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TEACHERS IN THE NEWS
A Corpus-Based Discourse Analysis: Teacher-Related Discourse in News Media

ABSTRACT

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The objective of this thesis is to research the ways teachers are represented and discussed in news media, with a focus on identifying potential discourse patterns established in teacher-related news reporting. The role of a teacher is often considered important within society, being part of most individuals' lives from their youth to adulthood – however, this importance may not be reflected in news media, which in fact may contribute to inadequate or controversial portrayals of teachers. The inspiration behind this study stems from an interest to explore the nature of teacher-related discourse in the news to reach a better understanding of the ways teachers are talked about, how they are represented overall and whether or not there are clear implications as to why teachers are presented in the news as they are.

The data for this thesis consists of a selection of articles from two British publications with varying designs, backgrounds and political leanings: *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star*. The number of articles in the data totals to 736: 381 from *The Guardian* and 355 from the *Daily Star*. The articles were downloaded from the Nexis Uni online database with selected attributes in order to gather specifically teacher-related articles. The articles were compiled into two specialized corpora, one for each publication. By uploading the corpora into the corpus analysis tool AntConc 3.5.9, the analysis was conducted by utilizing the key methods of corpus-based discourse analysis.

While there have been previous corpus-based discourse analysis studies related to examining specific topics within a particular genre of texts, the focus on teachers appears to be fairly original. The selected analysis method of corpus linguistics combined with discourse analysis provides both quantitative and qualitative measures for this study, which aids in producing a balanced approach to researching teacher-related discourse. This thesis analyzes the collocates and framework surrounding teachers in the news articles, and then further explores the discursive context that can be identified surrounding teachers.

The results indicate that, perhaps unsurprisingly, the discourse around teachers in the news often revolves around schooling and education. However, the dominant tone in the articles is often negative, and focuses either on the struggles and challenges teachers face within their work field, such as their working conditions or competence – or places teachers in awkward, unpredicted or unsolicited circumstances. Some patterns can also be discerned in the ways teachers are described, the action associated with teachers and how other entities are grouped with teachers, all of which also contribute to the overarching narrative contexts surrounding teachers in the news. Some of these findings are shared across both publications, while others are more prominent in one than the other.

The results indicate that much of the discourse regarding teachers in the news revolves around discouraging or unpleasant themes. However, because of the fluctuating nature of news media, definitive implications of the representations of teachers are challenging to derive. Despite this, this study has revealed some key elements regarding teacher-related discourse in the news, which can be further applied to portrayals of other professions or future studies within similar fields.

Keywords: corpus linguistics, discourse analysis, news media discourse, corpus-based discourse analysis, teacher, representation

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämän pro gradu -tutkielman tavoitteena on tutkia millä tavalla opettajista keskustellaan ja millä tavalla he ovat edustettuina uutismedioissa, keskittyen erityisesti tunnistamaan keskeisiä diskursseja opettajiin liittyvässä uutisraportoinnissa. Opettajan roolia pidetään usein tärkeänä yhteiskunnassa, sillä opettajat ovat osana useimpien yksilöiden elämää nuoruudesta aikuisuuteen – tämä merkitys ei kuitenkaan välttämättä heijastu tiedotusvälineissä, jotka voivat itse asiassa edistää riittämättömiä tai kiistanalaisia kuvauksia opettajista. Tämän tutkimuksen taustalla on kiinnostus tutkia opettajiin liittyvien diskurssien luonnetta uutisissa, jotta saataisiin parempaa käsitystä siitä, miten opettajista keskustellaan, kuinka he ovat edustettuina ja onko olemassa selkeitä syitä sille, miksi opettajat esiintyvät uutisissa juuri näillä tavoin.

Tämän tutkielman aineisto koostuu joukosta artikkeleita kahdesta brittiläisestä sanomalehdestä, jotka eroavat ulkoasultaan, taustaltaan ja poliittisilta suuntauksiltaan: *The Guardian* ja *Daily Star*. Kerättyjen artikkelien kokonaismäärä on yhteensä 736: 381 *The Guardianista* ja 355 *Daily Starista*. Artikkelit ladattiin Nexis Uni -verkkotietokannasta tietyillä määritelmillä kohdistuen artikkeleihin, jotka käsittelivät nimenomaan opettajia. Artikkeleista muodostettiin kaksi erillistä korpusta, yksi kutakin julkaisua kohti. Korpukset ladattiin AntConc 3.5.9 -korpusanalyysityökaluun ja analyysi suoritettiin hyödyntäen korpuspohjaisen diskurssianalyysin keskeisiä menetelmiä.

Vaikka korpuspohjaisia, yksilöityjen aiheiden ja valikoitujen tekstilajien sisällä toteutettuja diskurssianalyysitutkimuksia on tehty aiemminkin, keskittyminen erityisesti opettajien representaatioon vaikuttaisi tarjoavan uutta näkökulmaa. Korpuslingvistiset menetelmät yhdistettynä diskurssianalyysiin tarjoavat sekä kvantitatiivisia että kvalitatiivisia lähtökohtia, jotka tarjoavat tasapainoisen lähestymistavan opettajakohtaisten diskurssien tutkimiseen. Uutisartikkeleista on analysoitu ensin opettajiin liittyviä kollokaatioita ja viitekehyksiä, jonka jälkeen on syvennytty tutkimaan opettajia ympäröivää diskursiivista kontekstia.

Tulokset osoittavat, ehkei kovin yllättävästi, että opettajia koskeva diskurssi uutisissa pyörii usein koulunkäynnin ja koulutuksen ympärillä. Hallitseva sävy artikkeleissa on kuitenkin usein kielteinen ja keskittyy haasteisiin, joita opettajat kohtaavat työssään esimerkiksi työoloihinsa tai osaamiseensa liittyen. Opettajia asetetaan myös kiusallisiin, ennakoimattomiin tai ei-toivottuihin olosuhteisiin. Joitakin toistuvia kaavoja havaitaan myös muun muassa tavoissa, joilla opettajia kuvaillaan; teoissa, joita opettajien kuvataan tekevän sekä opettajien ryhmittelyssä muiden entiteettien kanssa. Nämä kaikki myös osaltaan myötävaikuttavat opettajia ympäröiviin diskursseihin uutismedioissa. Osa näistä havainnoista ovat yhtäläisiä molemmissa sanomalehdissä, kun taas toiset ovat yleisempiä jommassakummassa.

Tulokset osoittavat, että suuri osa opettajia koskevasta diskurssista uutisissa pyörii lannistavien tai epämiellyttävien aiheiden ympärillä. Uutismedian vaihtelevan luonteen vuoksi opettajien representaatioon liittyvät lopulliset implikaatiot ovat kuitenkin haasteellisia määritellä. Tästä huolimatta tämä tutkimus on paljastanut joitakin keskeisiä elementtejä opettaja-aiheisesta keskustelusta uutisissa, joita voidaan edelleen soveltaa esimerkiksi muiden ammattien kuvaamiseen tai tuleviin tutkimuksiin samankaltaisilla aihealueilla.

Avainsanat: korpuslingvistiikka, diskurssianalyysi, uutismediadiskurssi, korpuspohjainen diskurssianalyysi, opettaja, representaatio

Tämän julkaisun alkuperäisyys on tarkastettu Turnitin OriginalityCheck -ohjelmalla

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1 INTRODUCTION

In today's society the role of teachers is undeniably important, as they are a key element in shaping the minds and outlooks of future generations. However, despite the extensive influence teachers have not only on individual people but also larger communities, their representation in news media can sometimes fall short regarding sufficiently portraying the full extent of their experiences, challenges and achievements. In a time where media plays a critical role in forming public perception, it is important to examine how teachers are represented in news media in order to identify potential reasons for the representations in question, as well as consequences of such representation. For instance, positive news coverage can encourage appreciation and dedication towards teachers, while negative coverage may create misconceptions and generate unnecessary criticism towards them. Not only does the discussion about teachers in the news affect the individual people of said profession – whether in relation to their work morale or personal well-being – it may also highlight trends in broader topics, such as education policies, teacher recruitment and career issues as well as potential problems in resources such as classroom conditions.

Teachers, being in the front line of education, dedicate much of their time and expertise to ensure growth, both physical and mental, to youth – not only in their early years, but also later in life. Teachers act not only as educators, but participate in other roles as well, such as mentors, assistants, and supporters of their students. Teachers are often expected to adapt to and overcome many challenges presented to them, such as meeting student needs in increasingly growing and diverse classrooms and accustoming to rapidly evolving educational systems and developments. Despite the efforts teachers put in their work and the pressure they may be under, they are often marginalized, if not completely neglected, in mainstream news discourse.

News media functions as the main source of information for many people and holds considerable control in shaping public opinion. However, when it comes to the representation of teachers, news coverage tends to focus on negative incidents or controversies surrounding them, which may contribute to inadequate and misleading perceptions of their profession. Such a restricted representation can further contribute to sustaining stereotypes of teachers as well as damage the public's viewpoint of them, which in turn may lead to a lack of appreciation for teachers' work. A limited representation of teachers in news media may also disregard any positive influence teachers have on their students or other larger communities of people. It is not uncommon for teachers to go beyond their expected 'work description' in order to help their students, be it via innovative teaching methods, by addressing social issues or encouraging their students to find inspiration to reach their full potential. By overlooking stories of teachers' success stories and commitment, news media simultaneously diminishes not only the general discourse about teachers, but also discourse surrounding education overall and potential issues related to it.

This study will aim to illustrate the discourse surrounding teachers in news media by focusing on articles from two British news publications, *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star*, which are not only different in the type of newspaper they serve as, but also differ in their contents and even their political orientation. By critically analyzing news coverage of these two publications with the use of corpus-based discourse analysis and identifying the ways teachers are discussed in the news, both the merits and shortcomings in the portrayal of teachers in news media can be recognized. This, in turn, helps in creating a 'profile' as to what types of things are typically seen associated with teachers in the news, and whether there is room for improvements in this regard. This study will attempt to tackle the following research questions:

1. In what ways are teachers portrayed and discussed in news media?

2. What kinds of differences are there in the representation of teachers between *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star*?

3. What are the potential implications of such representations of teachers based on the analysis?

Corpus-based discourse analysis will enable specialized analyses of specific topics, typically associated with discourse studies, alongside the help of quantification of corpus research (Virtanen 2009, 53). After taking a closer look at the data, consisting of collections of articles from the two publications, a more comprehensive understanding on the key elements of how teachers are represented in news media should be established.

While the main objective of this study is to analyze the language used in news articles in relation to teachers in order to identify what kinds of discourses revolve around them, the results may also help in identifying any possible underlying implications about media representation of education, the public perception of teachers and educational systems. The ways in which teachers are discussed in the news can also raise awareness of potential shortcomings of different news publications themselves regarding their approach to teacher-related news coverage, and also help realize what explanations there may be for specific types of representations of teachers.

There are some previous studies carried out about language use and its meaning in relation to the portrayal of specific topics, both within corpus linguistics as well as discourse studies – however, the spotlight on teachers specifically seems to be fairly original. Likewise, the method of combining the two perspectives of corpus linguistics and discourse analysis, which are elaborated on more later when going over the theoretical background of this thesis, has generally seen quite rare use in linguistic research (Biber et al. 2007, 10-11) – although, it also appears to have experienced gradual increase in interest, especially concerning topics that are current and frequently part of public

discourse or attention such as global warming, sustainability and ecotourism (Liu & Huang 2022, 36). Corpus-based research oftentimes focuses on 'numbers' in language, such as the quantitative distribution of grammatical features, which consecutively disregards notions of the actual language used in particular texts or discourse structures (Baker et al. 2007, 10-11). Instead, research on the usage of language and narrative structures are covered typically in discourse studies. As such, it will be interesting to see what conclusions can be observed regarding discourse around teachers by using these particular analysis methods.

This thesis contains six sections. After this introduction, Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework for this study, including themes such as *corpus linguistics*, *discourse analysis* and *news media discourse*. Chapter 3 describes the ways the data was gathered and explains the methods used in the analysis of said data. An overview of the two publications under scrutiny, *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star*, will also be presented in this section. The analysis itself is demonstrated in Chapter 4, which also contains some initial results of the analysis. These results will be further discussed in Chapter 5 in a more thorough manner, with the attempt of also answering the research questions mentioned above. The final section, Chapter 6, summarizes the most significant findings and also concludes this study by expressing any noticeable implications the study may have unveiled.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter will introduce the theoretical background and key elements applied to this study. The background theory will focus on the themes of *corpus linguistics* and *discourse analysis* as well as the methods and possibilities of combining the two, also referred to as *corpus-based discourse analysis*. The topic of *news media discourse* will be also examined, with a separate section highlighting specifically teacher-related instances in news media and previous research on the topic.

2.1 Studying Language

Language is built from conventions such as rules and sets of symbols, words, and phrases, as well as from surrounding elements like the environment, social class, and upbringing. Even though language is typically seen as relatively rule-based, it undergoes variation by being exposed to the elements exampled earlier, and by the individual choices a language user makes. Because of the rather extensive perceptions language can have, it is no wonder that language can also be studied in various different ways, utilizing different types of study methods and viewpoints.

Gee (2010, 2) suggests that language allows people to "engage in actions and activities" – people argue, discuss, promise, propose, and pray using language. In addition to this, language also gives people tools for giving and receiving information. Gee (2010, 2) conceives using language as being constructed of three fields: informing (saying), action (doing) and identity (being). Fields like these are rarely recognized in everyday life but are subconsciously involved in language use. Language is seldom specific enough to determine all its intended purposes of use, as language is used in as many ways and situations as there are people in the world, and all people have their own, varying styles of using language (Van Dijk 2008, 239). As such, any potential discourse structures may also

be difficult to construe from language, as the same kind of language can be used for contrasting purposes: to give information or to get information; or to educate or persuade, for example (ibid.).

Baker (2006, 13) suggests that even "a single word on its own may suggest the existence of a discourse". Thus, studying even a single word may provide valuable information about language use and discourses constructed with it. For instance, by observing associations between two words which co-occur in a repetitive manner in naturally occurring language, one may find instances of underlying, yet dominant discourse (ibid.). The choices of word pairings can point towards generalizable patterns in language use, implying that by looking into a relationship of two or more interrelated words alone can already indicate the existence of a discourse. This kind of thinking leads to certain decisions when commencing a language-related study, and finding suitable methods to conduct either word- or discourse-focused research is crucial. Some of the options for language research are *corpus linguistics* and *discourse analysis*.

