

My copyediting credentials

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Introduction

My editing work is an integrative, transformative blend of line editing, copyediting and proofreading, mostly in Word (in *Track changes while editing*) (not LaTeX or PDF), occasionally with tables or figures in .ppt or .xls.

Line editing (a.k.a. stylistic or comprehensive editing): I focus on word choice, whether each sentence has the intended meaning, and how it flows into the next sentence. I clarify meaning, eliminate jargon and clichés, shorten run-on sentences, and ensure that each sentence sounds right.

Copyediting: I find and fix spelling, punctuation, grammar, style and sentence construction mistakes. I also identify and fix small grammar issues that even some native English speakers may not know.

Proofreading: A proofread catches the errors that may remain after the line editing and copyediting. I look for typos, misplaced punctuation, and issues such as (in)consistency in headings.

Unless there is a time constraint, I go through every document once in soft copy and once in hard copy; I then apply the hard copy changes to the soft copy, ensure consistency of usages, run a spell-check and check for double spaces. I work on the abstract and generate a Notes document that allows the author to 'contain' and sign off a document.

This minimises the time and effort they need to invest in getting their documents publication-ready.

Is your writing ready to make an impact in the world?

A linguistic call to arms is based on the fact that no one wants to read writing that's full of errors and inconsistencies. Great writing is a pleasure to read, makes you look good, and is good business. A good edit can be the difference between passing and failing, publication and rejection, and cum laude and summa cum laude.

A good edit also prevents a manuscript from being returned with the instruction to have it copyedited by a professional, with the resulting time loss.

To edit is to unlock a text's full potential and make its writing shine. A great edit has a profound effect on the quality of a text and the experience of its readers – superiors, peers, investors, examiners, institutions, promoters, friends, parents, prospective employers and others.

Based in South Africa, I'm a native English-speaking copyeditor and copywriter with years of experience across multiple fields and sectors. When I edit, I take responsibility for the text as if I were the co-author. That is, I assemble hard-working sentences that can be inhaled like ice cream.

As of early 2026, I've assisted many authors to successfully submit to at least 98 academic journals and several conferences. For a list, see johangrobler.com/journals/

My clients include academics, consultants, university departments, and organisations concerned with policy, science and conservation in Europe, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Japan, Mexico, Qatar, South Korea, Taiwan, the UAE and the U.S. To see some clients' (unsolicited) feedback to my work, go to johangrobler.com/testimonials/

Four of my clients are Editors or Associate Editors of academic journals, and I have worked on Editor introductions to journals. I have also done work for various sub-organisations of and individuals connected to the United Nations.

I've also had the rare opportunity to edit a book chapter by Prof. Muhammad Yunus (Grameen Bank), a Nobel Peace Prize winner.

Feel free to request a quotation. The sooner you contact me, the sooner I can assist you...

What I seek to do when I copyedit

- Turn on the *Track changes while editing* setting.
- Remove multiple spaces and remove optional hyphens.
- Amend incorrect or unnecessary formatting (e.g. change underline to italic).
- Use the appropriate spellchecker (UK or U.S.) dictionary.
- Correct spelling errors and ensure the consistency of optional spellings.
- Delete redundant apostrophes in dates and abbreviations (e.g. 1990s instead of 1990's).
- Make specific s/z spelling changes (e.g. organisation vs. organization).
- Indicate errors and inconsistencies found in the References section in my Notes.
- Check that each figure and table has a heading in the text and that these are consistently formatted.
- Make use of the *Find* function (not *Find and replace*).
- Make spelling, hyphenation, style and usage decisions; check grammar and punctuation.
- Check that abbreviations and initialisations are explained upon first usage.
- If needed (e.g. in a book or dissertation), I prepare a list of abbreviations and initialisations.
- Indicate in my Notes if there is inconsistent spacing between paragraphs.
- Check the numbering systems.
- Write out contractions (e.g. do not rather don't; isn't rather than is not).
- Indicate in my Notes if the document contains text in another colour (e.g. red).
- List misleading, ambiguous or incomplete sentences in my Notes.
- If applicable, recommend in my Notes that the author check for any repetitions and redundancies.
- Check for biases, parochialisms and stereotypes (e.g. they rather than he/she, he or she, or s/he).
- Check consistency of uses (e.g. YY% or YY percent).
- Change 'this country' to, say, 'Germany'.
- Indicate in my Notes whether the footnotes contain inconsistent line spacings and/or type-sizes.
- Check that dates are written consistently (e.g. 1 January 2026 or January 1, 2026).
- Recommend that the author change 'four years ago' to 'in 2022'.
- Check plural 's', possessive 's'; check possessives (e.g. Socrates's method rather than Socrates' method).
- Check comma or space to indicate thousands.
- Change 1... 9 to one... nine, except for instance 8%.
- Indicate in my Notes uses of zero vs. no zero before decimal points.
- Check punctuation with closing quote (UK vs. U.S. English).
- Check or recommend that the author check the spellings of the names of persons, organisations, laws, etc. (especially those with two accepted forms).

