels of edit, degrees of edit, literary and technical edits, and rules-based and analysis-based edits. However, an overlap exists in the literature between rules-based editing and analysis-based editing on the one hand and the other types of editing on the others.

On the one hand, Weber (2002) states that rules-based editing covers ways to make a document correct, consistent, accurate and complete, using standards and guidelines specified by the company, especially in the following matters: spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalisation, hyphenation; adherence to legal requirements (copyright, trademarks, and so on); internal consistency, typically to do with design: typography, layout and illustrations; and, bibliographic references and citations. In this type of editing, the editor does not negotiate the rules with the editor. On the other hand, analysis-based editing is carried to ensure the readers get the intended meaning of the draft:) states that:

> Analysis-based editing covers the process of evaluating a document for concept, content, organisation, form and style, to make it more functional and appropriate for its readers. Much of this type of editing should be negotiable: the editor should suggest improvements rather than make corrections (Weber, 2002, para.5).

Editing can also be classified according to the following types:

Copyediting: Copyediting is a form of editing concerned with matters of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and other mechanics of style, internal consistency of facts and presentation.

Substantive Editing or Developmental Editing: In substantive editing also known as developmental editing, Weber (2002) notes that the editor is concerned with document's concept, content, organisation, design, and analysis at all levels: word, sentence, paragraph, and not just rules of grammar.

Line Editing: Harris (2015) states that line editing is a basic form of editing where the editor looks at common issues, such as spelling, grammar, punctuation and syntax, as well as suggestions to word choice and sentence structure.

Queries and their Types

The mention of 'query' elicits unfavourable reaction from many. This may be due to the notoriety the term has acquired within government or administrative circles. When a staff of an organisation fails to come to work or does anything outside his or her power, the staff is given a query by the superior. A query is usually written in form of a letter requiring the staff to explain within a specified time the reason for an action and why punishment should not be imposed on them for the action. However, the application of the term in book publishing differs with its negative rendering in the government or administrative spheres.

There is also a terminological confusion in the use of the phrase 'author query'. Editors, authors and book agents all write queries. If an author writes a query, say, to an editing firm or publishing house, should it not be called 'author query' because it was written by the author? In the same way, when an editor writes a query, why is it not called an 'editor query' if it would show that the query is written by or for an editor? If queries are written to people, as it is well known, then, the ones meant for the author would be *author queries*, the ones for the editor would be *editor queries*, the ones meant for the publisher would be *publisher queries* … and so on. At the extreme of the terminological dispute is the absence of an apostrophe after the designated owner or maker of the queries. For example, an editor's signature is a signature of an editor, an author's signature is a signature of a writer of a book, and so on. Following that example, an author's query would be the query made by an author, an editor's query would be a query made by an editor, a publisher's query would be the one made by the publisher. But, the use of apostrophe in such circumstance is unnecessary because the sense conveyed by the expression is *to whom the queries are intended*—and not *the maker or owner of the queries*.

In any case, there is a big difference between the queries written by editors and those written by the authors and literary agents to editors or publishing houses. Kothe (2016) describes author query thus:

When editors refer to an 'author query', we mean the comments and questions written to the author within the manuscript. These queries address areas that need clarification, added detail, citation, reorganization, cutting, revision for consistency…the list goes on (para.3).

Author queries are questions by way of short notes, comments, suggestions or explanations written for the author in the process of editing a manuscript intended to help the author address obvious lapses in organisation, citation, diction, grammar, style, theory, methodology, analysis, logic, tone, exposition, point of view, characterisation, setting and general weaknesses in writing craft. They are editorial reviews on technical aspects of writing made in the course of editing which help to increase a manuscript fitness and health as a suitable and publishable piece of writing. Editors often raise 'query flags' when they come across areas in the draft which require the author's attention or approval to fix in order to improve the understanding of the manuscript. With the help of word processors, editors now have Track Changes or Review buttons where the editing comments and notes are made.

Queries written by the authors or literary agents are letters seeking to sell a book to an editor or publisher or get a publisher for one's book. A query letter is described as a marketing tool where an author captures the significance of his or her book in order to get a publisher to publish the book. But, going into the details of query letters is not the subject of this paper.