2.1.1 Corpus Linguistics

Corpus linguistics refers to an area of computer-aided language study, which makes use of large-scale language data or *corpora* (McEnery & Hardie 2012, 1). Corpora are collections of both spoken and written text typically in electronic form, also referred to as bodies of electronically coded text (Baker 2006, 1). Corpora contain not only text in its typical form, but also texts with underlying information encoded within them, such as age, sex, socioeconomic group and region. This kind of information can allude to observations of different types of speakers, which broadens the scope of corpus-based research (Baker 2006, 2). Corpora differ from archives or databases in the sense that corpora aim to be designed for 'representative' purposes, thus, not only for the sole purpose of storing texts (ibid.).

Many existing corpora are web-based and easily accessible online, though one can also build their own corpora designed for their specific researching needs. Hence, it is important to note that a corpus does not necessarily consist of a random collection of texts, but instead may consist of specifically gathered texts depending on what is studied (Baker 2006, 26). This type of corpus is typically referred to as a *specialized corpus*. Virtanen (2009, 61) along with Biber at al. (2007, 18) note that specialized corpora are rather common in discourse studies and are quite appropriate for studies of discourse structures in particular, but their potential downfall is that they may turn out to be too small to be of interest in corpus linguistics. Likewise, Sinclair and Carter (2004, 187-193) suggest that strictly corpus-driven linguistic studies often work better with larger corpora because of the method's tendency for quantity and its attraction to several, repetitive occurrences of linguistic items – contrarily, smaller corpora are often kept deliberately small in order to get closer in understanding the rooted contexts of language. In lieu of these notions, Baker (2006, 26) states that a specialized corpus is in fact the most important one when it comes to linguistic research, as it is crafted for specific research needs and collected from relevant domains. A specialized corpus will be built and used in this thesis, as we will be looking into specifically used language in a selected domain: newspaper articles.

Corpus linguistics has steadily garnered more interest in language research. "Data-driven learning", as Aston (2002, 2) describes it, has been particularly helpful in formulating linguistic regularities. Baker (2006, 3) notes that corpora began as being especially useful in research related to early learners of English and have since been used in more extensive linguistic studies as well. The centrality of the Internet has also had its effect in the popularity of corpus linguistics, as it makes the accessibility of corpus-based data more convenient (McEnery & Hardie 2012, 1). The computer-based approach of corpus analysis is quite beneficial when looking at specific types of language uses. Upton and Cohen (2001, 601) note that much more comprehensive linguistic analyses can be

produced with computers, since frequencies of words and "co-occurrence of linguistic features" – and how these words and features co-operate with each other to formulate communicative purposes – can be studied more handily. Rather than looking at the distribution of single features individually, computer-based analysis allows to get a more expansive look at functions and the co-occurrence of different features of language at once, which is generally more informative and helpful (ibid.).

Baker (2006, 5) mentions that corpus-based methods have been quite prolific in studies which have attempted to analyze language use based on identity, such as gender, as well as in uncovering different ideologies behind language. Identity and ideologies are some of the earlier-mentioned underlying elements corpora may include, though only some of them can truly be identified, depending on what particular kind of language is being researched. Baker (2006, 20) also notes that corpus analysis can help detect diachronic changes in language, although he is unsure whether or not corpus analysis sufficiently takes into account the fact that words can change meaning over time. Corpus linguistics is often thought of as a largely 'mechanical' research method, implementing mainly quantitative methods. However, this line of thinking is rather erroneous, as Baker (2006, 2) in fact suggests that "corpus analysis is based on both qualitative and quantitative approaches".

There has been discussion as to whether corpus linguistics is viewed as a methodology or a science. While there has been no clear consensus, Viana et al. (2011, 2) suggest that it can be both. Corpus analysis is typically carried out with tools or applications, which consist of the corpora themselves in addition to external information sources such as dictionaries. This type of tool-using approach contributes to the idea of corpus linguistics being a methodology (ibid.). On the other hand, corpus linguistics has a specific object of study: language in its naturally occurring state. This fact gravitates more towards the idea of it being a science (ibid.). Rather conclusively, Baker (2006, 12)

declares that corpus linguistics offers "various different ways of analysis", with there being no single correct way to undertake corpus linguistic research.

2.1.2 Discourse Analysis

The word *discourse* is defined as a "linguistic unit larger than a sentence" or "connected speech or writing" and is often interchangeable with the word *conversation* (Merriam-Webster s.v. *discourse*). However, this kind of definition may be too narrow, as discourses typically involve more than just text, language and discussion. Gee (2010, 47) notes that discourses combine language with "ways of acting, interacting, valuing, believing and feeling with bodies, clothes, non-linguistic symbols, objects, tools, technologies, times and places". Gee (2010, 194) further suggests that discourses can also be deduced from "multimodal texts", such as combinations of words, music and images, especially in today's digital age. This suggests that discourse, indeed, has more universal presence in people's everyday life than is probably generally acknowledged. A discourse can also be viewed as "characteristic ways of saying, doing and being" (Gee 2010, 30): when a person speaks or writes, they use their knowledge of language to present themselves as a certain type of person in certain types of circumstances. In addition, through this they also immerse themselves into certain practices or activities (ibid.). As such, discourse is built around the notions of knowing who you are, what you are saying and what you are doing; otherwise, it would be impossible to understand another person's speech, writing or behavior (ibid.). While discourse is often limited to conversations or the content of texts, it is worthwhile to note that the presentation of discourse also plays a role in discourse analysis regarding frequency and interpersonal[1] functions (Rühlemann 2009, 416). Whether discourse

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[1] "Being, relating to, or involving relations between persons", Merriam-Webster s.v. *interpersonal*

is presented in written or spoken form, the intention of it is to "create and share meaning between two participants" (Sinclair and Carter 2004, 82). This aptly describes the context which discourse analysis is often associated with: not only the language at face value, but also the interactions beyond the text itself.

Baker (2006, 3) notes that the term "discourse" can be problematic in a linguistic sense as the term is used in various "inter-related, but also different" ways. Discourse can be associated with all kinds of texts and speech, from domain-dependent content, such as recipes, to larger-scale discussions, such as political discourse (ibid.). While discourse can be found in many aspects of life, providing a conclusive definition for it may be challenging, as discourse can be rather subjective: some may find discourse in places others do not. Baker (2006, 14) implies that discourses change all the time and do not remain static – for example, conversations that were accepted ten years ago may not be acceptable today and vice versa. Defining discourse is complicated also in the sense that one discourse can split into two or more discourses, or contrarily, multiple discourses can meld into one (Gee 2010, 38). For instance, some historical subjects, like natural philosophy, have split into separate sciences such as philosophy and physics in the course of time, while conversely, the discourse of "gangs", for instance, has eventually melded into an all-encompassing discourse including people from all backgrounds – previously "gangs" were typically isolated into separate groups of people with similar cultural heritages, with their own ways of being and doing (ibid.).

Blommaert (2005, as cited in Baker, 2006) has called discourse "language-in-action", while Baker (2006, 4) suggests that discourse typically represents different stories and portrayals of the world, associated with everyday lives in society. The research method of *discourse analysis* takes these kinds of perceptions of discourse into account and specifically focuses on the language used. It involves thinking about how language is used to interconnect with surrounding environments in any given time or place, which may accentuate specific meaning, social backgrounds or intertextuality

(Gee 2010, 121). When researching discourse, much of the attention goes into the process of creating language, rather than the creation itself (Virtanen 2009, 50). As discourse is inherently dynamic and created through social interactions, a great deal of it may be beyond the reach of corpus linguistics, even if the end results of the language process can be stored in the form of a corpus (Gee 2010, 121). Upton and Cohen (2009, 586) introduce three distinct processes for discourse analysis: the study of language usage, the study of linguistic structures both within and "beyond" sentences; and the study of associations of language, such as social practices and ideological beliefs. Out of these processes, Biber et al. (2007, 10) note that discourse analysis focuses primarily on the linguistic structures "beyond the sentence", including the internal arrangements of texts.

Discourses, and conversations in general, typically arise among social activities, which is also a key element to keep in mind when conducting discourse analysis. When analyzing discourse data, one of the most important prospects is to understand *why* certain linguistic elements appear among specific social settings, different identities and so-called "figured worlds" – these can be considered as building blocks for assembling the overall idea of discourse (Gee 2010, 126). Furthermore, discourse analysis does not limit itself to realizing theoretical or academic awareness, but also aims to deal with "practical problems in the real world" (ibid.). Van Dijk (2008, 17) adds that culture also plays a part in how discourses are constructed, as the 'power' of language is produced differently in different cultures – as are any other social organizations and cognitions.

There is no definitive way to tackle discourse analysis, similarly to corpus analysis. Gee (2010, 9) divides discourse analysis into *critical* and *descriptive*, the latter of which mainly focuses on describing how language works so that it can be understood in conversational aspects. Critical discourse analysis, on the other hand, considers how social practices may influence any given discourse, and as its name suggests, introduces critique and reasoning for certain reactions within conversations. Neither style is a method of discourse analysis per se, but rather an orientation of sorts,

which will help determine the suitable and relevant research methods to any study at hand (Van Dijk 2008, 2). Gee (2010, 9) prefers the critical point of view and suggests that all discourse analysis "needs to be critical, because language itself is generally political". This study will lean more towards utilizing the critical discourse analysis aspects of said research method.

It is important to note that discourse can be represented not only with the presence of certain elements, but also with the absence of them (Baker 2006, 4). Noticing that something is *not* being talked about in an environment where one would expect it to be can lead to certain kinds of implications, such as normalizing or 'unproblematizing' topics which are, in fact, problematic, offensive, or sensitive and *should* be talked about (ibid.). This is a viewpoint crucial to be taken accounted for when constructing discourse analysis. However, it can be quite difficult if not entirely impossible to "remain truly objective in regards to discourse analysis" (Baker 2006, 10). Regarding this line of thought, a well-advised sentiment is to remember that even though a study revolving around discourse analysis itself is manually constructed, the discourse itself is linked to authentic, existing situations in the real world (ibid.).

Discourses are not only represented with words or text, but also in ways of acting (such as opening a door) and images (which may convey hidden messages). These types of discourses may not be included in collections of corpus data at all, or at least they can be rather difficult to identify in them (Baker 2006, 17). However, when it comes to discourse analysis, it truly benefits from full texts, as they more easily demonstrate the development of the usage of certain vocabulary or other linguistic features across the course of a single text (Baker 2006, 175).

2.1.3 Using Corpora in Discourse Analysis

Using the frames of corpus linguistics together with the ideology of discourse analysis has produced an additional 'branch' of language research, *corpus-based discourse analysis*, which has thus far been

utilized fairly rarely in studies. Upton and Cohen (2009, 586) mention that "few studies have attempted to combine these two research perspectives", noting that corpus-based studies typically emphasize on the lexical or grammatical aspects of texts quite heavily, with a more quantitative point of view and with a lesser focus on discourse structure. On the other hand, qualitative-based discourse analysis tends to do the opposite, as well as target smaller samples of texts than corpus analysis, the results of which may be limited to only those very sample texts and thus not be applicable to a larger number of texts or across multiple genres. However, as mentioned in Chapter 2.1.1., corpus linguistics is not all quantitative, and offers qualitative perspectives as well, and the same can be said about discourse analysis. Thus, the two can complement each other quite adequately.

Virtanen (2009, 40) suggests that a well-established relationship has formed between discourse linguistics and corpus linguistics, and that both are highly active to develop further individually and together. In addition, Virtanen (2009, 55) notes that discourse linguistics have greatly benefited from the methods of corpus linguistics due to being able to "study variation across texts and discourses" even across a longer period of time. Despite these notions, the idea of corpus-based discourse analysis has sometimes been met with some opposition, as "discourse and computers have not been seen as a good match" (Baker 2006, 5-7). There are some inherent aspects in naturally occurring language which may not be realized in a corpus, such as underlying meanings and intuition of native speakers, which potentially complicates making definitive conclusions about language (ibid.). Additionally, the overall context or noteworthy background information of a text, such as the social conditions it has taken place in or alternative interpretations of the text, may be obscured when stored in a corpus (Baker 2006, 18). As noted earlier, corpus analysis is considered a primarily quantitative research method, which is considered opposite to the social-based, qualitative discourse analysis, which in some researchers' minds contributes to the resistance of combining the two (ibid.). Corpus-based discourse analysis may involve a great deal of computer-based methodology, but Baker

(2006, 175) also underlines the human involvement in it, which occurs at every step of the analysis: from the initial stages of deciding on what to research, to building a suitable corpus and deciding on research methods, all the way to interpreting and explaining the results found.

The beneficial features of corpus-based discourse analysis include allowing an emphasis on researching the repetitiveness of a text, and the computer-based tools which are ideal for pattern investigation (Upton & Cohen 2009, 587). These features help in establishing units of both text and discourse structure, which can then be examined in further detail as individual components. Baker (2006, 71) also mentions that even if looking at 'numbers' – such as frequencies of words – can be helpful in determining where the focus of a text lies, it can also lead into unreliable presuppositions. Even though language is generally rule-based, which assists in using frequencies as precedents as to why certain words are used in certain situations, language primarily originates from people themselves, who independently decide what kind of language they use (ibid.). As such, integrating qualitative discourse analysis into corpus analysis seems to offer a more balanced approach to language studies.

Some of the pitfalls of corpus analysis or discourse analysis may be neutralized when introducing features from one into the other. When conducting discourse analysis with hand-picked newspaper articles, for instance, it can raise the question of bias, as the data selected may consist of articles which conveniently 'confirm' the hypothesis, while simultaneously ignoring any other articles from different perspectives (Baker 2006, 11). By adding the usage of a corpus in this kind of study lessens this bias, as there will be less selection involved: a corpus, even a specialized one, would include a considerable amount of 'unconscious' data, as it would be built from a larger set of texts, which are not individually picked (ibid.). However, when constructing a specialized corpus, being at least slightly selective is also encouraged in order to maintain the quality of the data (Baker 2006, 29).

