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**THE REPRESENTATION OF TEACHERS IN THE HEADLINES OF  
*POSTIMEES* AND THE *TIMES*, 2008–2012**

MA thesis

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## ABSTRACT

The poor social position of Estonian teachers has been a problem for decades. The profession is not considered desirable due to low income and disproportionate workload. This affects teachers' professional identity as well as the attitudes towards teachers which circulate in the society. News media, as a major influence on public opinion, is in the position to shape the audience's perception of teachers. Therefore, it is worthwhile to examine teacher representation in popular newspapers with large readerships. The aim of the thesis is to identify whether teachers as a social group tend to be represented as active or passive participants in processes taking place in society. The paper presents an analysis of headlines concerning teachers, published in the online versions of *Postimees* and the *Times* from 2008 to 2012.

The Introduction provides an overview of the role of teachers in society and describes their current social position in Estonia and other countries. The first chapter introduces studies on teacher representation that have been carried out over the last ten years. It also addresses the role and characteristic features of headlines as a genre. The second chapter describes the methodology used (critical discourse analysis) and the specific elements of the method that are employed in the analysis (transitivity, lexical selection). This is followed by data analysis and discussion of the results. The data includes two corpora of headlines from the electronic versions of *Postimees* and the *Times*. The detected patterns of transitivity and recurring lexical choices are discussed. The analysis also points out prominent issues that emerge in connection with teachers in the two papers over the five-year period. The Conclusion provides the main findings of the analysis.

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## Introduction

The idea to investigate the representation of teachers was motivated by a paradox that has characterised Estonian education for the past decades. On the one hand, emphasis is placed on school as a fundamental institution of society because the education system is the primary means for shaping citizens and creating social capital. School socialises young people by teaching them social values and norms which form the basis of their future participation in society. On the other hand, the role of the teacher, who is supposed to transmit these vital qualities to students, has remained ambiguous. Teachers are celebrated on occasions related to education, but they also remain underpaid and the profession does not have an attractive social image. Estonian teachers are not satisfied with their status because they are poorly paid and overburdened. The low reputation of the profession challenges teachers' self-confidence and social position. The instability of teachers' position and their low status jeopardise the goals of education because for teaching to be effective, teachers should be seen as authoritative.

The dissonance has been acknowledged as in 2011 the Estonian Cooperation Assembly, Estonian Education Forum and Ministry of Education and Research developed the Estonian Education Strategy for the years 2012 to 2020 which lists the principal challenges facing Estonian education. One of the five crucial problems addressed in the strategy is the need to improve the position and reputation of teachers. The importance of education is also signalled by continuous reforms in the area.

Analysing the position of teachers, Ruus (2005) uses Bourdieu's concept of social field according to which the position of a social group is determined by their economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital. She concludes that the position of Estonian teachers is yet to be established, for teachers themselves as well as for the society (Ruus 2005: 15).

She also mentions that teachers lack all of the capitals needed for the improvement of their position. They do not have symbolic capital (poor reputation), social capital (insufficient lobbying), probably not much cultural capital (lack of professionalism and learnedness) and certainly no economic capital (unsatisfactory income) (ibid.).

Several phenomena might have caused the current unfavourable position of Estonian teachers. One of the reasons could be the spirit of free-market economy which has dominated in Estonian society since the 1990s, as a result of which teachers were expected to assume the role of customer service representatives. This attitude confused teachers about their professional identity and undermined their authority. Another problem concerning Estonian education is the feminisation of schools. Kuurme (2013: 18) states that in the situation where most teachers are women, boys do not perceive education as a desirable walk of life. There is a shortage of male teachers because of low income and poor prestige of the profession. The overwhelming majority of teachers are women because they are more willing to settle for lower pay and poorer working conditions and are also less likely to fight for their rights than men (it is usually the few male teachers who write articles in newspapers and express their opinions in forums). As a result of this passivity in presenting their views, teachers remain represented by people who do not work at school. Tankler (2009: 3), a journalist and former teacher, suggests that teachers themselves should take more initiative to inform the public about who they are and what their work involves, not let others do it for them. He believes that in order to improve teachers' reputation, media coverage ought to focus on the positive instead of transmitting messages of problems.

Estonia is not the only country facing this situation. The professional identity of teachers is problematic in many countries going through educational reforms. Hargreaves and Shirley (2011: 1) present a pessimistic view of the status of teachers, suggesting that

“Teachers are the end-point of educational reform – the last to hear, the last to know, the last to speak. They are mainly the objects of reform, not its participants”. The authors point out the contradiction that, on the one hand, policy-makers acknowledge teachers but at the same time assume that teachers are not fit to make decisions about the education system.

Lefstein and Perath (2014: 33) also express concern over the lack of teacher participation in educational processes. They focus on “teacher voice” and report that in Western countries it has been neglected for decades. The authors refer to studies which suggest that the situation has recently become even worse with the growth of standardisation and testing, because teachers are blamed for students' poor results (Lefstein and Perath 2014: 34). The authors list arguments why it is important to empower teacher voice. For instance, teachers know the process of learning and teaching better than anyone. They are also the ones who implement changes in the education system, therefore, in order to be successful, they should be convinced that the reforms are justified. If teachers were included in the decision-making, they would be more likely to accept and carry out the reforms (ibid.).

News media, as the fourth estate, is a major influence on public opinion. Newspapers and especially their online versions are the primary source of information for a growing number of people. Therefore, the ideas circulated by the press shape the readers' perception of what is happening in the world around them. Entman (1993: 52–53) identifies two important aspects of communicative texts (such as news): selection and salience. By selection he means that certain information is transmitted to the receivers while other issues are left in the background. Salience refers to highlighting particular information, so that it becomes more memorable to the audience, for example, by repetition or encouraging associations. Consequently, issues which are selected for news coverage and presented in a memorable way, appear relevant, whereas problems ignored

by the press do not hold a prominent place in the consciousness of the audience. Bell (1991: 2) remarks that news “carry the stories and images of our day”. This means that news media is in the position to influence the choice of stories and images included in our everyday reality and affects our perception of them.

The selection of issues to be covered in the press is a general, macro-level choice, whereas on the micro-level journalists make specific linguistic choices, which can prove equally significant. Bell (*ibid.*) believes that an essential part of the news are value judgements which are reflected in the language. In his opinion “one of the main reasons why researchers have studied media language is interest in how media language affects attitudes and opinions in society through the way it presents people and issues” (Bell 1991: 4). Therefore, examining media language provides information about how we perceive different matters and social groups.

Headlines are the most prominent features of newspaper articles which perform several functions, for instance, attract attention and inform the audience of the content of the news. Headlines are said to contain the most pertinent information of the story (Bowles and Borden 1997, quoted in Wang 2009: 756). According to Richardson (2007: 197) “examination of the content of the headlines is a useful first approach to the analysis of newspaper outputs.” Reah (1998: 28) believes that in addition to arousing interest, headlines can also serve the purpose of influencing the opinion of readers. She calls this the persuasive function of headlines and refers to headlines as “opinion manipulators” (*ibid.*). The persuasive effect is achieved by employing various linguistic tools. In addition to linguistic devices one could also analyse corpora of newspaper headlines to conduct a longitudinal study in order to identify the frequency of headlines on certain topics. According to Develotte and Rechniewski (2001) this provides information about how relevant issues have been considered over time.

The aim of the thesis is to determine whether teachers are mostly represented as active or passive participants in the processes taking place in society as well as identify the similarities and differences of teacher representation in popular daily papers in Estonia and the UK. In addition to active and passive representation, the thesis also focuses on lexical choices in order to ascertain the associations readers are encouraged to make in connection with teachers. It is important to carry out this research because the way the profession is portrayed in the news affects how society and teachers themselves perceive their position. In order to examine teacher representation, two corpora of headlines from the electronic versions of *Postimees* and the *Times* were collected. The period covers five years, from 2008 to 2012. The headlines were analysed using elements of critical discourse analysis (transitivity, lexical selection), as proposed by Roger Fowler and modified by later scholars, to get information about the active and passive roles of teachers in the news. The thesis also points out which topics are usually discussed in connection with teachers.

Critical discourse analysis as a research method does not provide results which could be presented as “the objective truth”. Richardson (2007: 15) remarks that texts do not have one meaning which all readers perceive in the same way. He believes that each reading is a new process of interpretation which involves the author, text and recipient. Fairclough (2003: 14) emphasises that a text analysis can never be final because of the partiality of the process. He explains that the researcher always selects questions to ask about the text and neglects others. Consequently, the present thesis does not provide a definitive account of teacher representation but, as a case study, offers a view of trends that can be observed in two newspapers.

The research questions of the thesis is:

Are teachers represented in *Postimees* and the *Times* headlines as active agents or passive participants in the processes taking place in society?

The structure of the paper is as follows: the first chapter will discuss studies regarding the representation of teachers in the news that have been carried out in different countries. Similarities and differences as well as strengths and weaknesses will be pointed out. Also, headlines as an independent text type in newspapers, their characteristic features and significance will be discussed.

Chapter two will provide information about the general research framework of the study – critical discourse analysis. Firstly, the chapter will introduce elements of critical discourse analysis that are employed in the analysis. This is followed by the empirical part of the thesis, that is, the introduction of the corpus, data analysis and discussion of the results. The thesis will end with conclusions drawn from the discussion.

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **The Representation of Teachers**

The representation of teachers in the media has not been thoroughly investigated. Some authors who address the issue state that there is plenty of research concerning the image of teachers in films and works of fiction but studies about their representation in the press are scarce (Hansen, 2010; Shine and O'Donoghue, 2013). In Estonia, the situation appears to be the same. The BA thesis of Kersti Kukk (2009) compares the portrayal of teachers' work in two newspapers and the representation of teachers as a social group is briefly mentioned in the BA thesis of Signe Kaurson (2005) who discusses the representation of various social groups in *Eesti Päevaleht*. Research in Anglophone countries, however, has been steadily increasing during the last decade. Several studies have been published in the UK, USA and Australia which focus on the representation of teachers in newspapers.

This chapter introduces seven studies which explore the representation of teachers in the printed press. They all come from Anglophone countries and are fairly recent, published over the last ten years: the oldest in 2003 and the newest in 2013. These studies provide information about earlier media coverage of teachers in different countries as well as demonstrate how the representation of teachers has been analysed recently. The findings identify current trends in the portrayal of the profession. Two of the studies focus on British, two on US and three on Australian newspapers.