The Nature of Author Queries in Nonfiction

The species of works which fall under this category include dissertation, theses, biography, autobiography, letters, or academic works, such as journal articles and conference papers.

Aspects of Author Queries in Academic Works

A key feature of author queries in academic works for publication, such as journal articles or conference papers, occurs in form of reviews, notes or comments. Generally, editor reviews the fitness of an academic manuscript by making the following author queries identified by Bartol (1983, cited in Eichorn & VandenBos, 1985), namely, inadequate review of the literature, inappropriate citations, unclear introduction, ambiguous research questions, inadequately described sample, insufficient methodology, incompletely described measures, unclear statistical analysis, inappropriate statistical techniques, poor conceptualization of discussion, discussion that goes beyond the data, poor writing style and excessive length. Here are some of the examples of author queries in academic works:

Samples of Author Queries in Academic Manuscripts

The following author queries are noted in academic works:

Manuscript One

Author Queries in a Sample Abstract

Library patronage and services in Nasarawa, no doubt, are currently still very low. Poor library marketing along with poor user education is greatly responsible for this situation. And the grave implications include poor consumption of library resources and services, poor services, untapped library potentials, lagging behind in the area of information, communication and technology, still being bent to and constrained by conventional manual /physical market transactions, high illiteracy and poor growth and development. Therefore, effective marketing of library and Information services is one of the best solutions to Nasarawa contemporary problems. Librarians are these marketers and solution-providers/givers, and thus must rise to this challenge towards betterment. Marketing involves finding out what the users want, then setting out to meet those needs. The librarians ought to significantly embrace the total marketing functions of market research and analysis, service planning and promotion, among others. Hence, the dire need for this study cannot be over-emphasized. However, library marketing in Nasarawa is challenged by several factors, socio-cultural, economic, political, technological, educational and religious, among others. But they can still be contained if the librarians rise to the challenge pragmatically, evolving standard and functional marketing strategies.

1. Any theory for the research?
2. Is your paper addressing the inability of librarians to market their resources or the failure of library patrons to take advantage of library services or both (scope)?
3. What differentiates the second sentence from the second to the last one in the Abstract? The two sentences are confusing (logicality).
4. What library services, products are marketed? Be very clear about these.

Sample Author Queries in Body of Academic Work

5. What is the three dots at the beginning of each of the quotes in the body of the paper all about? This is a long winding quote! Paraphrase!
6. 'Such a right cannot exist by itself or reside within the form of certain works': Does this capture your view here? The original sentence appears vague. I could not make complete meaning of it. Since the sentence has something to do with the next sentence, explain what the concept of 'subsist' and 'exist' mean.
7. 'The concept of intellectual property is the main frame that sustains all creative endeavours and provides the thrust for countries in the current match towards globalization': It is important to back this assertion with an authority.
8. Library services or products which appear within the scope of marketing needs to be specifically listed and the merit in the marketing of each of the items needs to be shown under a subhead such as 'Marketing of New Collection'.
9. What items are acquired recently by the library?

Author Query of Conclusion in a Journal Article

'Over the years, there have been insufficient funds for libraries and information centres in Nigeria (likewise Narasawa State). The result is insufficient library resources and poor services. The situation can be addressed partly by marketing library products and services. This will enable libraries to generate income which can be used to improve their human and material resources, while at the same time ensuring that the libraries remain dynamic and meet the challenges of the time. As such, librarians are facing an acute sense of accountability to market and sustain their

useful products and services without jeopardizing the interest of the potential users (cf. Uluocha, 2010). Marketing of library products and services is very necessary for the sustenance and development of libraries, which requires revenue generation by librarians to complement grants from parent institutions'

10. The conclusion in the article introduces an element that was never contemplated by the literature, that is, insufficient funds for libraries being cause of insufficient library resources or services (scope/logicality). All along it has been shown that marketing of library products, services and resources was desirable to increase patronage or raise the standard of library services. But, if the patronage was for the purpose of meeting funding needs, that fact is not reflected even in the abstract, nor the body of the paper. In the Conclusion, too, it is not clear what librarians would be marketing and how they would go about it. And, since much of what marketing entails as shown in the paper would be getting first the views of library users and deciding how to handle them, it would be difficult to show how the users would want to be taxed or how costs of purchasing library products would be *raised* in order to meet library funding needs without a corresponding drop in patronage!

