

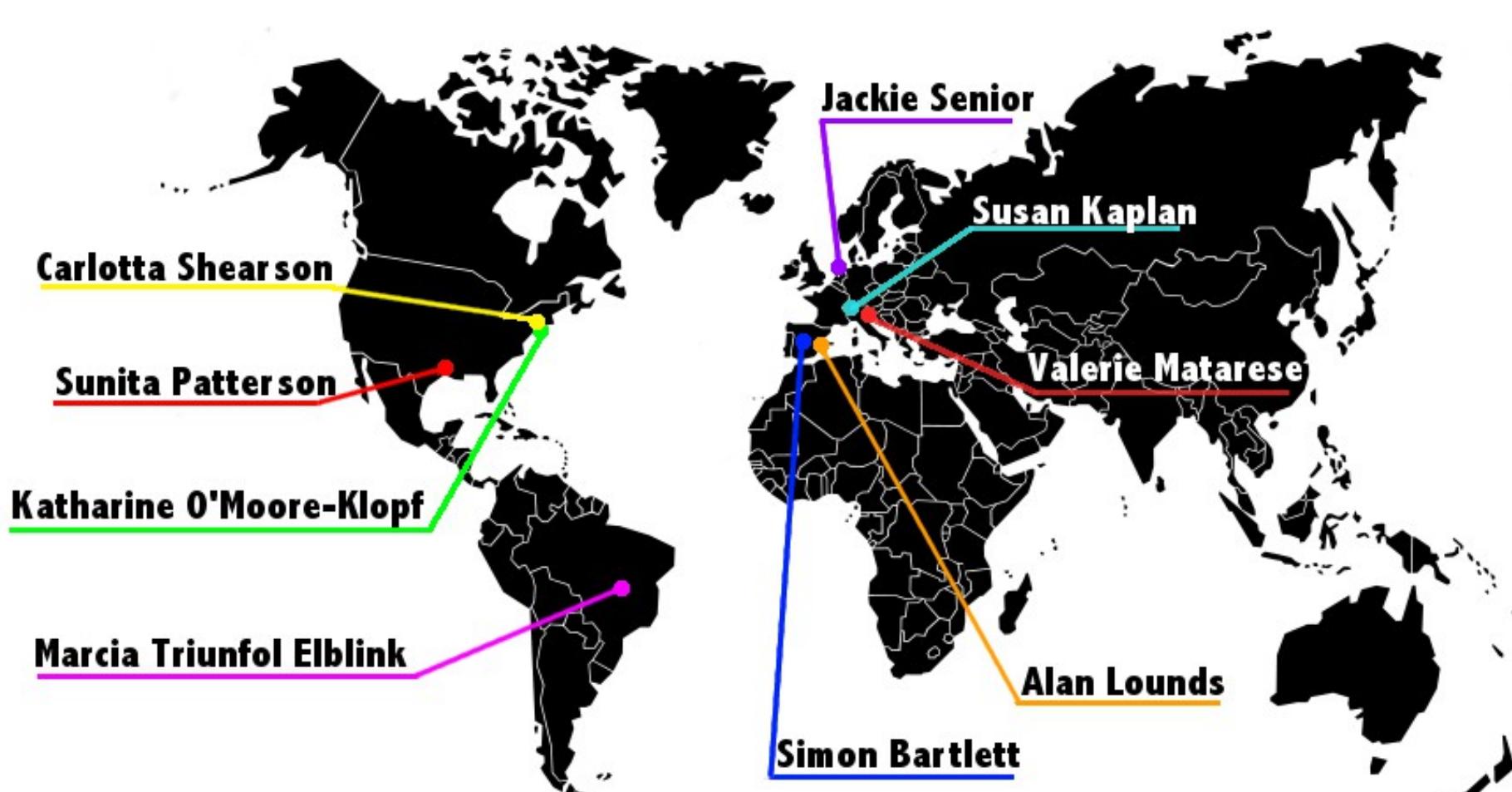
# Authors' Editors

## Partners in communication at the service of researchers and readers

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### A little background

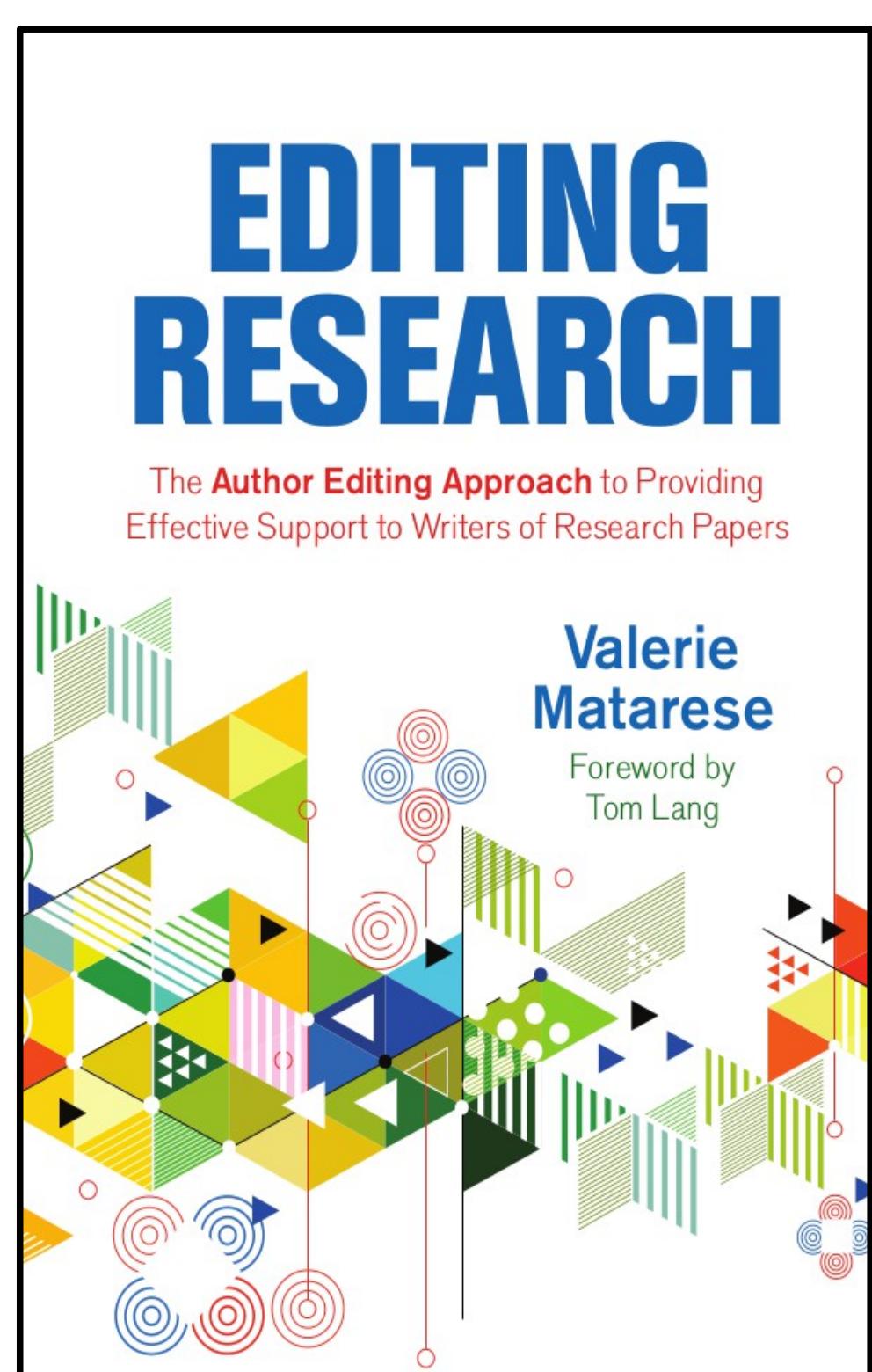
- Authors' editors work for, and with, authors to help make draft manuscripts fit for purpose.
- Author editing has roots in US medical research; first published definition 1968.
- Authors' editors have low visibility and their work is often underappreciated and misunderstood.