The articles establish the general context in which the examined news were published. In the British studies by Zemke (2007) and Hansen (2010) the time period under scrutiny is the 1990s which followed the Education Reform Act of 1988. This law changed the education system from a public service into a market based one, where schools had to

meet standards and compete for students. The studies by Cohen (2010) and Goldstein (2011) discuss news stories from US newspapers published around the time when the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law was implemented in 2002 and also the following years. This act is similar to the British reform as it is also based on standards and achieving measurable goals. The problematic nature of the legislation gave rise to considerable debate. Goldstein also discusses the conflict between the teachers' unions and state authorities as the teachers' unions are very visible in the US. Australian studies by Thomas (2003), Blackmore and Thorpe (2003), Shine and O'Donoghue (2013) refer to the restructuring of the education system and the move towards self-management of schools during the time when the analysed news were published. The authors often associate features of newspaper texts with particular policies introduced on the state level. Therefore it could be said that teachers receive media attention mostly in connection with political issues which influence them directly.

The studies vary according to the length of the analysed period. Hansen carried out a longitudinal analysis, focussing on the headlines published in British papers over 15 years (1991–2005). The relatively long duration of the selected period enabled him to make observations about the changes in the representation of teachers over the time span. He discovered that at the beginning of the nineties teachers were usually portrayed as troublesome but by the end of the decade and the following years teachers assumed the position of knowledgeable professionals. Zemke collected data from the 1990s. Goldstein's work provides information about eight years (2001–2008), Shine and O'Donoghue's about five years (1997–2001). The other researchers focussed on shorter periods, for example, Cohen limits her study to two years (2006–2007), Blackmore and Thorpe only one year. Thomas (2003) analysed the coverage of the release of one education report in 1993, so the period she analysed is the shortest. The studies that concentrate on short periods have a

clear focus on the immediate context of reform in the education system. Their aim is to make explicit the links between planned reforms and the newspapers' attempts to present these changes as positive and necessary steps. This may include the denigration of opposed parties who are in most cases teachers, teachers' unions and schools. The studies that deal with longer periods seem to place the main emphasis on the portrayal of teachers and are less concerned with, though not completely devoid of, the political background. The studies indicate that in the newspapers' presentation of the opposition between government and teachers, teachers usually do not have authority and they are subject to the decisions of state officials. Only Hansen's study demonstrates that there is a trend towards teachers being represented as active agents who have a voice.

The studies analyse a different number of newspapers. Three studies are dedicated to only one publication. The authors explain their choice of newspaper by emphasising its dominant role as the paper with most readers in their region. In Cohen's case, the *Chicago Tribune* "has the larger circulation of the two daily papers in Chicago" (Cohen 2010: 107). Shine and O'Donoghue (2013: 386) chose the *West Australian*, which is "the only local metropolitan daily newspaper servicing Western Australia, it has no direct competition". Newspapers with the largest audience are likely to shape the opinion of a number of people in the area. British studies included more sources: Zemke examined six newspapers and Hansen seven, but during the last three years of the period he analysed even 22 national and regional papers. In Zemke's case the sources were chosen according to their *typicality*, that is, how well they represent British national press in terms of reach, content and reputation (Zemke 2007: 35). Hansen's (2010: 30) explanation for including the particular newspapers was their availability in electronic form. The Australian study by Blackmore and Thorpe is an exception as the authors analyse different kinds of media: printed press, radio and television broadcasts.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) emerged as the most popular method of analysis in the articles covered in the literature review. Five out of the seven studies prefer this method, some authors combine it with other methods. For instance, in addition to CDA Hansen also makes use of corpus linguistics, Blackmore and Thorpe draw upon cultural studies and communication theory, while Goldstein adds communication theory, critical media studies, frame and visual analysis. It appears that CDA is the preferred tool for the analysis of newspaper articles in order to determine how a particular social group is presented in the news in relation to power and ideology. The method makes it possible to describe the relationship between different parties, in this case the positioning of state institutions and teachers. Combining other methods with CDA enables the authors to approach their research object from various perspectives and allows them to make generalisations which would not be sufficiently founded by using solely the tools of CDA.

Goldstein's analysis is distinct as she approaches data from several angles (communication theory, critical media studies, frame and visual analysis) and combines textual material with visual to see how particular frames are constructed. Frames are certain structures in our memory, systems of meaning that help us understand the world. Goldstein (2011: 553) coded textual features of two publications as expressing positive, negative, neutral or mixed attitudes towards teachers' unions. She also analysed features of visual images of teachers which are transmitted to the public through media and advertising. The author came to the conclusion that the media tends to show governing institutions and their reforms in a more favourable manner than teachers and teachers' unions.

The most multifaceted work discussed in this chapter is done by Blackmore and Thorpe as their research includes newspapers, radio and television programmes. Altogether five strategies were employed to collect information (interviewing principals of schools

which were the focus of newspaper articles, conducting content analysis to identify themes and relationships between stakeholders in education, selecting issues arising from radio education programmes, interviewing teachers to find out how they understand the role of media in education, interviewing school principals to determine how they as leaders perceive the influence of media). Education journalists were interviewed as well. This thorough case study enabled Blackmore and Thorpe to draw conclusions about the media's representation of various groups involved in education. According to their findings, teachers and principals were harshly criticised for opposing government policies. Teachers were also accused of laziness and were referred to, for example, as “bludgers' in schools who were “idling” away taxpayers’ dollars” (Blackmore and Thorpe 2003: 588).

The remaining two methods that are employed in the studies discussed here are grounded theory in Zemke's case and interpretivist theory in the research carried out by Shine and O'Donoghue. Zemke's main conclusion was that journalism tends to exaggerate stereotypical qualities of teachers (Zemke 2007: 34). Shine and O'Donoghue (2013: 390-393) found that newspapers portray teachers as uncooperative and unqualified. Although research methods vary, the results of these two studies do not differ considerably from those using CDA.

Despite differences in research methods, examined time span and location, the studies yield similar results. The majority of the studies state that newspapers tend to represent teachers in a negative way and position them as a social group without authority. Blackmore and Thorpe (2003: 591) claim that “media interest (and profit) comes mostly from conflict”, which makes it necessary for the media to show opposition. Most of the studies discussed here demonstrate the conflict between the governing bodies, who want to introduce reforms, and teachers, who are against changes. In this situation, the opinions of teachers are bound to receive less attention because, as Cohen (2010: 106) remarks, power

relations play an important role in media representations and the views of politicians usually have more news value. Iggers (1999: 102, quoted in Richardson 2007) remarks that “newspaper discourse has tended to be shaped by the elements in society that are powerful enough and organised enough to generate press materials, hold press conferences and otherwise garner media attention.” In Bourdieu's terms they are the groups that possess social capital.

An obvious similarity between the studies carried out in the USA and Australia is the newspapers' attempt to create the perception that education is “in crisis”. Cohen (2010: 105) describes the situation in the US by saying that newspapers send messages of crisis: they accuse schools and teachers of not preparing suitable workforce that is needed for the continuation of the economic prosperity of the country. Therefore, reforms are vital and common sense. Thomas noticed the same tendency in an Australian newspaper. She points out that the *Sunday Mail* constructed “a discourse of crisis in education” and placed teachers in a position without an authoritative voice (Thomas 2003: 19). In this particular case, the person with most authority to speak about educational matters was the newspaper's editor who appeared to represent the voice of the people (ibid.). Power relations are difficult to avoid when discussing media representation.

The studies by Blackmore and Thorpe (2003), Shine and O'Donoghue (2013) convince readers that negative media representation of teachers is especially problematic in Australia. Blackmore and Thorpe (2003: 588) talk about media bashing of teachers and principals. Teachers were said to be opposed to government policies because they were “conservative, union radicalists or just 'out-of-date’”. The Minister of Education even suggested that “Victorian schools contained numbers of excess teachers who were sitting around on their backsides all day doing nothing”. The authors of the article convey that the media they analysed creates a situation where teachers are “under surveillance” by

journalists, politicians and also parents (Blackmore and Thorpe 2003: 594). Blackmore and Thorpe (2003: 591) conclude that their analysis reveals “a discourse of power which positions teachers /.../ in particular ways, usually negatively”.

Shine and O'Donoghue (2013: 389-390) express similar ideas in their article. They state that “The *West Australian's* coverage of the introduction of standardised testing portrayed teachers as subversives, resistant to accountability measures, opposed to standardised testing and willing to undermine its introduction.” Based on their research the authors formulated five propositions about the teacher profession: teachers are to blame for declining educational standards, they fear being compared (by the new testing system) and therefore claim that the system has no value, they are under pressure and willing to undermine the reform (Shine and O'Donoghue 2013: 390-393). The authors sum up their research by saying that the *West Australian* mainly presented teachers in a negative way.

Thomas (2003) analysed the coverage of an educational report and demonstrated that in this context teachers were not able to express themselves in an authoritative voice. The editor of the newspaper assumed the role of an expert in educational matters. He also seemed to represent dissatisfied parents who were asked to express their opinion about the state of education. They were invited to participate in the debate and answer the editor's questions. This positioned parents as authoritative counterparts who judged the competence of teachers (Thomas 2003: 23). Parents criticised teachers as well as politicians and blamed them for the nation's poor state of education. Politicians were accused of lacking political courage, teachers of using wrong methods and resisting better ones that would improve the situation (Thomas 2003: 31). Once again the overall impression of teachers is negative.

Both authors who discuss the representation of teachers in US newspapers address the national NCLB policy which has caused a lot of debate. Goldstein (2011) analysed textual as well as visual material in two large publications. Her study shows that the *New*

*York Times* and *Time Magazine* attack teachers and their unions who are opposed to NCLB in order to convince the readers of the necessity of the law (Goldstein 2011: 543). In her article Goldstein counted occurrences of positive, negative and neutral comments about teachers' unions in the two publications. She concentrates more on teachers' unions but says that the negative portrayal of unions extends also to individual teachers. According to the results of her study, teachers' unions were presented negatively in more than half of the articles (Goldstein 2011: 566). The author concludes by saying that such negative coverage shows teachers as “anti-NCLB, anti school reform and anti child” (ibid.).