Manuscript Two

Author Queries of Sample Abstract

As socio-economic and technology change gather pace, people everywhere need to develop their knowledge and skills on continuous basis so that they can live and work meaningfully in the technological society. For development to take place, a country must cultivate certain minimum scientific and technological culture through education (including Technical and Vocational Education). Education and training contribute to an individual's personal development, increase his/her productivity and incomes at work, and facilitate everybody's participation in economic and social life. It follows that education and training can also help people to escape poverty by providing them with the skills and knowledge to raise their output and generate income. Investing in education and training is therefore an investment into the future: Knowledge and skills are the engine of economic growth and social development. Finally, it was recommended among others that education should develop capacities for decision-making and qualities for active and intelligent participation, teamwork and leadership at work.

1. This Abstract does not show the theory or conceptual framework used for the study. It does not reflect the methodology used nor findings or analysis. Yet, it moves on to make recommendations. Much of what the authors have done is to introduce the subject, that is, the role of technical and vocational education for self and national development. This apparent oversight should be fixed.
2. 'Education is a means-end-activity.' This is a strong assertion whose reference is needed.
3. The connection between education (is it just 'education' generally now or technical education?) and industry is not yet established.
4. Note that Conceptual Clarifications does not serve the same function as Conceptual Framework. Conceptual Framework operates like Theoretical Framework upon which the analysis is approached. A section should be provided for Conceptual Framework or Theoretical Framework.

5. Create a subheading and tag it 'Literature Review'. Much of what you have reviewed here can be accommodated in the subsection.

Manuscript Three

Author Queries of Portions of a Sample Academic Paper

1. 'Without the mobile phone, the economic activities of immigrants across and within borders would have failed': Who says so, and what do you mean? (Citations for strong claims.)
2. 'In this research, I provide not only unique and valuable insight into the role of the mobile phone on informal self-employment activities of Senegalese and Gambian immigrants in the US': You are not selling a product, but writing an academic text! Use of unnecessary adjectives or subjective words in academic communication make it look an ad!
3. 'With the help of historic shortcomings, the research will illuminate a richer depth of understanding on what significance the mobile phone holds for informal self-employed immigrants living in the US': What are these and what do you mean?
4. 'My extensive curiosity in this topic created the passion within me to embrace this research with no sentiments attached': Strange sentence! This passion and sentiments cannot be verified or confirmed, and academic work is all about scientifically verified truth. Stop practising witchcraft!
5. 'Informal self-employed migrants are characteristically entrenched in informal networks which largely consist of family, relatives, and (co-ethnic) friends (Hones, 1976; Peter, 1999; Allwell, 1998; Alemon, 2004; Mitt, 2007; Sans, et al 2015)': Use the authors, don't just mention them. Weave the narrative around the authors and specifically mention what each of them said.
6. 'The Third Plank in this Administration's drive to CHANGE Nigeria is re-structuring the economy': The first and second planks were not mentioned nor implied. To begin with the Third Plank is torturing your readers or hearers. They should follow chronologically in descending order. This paragraph appears from the moon and things are falling down!
7. 'Economies behaviour is cyclical. All countries face ups and downs': Jehovah. I have stared at this sentence for a million's time, but I don't know what it means. Pure gobbledegook. Recast!

Aspects of Author Queries in Fiction

Aspects of writing author queries in fiction show marked features. The formality of language seen especially in academic works disappears in fiction. Editors use flexible language; the language is entertaining, sarcastic and full of pedantic jokes. Here are sample author queries:

Manuscript One

Author Queries of Portion of Sample Short Story

1. 'It wasn't a camp like a summer camp. It was a displaced person's camp. That's how the place we were evacuated to was called. It was really heart rending': (Compare this edit: It was a camp —a displaced person's camp. That's how the place we were evacuated to was called. The sight of the camp was heart rending.)