What I don't do when I copyedit

- I don't screen files for viruses with antivirus software.
- I don't insert Comments in a document; I do not seek to detect or delete author Comments.
- While I don't change formatting, I do point out inconsistencies in this regard.
- I do not check whether the sources of the figures and tables have been cited, or cited correctly.
- I don't check cross-references.
- I don't check any matters of copyright, libel, legal matters, permissions or negligent misstatement (e.g. whether the authors have acknowledged all sources, or the wording or position of acknowledgments, or whether they comply with copyright).
- While I don't check for factual errors (e.g. correctness of names or dates), I note them when I spot them.

Does your abstract sing?

I pay particular attention to the abstract, which is the most read section of an article or dissertation, providing suggestions about what may be further included and/or implied therein. While effectively encapsulating research in an abstract usually involves repeated rewriting, with time pressure always a factor, the risk is that the abstract is rushed.

The abstract gives readers the gist of a manuscript quickly, so that they can decide whether or not they want to read it. It also prepares one to follow the information in the body text.

Further, nowadays, search engines and online databases use a title, abstract and keywords for indexing and cataloguing, allowing research to be easily discovered, read, used and cited by scholars who may not otherwise have been aware of it. If the abstract doesn't do its job, the reader may turn to others that do.

The abstract's purpose

An abstract must be well written, clear, specific, coherent, effective and powerful. It should communicate a manuscript's scope to as wide an audience as possible. If it doesn't do its job, readers "may turn to other abstracts that do" (Foster). The limited word count means that every word should be essential.

Given the time and effort that goes into delivering reliable, rigorous research, it would be a pity to drop the ball in the abstract, since – besides the title – this is the most read section of an article, thesis or dissertation. Abstracts also appear in invitations to talks and lectures as well as in conference proceedings. Yet they seldom represent their body text 100%.

An abstract gives readers the gist of a manuscript quickly, so that they can decide whether they want to read it (or attend your talk). It also prepares readers to follow the information in the body text. Identifying critical assumptions, non-standard methods, and limitations on the findings will make clear a research project's scope and potential applications.

Guidelines for what to include in an abstract vary between paper types, journals, conferences and universities. Consult the guidelines. Some even allow for a highlights aspect and/or a graphic or infographic element. The maximum allowed word counts also vary. The limited word count means that every word should be necessary.

Many disciplines have specific keyword lists that may be helpful to an author. Keywords should not be too general. Journals tend to want around 3 to 6 keywords; these should also appear in the body text.

IMRaD and beyond

How much of an abstract you devote to each information type or section and the sequence vary, depending for instance on a paper's nature and genre. This calls for "a balance between including detail and retaining the reader's interest" (Foster). Information is sometimes implied rather than stated. Well-placed adjectives (e.g. "integrative") can be helpful, especially when the word count limit looms.

Regarding IMRaD (introduction, method, results and discussion) structure, I recommend the guidance of the OWL at Purdue and the University of Wisconsin.

Some tips and best practices

- Keep the abstract to one paragraph, unless you have good reason to do otherwise.
- Understand your audiences (are they general or specialised?) and what their members know.
- If you use abbreviations in the abstract, unpack them there.
- Don't mislead; don't overstate certainty; an abstract is not an advertisement.
- Acknowledge when findings are preliminary, but don't undermine the article's authority.
- Read other abstracts, and save the two or three most striking ones (not necessarily from your discipline) to refer to.
- Write or rewrite the abstract after signing off your paper; make time for this.
- Ask a colleague for incisive feedback to your abstract. Disclose the word count limit.
- Have at least the abstract, introduction and conclusion (if not the whole document) professionally copyedited.