Cohen's (2010) focus is also on the opposition between education policy-makers and teachers. In her study she identifies two social languages to describe the way the two parties are represented in the *Chicago Tribune*. State officials employ the language of Accountability – using numbers, statistics and hard facts which all convey the necessity of the NCLB legislation (Cohen 2010: 110). Teachers, on the other hand, are portrayed using the language of Caring which focuses on descriptions and personal stories. These render teachers as people who are good at taking care of children, which in itself already implies that they are probably not the sort of people who are fit to make decisions about national policies (Cohen 2010: 113). Majority of the hard news stories Cohen analysed were written in the language of Accountability and only a few human interest stories used the language of Caring to portray individual teachers. As a result, teachers are left without an authoritative voice in their own field.

Zemke (2007: 28) makes a distinction between texts written about teachers by *insiders*, people who are involved with the sphere of education, and *outsiders*, journalists and others who express their opinion in newspapers. She compares literature and British newspaper articles about education. The author concludes that although educational literature and printed press cover the same topics, newspapers as outsiders, tend to

“exaggerate positive and negative, old and new characteristics of teachers” (Zemke 2007: 49). Her study shows that the press does not consider how teachers are influenced by changes of the education system but at the same time they are assigned responsibility for change (Zemke 2007: 48). This resonates with Lefstein and Perath's (2014: 34) concern over the fact that teachers are not involved in the design of the reforms they are expected to carry out.

Two Estonian studies were mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. In Kaurson's (2005) bachelor's thesis “The Representation of Estonian Social Groups in the Media – the Case of *Eesti Päevaleht* Newspaper” only a short paragraph concerns teachers. She combined content analysis – detecting social groups, the amount of media attention and types of features used (headlines, photos, placement of text, etc) – with grounded theory to examine the social position of various groups (Kaurson 2005: 100). Due to current events, most of the education news Kaurson collected concern changes in higher education, matters of general education are less prominent. She states that political and economic issues are foregrounded, especially the fact that politicians are strongly interfering with education and this causes discontent among those working in the sphere of culture and education (Kaurson 2005: 58). The author mentions that the typical image of a teacher in the newspaper is “the impeccable role model” whose duty is to teach ethical values (ibid.). This corresponds to Zemke's claim about newspapers emphasising the stereotypical view of teachers as well as Goldstein's (2011: 559) observation of the frequent occurrence of the “prim and proper” teacher image.

Kukk (2009) focuses on the tasks and roles of teachers as represented in two Estonian newspapers – *Postimees* and *Õpetajate Leht*. The first is a daily paper with a large readership, the second is mainly oriented to teachers. The author focuses on opinion articles and conducts a content analysis. The results suggest that both papers convey the

idea that a teacher's most important task is to instruct and motivate students. Essential characteristics teachers ought to possess, according to the papers, are competence and authority. Kukk (2009: 63) found that both newspapers describe teachers as incompetent. However, authors of the articles assessed teachers' overall capabilities positively more often than negatively (Kukk 2009: 62). Another conclusion is that *Postimees* expresses slightly more critical judgements (Kukk 2009: 65). This could be expected as the main audience of *Õpetajate Leht* are teachers and the paper expresses sympathy towards them.

The study most similar to the present one is carried out by Hansen (2010). His research on the headlines of several British newspapers over 15 years shows signs of change in the representation of teachers: at the beginning of 1990s they were usually portrayed as passive targets of government actions but by the end of the decade they had assumed the position of agents. Hansen (2010: 28) suggests there is a correlation between the nature of media coverage and public perceptions of the teacher profession which can be determined by opinion polls. The author claims that the news media creates “climates of opinion” and guides public debates (ibid.). Therefore it is important to analyse the way these conceptions are constructed and acknowledge the impact they have on the readership. For instance, the studies introduced above by Goldstein (2011) and Cohen (2010) concerning the USA and by Shine and O'Donoghue (2013), Blackmore and Thorpe (2003) regarding Australia, showed that the media created “a climate of crisis” which made the readers nervous and eager to push through reforms.

Throughout the period 1991–2005 Hansen sampled headlines of three year-clusters using an interval of 15 days. This procedure led to a corpus of 5419 headlines. He analysed lexical and syntactical patterns associated with the keywords 'teacher' and 'teachers'. The lexical part of the study investigates collocations in headlines to find out which words are most often associated with the keywords. Hansen (2010: 29) claims that recurring

connections with other words can play a significant role in the process of constructing meaning, that is to say, certain vocabulary invokes certain discourses (e.g., battle). The author used a concordance computer programme to detect most frequent collocations and categorised them as positive or negative. The results indicate that most often teachers are “in trouble”, as he named the category, because 'teacher' collocates mainly with words like 'jail', 'air-gun', 'rape', 'murder', etc. Teachers are both victims and aggressors in these incidences. Hansen (2010: 32) explains that this does not mean that teachers generally tend to use air-guns or end up in jail but extreme cases receive more media attention than everyday matters. Another frequent collocation according to his analysis is 'favourite'. It is because one newspaper had a section about the favourite teachers of celebrities. Consequently, Hansen emphasises that findings of collocation analysis ought to be interpreted critically.

As for the analysis of syntactic patterns, Hansen focussed on the subject/agent and object/target position of teachers. The results indicate that there is a growing tendency to present teachers as active agents. Changes in syntactic patterns are related to the change of tone in newspaper headlines. According to Hansen (2010: 34), “troublesome teachers” of the 1990s were replaced by active, knowledgeable professionals of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Hence, it can be said that out of all the studies discussed in this chapter, Hansen's is the only one showing signs of positive change in the representation of teachers in newspapers. He states: “Earlier news coverage of the teacher bashing mould /.../ has given way to a more supportive and less confrontational style of reporting, which gives teachers a prominent voice and recognises, as genuine, the problems and pressures faced by teachers” (Hansen 2010: 37).

## **Newspaper headlines**

Kronrod and Engel (2001: 686) explain that newspaper headlines are written in a particular style which is characterised by a high level of information in a concise form. It is said that headlines are written in a telegraphic style to communicate several prominent details of the story but take up little space in the paper (Bell, 1991: 185; Reah, 1998: 13).

Headlines are usually assigned two main roles: provide a summary of the news and attract the attention of readers. Conboy (2007: 13) adds a third purpose of signalling the content and style of the newspaper. Quality newspapers typically prefer informative headlines, whereas tabloids tend to create sensation to appeal to the readers. This is achieved by using various techniques, like colloquialisms, block letters, word-play. According to Dor (2003: 697) quality newspapers may choose not to use summarising headlines but prefer to highlight a specific detail in the story or use someone's quotation. Bell (1991: 189) explains that highlighting an aspect that is not prominent in the story is especially telling as it assigns more news value to the detail. As the present study addresses only headlines, this aspect cannot be commented on.

Dor (2003: 695) points out that researchers who are interested in headlines often focus on the surface structure, for instance, if the headlines are statements, questions or exclamations, whether they are simple or complex sentences, are parts of sentences omitted or some other aspects of form. Critical discourse analysts go further in their research and consider the implications of surface structure. They focus their attention on the effect of linguistic features of headlines in order to determine how newspapers present information to the audience.

Attracting attention is a very important task of the headline because most readers do not read all the articles in a newspaper but make a selection based on which stories seem

interesting. In most cases this decision is made by scanning the headlines. Crystal (1969:174, quoted in Šipošová 2011) suggests that “the function of headlining is complex: headlines have to contain a clear, succinct and if possible intriguing message, to kindle a spark of interest in the potential reader, who, on average, is a person whose eye moves swiftly down a page and stops when something catches his attention.” This fits the description of a “skilled newspaper reader” provided by Dor (2003: 695). This is a reader who spends most of his or her reading time scanning headlines. Taiwo (2007: 222) also states that the number of people who scan headlines far surpasses the number of those who actually read the articles.

Only scanning headlines is even more common in the case of online news because on the Internet one has to click on the headline for the article to open and therefore getting the reader to make that click is of vital importance. Nowadays eye-tracking studies are conducted to find out which features (images, font, location on screen) invite viewers of web pages to stop scanning and actually read the text (see Holmqvist et al, 2003; Lee and Treadwell, 2013). The results of a study carried out by an expert of web usability Jakob Nielsen, suggest there are three main characteristics that describe online readers: they look for content which is relevant, they pay more attention to the top of the page and they look at headings, terms in bold and images (Lee and Treadwell 2013: 268). The last point demonstrates that headlines could be analysed as one of the main devices which appeal to readers of online newspapers.

Headlines attract attention with conspicuous wording or vagueness which arouses curiosity. Mihelson (2012: 10) draws attention to the similarities between online headlines and advertisements: both of them try to inform readers and get them to “consume the product”. Mihelson (2012) conducted a study to find out the reasons that make people click on the headlines and discovered that readers are attracted to headlines which are personally

relevant, evoke general human interest (e.g., the weather), are abstract or unusual. As for the level of abstraction in headlines, Mihelson (2012: 46) reports that it works as an appealing feature only to a certain extent: some readers are put off by vagueness, others are intrigued and want to find out more. Thus, a successful headline informs the reader of the content of the article but does not reveal everything, so that the reader is motivated to make the click.

The language of headlines is quite distinct in English. The telegraphic style is usually employed, placing emphasis on brevity. Develotte and Rechniewski (2001) refer to Mårdh's list of characteristic features of headlines in English, for instance, the omission of articles, verbs and auxiliaries (the verb 'to be'), nominalisations, the frequent use of complex noun phrases in subject position, the use of short words, puns, word-play, alliteration and other techniques.

There are recognisable differences between quality and popular newspapers. The former tend to use formal lexis and keep the tone neutral, while tabloids employ a range of linguistic tools to create sensation. Reah (1998: 18) states that headline writers often select loaded words with strong connotations to attract attention. She also (1998: 16) states that headline writers employ a specific vocabulary which includes words that are hardly ever used in other text types. Hence, at least in English, there is a set of words which are automatically associated with the news. Mårdh (1980; quoted in Reyes 2010: 3) suggested that not only is the vocabulary of English newspaper headlines specific, the whole structure of headlines is so unique that she named the language of headlines 'headlinese'.

