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Editorial standards in European publishing houses using the example of Great Britain

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Abstract. The purpose of this study was to trace the evolution of editorial standards in UK book publishing and find out their impact on the development of ethical, linguistic, and professional norms in the European publishing space. The study covered five phases, in which the historical, institutional, technological, and integration aspects of the British editorial tradition, which has evolved from craft practices to contemporary quality control systems. The results showed that the professionalisation of editing in the UK was formed as a multi-level system that combined language unification, ethical control, and technological modernisation. It was found that the standards developed within the university publishing houses became the basis for European standards of textual accuracy, and the introduction of codes of editorial ethics and review systems ensured the stability of publishing procedures. It was revealed that the mechanisms of fact-checking and reliability in British practice have a clear institutional structure, and their effectiveness is confirmed by the level of transparency, publicity of reports, and interaction of independent organisations with public broadcasters. The study also showed that the digitalisation of editorial processes in the UK has not led to the loss of the humanitarian content of the profession: automated tools were used as auxiliary tools to ensure grammatical correctness and stylistic consistency, but the final control remains with the individual. The analysis showed that the British editing model serves as a benchmark for the balance between technological efficiency and ethical principles, forming the basis for further unification of European standards. The practical significance of the study lies in the possibility of applying British editing principles to improve national publishing policies, create common quality control criteria, and develop training programmes for editors in European countries

Keywords: professional ethics; reliability control; reviewing; fact checking; proofreading; digital tools

Introduction

Editorial standards in European publishing houses were formed as a complex system of professional, ethical, and technological norms that determined the quality of the text and the level of trust in the printed word. The need to investigate the British experience arose because of its long historical continuity and influence in the European context. For several centuries, British publishing institutions have played the role of not only a unifier of language and technical standards, but also a regulator of

ethical behaviour in the editorial process. Issues of the historical evolution of British publishing practices were considered by A. Nash *et al.* (2021). The researchers reconstructed the development of the British book industry of the 20th-21st centuries, emphasising the consistency of institutional structures and the role of university presses in codifying professional standards. Their analysis showed that centralised publishers such as Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press ensured

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the continuity of editorial culture by creating internal rules that became standards for the entire English-language publishing system. This conclusion allowed considering British book publishing not as an isolated national practice, but as a matrix for forming European standards of publication ethics and stylistic accuracy.

The issue of publishing strategy in the context of the post-war transformations of the English-speaking world was raised by S. Elliott (2023), who traced how the growth of the mass market in the second half of the 20th century changed the approach to editing and producing books. The researcher concluded that the transition from academic to commercial formats was accompanied by a search for a balance between market feasibility and qualitative criteria that have traditionally been determined by British publishers. Thus, editing began to serve as an intermediary between economic and cultural tasks, and the profession of editor itself underwent an expansion of competencies. The concept of developing professional editorial ethics was considered in detail by S. Norton (2024), who investigated the phenomenon of developmental editing as a form of intellectual collaboration between an author and an editor. Her findings confirmed that British and American editors adhered to similar structural principles, but in Britain, standardisation of language and typographic norms remained a priority. The researcher noted that the ethical principles of the profession were embodied in the activities of such institutions as the Society of Freelance Editors and Proofreaders (now the Chartered Institute of Editing and Proofreading), where codes of conduct determined responsibilities to the author and reader. These results outlined the fundamental role of professional organisation in consolidating editorial norms as a social responsibility, which was later adopted by European publishing associations.

The sociolinguistic dimension of editing was considered by M.A. Law Favo (2024), who focusing on how editors' personal language profiles affect the choice of norms in the English text editing process. The researcher found that British English, despite the multilingualism of the English-speaking space, remained the main source of regulatory guidelines in international publishing circulation. Her research has proven that it is British style manuals and language standards that ensure stability in global editorial practice. Such conclusions are important for understanding linguistic unification within the European publishing sector, where British standards function as reference standards, even despite the variety of local English-language options. In the field of data verification, P. Ferracioli *et al.* (2022) conducted observations and described the activities of fact-checkers in various media systems as a supervisory mechanism for public discourse. The researchers proved that the degree of effectiveness of fact-checking depends on the level of institutional independence and trust in the media. They found that in the UK, fact-checking is clearly institutional in nature, associated with state broadcasters and

independent analytical organisations, which guarantees a high level of objectivity.

Aspects of digital transformation of publishing processes were highlighted by T. McIlroy (2025), who examined the impact of artificial intelligence on editor functions. The researcher concluded that automated tools did not replace human expertise, but changed its course when the editor became the coordinator between technological systems and the author, responsible for aligning algorithmic solutions with ethical and stylistic requirements. In the context of academic publishing, an important addition was made by L. Fiorillo & V. Mehta (2024), who outlined the possibilities of using artificial intelligence to speed up the editorial review cycle. Their results showed that technological solutions can optimise the process of evaluating manuscripts, but do not replace the need for human judgement. The cultural and philosophical aspect of the editorial work was revealed by M. Griffiths (2022), who defined editing not only as a technical process, but also as a form of critical interaction with text. His findings showed that the editor is a co-creator of intellectual content, and the standards of the profession are at the same time a tool for regulation and creative freedom.

Despite the wide representation of research, some aspects of British editorial standards remained insufficiently systematised. The question of the relationship between historical heredity, codes of ethics, and technological innovations in British publishing practice needed to be clarified. It was also not fully disclosed how British institutional norms influence the development of European publishing policies, especially in the context of digitalisation and standardisation of the language. Thus, the purpose of this study was to trace the evolution of editorial standards in British publishing, determining their impact on the European system of norms and professional ethics in editing. To achieve this goal, the following tasks were formulated: to trace the historical stages of the development of British editorial standards and identify the factors of their professionalisation; to analyse the evolution of the principles of editing, reviewing, and fact-checking as components of reliability control; to investigate the impact of digitalisation on the transformation of editorial procedures and editor functions.