Texts in corpora are typically not contextualized, meaning the specific context of the text may not be visible, which makes recognizing any potential ideologies behind the text more difficult (Baker 2006, 18). However, by utilizing discourse analysis alongside corpus analysis some of these hidden elements can be revealed, and thus it is possible to view the topic of study more broadly. However, whichever elements are deemed important heavily rely on the purpose of the research. It is not always necessary to identify every aspect of a text, and sometimes *not* identifying something may be of great value – Baker (2006, 19), in fact, notes that "sometimes what is not said or written is more important than what is there", the notion which was already touched upon earlier in Chapter 2.1.2.

Semantic features of texts are more convenient to inspect via discourse analysis, and further analyzed with corpus linguistic methods. Stubbs (2001, 65, as cited in Baker, 2006) introduces the idea of *semantic preference*, defined as "the relation between a word-form and a set of semantically related words". An example of such relation would be examining the word *rising* and realizing it has a connection to words such as *money* and *work* (ibid.). Similar semantic connections can also be witnessed when researching strings of words, such as recognizing that the adjective *blind*, which can be taken literally, has also evolved into broader phrases, such as *turn a blind eye* (ibid.). Baker (2006, 87) finds semantic preference to have a strong connection with discourses, as a single word together with a set of other related words create patterns, which in turn suggest an existence of a discourse. Oftentimes these types of word-relations are unrestricted, but indicate some typical characteristics within them as well, such as having repetitive use of same 'members' in a phrase (ibid.). The semantic environment, and the selection of words used together with other words, may illustrate distinct associations, both negative and positive, a phenomenon Baker (2006, 87) refers to as *discourse prosody*. Discourse prosody is closely related to the attitudes words may imply to users of language, while semantic preference concentrates on the meanings independent of the speakers themselves.

Both corpus linguistics and discourse analysis offer various premises when it comes to language discourse, and it is up to the researcher to determine which types of methods they find most useful to their research. While the method of study is important to any type of research, it is mostly the data and the results which are of most interest, and this typically comes down to the human involvement from the researchers themselves. As such, the most important aspect of any type of research is how the researcher chooses to interpret the data they have collected (Baker 2006, 148). Even though combining discourse analysis with corpus linguistics may involve having two different points of view within the same study, by recognizing the objectives of both fields will help in discovering the "perfect balance" between the two (Virtanen 2009, 62). Successful ventures in combining corpus linguistics to discourse analysis have been done before. These studies have typically leaned more towards the qualitative aspect, being based on smaller data samples and focused primarily on internal structures of texts in a single genre (Biber et al. 2007, 10), yet still produced adequate results. This is the direction this thesis will also veer towards.

2.2 News Media Discourse

News articles are filled with discourses, which are shaped not only by the journalists who write them, but also by the audiences who read them. Oftentimes news articles serve some specific purpose, and the discourses in them are produced for a journalist's own needs (Baker 2006, 72). Although journalists are expected to avoid inserting their own opinions or bias into their work, their profession requires them to investigate newsworthy events thoroughly, gather information from various sources and report it to the audience in a proper manner. This work is frequently done independently, which may evoke potential bias in news reporting (Garretson & Ädel 2008, 157). The most prominent contribution journalists deliver in the news, however, is their choice of language in their reporting, which also may add to the discourses found in news media.

According to Bell (1991, 2), the kind of language used in news media reflects the values by which news itself is determined by. As such, readers of news articles interpret the language used in their own individual ways, which in turn affects the way they receive the substance of the news (ibid.). This, in turn, shapes the way the readers interpret the world we live in – in fact, Hamuddin (2015, 2) has concluded that the language employed in different media, news media included, has a significant influence in the readers' understanding of our existing world. Because of such an influence, media literacy, or the ability to reflect and analyze media communication, is crucial to truly comprehend the intention of any given piece of news.

Van Dijk (2008, 9) suggests that news discourse in particular tends to at least partly contain prospects of 'power': even though in today's world the aim is for anyone to be able to speak freely and write "when, where, to whom, about what or how they want", what is ultimately published is still regulated to some extent (ibid.). Bell (1991, 3-6) also notes that news media constructs a lot of the language that is used in today's society, and that news stories reflect the most prominent discourses of our current time. Van Dijk (2008, 9) notes that the direction of news discourse may be intervened by the state or police, or even mass media itself, and also believes that for an article to be 'newsworthy', it needs to draw attention of elite groups and influential institutions. Interestingly, Van Dijk (2008, 55) also believes that mass [news] media is the one of the most pervasive forms for distributing 'power' to its recipients as well, which in turn may influence the readers' everyday life. Cohen (2006, 106), for instance, suspects that regarding topics of public interest, such as education policies, the mainstream news media is one of the most powerful channels used to influence the public by "producing and reproducing ideological dimensions of public discourse". Even though news articles may induce 'power' and attempts to convey certain types of messages to their readers, they are still rather universal, easily accessible to everyone and more widespread than personal discussions between two or more individuals (Baker 2006, 179). For realizable news discourse to arise, the news

needs to have an audience: the meaning of texts can only be delivered when they are interacted with by readers (Baker 2007, 72).

The form of publication may be of some importance when considering news media discourse. A general assumption is that traditional broadsheet newspapers contain more 'correct' news, while tabloids "transform rationalist discourses into sensationalist ones" (Connell 1998, 11-12). This prospect is further strengthened with the perception that tabloids often lean more towards 'popular' news stories to try and appeal to larger audiences, which in turn suggests a more market-driven attitude and thus a strong focus on the commercial values of news (Boukes & Vliegenthart 2020, 284). To create interest for a broader audience, tabloids also have tendencies of personalizing their news, which enhances the appeal and understanding of the news for those individuals who generally are less interested in current, ongoing events (ibid). In addition, negativity tends to capture the attention of readers, which may explain why tabloids often incorporate a more 'sensationalist' approach in their news coverage, as seeking more attention would be in line with their profit-driven nature. Broadsheets appear to be less inclined to prioritize commercial interests – however, the introduction of online editions of publications seems to show signs of a gradual shift to a more tabloid-like approach, providing the audience "easy-to-consume, immediate-reward" news (Esser et al. 2017, 133).

Connell (1998, 11-12) has compared news discourse in broadsheet papers and tabloid newspapers and has recognized that the two forms of publications do, in fact, not differ much when it comes to news discourse. While there is a general assumption of polarization between broadsheets and tabloids, they can still be thought to exist on the same 'press spectrum', albeit on different ends (ibid.). Regarding the actual news discourse between these types of publications, they have evolved into containing fairly similar news content. Interestingly, Connell (1998, 15) has noted that broadsheet newspapers seem to move towards having less 'actual' news in general, changing into

something tabloids are perceived to be, while tabloids are taking the opposite turn with current, on-the-spot news with fast accessibility, especially in today's digital world. While there are several different types of publications and journalism nowadays, it seems safe to say that the features of news discourse are less dependent on the domain of discourse, but rather the intention of it: Connell (1998, 28-29) notes that issues with news discourse originate from its attempt to be impartial, but still having its underlying biases, all of which is strengthened by the pressure of mainstream media.

News media is complex in the sense that it is a genre so large that it can cover almost any topic imaginable, and thus is also possible to be catered towards selected, specific audiences. This promotes the existence of selectiveness and bias. The ideas and values of the publications themselves, like political standings, also affect their content, which consecutively are geared towards certain types of audiences. This kind of 'favoritism' in publications is important to keep in mind when gathering data from news articles and researching them.

When researching news media discourse, the focus is typically on one domain only, such as newspaper articles, and oftentimes revolves around one specific topic as well. A minor setback of this type of approach is that it limits the potential for any sort of generalizations regarding how other discourses in other domains may occur around the same topic (Baker 2006, 179). News articles are some of the easiest data to get hands onto, as they are easily available in online form and the types of research that can be conducted with them can be quite versatile (Baker 2006, 72). However, looking at discourse in news typically requires some intricacy: as the news media is constantly changing, more and more topics of discussion are becoming sensitive and news systems in general can be met with skepticism. Researching news media can end up being rather fruitful, however, as journalistic discourse may lead to interesting findings, such as identifying positive and negative connotations towards specific themes and ways of portraying, showing and listing news resources – and how these matters affect potential underlying bias (Garretson & Ädel 2008, 159). By adding a discourse analysis

approach to researching news, the research can transform from just 'explaining' data in a text into a more interpretative study, offering more various viewpoints and further descriptions of the structure and content of a text (Hamuddin 2015, 4).

Van Dijk (2008, 23) has made use of discourse analysis in relation to news media by looking into specific news media discourse and has discovered that discourse analysis is a particularly useful method in uncovering power structures of news articles. Even simply the headlines of news articles can be used in ways to invoke feelings, thoughts, and opinions of their readers, initiating the first steps of larger discourses. Discourse analysis is also rather useful in looking at how lexical items and metaphors found in news articles are used to define events or people's characteristics and what their role is in the overall context of the text (ibid.).

2.3 Teachers in News Media

Considering the current representation of teachers in news media, much of the discussion around them in the news is related to the overarching topic of education. There have been few discourse analyses studying the ways teachers themselves are talked about or represented in news media. Instead, teachers are typically only slightly touched upon in studies revolving around other topics related to them, such as politics, publishing, education, and teaching practicalities – and even in these cases, the news articles may not genuinely reflect the ways teachers are discussed or how teachers themselves are involved in the discourse (Van Dijk 2008, 12). Cohen (2006, 107) has also noted that much of teacher-related news articles are written by "those talking about teachers, rather than the teachers themselves", which also raises apprehension as to whether or not teachers are represented correctly. One would think that teachers would be considered the controlling 'force' of teaching and educational discourse, much like "lawyers would be for legal discourse and professors for scholarly discourse" (Van Dijk 2008, 90), however, this does not appear to be the case.

Nevertheless, it is also quite understandable that the topic of education is closely connected to teachers. In fact, Cohen (2006, 106) suggests that acknowledging how teachers are represented in the media leads to a better understanding of education as a social practice, and how work of education is executed in everyday life. As mentioned earlier in this section, news media can be considered to have 'power' to sway the public's opinion, and based on Cohen's thoughts, having more discourse about teachers would likely invigorate the public to discuss more not only about teachers, but also about education in general (ibid.). Discussion about education is often of great interest to the media because of its close relation to government investments as well as its potential to solve ongoing social and economic troubles (Blackmore 2007). In addition, education as a topic may be rather productive when it comes to news reporting due to it being an area journalists may think they know a lot about, although this is necessarily not accurate.

When concentrating on the topic of teachers, Blackmore (2007) has noted that media tends to focus on the "pressures on schools", in which the teachers are shown to be associated with themes of teacher shortages, lack of replacement teachers and difficulties finding teachers for specialized fields which, in turn, force cancellations of specialized study programs. In addition, legal responsibilities of teachers, bullying, and parents' disappointment with student performance or teaching quality are also popular topics in the media (ibid.). These kinds of topics innately exude more negative than positive associations when it comes to teacher representation in the news and is something which will be further examined in the analysis later in this study.

As mentioned in Chapter 2.1.2., one discourse can split into multiple discourses, or multiple discourses meld into one, and the relationship between the discussion of education versus teachers seems to be a good example of this phenomenon: the two discourses are often grouped together, while at other times kept strictly separate. However, regardless of the type of discussion about teachers, Blackmore (2007) believes that media representation of teachers and education is important, not only

in terms of governance-level development and awareness of it, but also to provide better depictions of all schools for a broader audience, be it state schools, private schools; 'good schools or 'bad schools'.

It can be assumed that all teachers were also students at some point and carry both positive and negative experiences from that time to their current line of work (Cohen 2006, 106). These experiences allow teachers to take part in discussion about their wellbeing and educational issues with a more personalized mindset. This, along with the professional identity teachers may have acquired, place them in an interesting position between the realistic school world and the external debates about education (ibid.). Cohen (2006, 115) has discovered two dominant types of language use in teacher and education news discourse: caring and accountability. The language of 'caring', according to Cohen (ibid.), maintains teachers' knowledge and authority within the "private sphere", referring to their personal relationships with students, for instance, while simultaneously downplaying teachers' authority to operate within the "public sphere", referring to external factors (ibid.). The language of 'accountability', on the other hand, takes into account the social settings or ethical obstacles teachers may experience, with more of an emphasis beyond of the personifications and personal experiences of teachers (ibid.).

Bell (1991, 145) classifies news into 'hard news' and 'soft news'. Hard news typically refers to core, important news, such as reports about accidents, crimes and political turmoil (ibid.). Soft news, on the other hand, leans more towards casual news, stories of everyday occurrences, entertainment and humor. When thinking about news articles about teachers, they appear to fall into both categories. However, as mentioned earlier in this section, much of the news material related to teachers involves issues either in their personal well-being, or difficulties in the educational sphere. Inherently, these types of articles lean more towards 'hard news', with their "straight to the point"-mindset and strong ties to urgency, recency and also negativity, which are characteristics typically

considered being more newsworthy and thus garner more interest in readers (Bell 1991, 156). In addition, hard news often follows the themes of exaggeration, 'eliteness' and personalization, which are all attributes that can also affect the ways in which teachers are portrayed in news media (ibid.).

3 DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter will review the data gathered for this study as well as describe the methodology used for the analysis of said data. First, Section 3.1 introduces the two British publications under inspection in this thesis: *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star*. Section 3.2 describes the ways the data, which consists of a selection of news articles from the two publications, was collected and how the articles were constructed into two specialized corpora for further analysis. Section 3.3 discusses the methods of analysis used in this study and introduces some of the key concepts of the practices used as well as points out any potential restrictions or obstacles the chosen methodology may have presented.

3.1 *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star*

The two publications from which news articles will be further studied upon in this study are *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star*, two British news publications with different genres, layouts and backgrounds. The analysis will be conducted from a selection of articles from each publication, which will make up the data. This section will act as an introduction to both publications in question and provide some initial, general information about both of them.

The Guardian is a long-running British newspaper, having been founded in 1821. It has since then retained its position as one of the major national newspapers in Britain, with large circulation and it is also authorized to publish public and legal notices. Throughout its history, *The Guardian* has achieved acclaim for its investments in quality journalism and innovations regarding news media development (GNM Archive, 2017). It has also been awarded for comprehensive and groundbreaking reporting of global issues (ibid.). Like many publications today, *The Guardian* is not only available in broadsheet form, but online as well. *The Guardian*'s political stand leans towards left or left-center (Smith, 2017). Its typical readers – sometimes referred to as the "Guardian readers" – are described

as "liberal, left-wing or politically correct" (Collins s.v. *Guardian reader*). *The Guardian* is often considered as a producer of "proper" news and Bell (1991, 20), for instance, places it within a sector of 'quality' and 'popular' news media press when thinking about its journalism.