Characteristic features of headlines in Estonian newspapers have not been studied as extensively. Kasik (2004: 9) assesses newspaper language as a whole and observes that remarkable changes have taken place compared with the nineties: conventional and formal register which used to be associated with newspapers has been replaced by colloquial style

because in addition to informing readers, the newspaper is also meant to entertain. She suggests that formal and complex linguistic structures do not appeal to the audience as well as simplistic, conversational style. Kasik (2004: 12) thinks that the difference between spoken and journalistic language is disappearing.

A practical source of information about the language of Estonian newspapers is a handbook for journalists by Hennoste (2008). There is a section on headlines where he gives instructions for writing effective headlines. Hennoste (2008: 301) emphasises that headlines should be clear and straightforward, so that the reader would not even need to read the whole article. On the other hand, he admits that using rhetorical devices attracts attention which is especially important for online headlines. In his opinion, accuracy should still be considered more important than arousing curiosity and misleading headlines ought to be avoided (Hennoste 2008: 302).

The media representation of teachers has been analysed in several countries using various methods. Most of these studies demonstrate that the image of teachers created in journalism tends to be negative. One of the prominent features of news are headlines which inform readers and are also said to have a persuasive effect. Studies that focus on the media representation of social groups usually employ critical discourse analysis, which is introduced in the following chapter.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

The present thesis employs CDA to investigate the representation of teachers in newspapers. CDA is an approach that studies various kinds of texts not only to provide information about linguistic features but, more importantly, to discover the social function of these features. Critical discourse analysts want to make explicit the relationship between language and ideology. Their aim is to show how texts are constructed to achieve a particular effect. Fairclough (2003: 8) explains that texts have causal effects which means that they can bring about change in our attitudes and social relations. Machin and Mayr (2012: 5) list text types that are most often examined by means of CDA: political speeches, advertisements and news texts. These are genres which are meant to influence the audience and make them think in a certain way. Readers of news may presume that events are mediated objectively but each event can be presented in various ways and the linguistic choices of each coverage affect our perception (Fowler 1991, Richardson 2007).

Critical discourse analysts do not follow a single research method. Different authors concentrate on different aspects of language use but, according to Machin and Mayr (2012: 4), the common interest of the authors is “language as a means of social construction: language both *shapes* and is *shaped by* society.” Gee (1999: 82) refers to this phenomenon as 'reflexivity' which he explains as the “*reciprocity* between language and 'reality': language simultaneously *reflects* reality (“the way things are”) and *constructs* (*construes*) it to be a certain way.” As ideology and power relations are established in texts, CDA helps us to become aware of how they might be biased. The target of critical discourse analysts is firstly, to reveal social dominance in various types of texts, and secondly, to make a stand against detected inequality. For this reason practitioners of CDA have been criticised for

lack of objectivity. However, according to van Dijk (2001: 352) scholarly research cannot be totally free of the researcher's own values as all studies are carried out by members of society and must therefore inevitably reflect the position of the author. Fairclough (2003: 14) also admits the selective nature of any analysis as the researcher chooses to ask certain questions and ignore others. Differently from many other methods, CDA makes the position of the researcher also visible to the reader.

CDA has also been accused of being “too ambitious in its quest for social change” on the basis of only textual analysis (Machin and Mayr 2012: 208). Therefore, Machin and Mayr (2012: 215–218) propose combining CDA with other methods, for instance, corpus linguistics or ethnographic methods to make research results more reliable. O'Halloran (2010: 449) has observed that critical discourse analysts are including more corpora in their studies of media which enables them to make generalisations about the findings and shed light on the notions that are constructed and spread regularly in society by the press.

The present thesis makes use of CDA in order to find out how newspaper discourse positions teachers in society. CDA is a suitable method because it provides information about social problems by means of analysing micro-level linguistic features of texts. As the focus of critical discourse studies is “the *social power* of groups or institutions” (Van Dijk 2001: 354), the present study uses CDA to establish the power relations between teachers and other social groups, but also state institutions, as represented in two national newspapers. Because the study has limited aims, it does not combine CDA with other methods.

The present study is modelled on Hansen's (2010) analysis of newspaper headlines. Analysing headlines, not whole articles, makes it possible to collect a corpus which provides information about a longer period and observe repeating linguistic characteristics used in teacher representation. The study concentrates on the headlines published in the

electronic versions of *Postimees* and the *Times* from the year 2008 to 2012. As the amount of data is manageable for this thesis, no sampling is needed. The keywords 'õpetaja' and 'teacher' are analysed for lexical and syntactical patterns in order to determine how linguistic choices might influence the representation of teachers and consequently also the way readers and teachers themselves perceive the profession. Syntactical patterns provide information about the active/passive representation of teachers, whereas analysing lexical choices helps to discover associations that are invoked in readers in connection with teachers. Hansen analysed altogether 29 newspapers but this study, because of limitations of scope, compares two papers – *Postimees* and the *Times*. Researchers like Cohen, Shine and O'Donoghue chose to analyse the most popular publications in their regions because these reach the most people. Alla (2012) reports the results of a survey by TNS Emor, which declares that *Postimees* has the largest readership in Estonia and its online version is the second most popular web site after delfi.ee. According to the information of a web site about UK newspapers (2009: para.5), the *Times* is by circulation the second largest quality newspaper in the UK after the *Daily Telegraph*. Its electronic version Times Online was one of the leading online newspapers until 2010 when it started charging readers. However, according to BBC News (2010: para. 7), Times Online still has 2 million visitors per month and subscriptions to digital versions of the paper are on the rise. Also, the *Times* provides suitable comparison to *Postimees* because they share a similar conservative viewpoint.

Hansen's method was to find collocations to the keywords 'teacher(s)' and label them as either positive or negative. It seems that such a decision would be difficult to make, for instance, in case of the headline “*Parimad koolisööklad võluvad lapsi ja õpetajaid kodususega*” where nothing positive or negative is actually said about teachers. Goldstein (2011) is another author who categorised headlines either positive, negative, neutral or mixed. As the validity of such decisions is questionable, the present study

categorises headlines according to whether they present teachers as active or passive participants in the processes described. This choice can be made on the basis of objectively identifiable linguistic features. Like most authors of the studies discussed here, the present research also employs elements of CDA to determine agency and uncover power relations and the positioning of teachers and other social groups in the published headlines.

CDA is an approach which includes a range of research techniques and it is therefore necessary to opt for a specific methodology. The study relies on Fowler's (1991) methods of text analysis. Fowler is one of the founders of critical linguistics, which is considered to be the origin of CDA (Machin and Mayr 2012: 2). Although his work dates back to the 1980s, the method, in its discussion of specific linguistic tools, is valid and it continues to be productively applied in the work of several scholars (Machin and Mayr, 2012; Richardson, 2007). Where the radical changes in the media landscape in the past 10 years make a difference (e.g. in the context of online news), the work of more recent scholars is used to complement Fowler's basic linguistic tools.

The thesis examines two important linguistic aspects of news headlines. Firstly, in order to establish the relationships between participants in the headlines, transitivity is analysed. This provides information about the active and passive representation of social groups. Secondly, lexical choices are examined to investigate associations invoked in readers by the use of particular words. Vocabulary loaded with additional shades of meaning provides information about the writer's values and attitudes towards the subject of his text. The analysis of these linguistic features makes it possible to identify recurring patterns in the representation of teachers which shape the readers' perception of the social group.

## Transitivity

Mautner (2008: 41) notes that transitivity continues to be one of the most commonly analysed linguistic features in CDA. According to Fowler (1991: 71), transitivity is the “foundation of representation” which determines how events are expressed. This feature informs us of the relationships between participants and their roles in the processes described. Richardson (2007: 57) explains transitivity very simply as “the *who* (or what) does *what* to *whom* (or what)”. The most obvious expression of this is using transitive verbs and assigning subject and object positions to participants in a sentence. However, sentences are also formed by means of intransitive verbs which means that there is no object, for example, *He laughed*. Therefore, analysing transitivity can cover various linguistic characteristics of a text.

Gee (1999: 13-14) emphasises the importance of concentrating on the 'whos' and 'whats' while conducting discourse analysis. He defines 'who' as “a socially situated identity” and 'what' as “a socially situated activity”, adding that texts communicate the two of them together as 'who-doing-what'. This corresponds to Richardson's views about the significance of the perceived role of participants and their (in)action in certain contexts.

Fowler (1991: 71) concludes that if there is already a choice of how to present events, then ideology inevitably comes to play because the author prefers one representation to several others, which can have significant ideological implications. As Fowler (1991: 11) declares: “The world of the Press is not the real world, but a world skewed and judged.” Newspapers' choices of transitivity reach large audiences and have the opportunity to shape the opinions of readers. Richardson (2007: 56) refers to studies of journalism which prove that there is considerable difference between presenting an event as an active process, that is, in a way that shows the subject, verb and object of the

sentence (e.g. “the IMF is changing the international economic order”) or as a state of affairs (e.g. “the international economic order is in a state of change”). Richardson (ibid.) reports Fairclough's (2000) claim that preferring the second option has political implications. Therefore, transitivity is an important indicator of the writer's or newspaper's ideological preferences.

Fowler (1991: 73) uses headlines as illustrations of how transitivity works as they are short and show clearly the linguistic relationships between participants. He explains this by distinguishing between material, mental and verbal processes. Material processes describe doing something that has a material result, for example, “The police *shot* the criminal.” Mental processes give information about the feelings and senses of participants, for instance, “Civilians *feel* insecure.” Verbal processes are expressed with the word 'say' and its synonyms, for example, “Politician *claims* innocence.” Making a distinction between the types of processes gives us information about active and passive participants in the news, whose roles constitute the transitivity structure of the headline.

The participant who performs an action is called an 'agent' and those to whom things are done are collectively called 'affected participants' (Fowler 1991: 75). Assigning these roles to participants enables us to determine who is more often represented in newspaper headlines as an active agent and who is portrayed as someone to whom things happen. In the case of material and verbal processes it is quite easy to detect the one who is actively doing something or expressing opinions. Analysis of verbal processes provides information about who are given the opportunity to express their opinion in the news and whose views are kept in the background. Mental processes, however, can prove quite complicated. Machin and Mayr (2012: 107) point out that although the subject may appear busy, he or she does not actually perform any action. As mental verbs convey mostly sensing and reacting, they actually present the person as being passive.