What to avoid

Avoid: defining any terms (at length); adding new information that doesn't appear in the body text; adding filler words and obscure jargon; including references. Introducing citations undermines the expectation that the abstract must stand alone; it also blocks readers' flow. Some abstracts summarise a paper rather than its content. Such meta-reporting may lead to "uninformative boiler-plate text" (Foster). Don't write: "Implications of the results are discussed."

Some common errors and my proposed fixes

I've listed examples of some of the errors and redundancies I often encounter in journal articles and dissertations, as well as my fixes for them:

BEFORE: The first study explored... . The second drew on | **AFTER:** Study 1 explored..., while Study 2 drew on OR The first study explored..., while the second drew on

BEFORE: In this paper, we investigate | **AFTER:** We investigate

BEFORE: It is important to note that | **AFTER:** Notably,

BEFORE: people that care about | **AFTER:** people who care about

BEFORE: The article is structured as follows: Section 2 | **AFTER:** The remainder of this article is structured as follows: Section 2

BEFORE: Thus, Artificial Intelligence (AI) | **AFTER:** Thus, artificial intelligence (AI)

BEFORE: like "learning" and "problem solving" | **AFTER:** such as learning and problem-solving

BEFORE: incumbents embarking on the exploration of digital business models | **AFTER:** incumbents that are exploring digital business models

BEFORE: However, it is essential to acknowledge that there are undoubtedly | **AFTER:** However, there are

BEFORE: for instance, Value Creation logics | **AFTER:** for instance, value creation logics

BEFORE: This perspective instead highlights | **AFTER:** Instead, this perspective highlights

BEFORE: The contributions of AI systems are likely to | **AFTER:** AI systems' contributions are likely to

BEFORE: Thus, we propose our research question: | **AFTER:** Thus, we ask:

BEFORE: Most existing [OR prior] studies investigated | **AFTER:** Most studies have investigated

BEFORE: The research objective of this study | **AFTER:** This study's research objective OR My/Our research objective

BEFORE: The method provides also | **AFTER:** This method also provides

BEFORE: Given the application of AI is developing very quickly in the retailing area, | **AFTER:** Given the swift application of AI in retail,

BEFORE: these two different types of investments | **AFTER:** these two investment types

BEFORE: our expert interviews | **AFTER:** our interviews with the subject matter experts OR our interviews with the experts

BEFORE: This improved the applicability of the results. | **AFTER:** This improved the results' applicability.

BEFORE: a multiple case study | **AFTER:** a multiple-case study

BEFORE: identifying "causal linkages" between | **AFTER:** identifying causal links between

BEFORE: society as a whole OR society at large | **AFTER:** society

BEFORE: Retailers change their | **AFTER:** Retailers are changing their

BEFORE: customer behaviour including | **AFTER:** customer behaviours, including

BEFORE: concepts that fit with the data | **AFTER:** concepts that fit the data

BEFORE: vast quantities of data | **AFTER:** vast numbers [OR amounts] of data

BEFORE: the data shows that | **AFTER:** the data show that [data = a count noun, not a mass noun]

BEFORE: German companies | **AFTER:** Companies in Germany

BEFORE: For example, 1-800-Flowers, the specialty floral gift retailer, | **AFTER:** For instance, the specialty floral gift retailer 1-800-Flowers

BEFORE: eBay launched the AI-based service, called "Grouped Listings", to | **AFTER:** eBay launched the AI-based service Grouped Listings to

BEFORE: We retained five of them, | **AFTER:** We retained five,

BEFORE: that don't appear | **AFTER:** that do not appear

BEFORE: As for the applications of AI | **AFTER:** Regarding the applications of AI

BEFORE: In respect of apps, | **AFTER:** Regarding apps,

BEFORE: the firm and their customers | **AFTER:** the firm and its customers

BEFORE: adaption | **AFTER:** adoption OR adaptation

BEFORE: Despite its numerous contributions, this study has limitations. | **AFTER:** This study has limitations.