Materials and Methods

The study of editorial standards in European publishing houses on the example of Great Britain was based on a combination of historical and analytical, comparative, and structural and discursive approaches, which allowed tracing the evolution of publishing practices from the early modern era to the era of digitalisation. The choice of the British publishing tradition as a central object was conditioned by its normative nature for the European context, because it was the British editing system, formed around university press and professional associations, that developed generally accepted ethical and

stylistic standards, which were later adapted in continental Europe. The United Kingdom was considered not as a separate regional example, but as a reference model that significantly influenced the professional culture of European countries through the activities of international organisations (Federation of European Publishers (n.d.), International Publishers Association (n.d.)).

The initial stage of the study was to reconstruct the historical foundations of British book publishing. For this purpose, archival and secondary materials were processed – in particular, documents from Oxford University Press (n.d.) and Cambridge University Press (n.d.), which reflect the process of development of editorial practices in the 19th-20th centuries. The source for the analysis was also published samples of editorial instructions and reference books, including Rules for Compositors and Readers at the University Press, Oxford (Hart, 1912) and later editions of the Oxford Guide to Style (Ritter, 2002). Historical and typological analysis helped to establish how universal standards of punctuation, spelling, citation, and typographic design were formed from the internal regulations of publishing houses.

The next stage was aimed at studying the institutional transformation of the editor's profession and the review mechanisms in the British system. For this purpose, regulatory documents and analytical sources related to the development of professional communities were used, in particular, materials from the Chartered Institute of Editing and Proofreading (n.d.) and Publishers Association (The history of..., 2021). Methodologically, this stage was based on the principles of socio-institutional analysis, which allowed tracking the process of transition from individual skills to professional self-organisation.

At the third stage, the principles of peer review and fact-checking in British publishing practices were analysed. Publications on the evolution of independent fact-checking structures were used (BBC Verify, n.d.; Full Fact, n.d.). As part of this stage, a comparative functional method was applied, which allowed comparing editorial, scientific, and journalistic models of reliability control. The analysis also covered regulations and instructions, in particular COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers (n.d.) and Principles of Transparency... (2022), which define standards for publication ethics. The fourth stage focused on the impact of digitalisation on the structure of the editorial process. British and international technological standards for editing were analysed – from the use of content management systems (CMS) to artificial intelligence tools for checking grammar, stylistics, and facts. Comparative analysis and structural descriptive analysis were applied to compare editorial practices, technological tools, and regulatory standards in British and international publishing. The material base consisted of digital reference books New Hart's Rules (Ritter, 2005), analytical reports on the implementation of Smart Topic Miner (Salatino *et al.*, 2019), and the activities of WoodWing Studio (n.d.). A structural and

analytical method was used to determine the role of automated systems in improving the efficiency of publishing processes. The final stage of the study was devoted to the investigation of the European integration of British standards. For this purpose, a document regulating language norms in European institutions was used (English Style..., 2025). The use of the comparative method helped to determine the degree of borrowing of British editorial principles in continental practices.

Results

Historical development of editorial standards in British book publishing

The origins of professional standards in the British publishing industry date back to the emergence of printing in the 16th-17th centuries, when London and Oxford workshops, operating under the guild rules of the Stationers' Company, gradually developed internal quality control practices (Handover, 2025). During this period, there was no unified spelling, punctuation, or uniform presentation style, so proofreaders and compositors relied on the oral "instructions of the experts". In preserved handwritten sheets from London printing houses of the 17th century (Fig. 1) numerous author and editor corrections were recorded in the margins, and insert sheets – corrigenda slips, which indicates early attempts to standardise the way corrections are fixed. It was in the workshop environment that the main professional roles were formed – proofreader, reader, editor – which became the foundation for further standardisation of editorial procedures.

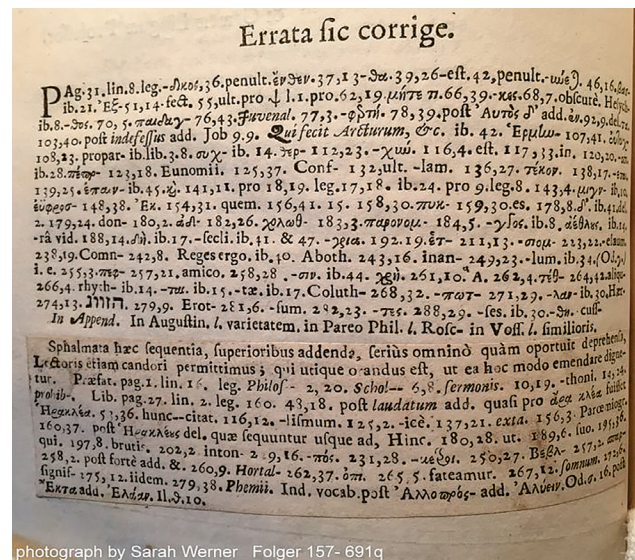


Figure 1. Insert sheet for correcting typos in the publication of selected works by Homer, 1660
Source: Correcting with... (2015)

The image shows a page from the historical publication with a list of corrections under the heading *Errata*

sic corrige, that is, “Correct errors thus” (from Latin). This is a typical example of editorial practice in 17th-century English printing, when errors were discovered after printing was completed and recorded on a separate sheet – an *errata* list. This sample shows detailed page and line numbering, Latin abbreviations, and Greek letters that indicate the exact location of each error. At the bottom of the page, another correction block was added, printed separately and inserted later, reflecting the multi-step accuracy control system in early modern book publishing. This sheet from the collection demonstrates the material aspect of editing before the emergence of the editor’s profession, when the functions of verification, correction, and standardisation were still carried out by the printing house’s technical staff.