In the present thesis corpora of *Postimees* and the *Times* headlines were analysed for aspects of transitivity to determine whether teachers appear mostly as agents or affected participants in the processes described.

## **Lexical selection**

Lexical analysis is one of the most frequent operations in CDA. In addition to literal meaning, denotation, words also have additional meanings, connotations. Such implicit meanings influence the readers' perception of events and carry ideological significance. Van Dijk (2000) emphasises the influence of lexical choice by suggesting that “probably the major dimension of discourse meaning controlled by ideologies is the selection of words through lexicalisation.”

Machin and Mayr (2012: 32) illustrate how word choice affects the readers' understanding of text by providing three alternative headlines for the same event:

“Youths attack local buildings”

“Youths attack local addresses”

“Youths attack local family homes”

All three phrases, 'buildings', 'addresses', 'family homes', denote a place for living. However, in case of the last headline, the attack seems much more serious as the words 'family' and 'home' have connotations of safety and stability. 'Buildings' and 'addresses' are neutral words and attacking these places does not invoke strong emotions in readers. Such lexical selection enables the writer to manipulate the readers' reactions and the way they make sense of the information presented to them.

Hansen (2010: 30) remarks that it is important to examine the lexical choices in headlines about teachers in order to see what kind of discourses are invoked by vocabulary and metaphors, for example, an atmosphere of crisis or combat. Richardson (2007: 65)

draws attention to rhetorical tropes: using words so that they mean something else than they usually do. This helps to emphasise a particular meaning the writer wants to convey. Richardson (2007: 65–70) highlights five tropes which in his opinion are useful to the analysis of newspaper language: hyperbole, metaphor, metonymy, neologism and pun. Hyperbole is the use of exaggeration to make the news a sensation. Metaphor is comparing something to something else that has similar qualities, without using the word 'like'. Metonymy means substituting “one word or phrase for another from a semantically related field of reference” (Richardson 2007: 67). Neologism is a completely new word or an existing word given a new meaning. Pun is a humorous use of a word that has multiple meanings or of several words with the same sound but different meanings.

By analysing the choice of words, one can draw conclusions about the value judgements of the writer (Richardson 2007: 47). Investigation of lexical choices informs us of the ideas and attitudes readers associate with the teacher profession.

## **Data analysis and discussion of results**

Two corpora of headlines were collected by means of the search engines of the electronic versions of *Postimees* and the *Times*. The keyword used was respectively, 'õpetaja' and 'teacher'. In the case of *Postimees*, the results also included derivations (*õpetajaskond*) and inflected forms. The search covered a five-year period from 2008 to 2012. After excluding headlines irrelevant to the current study, for instance, those regarding teachers in other countries, a corpus of 748 headlines was formed for *Postimees* and 386 headlines for the *Times*.

In the case of *Postimees*, the headlines come from the main paper as well as some other sources of the same media group, for example, local newspapers *Tartu* and *Pärnu*

*Postimees*, *Tallinn City* along with other extras like *Tarbija24*, *Naine24* and *E24* displayed on the same page. They first appeared in 2005 and became more popular over the following years. In the online version of the newspaper all headlines, from *Postimees* as well as the additional sources, appear together on the same web page. Often it is only when the readers click on the headline that they realise they are directed to another web site. Therefore, headlines from different sources appear equal and are available to all readers of *Postimees* online. Each extra has its own area of interest, for example, local papers cover local events (e.g., *Üle 360 Tallinna õpetaja saadeti keeleeksamile*), *Tarbija24* focuses on consumer issues (*Õpetajate streigipäeval käis kinos kaks korda rohkem rahvast*), *E24* concentrates on economy (*Kreeka abiraha ei läheks nii kui nii õpetajatele*) and *Naine24* covers subjects of entertaining nature (*“Stilipäevik” näitas, kuidas olla moekas õpetaja*).

The headlines from the *Times* cover the subsections *UK News*, *Scotland*, *Education*, *Life and Style*. *Scotland* reports local news, *UK News* addresses daily issues and *Education* focuses on general matters of education. Each year a couple of headlines come from the section *Life and Style* which is divided into the subcategories *Relationships*, *Families*, *Life*, *Court and Social*. The majority of the headlines in the present corpus were published in the category *Education*.

Headlines were firstly divided into groups according to topics. Then, within each group, patterns of transitivity were identified to find out whether teachers are represented as active agents or passive participants in the coverage of a certain issue. It should be noted here that there are certain cases where teachers appear in the headlines as agents but the verb indicates that they are actually passive and affected by somebody else's actions (e.g., *Teachers face sack under new classroom licence plan*). As the number of such instances is small and does not influence the general picture, then these headlines are not dealt with separately in this thesis. Finally, the lexical choices of journalists were analysed to discover

what kind of associations readers are encouraged to make while scanning the headlines about teachers.

The thesis employs CDA and therefore this is a qualitative analysis which mentions only some numbers and percentages for illustrative purposes. This way it is easier for the reader to have an idea of the proportion of the topics covered in the two newspapers and the balance between the occurrences of various grammatical positions.

## Topics

Van Dijk (2001: 356) emphasises the importance of the control editors have over choosing topics that reach the readers. By preferring to present certain topics, editors shape the audience's opinion of which information is important. Van Dijk (2001: 357) claims that readers are likely to accept attitudes presented in sources they consider trustworthy, for example, quality newspapers. He goes on to say that “a topic in a headline in news may powerfully influence how an event is defined” (van Dijk 2001: 358). Therefore, controlling discourse enables the media to highlight certain issues and avoid others, at the same time influencing the attitudes of readers.

Headlines were grouped according to topics, demonstrating that the issues which bring attention to teachers are quite similar in the two newspapers. However, as the corpus of *Postimees* headlines is twice the size of the *Times* corpus, then the range of topics is also broader. During the five years, *Postimees* has written about teachers mostly in connection with salaries. Other frequent topic areas are conflicts involving teachers, their acknowledgement, Russian teachers, shortage of teachers and teacher qualification. Most of the headlines published in the *Times* focus on problems with teachers, that is, cases of misbehaviour (on the part of teachers as well as students), teachers losing their jobs and

facing some kind of opposition. This corresponds to Blackmore and Thorpe's (2003: 591) observation about media interest in conflict, which they mention in their analysis of teacher representation in Australian press. Other frequent topics in the *Times* are strikes, qualification and pay.

## Salary

The analysis demonstrates that several topics covered in *Postimees* and the *Times* are the same but the amount of attention paid to particular subjects varies. In *Postimees* the prominent reason for writing about teachers is their salary. The majority of articles published about teachers each year address the problem of their low income (about 25% of headlines a year). According to the **transitivity** analysis, the word 'õpetaja' appears in four positions: genitive attribute (*Aaviksoo: õpetajate palk tõuseb aastal 2013*), beneficiary (*EAKL nõuab õpetajatele 1000-kroonist palgatõusu*), patient (*Tallinna õpetajatel jäi eile palk saamata*) or agent (*Õpetajad 20-protsendisest palgatõusust ei taandu*). The genitive attribute position occurs far more often than the others. The proportion for all years is quite similar, for instance, in 2009 there are altogether 36 headlines regarding teachers' salaries and 25 of them present 'teacher' as the attribute. Almost every year a couple of headlines place teachers in the position of a beneficiary, that is, a person who gets something (*Aaviksoo lubab õpetajatele palgalisa*). About the same number of headlines present teachers as patients of processes which means that they do not do anything themselves but are affected by what is happening (*Reformierakond: Tallinn jätab õpetajad lisarahast ilma*). The position teachers take least of all is that of an agent; this occurs a few times almost every year. Sometimes they are also given a voice, that is, they perform a verbal action (*Õpetajad: palga vähendamine oleks Eestile ohtlik*). The current analysis regarded

all participants who are quoted as performers of verbal action and therefore agents.

Teachers' pay is not a prominent topic in the *Times*. Most years only about 5% of the headlines address the issue. Similarly to *Postimees* headlines, the word 'teacher' again appears mostly as an attribute (e.g., *Raise teacher pay, say Tories*). The second most popular thematic role for 'teacher' is that of a patient (e.g., *Gove says scrapping pay scales will help weaker schools to hire better teachers*). The position of an agent (*Teachers demand 10 per cent pay rise*) occurs only a couple of times.

Analysis of the **lexical selection** in *Postimees* salary headlines reveals that the preferred rhetorical device is metonymy. One type of metonymy is replacing people who work in an institution with the name of their workplace. In the case of teachers' pay, it is usually the government, Ministry of Education and Research or local municipality who say or do something (*Valitsus kinnitas õpetajatele soovitud väiksema palgatõusu; Ministeriumi väitel sõltub õpetajate palgatõus omaavalitsustest; Tartu eitab õpetajate palgaraha väärkasutust*). This resonates with Cohen's (2010: 110) view of the social language of Accountability which tends to position institutions as subjects, thereby giving prominence to institutional processes and depriving teachers of the authority to perform actions in their own field. Richardson (2007: 68) explains that metonyms are typically employed for two reasons: either the responsible people are unknown or it is the writer's intention to keep them in the background. In the case of *Postimees* either of the explanations could be plausible.

Phrases often used in the pay headlines of *Postimees* include 'palgatõus' or 'palka tõstma', 'läbirääkimised', 'kärpima', 'hätta jääma'. This indicates that teachers are poorly paid and raising their salaries is the question at issue. However, in 2009 teachers' salaries were even reduced. This caused considerable discontent and the frequency of reporting verbs like 'nõudma', 'sõdima', 'vaidlema' increased. In 2011 one can notice several groups

and organisations supporting teachers in their demand for higher earnings. This can be seen in the frequent occurrence of the word 'toetama'.

Overall, there are two more noticeable characteristics in *Postimees* coverage of teachers' pay. Firstly, impersonal constructions are frequently used (e.g., *Õpetajate palgaraha jagamisele võidakse seada jäigemad piirid; Õpetajate palgatõus nulliti; Õpetajate palgad jäävad kärpimata*, etc). These sentence structures make it possible to avoid mentioning the people responsible for the decisions, which is convenient in the situation where news stories usually cover the problem of low income. Secondly, many of the headlines use personification which makes 'õpetajate palk' the agent who is performing various actions (e.g., *Õpetajate palgamäärad jäävad samaks*). Both of these techniques, impersonal construction and personification, enable the writer to conceal the people behind decisions affecting teachers' pay, making it seem as if these processes occur spontaneously without the effort of an actor.