BEFORE: Given services cannot be stocked, | **AFTER:** Given that services cannot be stocked,

BEFORE: the match between demand and supply | **AFTER:** the demand-supply match OR fit

BEFORE: We defined "events" in our study as those activities that | **AFTER:** We define events as activities that

BEFORE: 2600 to 3800 | **AFTER:** 2,600 to 3,800

BEFORE: search-related apps, purchase-related apps and hybrid apps | **AFTER:** search-related, purchase-related and hybrid apps

BEFORE: that has either a positive or a negative impact on | **AFTER:** that positively or negatively impacts on

BEFORE: Furthermore, the results | **AFTER:** Further, the results

BEFORE: In this section, we | **AFTER:** We will now

BEFORE: to strengthen our previous findings | **AFTER:** to strengthen our findings

BEFORE: it has focused on the mechanisms on the demand side only | **AFTER:** it has focused only on the demand-side mechanisms

BEFORE: has not taken account of the | **AFTER:** has not considered the

BEFORE: The effectiveness of this approach | **AFTER:** This approach's effectiveness

BEFORE: a means of generalizing | **AFTER:** a way to generalize

BEFORE: the role of A, B and C | **AFTER:** the roles of A, B and C

BEFORE: (see Madonsela, 2023 for an overview) | **AFTER:** (for an overview, see Madonsela, 2023)

BEFORE: Lang et al. (2013) examine the | **AFTER:** Lang et al. (2013) examined the

BEFORE: market value etc | **AFTER:** market value, etc.

BEFORE: Our findings provide insight for retailers how to | **AFTER:** Our findings provide insights for retailers on how to

BEFORE: apps help retailers improve their | **AFTER:** apps help retailers to improve their

BEFORE: through the automation of processes | **AFTER:** through process automation

BEFORE: during the shopping journey, and therefore to facilitate | **AFTER:** during the shopping journey, facilitating

BEFORE: In addition, mobile apps also create | **AFTER:** Mobile apps also create

BEFORE: by leveraging its existing assets; this leverage | **AFTER:** by leveraging its existing assets; this leverage

BEFORE: several factors as summarized in Table 1 | **AFTER:** several factors, as summarized in Table 1 OR several factors (see Table 1)

BEFORE: search- and purchase-related apps | **AFTER:** search-related and purchase-related apps

Before and after copyediting (five paragraphs)

Besides the (unsolicited) feedback from clients on my website and the sections above, the following enables you to swiftly evaluate my work:

Before copyediting	After copyediting
Exponential progress in machine learning, deep learning, natural language processing, and computer vision technology, fueled by the combination of cloud, big data, and new algorithms, is developing the artificial intelligence (AI)-based solution for retail. Increasing retailers adopt AI to offer enhanced user experience to their customers, improve their operational productivity and forecast future outcomes to make a better strategic decision. The global AI in retail market size is thus expected to grow from USD 993.6 million in 2017 to USD 5,034.0 million by 2022, at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 38.3% (source). However, according to the research conducted by automation platform Linc in May 2017 toward the US retail executives, just 7.7% said AI played a regular role in their customer service. Another 34.1% were experimenting, while 56.0% were not using it at all (source). The McKinsey's paper (year) revealed that more than four in 10 (41%) of the firms investigated by this research was uncertain about AI's benefits, specifically the business cases and return on investment (ROI). Therefore, it is important to understand how retailers can apply AI in their diversified activities and create values both to firms and customers, especially based on multiple firm case studies (sources). Despite increased attention, the theoretical and empirical knowledge of AI's applications in the retail sector remains limited and offers few insights to help top managers to capture the AI-driven business opportunities. Most of existing studies investigate only one of retail activities, such as sales forecasting (sources), retail segmentation (source), customer service and relationship management (sources), warehouse management (source), or merchandising management (source). Investigating the generic advancement of AI in the retailing area remains limited. Despite Grewal et al. (year) envision AI's influence on the future retailing in a broad way, including facilitating decision-making, helping in logistics, and influencing on customer behavior both online and offline. However, their study is descriptive. More research especially those by multi-case studies are needed to investigate the best practice of AI's applications in the retail sector. Regarding the value creation logic for AI's application in business and management, the summary in Table 1 reflects the current state of previous studies. The findings involving the value creation of AI are based on relatively limited logic, for example automation (sources), complementarity (sources), and personalization (source). Furthermore, most of these studies are still descriptive, only offering a conceptual framework. Although Carbuio and Lin (year) and	Exponential progress in machine learning (ML), deep learning, natural language processing, and computer vision technology, fueled by a combination of cloud, big data, and new algorithms, is leading to the development of artificial intelligence-based (AI) solutions in retail. Retailers' increasing adoption of AI to improve their customers' user experiences, improve their own operational productivity, and forecast future outcomes enable them to take better strategic decisions. The global market size of AI in retail is expected to grow from USD 993.6 million in 2017 to USD 5,034.0 million by 2022, at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 38.3% (source). However, according to research done in 2017 by the automation platform Linc among U.S. retail executives, only 7.7% said that AI played a role in their customer service. Another 34.1% were experimenting, while 56.0% were not using it at all (source). A 2017 McKinsey study revealed that 41% of firms were uncertain about AI's benefits, specifically the business cases and the returns on investment (ROIs). Thus, it is crucial to understand how retailers can apply AI in their diverse activities and can create value for both themselves and their customers, especially based on multiple-firm studies (sources). Despite increased attention, the theoretical and empirical knowledge of AI's applications in the retail sector remains limited and offers top managers few insights into how to capture AI-driven business opportunities. Most studies have investigated only one retail activity, such as sales forecasting (sources), retail segmentation (source), customer service and relationship management (sources), warehouse management (source), or merchandising management (source). Very few studies have investigated the general advancement of AI in retail. While Grewal et al. (year) envisioned some broad influences of AI on the future of retail (including facilitating decision-making, logistics, and customer behaviors), their study remained descriptive. More research – especially multiple-firm studies – is needed to investigate AI application best practices in retail. Table 1 reflects the current state of the research into the value creation logics for applications of AI in business and management. These findings were based on limited logic, for instance, automation (sources), complementarity (sources), and personalization (source). Further, most of these studies were descriptive, offering only a conceptual framework. Although Carbuio and Lin (year) as well as Riikinen et al. (year) explored multiple-firm cases, their studies were in healthcare or insurance rather than in retail.