The second half of the 18th century was characterised by the expansion of the reader’s market, the development of newspaper and magazine periodicals and the growth of university book publishing. At this time, editorial activity acquired the features of an independent profession. The first written instructions on spelling and citation design began to appear in workshops, and stylistics textbooks focused on the practical needs of printers began to appear in educational institutions. With the industrial revolution and the mechanisation of printing (late 18th – early 19th centuries), publishing became systematic, which stimulated the unification of editorial procedures: preliminary editing of the text before typesetting, double proofreading, checking tables and indexes (Joseph, 2024). The decisive stage in the development of professional norms took place in the 19th century within the framework of university publishing houses. Oxford University Press (OUP) (n.d.) and Cambridge University Press (CUP) (n.d.) became the leading institutions where standards of accuracy, reliability, and scientific integrity were developed. OUP, which began operations in 1478, already had its own printing house, editorial department and staff of proofreaders by the mid-19th century (Maw, 2014). The appointment of Horace Hart as controller of the university press in 1883 marked the beginning of the systematisation of editorial rules. Based on his internal circulars, the first version of *Rules for Compositors and Readers at the University Press, Oxford*, was published in 1893 – a document that became the prototype of modern stylistic reference books (Hart, 1912). Hart’s *Rules*, originally as an internal instruction of the OUP, was already used by other publishers in the early 20th century. Hart’s *Rules* covered punctuation, quote design, italicisms, abbreviations, formatting, note control, font selection, and typographic conditions. The first edition appeared as an internal 24-page booklet of the Clarendon printing house (OUP) in 1893, and was subsequently reprinted many times and expanded in scope and scope, remaining continuously updated for more than a century (James, 2013). It is known about cooperation with the compositors of the Oxford English Dictionary: in early public publications, spelling norms were revised by

James A.G. Murray and Henry Bradley, which increased the authority of the handbook as a source of spelling conventions and spelling consistency (Ritter, 2005). Hart’s *Rules* paid the greatest attention to the constancy of writing and unification of small but critical elements: spelling and variants of British spelling; the use of capital letters; hyphenation (separation and merging of complex words); punctuation (in particular controversial cases of commas, dashes, quotation marks); italics and highlighting of foreign words; abbreviations; numerals and units; correspondence between headings, content and captions of illustrations; and technical conditions for typing and proofreading (Hart, 1912). In practical terms, this meant that the form (spelling, punctuation, font selection) had to strictly correspond to the content and be reproduced equally throughout the publication, including content lists, indexes, and bibliographic elements.

Several factors contributed to the rapid distribution of the manual among publishers. The institutional weight of Oxford University Press as a leading printing and editing unit has provided the handbook with high trust and visibility in the professional environment. Hart’s *Rules* was originally a practical desktop tool for typesetters and proofreaders: its compact format, clear prescriptions, and focus on everyday production solutions made it easily applicable in the workplace (even early public releases had an affordable price, which made it easier to distribute among specialists). Subsequent editions integrated new areas of application – from foreign languages and transliteration to markup of illustrations and complex types of links – so that the reference book remained relevant in the publishing cycle. Together, these guidelines ensured consistency of style from manuscript to galley proofs and final print run, which explains the enduring influence of Hart’s *Rules* in the publishing ecosystem. The balance between the author’s style and the corporate standard determined the editorial tradition of Great Britain. Cambridge University Press (n.d.) created its own editing school. In the 20th century, Judith Butcher, the main subeditor of CUP, was particularly influential in systematising editorial procedures in the *Copy-editing manual: the Cambridge Handbook for Editors, Copy-editors and Proofreaders* (Butcher *et al.*, 2006). This guide is considered a key source in the British editorial tradition.

During the industrial revolution and the subsequent growth of the reader market (19th – early 20th centuries), the production capabilities of book printing significantly expanded: the use of a steam engine, metal presses, automatic font typing, mechanical reproductions of illustrations (Feather, 2005). This allowed reducing costs and scaling book releases, but also created new quality challenges: print runs were larger, production times were shorter, and the verification system had to adapt. In response, publishers gradually divided editing functions into separate roles: proofreader, subeditor, and copyeditor, and introduced procedures for checking citations or facts. It is during this era that the signs of the editorial

profession become noticeable, when subeditors begin to receive specialised training and work as individual specialists. By 1914, British book publishing had become sufficiently institutionalised, with well-established roles and processes that allowed it to withstand competition in the mass market (Plant, 2024). Within the professional organisation of standards, an important step was the creation of associations of editors and proofreaders. In 1988, the Society of Freelance Editors and Proofreaders (Our background, n.d.), which was later transformed into the Chartered Institute of Editing and Proofreading (n.d.). Through this organisation, ethical principles, recommendations for practitioners, exchange of experience and quality standards were developed – all this contributed to the professionalisation of editing in the UK. In addition, publishing associations, in particular the Publishers Association (established in 1896), issues of publishing practice standards were considered in the context of author protection, contractual practice, quality control, and pricing (The history of..., 2021). Although the Publishers Association was not an editorial organisation, it had an impact on systems thinking about professional norms in the publishing industry as a whole.

In the second half of the 20th century, Oxford University Press (n.d.) carried out a thorough editorial revision of its own internal standards and, building on the legacy of Hart's Rules, prepared a new generalised version – the Oxford Guide to Style (Ritter, 2002). For the first time, its structure shows a clear distinction between editorial and author's functions. The manual formalised the norms of citation, bibliographic description, use of capital letters, abbreviations, numerals, units of measurement, and designation of illustrations, that is, it established the foundation for practical standardisation of the entire publishing process. Its consistency allowed using the material not only in publishing houses, but also in academic institutions, media, bibliographic centres, and even in state publishing structures. Thus, the OUP has transformed its internal editorial regulations into a universal standard of British publishing style. A further stage of evolution was the appearance of the compact new Hart's Rules: The Oxford Style Guide (Ritter, 2005), which was distinguished not only by its convenient format, but also by its adaptation to the conditions of digital book publishing. It made a comprehensive update of the style reference book, considering not only print formats, but also digital publications, web content, and electronic publications. According to the preface of the handbook, the new edition contained 21 sections, among which an adaptation for "ebook, websites and other digital products" (Waddingham, 2014) was highlighted separately. In particular, section 1 of "The parts of a book" included comments on how traditional concepts "recto", "verso", "spread" lose their importance in digital formats, in particular, in e-books publishing, where the layout adapts to the screen and has no fixed pages. This aspect – the transition from print layout to adaptive display – became