The *Daily Star* is a daily tabloid newspaper, published in the United Kingdom since established in 1978. While it does report about important national and international happenings and phenomena, the *Daily Star* does not shy away from entertaining articles with humorous approaches, and even has a section labeled "weird news". The publication often gives priority to covering stories related to entertainment, celebrities, sports, and gossip about popular television programs and films. This appears to have taken a toll on the perception of quality and credibility of its reporting, and Greenslade (2018) has declared that the publication "survives on a diet of sex [...] and celebrity trivia". The *Daily Star* is distributed as a physical, tabloid-style publication alongside an online-version, and it also has its signature application for mobile devices. While the *Daily Star* is said to be somewhat neutral when it comes to its political stance, some sources claim it to lean at least slightly towards the right (Greenslade, 2018).

As can be noted, the premises of the two publications are quite different, yet they share some similarities a well. As they both operate in the United Kingdom but have different approaches to news reporting as well as their varying audiences, *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star* were concluded to be adequate choices for this particular study and will provide a wide enough range of data for analyzing the representation of teachers in the news media. Their differing backgrounds also present possibilities for sufficient comparisons between the two publications. In addition, the choice of the genre of news articles in particular is significant in the sense that not only are they handily available and easily accessible – especially online – but they are also usually recent enough to include stories about present-day issues and also have examples of emerging trends in language usage (H. Fletcher 2007, 27). Even though material online from the Internet may consist of irrelevant or "messy" data,

which may be difficult to properly gauge (Hoffmann 2007, 69), news articles as a category of texts are mostly standardized and 'compact' regarding their content, making them suitable for this type of study.

3.2 Collecting the Data

The data for this study consists of two specialized corpora constructed from a selection of news articles downloaded from the *NexisUni*[2] database. *NexisUni* is described as a platform which "enables students and faculty to conduct academic research […] with unique personalization, discovery and collaboration tools" and has over 17,000 news, business, and legal sources (LexisNexis 2023). Two separate searches were conducted to assemble two collections of news articles from different publications: one set of news articles was gathered from the results of *The Guardian*, while another set was collected from the results of the *Daily Star*. As noted in the previous section, these two publications were chosen not only because of their varying formats, characteristics, and differences in audiences – *The Guardian* being a 'proper' broadsheet paper while the *Daily Star* being a tabloid – but also because of their varying political views.

In *NexisUni*, articles from *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star* were gathered by using the Advanced Search function. This function allows to make specifications regarding the publications, as well as modifications to the time frame from which results are desired. *NexisUni* has an extensive list of publications, and also includes several versions of same publications. In relation to this study, the search was limited to the general versions of *The Guardian* (London) and the *Daily Star* only,

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[2] Access to NexisUni requires an academic license. For Tampere Universities: https://advance-lexis-com.lib-proxy.tuni.fi/bisacademicresearchhome/?pdmfid=1516831&crid=1c0a1cfa-cef4-4225-bb0e-f3ed2ff827e0&ecomp=3zygk&prid=6b79a6aa-ccf4-4ff4-975e-5ef52fe72be2

meaning that versions such as *The Guardian Weekly* and *Daily Star Online* were left out not only for the sake of simplicity, but also for the fact that the other versions would likely include similar, if not the exact same, articles as the general versions. As both publications under scrutiny are from Britain, no further restrictions were necessary concerning the publications themselves, such as location.

The keywords used for the searches were *teacher* as well as its plural form *teachers*. With a search like this, the chosen keywords appear not only in the actual body text of the articles, but also in their titles and potential subtitles as well. An initial search without a specific time frame unveiled far more results for *The Guardian* than the *Daily Star*, implying that the former is more prominently represented on *NexisUni*, generates more data on the platform – or simply contains more articles. In order to gather similar sized pools of articles from both *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star* for an adequate analysis, the time frame for the searches for each publication needed to be adjusted accordingly. The target was to collect about 300 articles from each publication for satisfactory analysis and comfortable manageability of the overall data. As such, the time frames for the searches were set between December 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022 for *The Guardian* and between June 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022 for the *Daily Star*, meaning that within only a month, *The Guardian* had provided a similar amount of articles including the words *teacher* and *teachers* than the *Daily Star* within six months. While conducting this search, what can already be noted by the amounts of articles resulted, is that the topic of teachers seems to appear more frequently in *The Guardian* than the *Daily Star*. However, this may also come down to *The Guardian* just being more prolific with its news or merely *NexisUni* as a platform and the way it provides and stores its data.

Regarding the time frames, a brief online verification was executed before conducting the searches to ensure that no major teacher-related incidents had occurred during the aforementioned time periods. This was quite important to take into consideration, as any potential 'newsworthy' teacher-related events may have inflated the amounts of news articles in a given time, which in turn

would have affected the search results and potentially resulted in articles mostly about one and the same topic. This would have not been beneficial when looking into general discourse patterns related to teachers in news media. While no incidents were checked to have occurred at the chosen time frames presented earlier, interestingly, in early 2023 some strikes have taken place in Britain to improve teachers' conditions. While it is certainly possible that some anteceding articles related to this can be among the data gathered, in general the collected articles from the chosen time frames can be considered neutral enough to be suitable for this particular study.

The executed searches with the selections described above resulted into a total of 381 articles for *The Guardian* and 355 articles for the *Daily Star*, many of which featured the keywords (*teacher* and *teachers*) multiple times within each of the articles. The articles were downloaded as two separate sets, one for *The Guardian* and one for the *Daily Star*. Any irrelevant information included in the articles such as links, page numbering and cover pages were taken out of the downloaded articles, so that most of the data would consist of the titles and the main bodies of text. The articles were first downloaded as .docx files, which were then converted into .txt files, essentially becoming two specialized corpora, one for each publication. These .txt files were then uploaded into *AntConc*[3], a freeware program designed to be used for corpus data analysis. After uploading the two collected corpora into *AntConc*, the word tokens in *The Guardian* corpus totaled to 659,915 words, while in the *Daily Star* the number was 119,672. This further strengthens the implications that even within a shorter time span, the corpus from *The Guardian* articles was almost six times the size of the *Daily Star* corpus, suggesting that *The Guardian* not only seems to have a more dominant presence of articles in general, but also longer and more profound articles with more words used in them. As

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[3] AntConc version 3.5.9 was used in this study. The toolkit is freely downloadable on the website https://www.laurence-anthony.net/software/antconc/

regards to the keywords *teacher* and *teachers* and their presence in the corpora, Table 1 demonstrates the number of occurrences of each keyword in each corpus. The occurrences appear to be quite even between the two corpora despite the overall size difference.

Publication	Total # of articles	Occurrence of *teacher*	Occurrence of *teachers*	Corpus size (word tokens)	Period covered (2022)
The Guardian	381	268	200	659,915	Dec 1st – Dec 31st
Daily Star	355	194	142	119,672	Jun 1st – Dec 31st

Table 1: Occurrence of keywords in the two corpora

3.3 Analysis Methods

As outlined in the theoretical background section in Chapter 2, the analysis method utilized in this study is corpus-based discourse analysis. While there will inherently be some quantitative aspects taken into account when looking at the data, as using a toolkit like *AntConc* allows for extensive numerical analysis for corpora, the focus point will be in the qualitative aspects and the contexts of the articles. *AntConc* offers a variety of features and functions which are especially helpful in quantitative analysis, such as identifying frequencies and collocation patterns of texts, and these will act as a starting point in the analysis. However, the toolkit is also quite convenient in assisting to identify discourse and narrative patterns and different relationships between words, which will aid in the qualitative viewpoint of the analysis.

The analysis is conducted by closely analyzing both collected corpora, one at a time. First, the overall commonness and frequencies of the keywords *teacher* and *teachers* in the corpora will be briefly looked at, followed by an examination of the most common collocates that are associated with teachers in each corpus. After this, the corpora will be explored in more detail, with a focus on pinpointing any relevant discourse patterns. This will be performed by looking into concordances and by carrying out searches with frequent collocates and other context items, which may point towards meaningful discourse patterns. Via this type of manual examination, potential discourses regarding

teachers in news media will be determined and described, while also attempting to create a 'profile' of significant narrative sequences related to discussion about teachers in both the chosen publications – and whether or not similarities or disparities between the two can be discovered.

A *concordance* is a list that compiles all instances of a specific search word within a corpus, presenting them within their respective contextual surroundings – typically, the emphasis of context is displayed on either the left or right side of the target word (Baker 2006, 71). In this study, the primary focus will be on the terms *teacher* and *teachers*. In *AntConc*, concordance lines are visualized with the keyword at the center, with a number of words appearing both on the left and right sides of the keyword. By utilizing concordance line analysis, some of the broader contexts surrounding the keywords can be examined – especially by taking advantage of some of the sorting options *AntConc* provides for more conveniency. One of these options is sorting the left- or right-side elements in alphabetical order based on different levels, which is one of the main options used for the analysis in this thesis. The data gathered for this study is relatively manageable, allowing for a manual analysis of the resulting concordance lines. Not only will the placement of different words in relation to the keywords *teacher* and *teachers* be inspected, but also their linguistic characteristics such as word-classes, with the aim to identify any recurring patterns. Identifying patterns like this is heavily reliant on the individual observations of the researcher, as was noted in Chapter 2.1.3, and as such there are no predetermined conceptions as to what the concordance lines may disclose.

The steps described above follow the framework described in the theoretical background, while also taking into account the aspects of critical discourse analysis. Baker (2006, 73-74) views critical discourse analysis as a "form of critical social research" with the objective of addressing questions related to the ways in which existing societies provide resources to individuals, how various social groups influence public discourse and what consequences such an influence has. This kind of research is often seen in relation to studies about minorities or groups with related individuals, such

as different professions (ibid.). The approach to this thesis is similar to that of Baker (2006, 71-94), who has conducted concordance line analysis when looking into discourses of refugees in newspaper articles. Baker (ibid.) utilized similar techniques by sorting concordances to look for patterns of repetition in the context both to the left and right side of the words *refugee* and *refugees*, which resulted in discoveries of distinctive discourses regarding the movement, quantification and support of refugees. Similar steps are taken in this study as the premises are rather similar, however, the focus being on *teachers* in this case.

In order to reach the qualitative elements associated with discourse analysis, the study must first identify the quantitative aspects of the data – the corpus linguistic viewpoint – as a "precursor" of sorts (Baker 2005, 10). Once the data, which in this case consists of news articles, is explored regarding its linguistic features, commonness of certain words and their associations with each other, it is possible to venture further in acknowledging the potential characteristics of discourse and narrative: the structures "beyond the sentence" (see Chapter 2.1.2). While employing the knowledge presented in Chapter 2, it is also important to note that the ways of utilizing the methods as well as analyzing any results with said methods are ultimately up to the researcher themselves (see Chapter 2.1.3), thus the steps taken may vary between individuals even if same methods are applied.

4 ANALYSIS

This chapter is comprised of the analysis of the data gathered, based on the methods described in the previous chapter. Section 4.1 discusses how the words *teacher* and its plural form *teachers* are represented in the collected news articles from *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star* from a more general point of view, taking frequencies and collocation into account. Sections 4.2 and 4.3 will cover the corpus-specific analyses of *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star* respectively and will also illustrate more explicit findings after analyzing the two corpora in more detail in *AntConc* while also attempting to identify meaningful discourse patterns related to discussion about teachers.

4.1 Collocation and Context

In Chapter 3.1 it was established that the two publications under inspection, *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star*, are different when it comes their format and their political stance – and based on the data gathering process described in Chapter 3.2, even the amount and length of articles they publish. When analyzing the two corpora gathered from the publications in *AntConc*, even more differences can be identified regarding the narrative styles and discourses present in the articles they publish. This analysis concentrates on how teachers are represented and discussed in the two pieces of media, and will attempt to provide a sketch of identifiable discourse patterns that can be found in the data.

When determining the presence of teachers in the articles by examining both corpora collectively, one of the first steps is to analyze how frequently the keywords *teacher* and *teachers* appear in the collected data. While Table 1 under section 3.2 displays how many occurrences of each keyword there are in each corpus, their frequency in relation to other words in the corpora present a clearer picture of how frequently references to teachers actually appear in the articles overall.

Publication	Normalized frequency of *teacher* (per 1000 words)	Normalized frequency of *teachers* (per 1000 words)
The Guardian	0.41	0.30
Daily Star	1.62	1.19

Table 2: Normalized frequencies of keywords in the corpora

Table 2 demonstrates the normalized frequencies of *teacher* and *teachers* in each corpus, and as may be expected, the larger the corpus, the lower the normalized frequency. As was already noted in section 3.2, *The Guardian* seems to have longer articles and is undoubtedly larger of the two corpora. Based on *AntConc*'s own frequency list function, which can be sorted by 'ranking' the words in a corpus according to their frequency, *teacher* is the 260th most frequent word while the position of *teachers* is 346 in *The Guardian* corpus. In the *Daily Star*, the ranks are 86 for *teacher* and 112 for *teachers*. With there being almost as many ranks as there are word types in the corpora, teachers seem to be fairly well represented overall – although this may be self-evident, as both corpora are supposed to contain abundant mentions of teachers, as that was the keyword used while collecting the articles. Their general frequencies in relation to the other words is still noteworthy to point out, as it may serve as a link into discovering discourse patterns in their surrounding contexts.

While Baker (2006, 71) notes that frequency lists are helpful in establishing focuses of texts, they may be too far-reaching for profound discourse analysis. As such, a more contextual understanding can be conducted by looking at the potential *collocates* of teachers in the gathered articles. Collocates in corpus linguistics refers to words which have a tendency to co-occur with other words in language (Mollin 2009, 176), and thus may uncover associations between words. Virtanen (2009, 57) further notes that collocation is often considered as a link between language and discourse, as it attributes to identifying words outside of context, while simultaneously using the words in specific situations and discourse settings. One of the other reasons why examining collocates may be of interest is that distinctive patterns of teacher-related discourse may be uncovered by identifying

frequently occurring collocates: in corpora collocates display words that "like each other's company" (ibid.).