Before copyediting (cont'd)	After copyediting (cont'd)
Riikkinen et al. (year) explore multiple firm cases, their studies are set in the health care or insurance sector, instead of the retail sector. This paper attempts to fill these theoretical gaps by seeking to identify the main applications of AI and their value creation logistics in the retail industry sector. To do it, we conducted our content analysis on Retailers' AI-enabled firm activities announced in Factiva database from 2001 to 2018 and found that AI has already been applied by the firms in their diversified activities, in particular focusing on the five types of management: customer service, store (physical & virtual), supply chain, strategy, and cyber security management. We identify also fourteen dimensions and thirty-four sub-dimensions of AI-enabled firm activities linked to these five types of retail management. Furthermore, we grounded in rich data obtained from 34 multiple firm cases and identify four major logic of value creation in AI-enabled retail firm activities, namely: automation, hyper-personalization, complementarity, and innovation. This study makes two contributions to AI's adoption and value creations literature. First, we develop research on AI's applications in the retail business by providing a holistic framework to analyze the development of AI in the retail industry sector. Second, we extend the literature on the AI's value creation by adding a new logic relating to innovation and identify the detailed mechanisms linked to each logic of value creation. Moreover, this study provides useful insights for retailers on how to take their AI applications to scale across their organizations, as well as prioritize and rational their AI investments.	We seek to fill these gaps in the theory by identifying the main applications of AI and their value creation logics in retail. We conducted a content analysis of retailers' AI-enabled activities announced in the Factiva database between 2001 and 2018, and find that AI has been applied by firms in diverse activities. We focus on five management types in retail – customer service, (physical and virtual) stores, supply chains, strategy, and cybersecurity management – and identify 14 dimensions and 34 subdimensions of AI-enabled company activities linked to them. Further, grounding our work in rich data from 34 multiple-firm cases, we identify four primary value creation logics in AI-enabled retail company activities: automation, hyper-personalization, complementarity, and innovation. This study makes two primary contributions to the AI adoption and value creation literature. First, we have added to the research into AI's applications in retail businesses by providing a holistic framework to analyze the development of AI in this sector. Second, we have extended the literature on value creation by AI by adding a new logic relating to innovation and identifying the detailed mechanisms linked to each value creation logic. We have also provided useful insights for retailers on how to take their AI applications to scale across their organizations, as well as how to prioritize and provide rationales for their AI investments.