one of the key innovations and responded to the need for digital transformation in publishing practices. The directory also significantly expanded the "Languages", "Science, mathematics and computing" and "Copyright and other publishing responsibilities" sections to meet the requirements of metadata, DOI, URL links, and online archiving. For example, the "Preparing copy" section states that online editing and converting electronic files to digital products, along with classic typesetting processes, should be considered when editing (Oxford University Press, n.d.). In addition, the publication emphasises compatibility with the Oxford English Corpus dictionary base, with which spelling and stylistic solutions are coordinated in the reference book. The compact format of the guide allowed for quick reference to style points both in layout studios and in digital CMS (content management system) environments. The adaptation to the digital environment was also reflected in the fact that the publication was published in electronic format (eBook ISBN 978-0-19-164914-1) and was integrated with the Oxford Dictionaries Online platform (n.d.), which provided online access to updates, usage examples and links to the Oxford dictionary and thesaurus. This reduced the time delay between updating stylistic guidelines and their implementation in publishing processes.

The editorial standards given in this handbook included a clear order of content: preparation of the manuscript, spelling and hyphenation, punctuation, capital letters, proper names, italics and other changes in font design, title of labour works, design of citations and direct expressions, abbreviations, numbers and dates, multidisciplinary texts (legal, mathematical, computer), lists, tables and illustrations, notes and bibliography, indexing and copyright protection. This systematisation makes the reference book a universal reference point for working with both paper and online formats. The consequence of these innovations was that the handbook not only recreated the traditions of British stylistics, but also set the framework for modern multi-format publication. It met the needs of publishers who worked simultaneously with books, electronic and audio formats. This approach is important for professional practices, as it allows ensuring consistency of style and technological solutions in the context of digital publishing transformation. It retains the basic logic of the classic reference book, but includes sections on electronic publication formats, web source design, DOI, internet links, and style matching in hypertext environments. Such refinements confirm the transition from a print culture to an editing system focused on hybrid content. Thus, the evolution of standards in British book publishing has moved from improvised local rules of printing houses to institutionalised norms that cover not only typographic aspects, but also stylistics, editing, citation, and ethical requirements. These standards laid the foundation for further transformation of editor roles, which helped to transform editing from an archaic workshop practice

into a professional discipline with its own tools, organisations, and standards.

Evolution of editing, reviewing, and fact-checking principles

With the development of publishing in Britain, the functional boundaries between the roles of editor, reviewer, fact-checker and content producer were increasingly outlined. In early practices, often the same person combined several of these roles, for example, a subeditor could perform fact-checking and stylistic editing at the same time. But the growing volume of publications and the complexity of content stimulated the division of labour. The editor is responsible for the overall quality of the manuscript, coordination of the structure, logic of sections, stylistic aspects; the reviewer is an external or internal expert who evaluates scientific or content correctness, argumentation and validity; the fact-checker has the task of verifying statements, data, citations, references; and the content producer coordinates the entire production cycle- from receipt of manuscripts to final publication, monitors the budget, deadlines, and approvals between authors, editors, and the publisher (Cavaliere, 2020). This specialisation allows improving quality control and reducing the likelihood of errors.

In the scientific and academic context, the peer review system has become a fundamental mechanism for quality assurance (Reinhart & Schendzielorz, 2024). Oxford University Press (n.d.) as a leading university publishing house actively used reviews from external scientists for monographs and journals, which helped to identify thematic, methodological, or conceptual shortcomings of manuscripts. In industry and multidisciplinary journals, such as publications Nature Publishing Group (Nature, n.d.), peer review has been established as a standard: manuscripts are sent to reviewers with special instructions for evaluating the reliability of arguments, clarity of presentation, originality of research, and correctness of citation. In many cases, double-blind peer review is used, in which the author and reviewer do not know each other's identity, which should reduce bias. Open peer review (where the names of reviewers are known) also attracts attention as an alternative, with a discussion of possible biases (Horbach & Halffman, 2020).

The move to institutionalise fact-checking has largely manifested itself in journalism and the non-fiction segment. Large media organisations, such as BBC (n.d.), established fact-checking departments: in particular, the BBC Verify service (n.d.) uses open source, OSINT data (OSINT – Open Source Intelligence), image and video analysis to verify the validity of statements in news and public statements. In the UK, there is also an independent organisation Full Fact (n.d.), which works to verify statements that appear in the media, in political discourse, and in public debates. This service has become one of the key actors in the development of a culture of fact-checking in society. In book publishing, the

issue of fact-checking has become important, especially in documentary, historical or biographical literature, but the amount of resources allocated for verification is often limited due to budget and time frames. In the book sphere, it is noted that the British edition is sometimes inferior in such aspects to the American practice of fact checking, that is, some books are published without careful verification of statements (“Carelessness rife”..., 2025). Editorial ethics has undergone a transformation as a result of the conflict between the requirements of accuracy, pressure on the speed of publication, and responsibility to the reader. Publications, especially in newspapers and online publications, face deadlines, which sometimes reduces the time required to check information. Simultaneously, there was a need for guarantees: foreseeing corrections, retractions, and responsibility systems. Publishers, for their part, have developed ethical principles that oblige authors to bear responsibility for the accuracy of their sources. However, editing and fact-checking can be limited by resources – and this creates an ethical dilemma: how much should a publisher “help” or control the text without violating the author's intellectual freedom (Liu *et al.*, 2023).

The interaction between the author and the editor is a key component of building trust in content. The author submits the manuscript with their own arguments and sources; the editor asks questions, offers clarifications, and sometimes requires additional checks or confirmations. In British publishers, it is often assumed that the author must provide proper references to sources, provide primary materials (archived data, statistics, etc.) – and the editor has the right to request documentary evidence in case of questionable claims (Murphy, 2019). This approach contributes to the responsibility of the author and increases the likelihood of detecting errors before publication. The practical impact of these principles on the quality of printed and electronic products can be traced in different segments. In the academic environment, manuscripts usually go through several stages of review, editing, stylistic proofreading, and citation verification. This ensures the rigour of arguments, the relationship with the literature, and compliance with disciplinary norms. In commercial book publishing (non-fiction, popular science literature), the role of fact-checking varies: large publishers, such as Penguin Random House UK (Penguin Random..., n.d.), sometimes have their own fact-checking departments or order external fact-checking services, especially for books with scientific or historical content. But due to resource savings, not all books are thoroughly reviewed, which sometimes leads to corrections in subsequent editions. For example, British journal publications of book critics indicate that in some non-fiction books, the level of fact-checking is lower than in journalism or academic articles (“Carelessness rife”..., 2025).