### Project design

- Qualitative research Interviews with exemplary authors' editors (purposive sample – *not representative*)
- Bibliographic research Document the history and development of author editing to present day
- Realist review Synthesize new knowledge from the research findings:
  - Explain how author editing works in particular contexts and settings
  - Guide decisions about engaging authors' editors in research communication.

### Book themes



- Authors' editors:
- Have important role in research communication
  - Help produce better research articles, reduce research waste
  - Contribute to researcher training

### Research highlights

#### What do authors' editors do (and not do) when editing a research article?

**Copy editing** Sometimes done, in limited amounts, not a priority. Examples:  
Standardize spelling to American or British; format according to journal's I2A

#### Language editing

Always done. A fundamental activity. Examples:

- Fix grammar, remove tautology
- Adjust formality, reduce verbosity
- For EAL<sup>§</sup> authors, correct:
  - Intralanguage errors (language learner's errors), e.g. over-generalization of grammar rules
  - Interlanguage errors: negative transfer from L1 (Table)

Incorrect L2 term	L1 term (language)	Intended term
<b>False friends</b>		
Sanitary surveillance	Veille sanitaire (French)	Disease surveillance
Pathology	Παθολογία (Greek)	Internal medicine
Process	Proces (Polish)	Trial
Hesitate*	Esitare (Italian)	To result in
<b>Coinage (unintentional)</b>		
Casistics	Casistica (Italian)	Case series
Morbidity	Morbilità (Italian)	Morbidity
Nocive	Nocivo (Spanish, Italian)	Noxious
<b>Erroneous translation of L1 word with multiple meanings</b>		
Data were aggregated in monthly prefixes	Kengetal (Dutch)	Data were aggregated in monthly indexes
Treatment concept	Behandlungskonzept (German)	Treatment plan
Population development	Populační rozvoj (Czech)	Population growth
<b>Literal translation</b>		
Object glass	Object glas (Dutch)	Microscope slide
Alternating alvus	Alvo alternante (Italian)	Alternating bouts of constipation and diarrhea
Promoter gene	Promotore genico (Italian)	Gene promoter

<sup>§</sup>EAL, English as an additional language

\* Also false cognate. Compare Latin *exitus* and *haesitare*

**Substantive editing** The heart of author editing. Activities depend on skills, knowledge, time, budget. Editor identifies areas to improve and decides whether to correct, *with author query*, or prompt author to change. Examples:

- Check genre adherence (e.g. length of sections; division of content among sections; level of detail): work with authors to improve
- Shorten, meet word limits
- Detect errors, discrepancies, and ambiguities
- Identify text that needs glossing (explanation of technical or unusual term)
- Check substantiation, citation and attribution: improve or prompt authors
- Pre-review: check reporting guideline adherence, anticipate reviewers' criticisms

**Added value** Activities depend on relationship with author. Examples:

- Plagiarism check: highlight and discuss problem with author
- Didactic editing: annotate changes with explanations, links to resources
  - Language: explain grammar, demonstrate hedging, point out false friends
  - Substantive: explain scientific notation and nomenclature, refer to reporting guidelines, advise on data presentation, educate about ethical reporting
- Assistance after peer review
  - Help interpret editorial decision; help contact journal editor with questions
  - Edit revised manuscript (check for coherence throughout text)
  - Edit rebuttal for tone, completeness, effectiveness

**Ethical limits to author editing** Authors' editors DO NOT:

- Rewrite plagiarized texts
- Cover up breaches in research ethics
- Assume authorial duties: calculate statistics, plot data, select references, draw up conclusions

Learn more The book *Editing Research* will be published by Information Today, Inc. (August 2016)