AntConc's collocate-function allows to search for collocates of any search queries, and in this case, the search word used was *teacher**. The asterisk indicates that the search includes variations of the keyword, which in this case includes the singular and plural forms of the word. By setting the window span to 5L and 5R, which indicate a range of five words to the left and right of the searched word respectively, the most common collocates were discovered. The results contained all types of words, including functional and grammatical words such as *the, for* and *and*. These kinds of words were discarded when compiling the collocates, as they were not deemed relevant concerning the context of discourse. Baker (2006, 100) has also noted that many of such kinds of functional words typically collocate with various other words as well, which further encourages to ignore them as the aim is to find words with evident narrative interpretation in relation to teachers. In addition, the results also included words such as *daily*, *star* and *body*, which were likewise disregarded as they were perceived as being leftovers from the data when downloaded from *NexisUni*, originating from the publications' names and strings of links and coding. These too were not seen as relevant to this particular study. The top ten most frequent collocates for each corpus, after the clearance of the types of words mentioned earlier, are compiled in Table 3, sorted from most to least frequent across *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star*.

Most frequent collocates (search query *teacher**)			
The Guardian		*Daily Star*	
Collocate	Frequency	Collocate	Frequency
school	54	*school*	30
primary	26	*said*	17
training	25	*kids*	17
said	21	*one*	16
workers	19	*PE*	12
schools	19	*children*	12
year	15	*old*	10
children	15	*two*	9
staff	13	*girl*	9
one	12	*found*	9

Table 3: Most frequent collocates for *teacher(s)*

Some of the collocates in Table 3, such as the numerals *one* and *two* do not seem to provide much regarding discourse patterns, as they innately act as determiners. For example, an instance from the corpora using such a determiner is the phrase "one of the teachers". These types of numerals may collocate with many other words as well, so there does not appear to be much attraction to them when establishing discourse patterns related to teachers specifically. At first glance, the collocate *said* does not seems to offer much either, however, what is interesting about *said* is the fact that it indicates action of reporting. It is, in fact, the only verb in the list of common collocates for both of the compiled corpora. Given how frequent the collocate *said* is in both the corpora, what can be deduced here is that much of the action teachers are associated with is *saying* something or commenting on something, in contrast to physically doing something. Though admittedly, this may also just be attributed to the ways the articles are written, potentially including interviews of teachers in them or things being distinctively said about them. The action of saying turns out to be of somewhat relevant interest, however, which will be later elaborated on in the further analysis of the news articles.

The rest of the collocates appear to be more compelling when it comes to the narrative focus. Perhaps a bit unsurprisingly, *school* is the most common collocate of teacher(s) in both corpora. In fact, the most common string of words related to the school's association with teachers is the compound "school teacher", oftentimes being further outlined as some kind of particular teacher, such as "primary school teacher". The collocate *PE* follows a similar pattern, as it is often connected to the string "PE teacher", referring to a physical education teacher. As can be seen in Table 3, *primary* is one of the more common collocates in *The Guardian*, typically referring to "primary [school] teachers", while the *Daily Star*'s closest equivalent to a similar descriptive element is the aforementioned *PE*. This does imply that there may be tendencies to add descriptive or more detailed elements to teachers in news media articles, at least to some extent, but they seem to vary between the two publications.

Another prominent collocate is *children*, which appears to be quite frequent in both *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star,* appearing in both publications' top ten most common collocates for *teacher**. Though rather interestingly, the *Daily Star* has *kids* as more frequent, which is essentially a more informal way of talking about children. The fact that *kids* is a more frequent collocate in the *Daily Star* may point towards more informality in general when it comes to the articles published in the tabloid. As noted in section 2.2, tabloids lean more towards providing 'entertaining' news and quick real-time commentary and are often socially less respected than broadsheets. Broadsheets in turn are typically associated with high-profile quality and 'fact-checked' information. This may explain the prominence of *kids* over *children* in the *Daily Star*.

In the list of collocates for *The Guardian*, two rather noticeable collocates which do not appear at all in *Daily Star*'s list are *training* and *workers*. These deviations suggest that discussions about the education and training of teachers themselves appear to be more of a prominent topic in *The Guardian* alongside the working conditions of individuals in the teaching profession. Interestingly, neither of these terms appear in the *Daily Star*'s list of collocates, and there also seems to not be any truly comparable terms present either. This distinction could be attributed to the tabloid format of the *Daily Star* discussed earlier, which may lean towards lighter and more entertaining news beyond the struggles or issues teachers experience, in contrast to the more serious tone typically found in *The Guardian*.

4.2 Teacher Discourse in *The Guardian*

From this section onwards the focus will move away from looking at frequencies and collocates to identifying potential teacher-related discourse patterns within the two publications separately, beginning with *The Guardian*. Here, the analysis will be mainly based on concordance line analysis, incorporating the knowledge gathered about corpus-based discourse analysis as reviewed in the

background theory section (Chapter 2). *The Guardian* corpus will be examined by elaborately inspecting the various concordance lines resulted by using the search word *teacher**. Any significant patterns or interesting pieces of context shall be examined from both the left and right side of the searched keyword. The use of italics and bold text are used in the following analysis to point towards important or otherwise noteworthy elements.

For a more convenient analysis, the concordance lines in *AntConc* are first sorted in alphabetical order by using the *KWIC* (Key Word in Context) *Sort* with the settings from 3L to 1L, resulting in concordance lines highlighting the three words appearing on the left side of the keyword *teacher**. Immediately one apparent pattern can be noticed regarding how teachers are being described as. While lightly touched upon in the previous chapter, the results here seem to further solidify that teachers are rarely just addressed as teachers only, but they typically have a descriptive, or some other type of element added to them. It appears to be rather important to somehow ensure that the readers of the news articles know what kind of teachers are being talked about. As likewise noted in Chapter 4.1, the string "primary teacher" is one of the most common word pairings in *The Guardian* corpus, followed by "school teacher" and teachers of specific subjects after that, such as "PE teacher", "English teacher" and "science teacher". Some instances of "substitute teacher", "secondary teacher" and "preschool teacher" are also present, all of which denote the 'status' of a teacher. All the aforementioned descriptions of teachers can be associated with a school setting, which suggests that news articles about teachers seem to heavily be based around educational aspects more so than teachers in non-school settings. Surely, this is quite predictable as teachers are generally associated with education and schooling.

The most common kind of teacher mentioned in *The Guardian* corpus is "primary [school] teacher", which may imply that teachers of younger children are discussed more than other kinds of school teachers. This may be a valid assumption to make, as oftentimes any actions of teachers, good

or bad, are coupled with the fact that they typically work with young children, which tends to provoke reactions from readers. However, by looking into more context of the articles, the mention of "primary school" seems to more often than not address the teachers' former or upcoming occupation, and not necessarily associate their status with children at all. Instead, the mention of the teacher status appears to be used to underline their position as part of a larger community, yet still having a voice of their own, as seen in the following extract:

1. My husband and I, both retired teachers, couldn't believe it when we read […] that after 12 long years of underfunding and depredation, she was proud to get school funding back to where Labour left it. I was **a primary school teacher** during the last Labour government, and I remember the new money to spend on books, computers and staffing. (*The Guardian*, Dec. 1, 2022)

Nevertheless, there are also some individual instances of other types of teacher descriptions found in the corpus, which can be placed outside of school settings, but still refer to teachers of some specific areas of expertise. These include examples such as "martial arts teacher", "dance teacher", "yoga teacher" and "piano teacher". In a similar vein, another phenomenon discovered in the corpus is teachers described as being *of* something: not only educators of different subjects (such as "teachers *of* creative writing", "teachers *of* dancing", "teachers *of* religious education"), but also of specific heritage ("teachers *of* South-Asian heritage"). As such, not all teacher-related discourse revolves around schools per se.

Another descriptive element observed in *The Guardian* corpus is the use of adjectives. Some of the more frequent adjectives that are used in conjunction with teachers are "traditional", "sympathetic", "retired", "effective" and "qualified". Out of these, it can be noted that some of them symbolize the qualities of a teacher ("traditional", "retired" and "qualified"), while the others describe characteristics ("sympathetic" and "effective"). While this sample of adjectives is quite small, it does paint a picture of teachers being expected to be of certain standard or have certain personality traits, which are typically either neutral or positive in tone. Very rarely do teachers appear to be talked about

without any kind of description at all in *The Guardian* corpus, which suggests that some additional information about what kinds of teachers are being discussed is almost a necessity.

It is not only teachers themselves that are described, but phenomena or experiences related to teachers as well, though they oftentimes do have references to teachers via compounding. Examples of this are strings like "initial teacher training" and "crippling teacher shortages". The usage of expressive descriptions is likely to hold the attention of the reader and emphasize the phenomena that is being discussed. In fact, in *The Guardian* corpus, teacher-related compounds often have negative connotations – "crippling teacher shortages", for example, does not exude particularly positive feelings. Some of the articles in *The Guardian* are related to taking a stand by teachers within the educational space, a theme which will be touched upon in further detail later in this section.

Outside of descriptive elements, the context preceding the keyword *teacher** can regularly be associated with action, either teachers themselves doing the action, or them being the object of action. Some frequent examples are "*become* a teacher", "*train* as a teacher" and "*work* as a teacher", which are rather predictable things to say about teachers and something that is inherently associated with them. Action is also depicted as something being done *by* teachers, with *The Guardian* particularly discussing themes which appear to revolve around wanting change within teachers' work field. Much of the action described this way leans more towards being passive than active, as seen in examples like "disappointment [*experienced*] by teachers", "concerns *voiced* by teachers" and "*planned* action by teachers", thus, nothing concrete seems to actually be happening other than planning, preparing or commenting on things. This illustrates that teachers in the news seem to be given a more passive role, with surrounding elements being the main focus rather than the action performed by teachers themselves. Even so, this action clearly showcases elements which affect teachers' work and highlight teachers' disappointment towards these aspects.

Teachers seem to be grouped with other professions within the public field fairly often, and typically in the context of needing or wanting improvements within their work fields. Examples of the professions grouped with teachers include nurses, police and firefighters. What links these professions together is that they are often considered as 'important' occupations in the sense that they have much responsibility in helping within society and working with individuals and also larger groups of people. However, the overtone of the articles present in *The Guardian* corpus appears to lean towards the perception that while teachers, along with nurses, police and firefighters, are given praise for their work and of their efforts, the individuals themselves working in those fields do not necessarily feel appreciated enough. This is further illustrated in the example below:

2. As I read the article in which the secretary of state for education heaped **fulsome praise** on **teachers**, I immediately thought of the nurses' slogan: "*Claps don't pay bills.*" (*The Guardian*, Dec. 1, 2022)

However, genuine appreciation towards teachers and their work seems to be at display as well. Such strings of words such as "thanks to an inspired teacher" and "thanks to the encouragement of […] teacher" occur in *The Guardian* corpus, which compliment individual teachers. As such, it is evident that the efforts put forth by teachers in their work do not pass entirely unnoticed. However, sometimes genuine appreciation can be difficult to detect. While the general profession and some efforts of teachers can be given recognition to, the undertone of it, as seen in Example 3, can sometimes be quite vague and instead suggest that teachers may, in fact, be the root of more issues rather than actually showing appreciation towards their intentions. This, again, implies a more pessimistic discourse.

3. It's no time to be a child who *struggled* with home schooling and is now *missing lessons* once again, **thanks to a teachers' strike** in Scotland. (*The Guardian*, Dec. 9, 2022)

Moving on to examining the context on the right side, by keeping the search word as *teacher** and sorting the concordance lines in alphabetical order with *KWIC Sort* from 3R to 1R, one

of the more prominent patterns that can be detected is the use of the conjunction *and*, suggesting that teachers are often paired with something else. The word *and* is one of the more frequent collocates in relation to teachers, however, these types of functional words were not included previously in Table 1 for the reasons stated in Chapter 4.1. Yet, in this more thorough concordance line analysis, it can be noted that teachers are often combined with mentions of children, students and parents. This may seem self-evident given that they are all connected to the school environment and education. Likewise, teachers are also paired with the school itself as well as other occupations on many occasions, indicating that teachers are considered a key element either within a larger overarching institution (the school system) or among other professions, such as social workers, police, and nurses. This theme was already touched upon earlier, yet these findings from the right-side context seem to solidify that not only are teachers grouped with other professions within the public space, but that they also seem to be considered as having important status within society – on par with police and nurses. The importance of working as a teacher and the level of respect teachers are given is well illustrated in the following expression from an article in *The Guardian* discussing the different roles of UN agency chiefs: "They are **teachers**, nutrition experts, team leaders, community health workers, vaccinators, nurses, doctors and heads of organisations" (Dec. 29, 2022). The fact that teachers are often mentioned first in these types of listings is also quite telling, as further seen in the following examples – which also interestingly present some insight to some of the critical topics teachers are often associated with in society:

4. This decision will also heap further strain on under-resourced **teachers and schools** and will worsen crippling teacher shortages. (*The Guardian*, Dec. 19, 2022)

5. The feedback we've had has been fantastic, not only from the parents but from **the teachers and the school** itself – with more funding we'd be able to go into more schools for four or five days a week. (*The Guardian*, Dec. 30, 2022)

6. **Teachers and social workers** have experienced the worst pay growth in the UK in the past decade, which has seen public sector salaries falling significantly

behind those in the private sector, according to research. (*The Guardian*, Dec. 21, 2022)

7. […] it will be tough to argue that a crackdown on workers' rights, rather than higher wages, might […] help to meet the Conservative manifesto pledge to hire thousands more **nurses, teachers and police**. (*The Guardian*, Dec. 8, 2022)

As noticed in a few of the passages above, a distinct discourse of uneasiness or dissatisfaction can be identified in some of the articles in *The Guardian*. The discontent of teachers' situations can be recognized from the context teachers are placed in – in *The Guardian* corpus, teachers are pushed to "speak up", teachers have been "pleading [change] for a decade", teachers "have no power" and teachers "battle prejudice", not to mention the aforementioned "teacher shortages", which appears several times. The portrayal of teachers lacking 'power', such as in Example 8 below, exemplifies not only the potential injustice teachers may face when set against higher authorities, but also the prospects of the 'power' news media can elicit and represent, as discussed in the theoretical background section (Chapter 2.2).