In the media environment (newspapers, magazines, online publications), the practice of fact-checking is

becoming increasingly important due to the growing spread of disinformation. Fact-checking organisations and services systematically publish the analysis of statements in political debates, policy statements, and statistics (Perceptions, power..., 2024). They are also subject to editorial review, but their openness and the role of public responsibility set new standards for publishing. Such practices shape the expectations of readers: statements used without due diligence can be publicly requested or criticised. Digital versions of publications (e-books, online articles) have special problems: hyperlinks, multimedia components (images, interactive elements), and the ability to quickly correct them. Here, the role of the editor and fact-checker can be combined with technological support (version control systems, change tracking, built-in link checks) (Cushion, 2025). In such cases, the practice of reviewing can be extended, for example, code verification, metadata verification, and verification of the correctness of links (URL, DOI). This tangible impact of new formats shows that the classical principles of editing and reviewing are being adapted, but not replaced: manual proofreading, argument analysis, and source verification remain central.

As a result, the evolution of the principles of editing, reviewing and fact-checking in the British publishing space demonstrates a gradual transition from amateur multi-role practice to a differentiated functional model. The separation of roles has allowed improving the quality of control, especially in academic publications where peer review was established as a standard. In the journalism and non-fiction segment, fact-checking has

received institutional support, but faces resource constraints. Editorial ethics are transformed by the pressure of publication speed, but the interaction between the author and the editor remains the key to building trust and responsible content. Such practices have a direct impact on the quality of both printed and electronic publications: they determine how well the text will be scientifically and factually sustained, considering changes in formats and technologies.

Digitalisation of editorial processes and European integration of British standards

In the UK publishing processes, there is a gradual transition from traditional editing methods to hybrid formats in which print publications are combined with electronic (e-book) and audiobooks (Table 1). This transition provided for a change in workflows, when manuscripts that were previously transmitted in paper or printed form for proofreading and editing are now received in digital formats (Word, XML, sometimes Markdown or LaTeX). After content processing and final editing, they are converted to ePub, MOBI, and other formats for e-readers, and to audio formats via voice acting. In such a hybrid format, it is important that editorial procedures are suitable for both traditional text and media elements or audio components. For example, in audiobooks, the editor must consider the logic of reading aloud, rhythmic pauses, matching accents, and editing dialogues that may have been stylistically designed on paper, but may require changes in audio for clarity. This adaptation is often performed by the editor in collaboration with the narrators.

Table 1. Transformation of editorial processes in British publishers under the influence of digitalisation

Parameter/Stage of the editorial process	Traditional model (before the digital transition)	Digital/hybrid model (after the introduction of AI, CMS, and e-formats technologies)
Manuscript format	Typewritten paper; printed copies with author's corrections	Digital formats DOCX, XML, ePub; integration with version systems
Proofreading and editing	Manual editing, margin symbols, typographic prints	Electronic editing, automatic style and grammar hints
Stylistic coordination	Application of Hart's Rules and Oxford Style Manual in printed form	Using digital style guides and integrated AI editors
Fact-checking and links	Manual verification, comparison of bibliographies and citations with printed sources	Using the CrossRef API, ORCID Lookup, automatic DOI and URL verification
Content management (workflow)	Paper archives, editorial notebooks, typographic layouts	CMS-systems that support multi-format output (print + e-book + audiobook)
Author's proofreading	Mail exchange of edits; corrections in the proofs before printing	Online version approval with changes recorded
Editor's role	Proofreader and stylist responsible for paper accuracy	Curator of multimedia content, moderator of AI edits, metadata controller
Technological tools	Dictionaries, printed stylistic manuals, manual indexing	AI assistants, style verification, metadata integration
Ethical and legal control	Human control over citation and reliability of sources	Codes of ethics for AI, copyright, and language
Publication formats	Printed book, magazine issue	Hybrid product: print + e-book + audiobook, with multimedia applications

Source: compiled by the author based on N. Hart (1912), R.M. Ritter (2002), I. Heibi *et al.* (2019), D.R. Desai & M. Riedl (2024)

One of the most significant changes was the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques for automatic text verification, stylistics, and – in some cases – fact-checking. Among the tools that have become widespread in the professional environment, – Grammarly (n.d.), PerfectIt (n.d.), Trinka (n.d.) and others – are able to detect grammatical errors, stylistic inconsistencies, punctuation errors, matching numbers, and even repeating phrases. However, an analysis of the operation of such systems indicates that AI- tools can make erroneous sentences, interfere with the author's style, or make incorrect adjustments, especially when the context of the text is complex (for example, scientific terms or interdisciplinary constructs) (Baron, 2024). In addition to purely stylistic correction, leading publishers use automated systems to help with indexing, thematic labelling, and metadata processing. For example, Springer Nature in the Improving Editorial Workflow and Metadata Quality project uses the Smart Topic Miner (STM) tool, an ontologically managed system that assists editors in classifying scientific topics for books, which significantly reduces the time for initial processing and improves content search (Salatino *et al.*, 2019). In the field of journals and scientific publications, digital manuscript management platforms integrate automated modules for plagiarism checking, reference standards, style matching, version tracking, and automatic metadata verification (Digital Tools & AI..., n.d.). These systems help editors to coordinate peer review and editing in the digital space, while maintaining control over parallel changes. One of the innovations in digital publishing is integration²⁰ in working publishing systems, for example, in the WoodWing Studio system (n.d.), where artificial intelligence helps to automate layout, and generate variants of titles, teasers, SEO texts, and other components of a multimedia product, leaving the final decision to the human editor.