Looking at the transitivity patterns of headlines concerning teachers' salaries, it can be said that in *Postimees* teachers appear to be passive participants who are not actively involved in negotiating their salaries. An overwhelming majority of the headlines present them in the position of a genitive attribute which means that the word 'teacher' is a complement to 'salary' but does not have an independent role in the sentence. It is the salary that holds the subject position when it either drops or rises, or other participants who make decisions about teachers' pay. When teachers appear in the role of a beneficiary or patient, the situation is the same: somebody else is acting and teachers are affected by the results. Agent position is granted to teachers on few occasions. There does seem to be a general growing tendency (in the whole body of headlines) to make their voice heard by assigning teachers agency in verbal processes. However, data from the year 2012 shows that in the context of payment there are altogether 35 headlines which quote somebody but

only one statement comes from teachers. 16 headlines quote leading politicians and the Ministry of Education and Research, the rest reflect the opinions of various individuals and organisations involved in education. Consequently, *Postimees* headlines do not represent teachers as active participants who affect the processes that shape their salary. Rather they appear dependent on the decisions of others. As salary is the primary context in which teachers appear in the news, then the recurring passive representation could influence the general image of teachers as a social group. Another problem that van Dijk (2001: 355) points out is the fact that dominated groups may become accustomed to the way they are usually represented and start identifying themselves with their public image. In this case it would mean that teachers accept their poor social position and do not even attempt to empower their voice.

In the *Times* there are not many headlines concerning pay, therefore it is difficult to point out anything characteristic. There are three headlines where 'pay' collocates with 'deal', so one can assume that teachers' pay rates were negotiated and this received some media attention.

## **Confrontation**

If *Postimees* writes mostly about teachers' salaries, then the *Times* devotes the majority of headlines (about 40% each year) to various conflicts involving teachers. In the case of *Postimees*, this is the second most popular topic area, covering roughly 15% of all headlines (the greatest number is 25% in the year 2008 and the smallest 10% in 2012). Following the example of Hansen (2010: 31), the thesis uses this category to cover headlines which represent “teachers in trouble”: they are either victims or perpetrators of misconduct and violence, they are pressured and forced to do something, their jobs are at

risk and qualification under suspicion. Additionally, this group of headlines includes cases where teachers stand up for their rights and confront opposing parties, who are usually the government, parents and students.

The analysis of **transitivity** patterns in the *Times* confrontation headlines over the five-year period demonstrates that most frequently teachers appear in the thematic position of an agent (88 headlines of 170). Agent position in the present data signals two kinds of activities: teachers are doing something wrong (e.g., *Maths teacher 'harassed German neighbours with Nazi salutes'*) or defending themselves against the wrongdoings of others (e.g., *Rebel teacher fights back after job threat*). There are more headlines presenting teachers behaving badly than those which show them standing up for their rights.

The active role of teachers in problem headlines is quite closely followed in frequency by the position of a patient (70 headlines). These headlines address various problems and present teachers as the affected participants who are judged, accused of or forced to do something by others (e.g., *Unruly pupils drive new teachers out of profession*). Recurring issues are bullying by students as well as parents, firing teachers and their lack of qualification.

There are 12 cases where teachers are presented in the *Times* confrontation headlines as either attribute, object or in some other grammatical position (e.g., *List of banned teachers to be made public; Schoolgirl, 15, elopes on ferry to France with maths teacher*). From the viewpoint of transitivity all of these headlines tend to present teachers as passive participants who are affected by the actions of others.

Considering the syntactical positions discussed, it can be said that there is an almost equal number of “teachers in trouble” headlines in the *Times* which represent teachers as active and passive participants. There are 88 occurrences of teachers as agents in comparison to a total of 82 cases of patient and other position, conveying a passive state.

Hence, there seems to be quite a balanced representation of teachers acting and being acted upon in the headlines covering various problems involving teachers.

In *Postimees* there is a much smaller number of headlines mediating misbehaviour of teachers or opposition between them and other social groups. Over the five-year period there are 114 headlines which make up 15% of all headlines. As the corpus of *Postimees* is larger, it also displays more issues that fall under this category than the *Times*, for instance, problems with teachers' health, the qualification of Russian teachers and the poor reputation of the teacher profession. According to the transitivity analysis, the most frequent thematic role of the word 'teacher' is that of a patient (52 headlines) (e.g., *Õpilased kiusavad õpetajaid vahendeid valimata*). This is followed by headlines expressing teacher agency (43 cases) (e.g., *Õpetajad asusid kooli eest võitlema*). These headlines are divided equally between those that present teachers doing something wrong and actively defending their rights or beliefs. Attribute, object or other positions occur 19 times (e.g., *Valjala vallavanem murdis õpetajatega sõlmitud kokkulepet; Saaremaal kutsuti politsei õpetaja kainust kontrollima*). The last group of headlines adds to the passive representation of teachers which is dominant in the confrontation category.

The **lexical selection** in headlines reporting the struggles of teachers is varied. Headlines in the *Times* that represent teachers as agents who are protecting their rights use verbs like 'demand', 'threaten', 'reject', 'take legal action', 'boycott' and so on. This vocabulary creates the image of teachers as knowledgeable professionals who are aware of their rights and ready to fight for them. Similar vocabulary describing teachers' activities is also present in *Postimees*: 'kaebas kohtusse', 'süüdistab', 'seisavad vastu', 'nõuavad'. These instances are quite scarce, though.

Both the *Times* and *Postimees* use vocabulary related to combat to invoke associations of strong opposition and fighting. A word that is frequently used is 'attack':

teachers are attacked (e.g., *Teachers face pupil attacks on their homes*) and they also attack others (e.g., *Teachers attack Gordon Brown's 'parent power' plan for schools*). Other headlines in the *Times* that include vocabulary of fighting represent teachers as the affected participants (e.g., *Teachers targeted in their own homes by pupils, say union delegates; Head hunters are called in to track down head teachers*, etc). Classrooms are described as 'war zones' and teachers are forced to buy 'body armour'. There are also headlines saying that teachers 'need protection' and they 'need parents to defend them' as well as those which express their fear with phrases like 'teachers frightened off', 'feeling scared', 'in fear of violence', 'fear bullying'. Combining lexical choices which refer to battle with those expressing fear informs readers of extremely strong confrontation and in most cases teachers are the victims of abuse.

Combat-related vocabulary in *Postimees* is less vivid but some examples can be detected (*Tilsi õpetajad tulevad võitlema maine eest; Õpetajate miiting lõppes riigikogu "vallutamisega"; Õpetajad sõdivad eesti keele tundide säilimise eest*). In these headlines, teachers are not victims but active agents. As the number of headlines using war metaphors is insignificant, then they do not create a general image of teachers as fighters.

Other conspicuous cases in the category of confrontation headlines include vocabulary which expresses teachers being pressured in some way. Examples in the *Times* include 'forcing teachers to work', 'forced to buy equipment', 'forced to quit', 'teachers are told' and in *Postimees* 'õpetaja saadeti keeleeksamile', 'saadetakse pensionile', 'sunnitakse palgata puhkusele', 'peavad tasuta lisatööd tegema'. Also, both newspapers often report news of teachers being fired, in the *Times* phrases like 'sack' and 'struck off' are preferred. Interesting metaphors present teachers as weeds or animals who are 'weeded out' or 'rooted out', 'trapped' or 'slaughtered'. A group of headlines in *Postimees* focus on threats to teachers' health (e.g., *Ligi veerandit Tartu õpetajatest ohustab läbipõlemine; Õpetajatöö*

*ohustab vaimset tervist; Antsla muusikakoolis vohav hallitusseen teeb õpetajad haigeks; Õpetajate Liit: alamakstud õpetaja rügab tervise arvelt*). All of these headlines present difficulties teachers must face and show them as a suffering social group.

It should also be noted that within the category of “teachers in trouble” there is a significant difference between the coverages of the two newspapers. The *Times* publishes numerous headlines reporting illicit relationships between teachers and students. In some cases the teacher is accused of harassment (e.g., *Wellington teacher sent for jury trial over sex assault charge*) but sometimes the student is not presented as the victim but as an equal partner (e.g., *I slept with my teacher, but I don't think he's a sex offender*). There is only one headline in *Postimees* which addresses the problem of romantic involvement between students and teachers: *Õpetaja suhet õpilasega võib pidada töölepingu rikkumiseks*. This is quite a matter-of-fact headline which clearly does not seek to cause sensation. *Postimees* does not report a single case of improper relations between teachers and students.

## Strike

Teachers' strikes are another reason for journalists to write about the profession. Each year there are headlines concerning (possible) strikes in both the *Times* and *Postimees*. There was a large-scale teachers' strike in the UK in 2008 and in Estonia in 2012. During the years when there was no strike action, some headlines still reported teachers and teachers' unions threatening to go on strike.

**Transitivity** analysis of the *Times* strike headlines shows that throughout the five-year period 18 headlines present teachers or their unions as active agents (e.g., *Teachers strike over unruly pupil behaviour*) and in 7 headlines they appear as attribute (e.g., *Ed Balls condemns teachers' strike*). In *Postimees*, attribute position is the most frequent (e.g.,

*Kell tiksib halastamatult õpetajate streigi poole*). Together with a few occurrences of the role of a patient (e.g., *Arstid ja õed toetasid õpetajaid*) these form a body of 51 headlines, which inform readers of somebody else's actions but the role of teachers is passive. Teacher agency is expressed half the times, in 27 headlines (e.g., *Eelmisel nädalal streikis 17 234 õpetajat*).

There is one particular difference in the strike coverage of the two papers. Namely, in 2012 when Estonian teachers went on strike, *Postimees* published 16 headlines expressing the support of various organisations and groups of people, for example, *Kultuuritöötajad toetavad õpetajate streiki*. This kind of expression of solidarity is missing from the *Times* headlines.