8. *Teachers* have **no power** to stop successive governments squandering money on vanity projects that have failed to live up to the hype. (*The Guardian*, Dec. 1, 2022)

This kind of narrative implies that teachers are most often prominent in the news media when they are under oppression of some kind or whenever some change is needed in an area which teachers are involved in. The type of burden teachers are placed under is not always at the fault of so-called 'decision-makers', but also of the school institutions themselves (via "teacher assessments") and parents of students (f.e. "teachers have felt pressure from parents"). Based on these contexts, teacher-related discussion in *The Guardian* rarely seems to consider positive or carefree depictions of teachers newsworthy, which again contributes to the notion of news media discourse around teachers focusing mostly on their issues and challenges.

The proficiency of teachers and their level of competence are also expressed quite frequently in the news articles from *The Guardian*. Teachers are seen associated with expressions such as

"teacher training", "teacher assessment" and "teacher grades", and also "teacher education", all of which divert slightly from the established idea of teachers being correlated to the education of the young. In fact, in these instances, the focus is more on the expertise and education of teachers themselves. The discourse behind these kinds of expressions raises an often-overlooked fact: teachers do not only provide education for others, but they themselves also undergo levels of education to refine their proficiency even further. Initially, this depicts a supportive, compassionate and understanding attitude towards teachers; however, by looking further into the context of the articles where teacher education is mentioned, much of it is related to teacher shortages or insufficiencies in their work field. This is in line with some of the similar themes inspected earlier when looking at the context from the left side of the keyword *teacher**. The following example illustrates this observation:

9. The number of graduates **training** to be **teachers** in England has *slumped to "catastrophic" levels*, with the government missing its own recruitment targets by more than 80% in key subjects such as physics. (*The Guardian*, Dec. 1, 2022)

The competence of teachers is also expressed in the ways teachers teach, and often the 'wrong' teaching methods or procedures – as determined by the general public – are highlighted in news articles. From what can be gathered from *The Guardian* corpus, these types of news pieces typically fall into disputes as to whether teachers have taught correctly or not. For instance, one article states "[…] education minister has accused campaigners of putting teachers under pressure by deliberately spreading "misinformation" about the teaching of LGBTQ+ issues" (Dec. 23, 2022). This statement implies that teachers themselves have not necessarily done anything wrong, but other peoples' (or "campaigners'") opinion on the matter is what makes headlines. While LGBTQ+ related topics, as exampled in this statement, can be considered a sensitive topic and thus questioning the methods of teaching about it is fairly reasonable, this article appears to place teachers under pressure by mere assumptions of their actions. On the other hand, it also does raise awareness of teacher proficiency and possible deficiencies in teacher training.

It is important to remember that the actions of teachers may be under scrutiny for good reason, as teachers may not always follow the appropriate guidelines in their work. Behavior not expected from teachers appears to be inherently more interesting to report about in the news, which may sometimes come across as 'scandalous' news reporting. The majority of news articles in *The Guardian,* however, exhibit a serious and professional tone, and most of the cases of teacher malpractice appear to be related to unjust assessing and grading of students, in which teachers are held accountable for their decisions (see Example 10). While not necessarily the most interesting of news, it seems to be in line with the general tone of *The Guardian* articles when criticizing the actions of individual teachers.

10. […] teachers at the North London Collegiate school (NLCS) have been placed under investigation for alleged **malpractice** in setting **teacher-assessed grades**. (*The Guardian*, Dec. 24, 2022)

Oftentimes in these kinds of news pieces the context surrounding teachers is also based on assumptions rather than factual or 'inside' knowledge, hence the indirect references to teachers being "under investigation" or having "accusations towards teachers". However, in the educational realm, wrongfully assessed grades is seemingly considered significant, even though generally speaking the ways teachers give grades is not necessarily the most exciting piece of news. However, some of the more 'scandalous' approaches in *The Guardian* seem to be related to improper actions from teachers towards their young students. Working with young children was one of the themes noted earlier as to why teachers can be seen from a very specific perspective when it comes to news articles about them. One article found in *The Guardian* corpus talks about improper attitudes from a teacher towards a child, which shows that even in today's society some individual teachers may have unwarranted presumptions of the children they teach (see Example 11).

11. **Teachers** (and arguably wider society) perceive black children as older than their years, and therefore less vulnerable and innocent […] when a **teacher**, convinced she was in possession of drugs, instigated a search of her belongings (*The Guardian*, Dec. 16, 2022)

Considering the narrative focus of these types of articles, the contrast is interesting to note, as teachers are generally held to certain standards when it comes to defending their students and ensuring their well-being, but certainly remain human at the same time, thus encompassing both positive and negative thoughts and feelings as we humans experience. However, it is typically the negative reactions of teachers which transcends to breaking news.

Many of the news articles collected from *The Guardian* appear to center around discussions about teachers on an individual level, either as a single worker or as groups of professionals. Even though there are also some individual mentions of teachers as a 'collective', these instances appear to be less frequent based on the findings. The few occasions where a broader idea of the teaching profession is addressed are exemplified by references to the "teachers union", an organization which aims to protect the rights of teaching professionals. Even so, such instances seem to be relatively rare and often tie into various issues present in teachers' profession. It becomes apparent that both individual teachers and the teachers' union share certain key concerns, particularly related to financial matters, as exemplified in the following passages:

12. The NASUWT **teachers union** has been granted a judicial review of the government's new regulations […] (*The Guardian*, Dec. 14, 2022)

13. **[union]** also remains committed to raising the *starting salary* for **teachers** […] (*The Guardian*, Dec. 1, 2022)

14. […] her party has *cut* the *real-terms pay* of **teachers** consistently since 2010. (*The Guardian*, Dec. 1, 2022)

Judging by the articles gathered in the corpus, it is quite evident that *The Guardian*'s news articles predominantly focus on portraying teachers as individuals within their professional context, rather than emphasizing discussions about the broader profession at the union level, as there are only a few select instances of the latter.

The action of teachers in *The Guardian* corpus was noted to be rather passive earlier in this analysis, specifically when examining the context preceding the keyword *teacher**. This can further be noted to be a prevalent feature throughout the context on the right side as well. While there are some individual examples of teachers taking physical action, a substantial portion of the 'doing' of teachers is related to *saying* or *trying* something; working towards a goal or striving to improve their professional situation. In Table 4, some examples have been gathered where this is particularly apparent. It is worth mentioning that these instances also share a common underlying narrative: a desire for change, perhaps even a necessity for it, but in which the perceived 'powerlessness' of teachers may act as an obstacle.

Left context	Action	Right Context
middle-aged *teacher*	**trying**	to patch things up
teacher	**tries and fails**	to convince
a history *teacher*	**trying**	to convince his pupils
their *teacher*	**tried**	to comfort them with music
teachers	**are balloting**	for industrial action
students and two *teachers*	**urged**	lawmakers to consider
so *teachers*	**contacted**	lawmakers and the media
the funding *teachers*	**have been pleading**	for a decade
it's no secret that teachers	**struggled**	significantly during the Covid

Table 4: Concordance lines of *teacher* **action** in *The Guardian*

As can be observed from Table 4, the overarching discourse that can be witnessed regarding teachers' activity revolves around trying to solve issues, either within a classroom or from a larger institutional point of view. This places teachers in a position where they make efforts to try initiating change, but the ultimate outcome may not always be favorable. When adding this to the context of the other discourse patterns noted earlier in this section, a general consensus can be concluded that the majority of the discourse about teachers in *The Guardian* is intertwined with discussions about their professional and personal challenges.

While attention-grabbing, 'scandalous' news is typically associated with tabloids, as discussed in Chapter 2.2, *The Guardian* also seems to include its share of sensational news stories, as slightly touched upon earlier. However, *The Guardian* appears to report on such occurrences with the intention of not necessarily gaining attention, but rather providing factual information from a more general viewpoint of incidents which have occurred among teachers. What is noteworthy in these particular news articles, though, is that the profession of the individuals talked about is specifically brought up – in this instance, teachers. The need to address the profession explicitly implies that people within the teaching profession being associated with 'scandalous' actions is considered surprising, or even disturbing, to some readers – which in turn raises interest among the audience. As noted previously, teachers are often expected to meet certain standards and are frequently associated with young children. This likely constitutes to a teacher carrying out a heinous action, such as committing murder, being considered absurd. The following examples highlight some of such 'atypical' actions teachers have been reported to engage in in *The Guardian* corpus:

15. […] conviction of former high school PE **teacher** […] for the *murder* of his wife (*The Guardian*, Dec. 19, 2022)

16. […] a dance **teacher** was accused of having *traded sexual favors* for higher scores […] (*The Guardian*, Dec. 26, 2022)

17. […] then working as a **teacher**, was *arrested* twice […] (*The Guardian*, Dec. 17, 2022)

It is no secret that oftentimes 'clickworthy' articles contain exaggerated and outrageous news stories, so placing teachers in positions they are not typically found in may grab the attention of many readers. However, as will be noted later when diving deeper into the analysis of the *Daily Star*, scandalous news articles are relatively uncommon in *The Guardian*. This may be somewhat expected given the background and type of publication *The Guardian* is purported to be. Furthermore, *The Guardian*'s articles seem to typically adopt a more serious tone in their approach, rather than resorting to excessive sensationalism when addressing these kinds of topics.

It is worth mentioning that when examining the articles gathered from *The Guardian,* some of the references to teachers appear to not necessarily apply to real-life educators but rather relate to portrayals of teachers in various other forms of media, such as movies and literature. While these types of instances display an indirect way of discussing teachers and produces its own area of discourse, the context is not highly relevant to this study, as in film reviews or synopses 'actual' teachers are not being discussed. Of all the articles covered in *The Guardian* corpus, only a few of them contained these types of indirect references to teachers, thus, their impact to this analysis was relatively minor. The primary focus has remained on analyzing the genuine representation and discourse surrounding teachers in *The Guardian*, which has provided valid and relevant observations and discourse patterns as discussed throughout this section.

4.3 Teacher Discourse in the *Daily Star*

A similar concordance line analysis as with *The Guardian* corpus in the previous chapter was conducted with the *Daily Star* corpus for comparable analysis. The same keyword (*teacher**) was used to display the relevant concordance lines in *AntConc*. Again, by viewing the context both left and right of the searched keyword, any significant discourse-related patterns are further discussed in the following paragraphs. Similar to *The Guardian*, we will first take a look at the left-side context by sorting the concordance lines in alphabetical order utilizing the *KWIC Sort* function in *AntConc* with the settings of 3L to 1L, resulting in lines highlighting the words appearing on the left side of the keywords *teacher* and *teachers*.

Upon initial examination, it becomes apparent that much like the articles found in *The Guardian*, the *Daily Star* also tends to specify or describe the types of teachers that are under discussion. While a significant number of these instances are related to educational settings, such as "biology teacher," "English teacher," and "primary school teacher," the *Daily Star* also covers

varieties of teachers who are not necessarily associated with traditional schooling at all. Examples of these include "aerobics teacher," "dance teacher," "gymnastics teacher," "Zumba teacher," and "IT teacher." While the discourse around teachers in the *Daily Star* does touch upon themes related to schools and education, its articles do not appear to be hesitant in exploring other areas and reporting about stories about diverse types of teaching professionals. Examples 18 and 19 below portray some occurrences of such teaching professionals outside of the traditional school setting, where they are depicted doing non-educational actions.

18. A former **gymnastics teacher** who abused students as young as eight was jailed for seven years. (*Daily Star*, Dec. 28, 2022)

19. […] old **dance teacher** told her to lose weight when she was already less than 8st. (*Daily Star*, Oct. 10, 2022)

What is also immediately noticeable is that whether the references to teachers are within or outside educational environments, the *Daily Star* seems to generally adopt a more straightforward, 'sensational' style in its descriptions and storytelling of teachers. Also, while not directly related to the left-side context of the keyword, this kind of 'dramatic' approach can be observed in the passages above in the themes of abuse and weight loss. As previously discussed in Chapter 2.2, this type of content can be considered quite typical for a tabloid like the *Daily Star*: the coverage of teachers seems to incorporate more 'shocking' and attention-grabbing articles rather than only focusing on informative, political or problem-solving news pieces.

A number of adjectives are also present in the *Daily Star* corpus when describing teachers. Some of these adjectives refer to their work status, such as "retired", "qualified", "underpaid", and "overworked", but the majority of adjectives appear to be more general in nature, such as "young", "hapless", "useless" and "great". Although this selection is somewhat limited, it does suggest that the depiction of teachers often leans more towards negative connotations, portraying teachers as less fortunate or less valuable within their work space. These connotations are present with the adjectives

related to their work as well, as seen with "overworked" and "underpaid" which also are rather direct references to the overall well-being of teachers' profession. While the *Daily Star* appears to provide less factual, informative reporting on any political or communal aspects of teachers' circumstances compared to *The Guardian*, the use of such adjectives as described above implies an underlying discourse which suggests that teachers are less appreciated and neglected.

Although many of the articles collected from the *Daily Star* primarily focus on stories about individual teachers, some discourse patterns can also be recognized when examining how teachers are associated with other entities. However, in the *Daily Star*, this seems to be fairly narrow, as there are only few instances where teachers are categorized alongside other entities. These instances are typically carried out by using the conjunction *and*, and the most frequent occurrences of teachers being grouped with others include examples like "students and teachers" and "parents and teachers", suggesting that the *Daily Star* strongly connects teachers with students and their parents – which is not entirely surprising. Similarly, akin to what was observed in *The Guardian*, teachers are also sometimes grouped with other professions as well. For example, teachers are mentioned alongside postal workers and nurses, as illustrated in the example below:

> 20. Conservatives warned it would result in a "levelling down" of the North by leaving **nurses, police officers and teachers** *poorer*. (*Daily Star*, Aug. 3, 2022)

This passage also highlights the shared challenges these select occupations face in society. Further patterns regarding the grouping of teachers with other entities will be extended later in this section, when examining the right-side context of the keyword *teacher**.