Despite technological innovations, classical editing principles are preserved and often combined with automated tools. Manual proofreading, context matching, stylistic matching, author proofreading, and citation control remain necessary, especially in cases of complex or specialised texts. Automated tools usually serve as the first filter, but they do not replace attentive human control, especially when it comes to clarifying logic, nuances of context, or interdisciplinary borrowing. Digital transformation has also changed the role of the editor. In a digital environment, it acts not just as a proofreader, but as a multimedia content curator. The editor can now be responsible for integrating multimedia elements (images, videos, audio, graphics), checking hyperlinks, metadata, and SEO text optimisation. For example, in electronic journals, the editor can control that all links (URL, DOI) are working properly, that illustrations have the correct captions and metadata, and that multimedia inserts do not violate readability. This advanced functionality of the editor in a digital environment creates

additional skills: knowledge of XML/HTML, understanding of web formats, knowledge of content management systems (CMS), and the ability to work with version control systems and changes.

On the other hand, implementation of AI and digital technologies carry social and ethical challenges. One of the key issues is copyright: if an automated tool is trained on publishers' texts, there is a risk that its suggestions will imitate the style or content without giving the author proper recognition. In discussions, some professionals draw attention to the copyright issue of text that serves as an AI training body (Samuelson, 2023). Another problem is inclusive language and sensitive content. When automatically editing a sentence, the tools can fail to consider cultural, gender, or language nuances. Therefore, the editor should make sure that automatic changes do not violate the principles of ethics or distort the original message in the context of sensitive topics. In addition, algorithmic biases can lead to automatic edits that prefer certain stylistic norms or language clichés, which can devalue the regional, stylistic, or author's version. Editing with such a tool without control can be made by the "average style", which erases the difference in the author's personality. Another challenge is the transparency of algorithms and the ability to check for changes. When AI suggests changes, the editor should see what changes were proposed, why, and on what basis. Therefore, among technological solutions, it is important to support version control, the suggestion log, and the ability to go back to the previous version (Schofield & Zhou, 2025). Ultimately, the integration of digital and automated components increases the requirements for data security and storage: electronic files, metadata, version changes, editing history – all this requires proper archiving and backup. In the process of moving to digital platforms, there is a need for policies for preserving originals, backups, accessing version history, and controlling the publishing chain. Thus, digitalisation of editorial processes in the British publishing context leads to a complex integration of technologies and classical techniques. It requires the editor to be not only a language and stylistic specialist, but also a multimedia content operator, a user of digital environments, a change controller, and a guarantor of the ethics of automatic corrections. However, classic manual verification and careful attention to context remain essential means of quality control in a hybrid editing environment. The transition from technological modernisation to international cooperation took place organically: digital tools that optimised internal editorial processes in the UK created the basis for unifying standards at the level of inter-publishing and professional associations. This institutional consolidation allowed British publishers to adapt their own practices to the digital environment and also to become leading initiators of the development of European standards of quality, ethics, and editorial responsibility.

As part of the European integration of editorial practices, British standards have been specifically reflected in certain regulatory documents and publishing policies on the continent. For example, the European Commission's English Style Guide (2016) states that for the purposes of stylistic consistency, the type of English on which the rules are based – British or Irish – borrows from British spelling and style standards. In addition, the handbook states that verbal design standards should be applied to multilingual publications of the European Union (EU), which demonstrates the transfer of the British model of stylistic standardisation to the level of EU institutions. Similarly, the publication *Country Compendium: A companion to the English Style Guide* (n.d.) contains special sections on style and spelling for each EU member state using the British variant language base. In the context of publishing policy, this meant that publishers in Europe often adopted British reference books as a reference point for developing their own stylistic guides. This approach contributed to the unification of publishing products, when British standards became the starting point for continental practice. Integration also manifested itself at the level of recognition of the British model for international academic publishing associations. The requirements for publications in scientific journals often specify that the style should be “British English” or “UK spelling, consistently applied” (*Editorial style...*, n.d.). This dimension means that British spelling and stylistics are not only used within the UK, but also accepted on the continent as the standard of editorial practice.

British publishers actively participate in international professional associations, which allows them to promote their editorial approaches as a reference in the European publishing environment. For example, the Federation of European Publishers (n.d.) is the main representative of the national publishing associations of Europe and regularly considers the opinions of British publishers in its policy appeals and standardisation initiatives. In addition, British publishers cooperate through International Publishers Association (n.d.), which coordinates the policy of copyright protection, freedom of publication, and promotion of the global book market. In the academic and professional segment, the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers (n.d.) plays an important role, with British university and professional publishers participating in the development of standards for peer review, open access, and ethical norms. The European integration of editorial norms was primarily conditioned by the spread of the requirement to use the British version of English or, at least, to ensure consistency between British and American writing within a single article: for example, the Journal of the Nature Publishing Group (n.d.) expressly required compliance with spelling according to the Oxford English Dictionary (*Formatting guide*, n.d.), and in the instructions of another edition of this group, “UK English spelling” (*Submission guidelines*, n.d.). Thus, it

is not a question of “exporting” a single British standard to all English-language publications, but rather of the coexistence of variants within editorial policies and institutional guidelines (Modiano, 2023). As for international recommendations and standards, British publishers have also contributed to their creation or implementation. For example, the ISO 9001 standard for quality management systems (*What is ISO...*, n.d.) is used not only in industry, but is also adapted for publishing activities as a framework for quality control of production processes (planning, verification, correction). An additional vector of integration was the large-scale adoption of the Oxford legal citation standard: the official guide to legal references developed at Oxford was used not only in UK institutions, but also by law schools and journals abroad, which recorded the penetration of British norms into the European academic space of humanities and law (*OSCOLA...*, n.d.). Alongside, the pan-European level of standardisation was confirmed by stylistic documents from European Union institutions: the English-language reference guide of the European Commission was based on “British/Irish usage” and applied the relevant spelling and stylistic rules to the Union’s web publications and multilingual materials, which reinforced the role of British linguistic convention as a regulatory standard for continental publications (*English Style...*, 2016). Ultimately, the harmonisation of ethical and procedural requirements was ensured by international professional networks: the journals’ membership in the committee on publication ethics provided for a formal obligation to comply with the code of publication integrity (*Guide to applying...*, n.d.), and the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers (n.d.) through the rules and curricula, it disseminated unified approaches to editorial policy and interaction with authors and reviewers in Europe.

