

# NEWSPAPER PORTRAYAL OF TEACHERS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF REPRESENTATIONS OF TEACHERS IN A BRITISH AND A CZECH BROADSHEET

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## Abstract

The study compares representations of teachers in the Czech broadsheet *Mladá fronta* and the British broadsheet *The Daily Telegraph*, aiming to reveal their possible impact on the level of public respect towards teachers. The methodology employed is critical discourse analysis, combining an investigation of semantic macrostructures and recurrent transitivity patterns. It is revealed that both newspapers call attention to problems regarding the teaching profession, advocating social change and higher job prestige. The social significance of a teacher is enhanced in both newspapers by allocating a teacher not only the role of a transmitter of knowledge but also a moral guide concerned with social issues. The main difference between the two broadsheets is that *The Daily Telegraph* foregrounds teachers' wrongdoings, while *Mladá fronta* highlights teachers' accomplishments. This seems to be mainly due to the inclusion of a section with regional content in the Czech broadsheet.

## Keywords

teachers, respect, British broadsheet, Czech broadsheet, critical discourse analysis, semantic macrostructures, transitivity analysis

## 1 Introduction

The occupation of a teacher is one of the most socially significant jobs, playing a key role in the development of a society. Yet, this is not always reflected in the level of public respect for teachers. As shown in a 2013 comprehensive study by a non-profit organisation, the Varkey GEMS Foundation, the social standing of teachers varies by country. Comparing the social status of teachers in twenty-one selected countries by analysing citizens' answers to four main questions, the study revealed that the lowest Teacher Status Index of all the surveyed European countries existed in the Czech Republic (scoring 12.1 on a relative scale 1-100). In contrast, the United Kingdom ranked in the middle of the Teacher Status Index (scoring 36.7 on a relative scale 1-100), having a similar score to nearby European countries (Dolton & Marcenaro-Gutierrez 2013).

As media have an impact on the public perception of the teaching profession, they are among social and cultural factors that contribute to the construction of

the social status of teachers. The aim of this paper is to compare recent discursive representations of teachers in *Mladá fronta*, the most circulated Czech broadsheet (Unie vydavatelů 2018), and *The Daily Telegraph*, the most circulated British broadsheet (Statista 2018), investigating main roles and attributes ascribed to teachers, and discussing their possible influences on the level of public respect for teachers. Based on the Varkey GEMS Foundation study, it is expected that the British broadsheet portrays teachers in a more positive light, inviting a more respectful attitude towards them than the Czech broadsheet.

## 2 Previous research

Although the prestige of different occupations, including the teaching profession, is a widely discussed topic in society, and media inevitably play an important role in shaping it (cf. Průcha 2002), newspaper representations of teachers appear to be a rather neglected research topic. Only a few studies on this topic have been published in recent years (e.g. Hansen 2009, Cohen 2010, Teplá 2010, Goldstein 2011, Alhamdan et al. 2014). The significance of media in influencing the public images of teachers has long been recognized (Wallace 1993); yet, many studies have focused on the portrayal of educators in films rather than in news (e.g. Ellismore 2005, Scull & Peltier 2007, Vandermeersche, Soetaert & Rutten 2013).

Out of the studies concerned with the newspaper coverage of teachers, two are particularly relevant to this paper: Hansen's (2009) research on the portrayal of teachers in the British press and Alhamdan et al.'s (2014) comparative study of the representation of teachers in newspapers in five countries. Combining critical discourse analysis with corpus linguistics, Hansen diachronically investigated the image of teachers in British newspaper headlines between 1991 and 2005. His analysis revealed a considerable change from a mostly negative to a mostly positive portrayal of teachers. More specifically, it showed that while newspaper headlines in the early 1990s focused on problems in education and teachers' conflicts with teacher unions and the government, newspaper headlines in the early 2000s carried a more sympathetic and supportive tone towards teachers and ascribed to teachers a more active role. The more recent Alhamdan et al.'s comparative analysis rooted in socio-cultural constructivist theory revealed four categories of teacher identity constructed across the studied newspapers, namely the caring practitioner, the transparent (un)professional, the moral and social role model, and the transformative intellectual. Drawing on these two studies, this paper aims to compare main themes of and main roles ascribed to teachers in recent articles of one British and one Czech widely read newspaper.