When considering the area of societal issues, which also lightly surface in the previous Example 20 above, the *Daily Star* appears to generally contain fewer politically editorialized news articles which address potential challenges faced by teachers in their daily lives or reports on efforts to improve their well-being at work. This is rather apparent when examining what teachers are being described as *doing*: essentially examining the verbs used in conjunction with teachers. The actions

attributed to teachers in the *Daily Star* corpus highlight a significant presence of 'sensationalist' news reporting, since much of the action teachers are associated with are either silly, troubling, threatening or even alarming, and often carry negative or unsettling connotations. These actions are not only depicted as being performed by teachers but also as being directed towards them. Some examples of these occurrences are illustrated in Table 5. As noted in the examples, teachers are placed in awkward or difficult positions, with their primary concerns often revolving around personal matters or dealing with unexpected events rather than focusing on their work or professional well-being. As such, 'proper' articles that provide socially relevant or supportive coverage of teachers' struggles seem to be quite rare in the *Daily Star*.

Left context	Action	Right Context
ex-pupil who said he was	*beaten and molested*	by a **teacher**
expelled from his old school for	*wrestling*	a **teacher**
house arrest after	*assaulting*	one of his **teachers**
and	*having an affair*	with her **maths teacher**
suspended from school after	*"mooning"*	his **maths teacher**
He also	*stabbed*	a **pregnant teacher**

Table 5: Concordance lines of *teacher* **action** in the *Daily Star*

As noticed in the examples in Table 5, teachers can be seen both carrying out the action as well as being on the receiving end of it. Likewise, the action itself can also be from different ends of a spectrum: either fairly harmless (*mooning*[4]) or quite dangerous (*beaten* and *molested*, *stabbed*). What is shared by these actions, however, is their negative implications and the fact that they are not activities which are typically associated with teachers. A similar approach to discourse about teachers is also noted in some other examples from the *Daily Star* corpus, where action itself may not be

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[4] "To expose one's naked buttocks to", Merriam-Webster s.v. *moon*

specifically present but discouraging events are still being described with teachers involved, though typically teachers are placed in the receiving end of the bad actions:

> 21. […] the *murders* of 19 children and two **teachers** in Uvalde last week made him "incredibly upset". (*Daily Star*, Jun. 1, 2022)

Moving on to the concordance line analysis with a right-side focus, sorting alphabetically from 3R to 1R in *AntConc,* which accentuates the words three places to the right of the keyword *teacher**, one of the initial patterns noticed is that much like in *The Guardian*, the *Daily Star* seems to also have a tendency of pairing teachers with something else. However, unlike in *The Guardian*, the *Daily Star* seems to mostly stay within the area of supposed "upper hierarchy" of the school environment, as teachers are mostly paired with parents, lecturers, headteachers and schools. What can be deduced from this list of entities is that they can be considered as counterparties to whom teachers are commonly seen as accountable: people, who teachers are expected to explain themselves to in the case they engage in inappropriate actions. There are only a few instances of "teachers and children" or "teachers and students", for instance. This implies that the *Daily Star*'s teacher-related discourse within the school setting seems to rely particularly on the administrative and institutional side of things instead of focusing on teachers' work with young children or students. When it comes to addressing teachers, the *Daily Star* appears to be generally less descriptive than *The Guardian*. While strings like "school teacher", or teachers of some specific subjects appear every now and then in the corpus data, as well as being sometimes described with general adjectives as noted earlier in this section, in many cases teachers are not specifically described at all but are instead just simply addressed as "teachers".

In a similar vein to the action of teachers explained earlier when looking at the left-side context of the concordance lines, the right-side context of *teacher** in the *Daily Star* likewise exhibits a sense of sensationalism, as there are several instances which exude some kind of shock value to gain attention. Some examples of this are strings such as "teacher died", "teacher fired", "teacher has

been sacked" and "teacher gunned down". There are negative connotations to this type of narrative context. As noticed when looking at *The Guardian* corpus, the discourse patterns in its articles also had a rather pessimistic perception – however, *The Guardian* mostly discussed the dissatisfaction of teachers' circumstances and the need for change in their conditions, highlighting social issues teachers experience either individually or among their profession. Adversely to this, the *Daily Star* clearly has a more exaggerating approach, focusing similarly on pessimistic stories, but instead of social issues within the field of education, the articles represent teachers on a more personal, out-of-work level while simultaneously maintaining the intention of generating an impact among its readers, thus more easily provoking reactions from its audience. Table 6 illustrates some of the concordance lines that can be affiliated with such motifs as described in this paragraph.

Left context	Hit	Right Context
Teacher training 'bad fit'.	*Teacher*	**banned** for 3yrs
A retired	*teacher*	nearly **died** when she drank
were among those hit and their	*teacher*	**died** at the scene.
Porno probe	*teacher*	**fired**
school aged children and their	*teachers*	**gunned down** – wants politicians
A grammar school	*teacher*	**has been sacked** after
it is very ignorant of the	*teacher*	**to discriminate** against him
Former gymnastics	*teacher*	who **abused** students as young
gunman killed 16 children and their	*teacher*	in the gym hall before **shooting**

Table 6: Concordance lines of *teacher** in the *Daily Star*

While the *Daily Star* seems to talk about teachers in a manner that generates 'buzz', not all the topics it covers regarding teachers have negative connotations. In some instances, similar sensationalist approaches are reached by reporting more positive stories, with teachers portrayed as heroes. The *Daily Star* corpus reflects this in strings like "teacher battled to save his life" and "teacher tried to save schoolboy". However, when discussing teachers, the portrayal is often quite polarized and clear-cut: based on the nature of their profession, teachers are usually depicted as either villains or heroes and there is often no in-between.

Some of the actions teachers are portrayed carrying out were mentioned earlier in this section, with teachers often placed in awkward situations. In addition to this, it appears that the *Daily Star* articles seem to place teachers performing more physical activity than what was observed in *The Guardian* corpus, although the context does vary quite a lot. Nevertheless, as noted in Chapter 4.1, *said* is one of the most common collocates and verb pairings with the keyword *teacher** in the *Daily Star* corpus and *saying* can be considered a rather passive action. As such, not only are teachers partaking in physical activity in the *Daily Star* articles, but they are also frequently portrayed as taking part in verbal communication, in addition to observing or perceiving events within their profession. These verbal conversations are often portrayed as teachers' own comments about events they have experienced, but there are also instances where they are used to highlight challenges that teachers encounter during their daily lives – not only related to themselves but also their students. This suggests that like *The Guardian*, the *Daily Star* also takes part in reporting on real, everyday problems teachers may be experiencing, although not quite to the extent of *The Guardian*. This kind of passive action also suggests a narrative where, despite the common perception of teaching being a demanding profession involving significant physical and mental activity, news articles in the *Daily Star* tend to emphasize teachers in a more subdued role, touching only lightly on their physical actions. The following examples illustrate some of the different areas in which teachers are portrayed sometimes as mere commentators, partakers in research, or providers of their humble input into broader topics.

22. A *teacher* **said**: "He was carrying a small gun. I thought he was going to come out but he stayed inside a long time. He stabbed all the kids". (*Daily Star*, Nov. 12, 2022)

23. Research by education charity the Sutton Trust found 52% of *teachers* **said** there was an increase in pupils whose families could not afford lunch. (*Daily Star*, Dec. 2, 2022)

24. Nearly half of all *teachers* **say** they have personally supplied their female pupils with period products. (*Daily Star*, Aug. 26, 2022)

25. A PE *teacher* **said**: "Today was such a proud moment for everyone, not just myself." (*Daily Star*, Nov. 2, 2022)

As also noted earlier in this chapter, even though much of the narrative in the *Daily Star* appears to be somewhat sensationalist and focused on entertainment or attention-grabbing news reports, it should be noted that it is not completely out of 'proper', serious-tone stories regarding teachers' position and wellbeing either. In fact, the *Daily Star* articles do contain several genuinely informative news reports talking about teachers' struggles, such as their recruitment issues or shortages, as seen in the following passages:

26. **Teacher recruitment** has been *difficult* for many years but it is currently at *crisis point*. (*Daily Star*, Jul. 9, 2022)

27. Headteachers are *worried* about **a teacher shortage** next year - as a strike threat looms. (*Daily Star*, Jun. 27, 2022)

28. **Teachers** are *threatening* to join Britain's paralysing *pay strikes* as 40,000 transport workers brought the nation to a standstill. (*Daily Star*, Jun. 23, 2022)

Some of them also carry a more positive tone, such as example 29 below – although the pay rises discussed in that very example seem to not necessarily transcend to a positive effect in the real-world when it comes to the school budgets themselves, as *buckling* in this context refers to an unclear, even crumpling status of said budget. As such, this leaves the connotations and interpretations behind the discourse rather ambiguous:

29. Recent pay rises for **teachers** have added sixfigure sums to *buckling* school budgets. (*Daily Star*, Nov. 8, 2022)

The discourse patterns surrounding the excerpts above reveals that there is oftentimes discussion of the working conditions of teachers regardless of the publication, although based on the findings in this analysis, *The Guardian* seems to cover topics of such matters more often than the *Daily Star*. However, what is important to note is that this selection of examples is a rather limited sample taken from the *Daily Star* corpus, which was already smaller than *The Guardian* corpus. In addition, as discussed earlier in this section, much of the discourse in the *Daily Star* regarding teachers revolves

around 'shocking' or entertaining news. Additionally, it is crucial to bear in mind that if an event is significant or widespread enough, it will receive media coverage from various outlets regardless of their stature, background, reputation or genre. As such, while *The Guardian* seems to cover the professional conditions of teachers more extensively, the *Daily Star* also features its own share of articles addressing these issues related to teachers – however, this could also very well be due to ongoing general relevance of such topics, or because other news outlets have also reported on them and the tabloid follows suit.

Despite this, it seems particularly clear that the general discourse about teachers' conditions across both publications often carries negative connotations. This implies that teachers are quite frequently portrayed as facing pressure, challenges, and dissatisfaction with their own well-being, which in turn also reflects the media's tendency to focus on negative news stories. Not only does this suggest that the ideology of "bad news sells" is, in fact, accurate, it also emphasizes the way media utilizes its power: by pertaining a major role in shaping the narrative around teachers for the general public, or at least the publications' own committed audiences. Even though positive aspects of teachers' profession seem to be rarely reported, the articles revolving around their societal issues do also occasionally imply hopefulness and optimism, and also promote a strong sense of teachers preparing to take action and advocate for their personal improvements, which in turn suggests a forward-looking attitude. In addition, there are also some select articles which paint teachers as heroes, oftentimes in the eyes of their own students.

As a final note regarding the *Daily Star* articles, similarly to the articles gathered from *The Guardian*, the *Daily Star* corpus also covers a wide range of topics, spanning from serious news to entertainment, film and book reviews, and synopses. Because of these latter types of articles, some of the references in the corpus related to teachers are either placed in a fictional setting or otherwise do not accurately depict real-life teaching environments. This analysis has placed less emphasis on

instances where the context of teachers was clearly associated with fictional scenarios that could not be readily connected to real-life situations, as these were deemed to not contribute much into recognizing relevant discourse patterns regarding teachers. This choice of approach has allowed to conduct a more straightforward examination of the overall discourse surrounding teachers in the *Daily Star* - a similar approach as was taken with the analysis of *The Guardian*.

5 DISCUSSION

This chapter will go over the most prominent and significant findings derived from the analysis presented in the previous chapter. The results discussed in this chapter will not only lay out any noteworthy patterns of discourse related to teachers in *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star* but will also compile instances of similar narrative contexts between the two publications, as well as review potential differences between them. Additionally, this chapter will also explore other potential connections between the two publications regarding teacher-related discourse and finally attempt to provide answers to the research questions, which were introduced in the introduction:

1. In what ways are teachers portrayed and discussed in news media?
2. What kinds of differences are there in the representation of teachers between *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star*?
3. What are the potential implications of such representations of teachers based on the analysis?

After analyzing the specialized corpora consisting of articles gathered from both *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star*, several noticeable observations can be made. Both publications feature a number of articles related to teachers, most of which directly address them, but some which also indirectly reference them. However, there appears to be some variety in the ways teachers are portrayed in the articles across the two publications. By utilizing the corpus-based discourse analysis methods described in the theoretical background section and by conducting research regarding collocation and context as well as carrying out manual concordance line analysis, certain patterns are discernable in both publications, while others differ between the two.

The previous chapter's analysis primarily focused on the context in which teachers are depicted in within the news articles and concentrated in examining the textual elements surrounding them. These elements include grammatical features, such as instances of co-occurrence and groupings with the conjunction *and,* alongside verb structures which indicate actions performed by teachers, or actions directed towards them. Additionally, the analysis explored prominent and underlying discourse topics concerning teachers within news media. First, some of the most frequently occurring collocates in both publications in relation to the keyword *teacher** were looked at, which mostly revealed rather unsurprising associations: some of the most common collocates between both *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star* were *school, children* and *kids* and descriptive elements of various types of teachers, such as *primary* and *PE*. However, the collocate list also unveiled noteworthy associations with terms like *said* and *workers*, suggesting recognizable discourse patterns related to teachers' roles as 'commentators' in many events as well as their connections to other professions. This inspection of collocates acted as a baseline for further analysis of the data.

When looking at the findings of further analysis, after examining the representation of teachers in news media, it becomes evident that both *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star* regularly depict teachers in challenging or unflattering situations. They often highlight the difficulties teachers face in their professional and personal lives, place them in unfavorable positions within larger groups of professionals, or position them in potentially 'controversial' situations where they are perceived as having made mistakes. It seems to be quite apparent that *The Guardian* tends to feature more news stories related to societal issues involving teachers, whereas the *Daily Star* presents teachers in more sensational, entertaining, or casual circumstances. Nevertheless, whether the articles pertain to teachers advocating for change in their working conditions, their involvement in criminal activities or being victims of violation, an overarching theme surrounding the discourse in the articles appears

to be largely negative in tone. This type of pattern suggests that reporting about teachers in a 'distressing' state is deemed more newsworthy than positive coverage.

As mentioned in the theoretical framework (Chapter 2), news media holds quite significant power in the sense that it aids in shaping the audience's perception of topics that are reported about. Based on the findings, both *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star* seem to convey that teachers often experience hardship or go unappreciated, at least to some extent. Although this kind of discourse does also serve a purpose in raising awareness of teachers' potential difficulties to a broader audience, it simultaneously places teachers under a shadow of negativity – perhaps sometimes to an unnecessary degree. This oftentimes overshadows the occasional news which highlight positive aspects of the teachers' profession. When considering these hardships that teachers face within their work field, it can be noticed that teachers are not alone – in fact, they often find themselves in the company of other professions that are considered equally significant in society, such as nurses or firefighters. This kind of grouping is more prevalent in *The Guardian*, as is the attention given to the proficiency of teachers, which appears to be more often under scrutiny in the articles in *The Guardian* compared to the ones in the *Daily Star*. Based on these findings, it can be deduced that *The Guardian* appears to be more attuned to issues related to questioning the competence of teachers as well as accentuating their unsatisfactory work conditions, with also correlating teachers to other professions.