2. From whose perspective James (name of the boy in the story), as small as he is, knows this? He, for example, has to be told before he knows that the place he *is* is a refugee camp. How much more a 'summer camp'! If he knows the difference as much as that he should be able to note the apparent difference between a purely fun-making holiday and a disparate group forced out of their homes. The issue I wish to raise here has to do with improper reference/use of geographical setting. From a knowledge of the weather and seasons in our country, I strongly doubt if the audience knows what 'summer' or rather 'summer camp' is and what time of the year it takes place in our country. We have two seasons—dry and raining-- and not three or four as in other countries.

3. For this edit, I'm using *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (11 edition), but would switch to *OED* if you preferred, especially given your requirement for UK English. I also use *The Chicago Manual of Style*, but we'd have to talk about that, too.

4. You kept using that word, but it doesn't mean what you fink! (Usage)

5. Please, clarify. Hope you were not high on something when you wrote this?

6. Unclear words: I know you dwell in people's minds, but use a word they would understand, God!

7. Using one word all the time: It was for people like you that Thesaurus.com was invented!

8. This is the Tiv translation of 'wan bojov'—an ugly beast. If you intend to have a glossary of unfamiliar words, then, there would be no need to do this as I have done here. It is done here for the interest of the foreign reader. You can now eat your pounded yam and rat meat in silence!

9. Although, I have no problem with a Hausa man being a gatekeeper, the image has become clichéd. In movies or books, it is a Hausa man who is always a gatekeeper. Stereotype literature lacks originality. Use a neutral reference, say, gatekeeper, but if the story depends on the fact that James is probably the child of the wife of the Hausa gatekeeper born to a promiscuous putative father, OJ, then, just ignore this suggestion.

10. See, here we're in Anna's head, but we jump almost immediately into Yalgo's. This apparent head-hopping can cause you a night in POV cell!

11. The reference to how the boys felt when they are with Father Othello should be cast in past tense, except there is a stylistic motivation behind this, say, you want to show that they mix up tense in speech or wrong grammatical choices, as a thread common in children's speech. But, even if you want to mark the speech of the boys as having traces of grammatical errors, it seems that the speech pattern of the boys shows a marked level of proficiency. Downgrading it to the language of non-adult will make it appear fake.

12. Hope you have heard the rule: don't tell, but show? Now, weave the account into the dialogue. Avoid dumping info in my head!

13. 'He had waited for her to beg a roasted cob seller for a sheet of newspaper to cover her hair from the remnant dribbles a man could bear': Your language is sexist. Use an equivalent feminine gender pronominal. Many people object the use of 'man' for both the masculine and feminine gender.

14. 'We both left and went further in the corridor of life': What do you mean by corridor of life? Oop, this is poetic. Prose writing is obviously different from poetry

15. 'You can get it outside. The cake. I wasn't trained with it. And I won't train you with it': There is merit in using short sentences or, even single words as sentences. They quicken the pace of the story and heighten the action. Yet, when they are overdone, they become boring and reflect a stylistic deficit. I strongly advise that you cut down the number of those you have employed in the story, while maintaining the line of the plot.

16. 'The mother had bathed her son and he cried and wanted to be warmed': From whose perspective did you know that the baby wanted to be *warmed*? Except, perhaps, you are a magician. Show the reader visible evidence to be convinced that when a baby cries, it wants to be warmed.

17. 'All things chose to fade in their own accord where the room was dimmer and light came from a blind window': I don't get the logic here: do you mean the passing of time wasn't enough to make things fade or age? The description of setting here, for example, the fading of light, etc., is unnecessary. It has to be properly linked to the scenic action to make sense.

18. ***: There is no logical connection between what preceded and the latter account. This is a bad habit, and it affects point of view (POV). The stars must be used anywhere the preceding action is different from the one that follows.

19. 'Ikem called them canopies. The chairs were arranged in rows, the tables led the chairs. They were placed at the beginning of the rows. Ikem called them high tables. The first time I heard it, I looked up to see how high the tables grew. Nothing. No height, no wings. Ikem laughed at me': You mean at aged 11, the boy hasn't known what canopies were? Ok na! The literary implication of this is that you are depicting how naïve you are. Yet, at aged 11, the boy wants birthdays, knows cakes, knows names of popular artists like Nabania, Tuface, Phyno, etc….