Thus, the British experience often serves as a theoretical and practical basis for the development of the European theory of editing. Academic editing courses or professional trainings in European countries borrow British textbooks and use British cases as reference materials. In addition, international conferences of professional editors often have sections dedicated to the British experience, discussing models of peer review, digitalisation, and ethics. Thus, British standards are not just imported, but become an element of an integrated publishing discourse that forms the boundaries of quality, professional response, and ethical acceptance in the European context.

Discussion

The development of editorial standards in British book publishing has demonstrated a pattern of gradual transition from craft practices to an institutionally regulated system, where accuracy and formalisation have become part of the publishing culture. In this context, the observation by L. Chia (2002) is relevant. The researcher

studied commercial book publishing models in Asia in the 11th-17th centuries and showed that production standards were formed through a combination of entrepreneurial initiative and local quality control practices. The results obtained on the activities of the British Stationers' Company, internal circulars of printing houses and early forms of proofreading reproduced a similar logic of self-regulation before the advent of centralised norms. However, unlike Asian traditions, the British process was initially based on university and educational institutions, which led to the transition from guild supervision to academic control. This comparative perspective showed that economic motivation did not deny the standardisation impulse, but rather created conditions for its development.

The relationship between editorial procedures and reader experience in the digital age revealed differences between traditional British editing and modern commercial models. K. Johanson *et al.* (2022) showed that modern book publishing is focused on market attractiveness and narrative effectiveness, while the role of the reader is mainly mediated by analytical data. The results of the study, which traced the transition from printed text to a multimedia product, considering SEO logic, confirmed the tendency to instrumentalise reader reactions. The similarity was in the technological shift, but the British version was distinguished by the formalisation of linguistic and stylistic requirements that ensured the constancy of the form regardless of commercial purposes. Thus, interaction with the reader remained subject to ethical and stylistic codes, and not just marketing strategies. The professional figure of the editor in the British tradition also showed parallels with international concepts of cultural mediation. S.B. Franklin (2025) analysed the phenomenon of the editor as an agent of the establishment of the literary canon, noting the ability of individual specialists to determine the areas of public reception through the selection and modification of texts. In the British context, which was based on the OUP and CUP regulatory documents, the editorial function became less personalised, but more collegial. The comparison showed a general desire to control the quality and preserve the integrity of the text, but the British model was based not on the contribution of individual figures, but on a system of institutional rules. This revealed a difference between the culture of individual authority described by S.B. Franklin (2025), and corporate responsibility consolidated in British editing practices.

The problem of fact-checking in British publishing and media structures revealed a coincidence with the principles outlined by K. Suomalainen *et al.* (2025), who proposed an epistemological model of fact-checking as a collective verification process. In the British context reflected in the study, the role of structures such as BBC Verify or Full Fact was consistent with this concept: the truth of the text was ensured not only by data

verification, but also by transparency of procedures. However, academic book publishing showed a different balance – resource restrictions reduced the scale of verification, but increased the requirements for author responsibility. This discrepancy showed that British practice was aimed at forming a system of joint responsibility between the author and the editor, while journalistic fact-checking was more operational and public in nature. Comparative analysis of international agencies carried out by P. Hidalgo-Cobo *et al.* (2024), allowed correlating British fact-checking mechanisms with the practices of France and Spain, revealing both common methodological foundations and significant organisational differences. The study emphasised that independent fact-checking structures in all three countries used similar tools – analysis of open sources, examination of audio and visual materials, cross-checking data in public and private databases, and attracting specialists from related industries. The results, which reflect the growing role of OSINT, algorithmic identification of visual forgeries and multimedia verification in British services, confirmed this trend. However, there was a difference in institutional organisation: British agencies, in particular Full Fact and BBC Verify, functioned in direct cooperation with public broadcasters and university laboratories, which increased confidence in their conclusions and contributed to the development of transparent protocols. The comparison showed that the British model was characterised by greater procedural standardisation, in particular, in fixing sources, verifying citations and publishing reports, while continental services were more likely to work with local initiatives and had more flexible, less formalised reporting mechanisms.

Coverage of political content in the British media was marked by a different structural logic than, for example, in the United States, which was confirmed by M. Robinson (2025). The researcher noted differences in balance mechanisms, editorial autonomy, and ways to control authenticity. In the British context, the editorial system was based on internal codes of ethics, a clear distinction between the functions of the editor, fact-checker and content producer, which allowed minimising the risks of manipulation or selective presentation of facts. The results of the analysis showed that multi-level editing, mandatory verification of citations, and a quick correction procedure maintained a high level of transparency in the work of news publications. The similarity with American practice was evident in the desire for accuracy, but the British model had a more institutionalised nature of control. It was based on the corporate responsibility of editorial staff acting within agreed professional standards, contributing to the stability of public discourse and audience trust. In terms of the effectiveness of fact-checking observation, E. Porter & T.J. Wood (2021) allowed considering the British experience in a global context. The results of the study show that the introduction of systematic fact-checking

contributed to the correction of misconceptions, although the scale of the effect depended on the socio-cultural environment. An analysis of British practice confirmed this pattern: verification of statements and transparency of sources strengthened confidence in the content, but did not eliminate the impact of information overload. The similarity between the identified patterns was the recognition of the evidentiary impact of inspections, while the difference was determined by the degree of formalisation, because in the UK the control process had more established regulatory parameters.