In both publications, teachers are quite consistently described in some way, whether as educators on specific subjects or partakers in extracurricular activities. In addition, adjectives are frequently used to further describe teachers. These aspects highlight the apparent importance of conveying to readers what particular types of teachers are being talked about. The apparent emphasis on this seems to stem from the likelihood that the general public, or the readers of the news articles, already hold particular and personal assumptions about teachers beforehand, thus, in the news it may be seen as relevant to make it clear what kind of teachers are in question. By specifying the type of

teachers being talked about, it may be easier for readers to perceive them in a manner they are intended to be perceived as, especially if a particular teacher is placed within an unexpected context. Reporting about 'teachers' in general terms can make their representation rather straightforward, and as such, the specification of the particular kinds of teachers may even be considered a necessity. On the other hand, specifying the role of teachers in the news also implies that the status of teachers hold a certain level of importance for them to be separately expressed. This may be connected to the overall context of the articles as well, as specific identification of teachers is probably required in specific contexts – especially in cases where teachers are found to have acted in ways which are generally unexpected of their profession.

Taking a brief look at the adjectives used in relation to teachers, both publications appear to make use of them to some degree, as was noted earlier in the analysis section. The overall sample of adjectives used in conjunction with teachers is rather small, however based on the findings, it is still rather evident that *The Guardian* utilizes adjectives more frequently than the *Daily Star* – although the push to describe teachers in some way or another is still quite persistent in both. Notably, when comparing the adjectives used across both publications, a distinction in tone becomes apparent. As observed in the analysis section, the *Daily Star* tends to include more adjectives that could be categorized as negative when describing teachers, while *The Guardian* seems to lean more towards positively classified ones. This aligns with the conception of tabloids having the habit of seeking attention as opposed to the serious and informative approach of broadsheets. Table 7 below illustrates a selection of adjectives from both publications, categorizing them into negative, neutral, and positive, which further highlights some of the distinctions between the two. It could be argued that some of the adjectives placed in the neutral category could also be considered as negative in correlation with teachers, such as *old*, *middle-aged* or *pregnant*, as teachers are more often than not expected to be in

efficient and competent working condition – yet this would only further emphasize the point made regarding the usage of positive and negative adjectives across the publications.

Adjectives associated with teachers in *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star*					
Positive		Neutral		Negative	
The Guardian	*Daily Star*	*The Guardian*	*Daily Star*	*The Guardian*	*Daily Star*
beloved dedicated committed effective excellent encouraging generous qualified supportive sympathetic wonderful	great qualified talented trusted	former indigenous middle-aged old retired young	former old pregnant young	obese	hapless rude intimidating overworked underpaid useless

Table 7: Adjectives associated with teachers in *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star*

While the majority of the descriptions of teachers are related to educational areas, some of the articles feature teachers in settings outside of the classroom, especially in the *Daily Star*. Additionally, its news coverage often extends beyond incidents that are typically associated with teachers, whereas *The Guardian* seems to more strongly focus on news within the educational sphere. As such, *The Guardian* tends to report more on political, societal, and occupational matters concerning teachers. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the majority of teachers discussed in both publications are primarily associated with the school setting – in fact, the most common collocates associated with *teacher** occur within the context of school. However, what cannot be disregarded is the fact that teachers are not exclusively portrayed within the school environment. The news coverage surrounding teachers varies between *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star*, but what can generally be noted is that more social or political issues are linked to *school teachers* specifically, whereas news reports about other types of teachers tend to be more generic and less pertaining to society. News articles about teachers outside of the typical school setting are more prominent in the *Daily Star*,

which suggests that the tabloid seems to be more open to broaden its discourse about teachers beyond their role in the classroom, emphasizing individuals who are identified as teachers beyond the typical school-related connections. In addition, when considering the representation of individual teachers, it is interesting to note that in both publications the news articles typically concentrate on individual teachers and only rarely address any broader groups of professionals, such as the "teachers' union".

As mentioned in the analysis section, teacher-related issues often carry a negative connotation, primarily centered on their professional workplace challenges. This theme is also quite evident when examining the actions teachers are portrayed performing, a topic explored in both publications' analysis sections. Teachers' actions tend to lean towards being more passive than active, although this tendency appears to be linked to the specific circumstances in which teachers are placed in in the news articles. Regarding some of the societal issues represented within the teaching environment, such as teacher shortages and salary cuts, teachers are often portrayed in an almost 'powerless' role: they *attempt* to have an impact on change, yet they do not always achieve their desired outcomes. Despite this, teachers are still depicted as making an effort or advocating for change on their own behalf.

This kind of passive role seems to be more dominant in relation to societal issues specifically, as when looking at news articles that involve teachers in downright criminal activities, they are more commonly illustrated as active participants or taking on more dynamic roles. In these instances, teachers are not only engaging in actions themselves, but are also on the receiving end of the actions in question. This type of contrast between teachers' roles is particularly visible in the *Daily Star* articles, which may not come across as surprising, given that it is a publication acknowledged for its 'sensational' news stories, including reports on crimes such as murders and stabbings – which are actions teachers are typically not associated with, thus, they inherently receive more attention from the reading audience because of their unexpectedness.

Not all news reporting about teachers falls into a negative category, however. There are multiple examples of articles where teachers are portrayed in a positive light. These news stories often revolve around teachers' 'heroic' actions, such as reports highlighting their generous or compassionate acts for the benefit of their students, recognition of their expertise or their overall impact on communal factors. This suggests that the value of teachers is still somewhat preserved among both journalists and the consumers of the news articles, despite teachers often being portrayed as part of unfortunate events. The perspective regarding teachers, however, is often clear-cut, where teachers are either part of something good or something bad, and rarely are they placed in the middle of such a spectrum. When examining the overall discourse patterns found in the collected data, the negative to neutral stories tend to outweigh the positive ones. Sometimes a more negative approach is justified, however, as there are also a significant number of articles that rightfully address teachers being out of line or being part of wrongful activities. Therefore, despite teachers' typical reputation as compassionate, well-educated and sincere professionals, they are not completely immune to making poor decisions either – they, too, are humans after all.

Both *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star* enjoy wide readership and regularly produce articles to this day. Thus, it is important to acknowledge that the specialized corpora gathered for this analysis only represents a limited selection of articles, despite being assembled by careful planning. However, the data sample has been sufficient enough in determining that specific, recurring discourse patterns emerge in the portrayal of teachers in news articles, as reviewed in the preceding paragraphs. Some broader, distinguishable implications can also be noticed. Looking at the articles on a more general level, *The Guardian* stands out for its more deliberate, professional articles, while the *Daily Star*, while also producing professional content, is not afraid to venture into more entertaining territory, even regarding teachers. This distinction creates a rather significant difference between the two publications.

When concentrating specifically on the representation of teachers, although there are occasions when the topics covered in *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star* align, what was already established is that the former tends to focus more on professional and educational areas of teacher-related issues, whereas the *Daily Star* covers more miscellaneous subjects, often opting for a more 'scandalous' approach as can be seen in teachers committing criminal acts or taking part in unsolicited action. Additionally, some other minor differences between the publications can be seen in how teachers are described, with the *Daily Star* relying on negative adjectives or no descriptions at all, whereas *The Guardian* describes them in a more conventional manner. Furthermore, the portrayal of teachers' actions sees variation depending on the news context, often casting teachers in a more passive role – active participation is more prominent in the *Daily Star*.

When considering the perceptions of previous research concerning the portrayals of teachers in news media (see Chapter 2.3), the findings in the analysis of this thesis seem to align with some of the typical patterns recognized in discussions about teachers in the news. Based on Blackmore's (2007) notions of the news media often concentrating on the challenges faced by schools, and as a result of that, the challenges experienced by teachers, the representation of teachers in the news seems to oftentimes rely on ongoing issues in their work field. Teachers are rather frequently portrayed as lacking authority in governance-related matters. In the instances where individual teachers are discussed, it is often in relation to their personal well-being, their interactions with their students or other children – or placed in a context not related to schools or the educational sphere at all. The tendency to report on urgent matters, recent developments and negative aspects of teachers' work is something the news media often leans towards, as these aspects are perceived to be more 'newsworthy' and more captivating in order to capture the attention of readers. In addition, in both *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star*, individual teachers themselves seem to seldom take an active role

in shaping the discourse or clarifying their issues – instead, they are often either portrayed as nameless entities, particular types of educators or commentators providing occasional spontaneous statements.

While it may prove challenging to single out specific reasons or implications behind these kinds of portrayals of teachers in the news media, some valuable insights can be deduced from the findings. As previously noted, discussion about the challenges faced by teachers not only sheds light on important topics but also raises awareness of teachers' current circumstances among the readers of the publications, who may or may not be aware of these ongoing issues beforehand. Although this awareness may not contribute to immediate solutions in 'real life', it does serve an important purpose in simply drawing attention to the matters. However, as such issues are often deemed negative in tone, a large amount of teacher-related news discourse constantly revolving around these kinds of challenges could maintain an unjust representation of teachers. Teachers play a crucial role in guiding and helping people from their youth to adulthood, and because of this, one might expect a more positive discourse surrounding their profession. On the other hand, the role of teachers in individuals' lives often remains somewhat impersonal, and more often than not teachers are either forgotten about later in life or, depending on the situation, they may also leave unfavorable memories to some people. As such, every individual has their own attitude towards teachers, which in turn may influence how readers perceive the representation of teachers in the news, regardless of how the journalists or news articles themselves intend to portray them. Teachers seem to share similar portrayals in the news with other professions in the public sphere, and overall, the discourse appears to be rather one-dimensional in nature.

6 CONCLUSION

Teachers play a fundamental role in the lives of individuals. As such, most people form personal impressions of their teachers, with some experiencing more meaningful impacts and others having more indirect influences in their lives. These pre-existing impressions in mind, are they in any way influenced by the media and its portrayal of teachers in news coverage? Or rather, how are teachers represented in the news media in general? News media has a rather significant role in shaping the opinions of its audience, which suggests that there may very well be a possibility of teacher-related discourse influencing the consumers of news media in some way or another. While an examination of how teachers are depicted in news media and what kind of discourse surrounds them might initially appear quite trivial, it is, in fact, quite a valuable source of information regarding the relationship between linguistic elements and social matters, and how they together are able to shape up overarching discourses around specific topics. This study has provided insights into how the news media discusses the profession of teachers and whether this portrayal benefits or hinders the perception of teachers, not only to the audiences of news media, but also to teachers themselves.

This research has analyzed a selection of news articles sourced from two British publications, *The Guardian* and the *Daily Star* – a broadsheet paper and a tabloid. This analysis was executed after constructing specialized corpora with the aim of a deeper examination of the discourse surrounding teachers within news media. Notably, the findings reveal that teachers are featured in a variety of contexts, the majority of which are centered, unsurprisingly, around the school environment. In particular, *The Guardian* articles seem to predominantly illustrate the challenges faced by teachers within their workplace, such as their working conditions or the competency of their profession. While the *Daily Star* also refers to instances of such discussions, it, on the other hand, appears to more frequently feature discourse about teachers in non-school settings. What appears to be rather

consistent regarding the narrative of teacher-related news across both publications, however, is the negative connotations they carry. This negativity stems from the facts that teachers consider themselves, their work and efforts to be underappreciated – or contrarily; teachers are held to such standards that when being portrayed in unexpected situations such as incidents involving violence, these incidents seem to be newsworthy in and of themselves. As such, what can be concluded is that news coverage typically features teachers when there are negative events related to them or their profession. Based on the findings, while positive aspects of teachers are occasionally noted in the news, they are rarely highlighted unless they involve something rather extraordinary or heroic, such as a teacher "saving the day". Teachers are also often portrayed in more passive roles in news stories, such as only making attempts in accomplishing change in certain areas of their work or speaking up their minds of such matters, but simultaneously facing challenges in truly achieving these goals. Though interestingly, teachers are depicted on taking a more active role in those news articles which involve them in crises or criminal incidents.

In general, it appears that teachers do not receive much attention in the news in the first place. The attention that is given, however, often revolves around the discourse of teachers being represented as 'powerless'. Even in news articles which aim to highlight positive aspects of teaching, the overall context is often less than encouraging. This study examined two distinct publications, which share some similarities but mostly appear to portray teachers in rather predominant ways: as individuals seeking change in their profession in *The Guardian* and as individuals placed in unexpected circumstances in the *Daily Star*.

The goal of this study was to identify the ways teachers are portrayed in news media and identify potential patterns in teacher-related discourse in the news for a comprehensive depiction of teachers' representation. Through the analysis, it can be noted that while teacher-related news content can vary considerably, it seems to also ensure that teachers' stories, challenges, mistakes as well as

both successes and failures receive attention and acknowledgment. This could ultimately lead to a better understanding of the issues not only teachers face, but what the larger concepts of education and schooling also face. Nevertheless, it could be argued that it would be reasonable for more teachers to be featured in the news for their positive accomplishments and efforts as well, receiving the recognition they would likely deserve.

What must be noted is that this study primarily focused on two British publications within a rather limited time frame, taking place quite recently from mid to late 2022. As such, the analysis and outcomes could definitely vary under different circumstances, such as within a more extended time frame, a larger number of articles in the data, or if different types of publications were included, potentially shifting away from broadsheets and tabloids to other alternative forms of media. Likewise, if any national or even global phenomena regarding teachers should emerge, they would also likely distort the conclusions of such an analysis depending on the time frame of the data gathered. Furthermore, conducting a similar study in a different geographical location, for example the United States, might reveal distinct discourse patterns not discovered in this study – in fact, conducting a similar study in a different geographical area could lead to a broader, global-level discussion on the portrayal of teachers, potentially unveiling new narrative themes regarding teachers in general and how readers perceive them in different parts of the world. Overall, this study has presented some insight as to the most significant elements of discourse in news media regarding teachers, which also aids in understanding the ways other professions in general may be portrayed in the news.

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