Author Queries in a Sample Poem

20. Stone? You got one stone head yourself! What symbolic meaning do you want to achieve with *stone*? 'Stone' is roughly an unproductive thing. In this context, its meaning is vague. Symbols used should have meanings that are easily identifiable. Symbols which require intellectual analysis to understand becloud meaning of a poem.

21. Plagiarism? Somebody call the police! These lines or part of it seems to be the same with the ones I once read on CN's Facebook wall or someone I can't remember now precisely. I have tried to go through his wall again, but since he updates on a frequent basis I aborted the task midway. In Literature, a parody of the lines is acceptable, but not outright imitation. While I don't doubt your creative ability, I strongly advise that if they are his or some other person's, they should be acknowledged. Piracy, once detected in writing, brings the career of a writer to a sudden end. I shall edit the poem, if you like, in the belief that you own the copyright and authorship and tell the police afterwards you live on No.5, Tarkaa Way, Gboko!

22. Except this stanza were meant to serve an ironic goal, verses 'cooked' in your mother's kitchen shouldn't end up in *ash*. 'Ash' is something that has no value. My

edit here did not alter your view. You may recast if your goal is mistaken, but bet me, if I am mistaken, you couldn't be right and wrong at the same time.

23. I am not able to make sense of this half-done stanza.
24. YOU & ME: Although, titles are seldom the subject of copyright violation, I wish to draw your attention to a similar title of a popular poem. Would you still want to retain the title?

Author Queries in a Drama Text

1. Casting dialogue in monologue: In drama, use stage direction, that is, explanatory notes in brackets, to capture feelings of characters, and what may not be cast in words before the audience.
2. Character A opens the car door and catches breaks and stops: I am really enjoying your Formula One Trip, but for once, just be real! Nobody puts the cart before the horse! (Sequence)
3. Character speaking non-stop hours on end: You could order a talking clock instead! Even your loquacious mum pauses sometimes to breathe for air!
4. Wardrobe accident: I can see your character wearing *agbad*a to the farm. Ok, kontinu!
5. Collapse this long prose into action, dialogue.
6. No antagonist, obstacles, conflict and resolution, and you think you were writing drama?
7. Being a drama whose diction is typical of the subject and setting, but which many readers will not identify with, I strongly advise you to cut down the use of jargons and technical words. Concentrate on using simple equivalents. It is a good idea that you have a page of glossary. This will also help in reducing the explanatory notes littering the drama.
8. 'She laughed for a moment. (*She was surprised she did*)': Somebody laughed and was surprised she laughed? Is she insane?
9. Cutlass, darkness, blood, dove? The motifs for using them in a church drama reflecting love is not apparent in the text.
10. Typical Kannywood drama: Mallam always meeting friend at the doorway and both sitting afterwards cross-legged on mats at the frontage!

Similarities and Dissimilarities in Author Queries across Genres of Writing

As shown in the preceding discussion, editors have limited time and energy, and their queries come in form of short questions, notes, comments or reviews. Query flags are clear, short and concise points editors make to help an author fix a draft. They are varied and instructive. They prompt the author to make useful correction or clarification in the manuscript.

There are different aspects of author queries with divergence and convergence across genres of writing. Editors working with literary works tend to be highly generous with using informal and literary language—a linguistically diverse construction full of wits, idioms, ironies, sarcasms, metaphors, proverbs and sharp criticisms. Non-scholarly works leave issues of language style, style guide, standard form of English or any language to be adopted

to the discretion of the author except in cases where publishers insist on compliance to some internal rules of formats. Less scholarly works trade little in jargon and theory. Editors working on more academic works, such as scholarly books, dissertations, theses, journal articles and conference papers, employ a formal language largely devoid of the vagaries noted with literary and entertaining language. With the non-fictive works, editors are overly concerned with a straitjacket of scholarly rules. Scholarly works avoid or deal less in idioms and ironic technical notes, so as not to confuse the author. Editors of the non-fictional genres attend to technical matters of writing research papers or books, such as the suitability of the theory, methodology, logic, hypothesis, literature review, statistical data, findings and analysis. Editors working with non-fictive works raise query flags about violation house style, style guides, documentation style and language style. As advocates of comprehension, all editors expect written communication to be free from typos and to be appropriate in all matters of spelling, punctuation, capitalisation, style and grammar. They expect drafts to be logical, organised and well developed.