A common feature in the strike coverage of the two newspapers can be seen in the **lexical selection**. Both papers publish headlines which indicate that striking teachers cause problems for other members of society. In the *Times* there are headlines saying that because of the teachers' strike 'a million miss lessons', '13 000 schools are disrupted', 'strike will hit pupils preparing for their exams'. This choice of vocabulary makes teachers look selfish as they do not care how their actions affect others. *Postimees* headlines are aggressive in tone and some of them are addressed directly to parents, as if to turn them against teachers. For instance, questions like *Mis õigused on lapsevanemal õpetajate streigi ajal?* or *Lugejad õpetajate streigist ehk kes hoiab lapsi?* The writer suggests that striking teachers are violating the rights of parents. According to the study about computer-mediated communication by Lai and Farbroth (2013: 10), question headlines, especially the ones with self-referencing cues, are a useful tool for increasing readership. *Postimees* employs this strategy by publishing a call for readers to react and send the editor accounts of their personal experiences related to the strike (*Anna teada: kuidas mõjutab õpetajate streik Sinu elu?*). Encouraging people to share their stories of (presumably) inconveniences they

have to bear due to the strike, does not show support to teachers and is more likely to cause tension between parents and teachers. As a result, it is difficult to say whether *Postimees* online coverage of the teachers' strike invokes more sympathy or antagonism in the readership.

The transitivity patterns of *Postimees* headlines in all three major topic areas represent teachers mainly as the affected participants. Furthermore, the analysis indicates that all three categories of headlines include mostly messages of problems concerning teachers. Struggles are already inherent in confrontation and strike headlines. The analysis of salary headlines demonstrates that this group predominantly sends signals of low income of teachers which again contributes to the general image of teachers in trouble. Headlines which express opposition and hardships of teachers are the ones Tankler (2009) warns against as, in his opinion, in order to improve the public image of the profession, media should transmit positive messages and avoid problematic coverage.

As for the three types of processes that Fowler distinguishes – material, verbal and mental –, then the analysis does not reveal a preference to present teachers as agents in any one of them. It was explained above that material and verbal processes signal agent position clearly, whereas mental processes rather communicate passive state. Throughout the analysed period, *Postimees* expresses teacher agency quite equally in headlines featuring material, verbal and mental processes. In the *Times*, however, the years are very different, for example, in 2010 there are 15 confrontation headlines expressing teacher agency in material processes but only two in 2011. As there is no tendency in either newspaper to present teachers mainly as performers of mental actions, then we can exclude the possibility that there are a number of headlines which identify teachers as agents but actually convey the image of their passivity.

## Other topics and characteristic features

The three topics mentioned above – teachers' pay, confrontation and strike – are the most prominent issues which bring teachers attention in the analysed newspapers. In addition to these, there are some other recurring issues concerning teachers which can be noticed. For instance, **shortage** of teachers is a problem addressed in both papers, especially in *Postimees*. The question was more acute during the first years of the analysed period but in 2012 neither of the papers published any headlines reporting teacher shortage. This could be interpreted as a positive consequence of the economic recession, as one *Postimees* headline in 2009 suggests: *Majandussurutise plussid: õpetajaid pole enam puudu, vaid ülearu*. Vocabulary selection of the *Times* tends to be more dramatic ('*A quiet crisis' in class as teacher numbers plunge; Crisis point: the shortage of head teachers*). These headlines illustrate Hansen's claim about newspaper language bringing forth "climates of opinion". As was the case in the studies carried out by Shine and O'Donoghue (2013), Blackmore and Thorpe (2003), here one can also see "a climate of crisis" being created by the author of the headlines. By using the word 'crisis', the writer alarms readers and suggests the situation is very serious. In contrast, the language of *Postimees* headlines is quite plain, usually stating the fact that schools are looking for teachers. The only figurative expression used in the context of teacher shortage is in the headline *Õpetajat otsi vahel vői tikutulega*.

Teacher **training** is a subject that sometimes appears in headlines. The approach of the two newspapers is quite different: the *Times* headlines usually express judgements or general opinions concerning teacher training, for example, 'better training called for' or 'training teachers is wasting money'. *Postimees* headlines, on the other hand, inform readers of the specific content of the courses teachers take (about media, drugs, cervical

cancer, ornithology, etc). However, there is some criticism concerning teacher training at universities, pointing out the shortcomings, for instance, lack of practice.

Some issues are very well represented in only one of the newspapers and almost missing in the other. **Recognition** of teachers is a good example. Praising teachers and acknowledging them for their hard work is noticeable in *Postimees* headlines every year, usually around the time of Teachers' Day in autumn. Most of these headlines state that either a town or the President has paid special attention to teachers or awarded them prizes (e.g., *President tunnustas parimaid õpetajaid*). The *Times*, on the other hand, published only one similar headline over the five years analysed (*Give your teacher a gold star*). British teachers are nominated for a gold star to honour the ones who stand out. Unlike in *Postimees*, this is not considered newsworthy in the *Times*.

Analysis of adjectives used to describe teachers reveals that the most common adjectives employed in both papers are 'young' or 'new'. *Postimees* mentions **young teachers** 22 times, the *Times* 7 times. Most of *Postimees* headlines focus on different ways for luring young people to start working as teachers (e.g., *Noort õpetajat ootab tööle lisaks stardiraha; 200 000 krooni toetust noori õpetajaid maakooli ei too*). In 2012 there are three headlines that present young teachers as agents in verbal processes (e.g., *Noor õpetaja: reaallained tuleb muuta õpilasele huvitavaks*), which could be a sign of greater consideration for their opinions. The majority of *Postimees* headlines which include the adjective 'young' express concern over the fact that the teacher profession is not desirable and even students who train as teachers often find employment elsewhere. This trend is phrased directly in a 2010 headline: *Eesti õpetajaskond väheneb ja vananeb*. Assigning considerable news value to young teachers, as is the case according to the analysis, helps to solidify the image of a typical teacher being old. In the *Times* there is no clear message concerning new teachers. Some of the headlines criticise the qualification of new teachers,

some point out that they have to struggle to find jobs.

Some **lexical nuances** of headlines are worth mentioning. A feature that catches the reader's attention is a set of headlines in the *Times* which use expressions related to punishing or grading pupils, only this time teachers are the ones who are taught a lesson. For example, they are 'sent home from school', 'told to stay on after school', 'told to behave', given 'B+ for behaviour'. These headlines express a condescending attitude towards teachers as they place them in the position of pupils who take orders from those with more authority. It is not explicitly said who are the people judging teachers and ordering them around but the humiliating effect of such a choice of lexis contributes to the image of teachers as a group dominated by those with more power.

To summarise the lexical selection of the two newspapers, then the language in the *Times* headlines is quite informal compared to that of *Postimees*. The *Times* uses colloquial expressions ('sack', 'pipe down'), rhetorical tropes, like metaphors of war ('fire warning') and teachers in the role of pupils ('B+ for behaviour'), word play ('those who can't spell, teach'; 'no pay, no gain'), hyperboles (*The cyber-fascists slaughtering a decent teacher*). Some of the adjectives and complements that are used to describe teachers are very expressive, for instance, 'Trotskyist', 'porn film', 'runaway', 'elope', 'lemon', 'welly-wanging' and 'suicide' teacher. These lexical choices serve the purpose of attracting attention rather than informing readers of the content of the news story. In this respect the *Times* headlines display characteristics of tabloids. It is especially noticeable in comparison with *Postimees* headlines which are usually written in formal language and use figurative expressions only sparingly. This can be seen, for example, in the headlines concerning teacher shortage where *Postimees* uses matter-of-fact language to report the situation, whereas the *Times* tries to alarm readers by referring to crisis. In *Postimees*, perhaps only two headlines are seeking for attention by means of colloquial lexical selection: *Õpetaja küttis kasvatamatul*

*pätipoisil kere kuumaks; Õpetaja kukkus tunnis püssist märki laskma.*

The reason why the corpus of *Postimees* headlines is twice as large as that of the *Times* could be the fact that headlines in the latter publication are designed to arouse interest and need not include the key word of the present study – 'teacher' – even if the article is about teachers. The goal is to make the headline attractive so that the readers would click on it. *Postimees*, on the other hand, wants to inform the audience of the content of the article and therefore states in the headline whom the article is about.

As for changes in the **prominence of topics** in the news over the five-year period, then the first thing that draws attention is the absence of headlines regarding teacher shortage in both newspapers in 2012. During the previous years this issue was always mentioned, more so in *Postimees*. However, by the end of the analysed period scarcity of teachers does not seem to be a problem any more. Secondly, the number of problem headlines stays high in the *Times* throughout the period but in *Postimees* the proportion of headlines reporting the struggles of teachers has dropped quite steadily from 25% in 2008 to 10% in 2012. This could be interpreted as a positive sign of less misbehaviour on the part of teachers as well as the decrease of pressures on teachers from other social groups and institutions. This corresponds to the results of Hansen's study which demonstrated less confrontation headlines in the second half of the period he analysed.

Headlines regarding teachers' pay are the most frequent in *Postimees* throughout the analysed period (with the exception of the year 2010 when there were considerably less pay headlines). The *Times* does not devote many headlines to this issue but a slight change can be detected. Namely, until 2011 only about 5% of headlines a year address teachers' salaries but in 2012 it is already 12%. The headlines from this year indicate that teachers are not satisfied with their income.

Another aspect to mention concerning changes in the issues covered by newspaper headlines is the fact that the number of headlines in *Postimees* focussing on praising teachers shows a steady fall. In the year 2008 about 10% of all headlines reported that teachers were acknowledged for their hard work. By the year 2012 only 2% of all headlines informed readers of such recognition. This tendency could suggest that *Postimees* is becoming more similar to the *Times* which does not pay much attention to public acknowledgement of teachers.

In short, the analysis demonstrates that in *Postimees* all three most popular categories of headlines mostly present teachers as passive participants. The most frequently used rhetorical trope is metonymy which assigns the agent position to institutions. Together with the personification of teachers' pay and impersonal constructions this leads to the situation where teachers are distanced from the decision-making process and those who are responsible for the decisions are not made explicit. The *Times* headlines tend to portray teachers as agents, though the difference between active and passive representation is not as conspicuous as in *Postimees*. Abundant use of rhetorical tropes and colloquialisms make the coverage varied.