The review system in British publishers, which functioned as a mechanism for monitoring academic credibility, correlates with the analysis by S.W. Chong & S. Mason (2021). Their research reflected the process of developing reviewers' competence through the practice of reviews, which developed standards of clarity and reasonableness. In the British context, this function was implemented through institutional mechanisms – two-stage peer review, style guides, COPE protocols. The similarity between the approaches was the understanding of peer review as a process that improves the quality of the text, and the difference was in the degree of institutionalisation: British mechanisms were part of the editorial rules, while the practices described by the researchers were individual in nature. The integration of automated tools into publishing workflows correlated with the findings of K. Heints *et al.* (2022). The researchers found that the effectiveness of automatic proofreading systems was high in basic linguistic tasks, but human editing remained indispensable in contextual analysis. The results of British publishers reproduced this trend: tools like Grammarly or PerfectIt performed initial error filtering, but the final control was carried out by the editor, who ensured the content consistency and accuracy of terminology. The comparison revealed a consensus on a hybrid model where technology systems unloaded editors, but did not replace professional expertise. Thus, British practice combined automation with human control within the regulatory framework.

A comparison of the historical and contemporary dimensions of British editorial standards has shown their sustainability as an institutional resource of trust. Unlike the models described in comparative studies, the British system demonstrated a balance between technological innovation and ethical control. Professionalisation of editing, development of peer review and institutional fact-checking functioned as interrelated components of a single reliability assurance system. The coincidence with international observations confirmed the universality of the basic principles of verification, while the differences reflected the special role of academic publishers as carriers of norms. Such results showed that the British experience remained a reference point for European publishing practice, forming a model that combines historical continuity, technological adaptation, and ethical regulation.

Conclusions

As a result of the research, it was found that the development of editorial standards in British book publishing has a continuous historical continuity from local craft practices to a contemporary institutional system based on ethical, stylistic, and technological principles. The analysis confirmed that back in the 16th-17th centuries, the foundations of quality control were laid within the framework of Stationers' Company's activities, which were later transformed into formalised editorial procedures. These results showed that the professionalisation of editing in the UK developed through the gradual expansion of the roles and functions of editors, the emergence of systematic manuals, style standards, and codes of ethics. Documents such as Hart's Rules and The Oxford Guide to Style were found to have played a key role in the development of the British model of editing, where accuracy, consistency, and structural discipline were integrated into the publishing culture. The results of the study showed that the evolution of editorial standards was accompanied by differentiation of functions within the publishing process. It was established that in the 20th-21st centuries, a clear system of distribution of professional roles was formed – editor, reviewer, fact-checker, and content producer. This structure helped to improve the quality and reliability of publications, ensuring mutual control between the participants of the editorial cycle. It was found out that the peer review system, established in British university publishers, is a central element of ensuring scientific validity and objectivity. Its use in various types of publications (scientific, academic, media) has confirmed the flexibility and stability of the British editorial tradition.

Analysis of fact-checking processes has shown that the British model of fact-checking is based on a combination of editorial responsibility and public trust. It was established that the activities of services such as BBC Verify and Full Fact are not only a verification tool, but also an important part of the public media responsibility infrastructure. The study confirmed that the integration of OSINT- technologies, algorithmic identification of images, and open databases in the operation of these services creates conditions for improving the objectivity and accuracy of publications. Digitalisation of editorial processes has changed not only the technical, but also the conceptual structure of editing. It was established that contemporary British publishers successfully integrate artificial intelligence and natural language processing tools into the processes of stylistic verification, indexing, link verification, and content management. It was found that tools such as Grammarly, PerfectIt, and Smart Topic Miner perform the function of primary control, while the final editing remains the responsibility of a human being. This confirmed that automation does not displace professional expertise, but creates a hybrid model of human-technology cooperation.

The study had certain limitations related to the lack of quantitative data on the frequency of application of certain procedures in publishing houses and incomplete openness of internal corporate policies. These circumstances made it difficult to statistically evaluate the effectiveness of standards, but did not affect the reliability of analytical conclusions. Further research may focus on quantifying the impact of editorial and fact-checking protocols on readers' trust, and comparing the British system with new European digital publishing models. An appropriate area is also the analysis of algorithmic ethics in publishing processes, the study of the role of AI in

the development of a standardised language of publications, and the investigation of new formats of cooperation between the editor and technological systems.

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Редакційні стандарти в європейських видавництвах на прикладі Великої Британії

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Анотація. Метою цього дослідження було простежити еволюцію редакційних стандартів у видавничій справі Великої Британії та з'ясувати їх вплив на формування етичних, лінгвістичних і професійних норм у європейському видавничому просторі. Дослідження охоплювало п'ять етапів, у межах яких проаналізовано історичні, інституційні, технологічні та інтеграційні аспекти британської редакторської традиції, що еволюціонувала від ремісничих практик до сучасних систем контролю якості. Результати показали, що професіоналізація редагування у Великій Британії сформувалася як багаторівнева система, яка поєднує мовну уніфікацію, етичний нагляд і технологічну модернізацію. Встановлено, що стандарти, розроблені в університетських видавництвах, стали основою європейських норм текстової точності, а запровадження кодексів редакційної етики й систем рецензування забезпечило стабільність видавничих процедур. Виявлено, що механізми фактчекінгу та контролю достовірності у британській практиці мають чітку інституційну структуру, а їх ефективність підтверджується рівнем прозорості, публічністю звітів та взаємодією незалежних організацій із суспільними мовниками. Дослідження також показало, що цифровізація редакційних процесів у Великій Британії не призвела до втрати гуманітарної сутності професії: автоматизовані інструменти використовуються як допоміжні засоби для забезпечення граматичної правильності та стилістичної узгодженості, проте остаточний контроль залишається за людиною. Аналіз засвідчив, що британська модель редагування слугує орієнтиром для досягнення балансу між технологічною ефективністю та етичними принципами, формуючи основу для подальшої уніфікації європейських стандартів. Практичне значення дослідження полягає у можливості застосування британських принципів редагування для вдосконалення національної видавничої політики, створення спільних критеріїв контролю якості та розроблення програм підготовки редакторів у європейських країнах

Ключові слова: професійна етика; контроль достовірності; рецензування; фактчекінг; вичитування; цифрові інструменти