Library and Information Resources for Fixing Author Queries

Library and information centres provide a rich collection stock any author can use to fix author queries. These include:

The Internet and Online Resources: Authors can surf the internet when they need valuable information to flesh out their piece of writing. The internet is a repository of knowledge. Almost every piece of information on any subject can be found on the internet. The internet is described as the superhighway of information and the greatest world library. Billions of books, articles, papers and informational materials are found on the internet. It is sometimes surprising how some upcoming writers appear helpless even though their handsets have internet facilities, yet they never put them to use.

Archival Materials: Sometimes the editor requires the author to consult archival sources to fill in vital information in the draft. But, since access to archival materials are usually denied or highly restricted, the author needs to seek the services of librarians to be able to gain access to archival materials.

Encyclopaedias: These are repository of uncommon knowledge on many subjects. It should be the writer's companion when writing. However, many authors do not use the encyclopaedias. They are found in a good library and authors are advised to consult them in order to sharpen their writing.

Dictionaries: Dictionaries are authorities on words, usage, spelling, punctuation and many other information. They are necessary companions of any good writer. A good writer needs to

have at least five dictionaries dealing with different kinds of English across different national standards. Dictionaries are of different types. Dictionaries have software and the author needs to have many dictionaries on their computer systems.

Thesauruses: The thesaurus is a dictionary which gives the writer precise words, synonyms and antonyms of words and their meanings. Instead of using one word many times in a piece of writing, the thesaurus can help the author to avoid repeated use of one word. The following are among the common thesauruses: *Random House College Thesaurus*. New York: Random House, 1984; *Webster's New Dictionary of Synonyms*. Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 1984, among others. Online Thesaurus, such as Thesaurus.com, is also available for writers with internet connectivity. Thesaurus is also found on word processor of computers.

College Textbooks: The library contains college books on different subjects. When the need arises, the author needs to go to the library to find help. These textbooks freshen the author's brain on subjects the author might have forgotten or lack adequate information about.

Annotated Bibliography: Libraries often have annotated bibliographies, which give good accounts of all the information a writer needs when he or she is writing on a particular area. In order to enrich literature review, build the argument and examine the development in a field, the bibliography comes handy as a worthy document or list to the researcher, scholar or student.

Phones calls: A piece of information an author needs may be available just for the asking. The author can place calls to any library to get the required information. Calls can equally be made to other authors whom the author knows have ready answers to the piece of information being looked for.

Experts: It may so happen that an author may want to write on a subject he or she does not have adequate knowledge. In the circumstance, the author needs to consult an expert in the field in order to be able to write on the subject.

Grammar Books: For authors struggling with basic grammar issues, it is good to consult the library for books where the basic rules and conventions on usage are found. Inability of many authors to understand the working of rudimentary grammar rules often cost the editors and authors time and money.

Style and Reference Guides: Style guides are important guides on matters of language use, punctuation, spelling, documentation, among others. Style guides help the author on how to construct sentences, how to write, and how to make meaning. They provide the writer with the toolkits for writing. In order to show the development of ideas and knowledge, some organisations have come out with various guides on how authors can report and document

findings and sources of their information. Authors are expected to obey the citation rules of the reference guide being used. *The Chicago Manual of Style*, the *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*, *Associated Press Style Guide*, etc., are the most popular within the academic community.

Conclusion

In this paper, it has been shown that editors perform a variety of tasks to ensure manuscripts are cured of all forms of writing defects. Editors do these on manuscripts by making author queries which are questions by way of notes or comments on the missing links in a draft to help the author polish the manuscript to a publishable standard. Editors ensure that publishable manuscripts are free from errors of grammar, usage, punctuation, style, typos and construction. They ensure that manuscripts adhere to some rules of formats or house style. Authors attend to query flags by the use of library resources and information sources. In writing or attending to queries, it is suggested that editors and writers need to be flexible in the way they follow rule books in order not to ruin creativity. Reason: even the most useful style guide in one century loses its worth in another and is discarded as bygone rules.

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