## Conclusion

School is the institution where young people, in addition to acquiring knowledge, also learn to socialise and adopt values. Teachers have a significant role as the ones who shape the attitudes of future members of society. In order to be successful in transmitting knowledge as well as values, teachers need to be regarded as authoritative. At present, teachers in Estonia are underpaid and overburdened which leads to low social status. One of the main scenes for constructing the public image of social groups is the media. Ideas that are circulated in the press and the language used to do it influence the readers' perception of events. If the media portrays teachers unfavourably and emphasises their problems, then it is difficult to improve their position in society.

Research carried out on the representation of teachers in several countries has shown that journalism tends to present teachers negatively. A number of studies (see Blackmore and Thorpe, 2003; Cohen, 2010; Goldstein, 2011; Shine and O'Donoghue, 2013; Thomas, 2003) indicate that the press focuses on opposition between education policy-makers who want to introduce reforms and teachers who are against changes. In this situation, the voice of the officials is usually made explicit and it receives more public attention than that of teachers. This has led to concern over the neglect of "teacher voice" (see Lefstein and Perath, 2014).

The thesis also introduces a study demonstrating the improvement of the image of teachers. A longitudinal study of newspaper headlines by Hansen (2010) reports that in the UK the image of teachers as a dominated social group, which was prevalent at the beginning of the 1990s, changed by the end of the decade and continued to do so until the end of the period of his study in 2005. According to his analysis of syntactic patterns and lexical choices, headlines gradually started referring to teachers as active professionals

instead of targets of government actions. Still, the majority of studies on teacher representation present them as a dominated social group without an authoritative voice to influence the decisions that concern them directly.

Most of the studies regarding teacher representation that are introduced in the thesis employ critical discourse analysis (CDA) as the research method. Critical discourse analysts explain language as a form of social practice and their main interest is how language reproduces power relations in society. It is their belief that as texts can be constructed in multiple ways, then the specific linguistic choices reflect the author's ideological preferences. Practitioners of CDA focus on discovering and reporting social injustice that is implicitly included in communicative texts.

The present thesis employed elements of CDA, as proposed by Fowler (1991), to carry out an analysis of the representation of teachers in two newspapers – *Postimees* and the *Times*. The aim of the project was to find out whether teachers are represented as active or passive participants in the processes taking place. In order to answer this question two corpora of headlines were collected from the online versions of the newspapers. Headlines were chosen because they are a prominent feature of news which inform and attract readers. Also, the brevity of headlines made it possible to analyse the coverage of a longer period, from 2008 to 2012. The key word for the search was respectively, 'õpetaja' and 'teacher'. Headlines were firstly divided into groups according to the topics they address. Then, the aspect of transitivity was examined in order to identify the relationships between different participants. Finally, the lexical selection of headlines was analysed to find out what kind of associations are invoked in readers in connection with teachers. The analysis of transitivity patterns and lexical choices enabled the author to draw conclusions about the active and passive representation of teachers in the two newspapers. The thesis also identified prominent topics that emerged in connection with teachers.

Most of the recurring issues were covered in both papers, though, the proportion of attention paid to each of them varied, as did usually the employed linguistic devices for mediating the news. The three topics that received most attention over the five-year period were teachers' salaries, confrontations and strikes. Some noticeable issues were addressed in only one publication, whereas the other hardly mentioned them (recognition of teachers in *Postimees*, inappropriate relationships between students and teachers in the *Times*).

In *Postimees*, teachers' salaries receive the most coverage. The transitivity patterns demonstrate that teachers are represented as passive participants who are not in the position to influence their income. The majority of headlines present teachers in the position of genitive attribute which means that they do not perform any actions. It is either the pay itself or other participants who act as agents. Analysis of the lexical selection in *Postimees* salary headlines reveals that the preferred rhetorical trope is metonymy. This means that agency is usually assigned to institutions who are then responsible for the decisions affecting the pay of teachers. Another noticeable feature is the personification of teachers' pay which shows the salary itself acting in certain ways. Both of these devices result in the avoidance of identifying the people shaping the processes taking place.

The second most popular category in *Postimees* is confrontation headlines. In this group, similarly to the previous one, passive teacher representation again exceeds active portrayal but the difference is less significant than in the context of payment. This category shows teachers more often as those to whom something is done, to use the explanation of transitivity of several discourse analysts. Usually teachers are forced to do something. When teachers themselves are presented as agents, then they are either acting in a way that is inappropriate for a teacher, or opposing policy-makers or students.

The third most frequent topic that occurred is teachers' strike which in a way adds to the number of problem stories published as there must be something troubling teachers

for them to start striking. Similarly to salary and confrontation headlines, here one can also notice the prevalence of the passive teacher image. This is quite unexpected because one would assume that when teachers are on strike then they are the ones taking action and making demands. Yet, the majority of these headlines express the agency of other participants and the word 'teacher' appears as a genitive attribute, similarly to the headlines about salary.

Transitivity analysis of the *Times* headlines indicates that in this newspaper teachers are much more likely to appear in the role of active agents. The topic area of confrontation, which receives the most coverage, shows an equal distribution of active and passive representation of teachers. This means that readers perceive teachers as the target of the actions of others but teachers themselves also perform actions which, though, may not always be commendable.

The most frequent rhetorical trope in the confrontation headlines of the *Times* is the war metaphor. Teachers are attacked by parents as well as students, sometimes also politicians. They are targeted at home and on the Internet. The vocabulary associated with combat together with lexical choices expressing fear often result in the representation of teachers as victims.

The second most popular context for writing about teachers in the *Times* headlines is strikes. The coverage differs from that of *Postimees* because in the majority of headlines teachers appear as agents who make threats and whose opinions need to be taken into consideration. As for lexical choices, then both newspapers include headlines which indicate that striking teachers cause inconveniences for other members of society, most of all parents and students.

The *Times* headlines concerning teachers' pay demonstrate the same preference for passive representation as *Postimees* headlines. However, the proportion of pay headlines in

the *Times* is so modest that it could hardly have a significant impact on the readers' overall perception of teachers.

To summarise, the analysis shows that in *Postimees* headlines teachers are usually represented as passive participants in the events taking place. Throughout the analysed period they most often appear in the news because of the discrepancy between their low salary and great workload. This newspaper coverage reproduces the poor social status of teachers. The *Times*, on the other hand, presents a more balanced view of teachers. The largest body of headlines reports teachers' confrontations, with a fairly equal number of active and passive representations. The second most popular headlines focussing on teachers' strikes add to the active representation, which supports the image of teachers as agents.

The analysis confirms the need to empower teacher voice in the press as most of the headlines are written from the perspective of people who do not work at school. In order to inform the public of their situation, teachers ought to take the initiative and make themselves heard in national newspapers with large audiences by submitting opinion pieces. This could increase the active representation of teachers, their participation in education reforms and provide teachers the authority they need as professionals.

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## RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL  
INGLISE FILOLOOGIA OSAKOND

**Annabel Moltsaar**

**The Representation of Teachers in the Headlines of *Postimees* and the *Times*, 2008–2012. Õpetajate representatsioon Postimehe ja Timesi pealkirjade näitel, 2008–2012.**

Magistritöö

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Annotatsioon:

Käesoleva magistritöö eesmärk on analüüsida õpetajate aktiivset ja passiivset representatsiooni ajakirjanduses Postimehe ja Timesi pealkirjade näitel. Õpetajate kui sotsiaalse grupi kuvandit on vähe uuritud, eriti Eestis. Töö sissejuhatuses antakse ülevaade õpetaja rollist ja sotsiaalsest positsioonist. Õpetajat peetakse küll oluliseks järgmise põlvkonna kujundajaks, kuid ühiskond ei varusta õpetajaskonda rahuldaval määral ei materiaalse ega sümboolse kapitaliga, et rõhutada ta töö vajalikkust ja väärtust. Olukorras, kus õpetaja pole veendunud selles, et üldsus teda toetab, kahaneb õpetaja enesekindlus ja ta ametile hädavajalik autoriteetsus.

Töö esimene peatükk tutvustab viimase kümne aasta jooksul tehtud uuringuid, mis käsitlevad õpetajate kuvandit ajakirjanduses. Nii Eestis kui mujal tekitab muret õpetajate vähene esindatus ajakirjanduses. Leitakse, et nende endi häält pole kuulda, kuid need, kes sõna võtavad, on esmajoones kriitilised või kujutavad õpetajaid pigem negatiivselt. Samas peatükis on toodud välja ka pealkirja kui žanri tüüpilised jooned ja olulisus meediatekstis. Pealkiri informeerib lugejat ja äratav ta tähelepanu. Võrguväljaannete puhul on pealkirjad eriti olulised, kuna neist sõltub, kas lugeja otsustab liikuda edasi artikli juurde.

Teises peatükis kirjeldatakse analüüsimeetodit, milleks on kriitiline diskursusanalüüs. Diskursusanalüüs uurib keelt, kui sotsiaalset nähtust, mis mõjutab meie arusaama ühiskonnas toimuvast. Roger Fowleri (1991) tekstianalüüsi meetoditest keskendutakse magistritöös esiteks transitiivsusele, mis kirjeldab lause osapoolte omavahelisi suhteid: kes mida teeb. Teiseks analüüsitakse leksikaalsed valikud, mis annavad infot selle kohta, missuguseid assotsiatsioone konkreetne sõnavalik lugejates äratav. Nende kahe aspekti uurimine võimaldab teha järeldusi õpetajate aktiivse ja passiivse representatsiooni kohta pealkirjades. Samuti tuuakse töös välja peamised teemad, millega seoses õpetajatest kirjutatakse.

Järgneb Postimehe ja Timesi viie aasta (2008–2012) pealkirjakorpuste analüüs ja arutelu tulemuste üle. Selgub, et Postimehes kujutatakse õpetajaid “sotsiaalsel väljal” pigem passiivse grupina, kes sõltub suuresti institutsioonide ja teiste sotsiaalsete gruppide tegevusest. Kogu analüüsitud perioodi jooksul kirjutatakse õpetajatest enim seoses nende palgaküsimustega. Timesi pealkirjadest nähtub, et õpetajate representatsioon on tasakaalustatum, kaldudes isegi enam aktiivse kuvandi poole. Peamine teema on õpetajate vastasseis teiste ühiskonnagruppidega.

Märksõnad: õpetajad, representatsioon ajakirjanduses, kriitiline diskursusanalüüs.

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