### 3 Data

The data for the analysis were collected from two sources: *The Daily Telegraph*, a British broadsheet with the highest circulation (477,900 copies) (Statista 2018), and *Mladá fronta*, a Czech broadsheet with the highest circulation (133,800 copies) (Unie vydavatelů 2018). The newspapers were chosen due to their popularity. Yet, despite their being the highest in circulation of all broadsheets in their countries, quite a small percentage of the whole population in each country read them, and thus their impact on wider public perceptions is limited. Nevertheless, the effect of *The Daily Telegraph* and *Mladá fronta* reaches beyond their readership due to word-of-mouth communication and their influence on other media, politicians and authorities who may reproduce their discourse. Thus, the two broadsheets are to be considerably important in forming public opinion on the teaching profession.

According to VoxEurop (2017), both broadsheets share a similar political stance, having a centre-right political leaning. This eliminates political bias from factors contributing to a difference in the representations between the two newspapers. Yet, there is one major difference in the agenda of the two newspapers that presumably has an impact on the way teachers are portrayed: the inclusion of local, regional content in one of the sections of *Mladá fronta*, which is missing in *The Daily Telegraph*.

The articles selected for analysis cover the time period from 1 July 2017 to 31 December 2017 (i.e. the six months prior to the start of the research). The articles were searched for by the use of the keyword ‘teacher’ (which subsumes all of its grammatical declensions) in the library archive of the British broadsheet and ‘učitel’ (which subsumes the female variant ‘učitelka’ as well as all the grammatical declensions of both the male and female variants) in the library archive of the Czech broadsheet. The search was restricted to the category of News only as it is generally considered more objective than other types of newspaper articles, such as features, editorials and commentaries, and thus more likely to be perceived less critically by readers. The total number of gathered articles was 759 in *The Daily Telegraph* and 823 in *Mladá fronta*. These were all read and analysed by the author. The limitation of the use of the library archive of a newspaper is that it does not allow for multimodal analysis, as visual aspects of the articles are missing. The present paper thus offers only the analysis of verbal messages, which, despite its limitations, is believed to provide a significant insight into the media construction of images of a teacher.

## 4 Method

The methodology employed in the study is critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough 1992, van Dijk 1993, Weiss & Wodak 2003, Wodak & Meyer 2009, Machin & Mayr 2012). CDA stands for a heterogeneous, multidisciplinary school of thought, which employs an eclectic approach to the study of discourse. The key notion in CDA is the view of language as “a means of social construction”, i.e. as both being shaped by and shaping the social world, social identities and social relationships (Machin & Mayr 2012: 4). Other main principles of CDA include an orientation towards social problems and a focus on the disclosure of links between language, power and ideology.

The analytical part of this paper starts with the investigation and comparison of the semantic macrostructures (i.e. topics) (van Dijk 1980) of the studied articles in the Czech and the British newspapers. Then, it moves on to the exploration of microstructures, focusing on the representational strategies employed in the newspapers to depict teachers as social actors, including characteristics and qualities attributed to them (cf. Machin & Mayr 2012: 77, Wodak 2009). This part of the analysis explores recurrent transitivity patterns (Halliday 1985, 2014) of clauses in which one of the participants is a teacher, paying attention to semantic roles commonly ascribed to teachers and types of processes in which teachers tend to participate (material, mental, behavioural, verbal, relational and existential).

The research employs mainly the qualitative method, which is complemented by the quantitative one. Quantitative analysis is adopted as a descriptive tool to provide an outline of topic distribution, accounting for the frequency of individual topic categories in each newspaper. It serves as a springboard for a more in-depth and complex qualitative analysis. An explanatory qualitative method predominates in the section investigating discursive microstructures, where discursive patterns are manually searched for and interpreted.

## 5 Analysis

### 5.1 Semantic macrostructures

The selection of news topics and the production of news are influenced by the newspaper's goal to sell. Events thus do not become news because they are intrinsically newsworthy but are made into news based on socially constructed criteria of newsworthiness, the so-called news values (Fowler 1991: 2, Harcup & O'Neill 2001: 277). Discursive meaning is thus communicated not only by presence but also by absence, i.e. by what is missing and excluded from the newspaper (Richardson 2007: 93).

The investigation of semantic macrostructures of the articles from the corpus is restricted only to those articles, the main topic of which concerns teachers. The search for the data by the use of the keyword ‘teacher’ rendered a variety of articles, some of which included only a single occurrence of the word ‘teacher’ (e.g. an article on a shooting at a concert in Las Vegas listing some of the victims, including their jobs). The topics of such articles are excluded from the analysis of semantic macrostructures as they are not considered to contribute specifically to the construction of the media image of teachers. After the omission, nearly an equal number of articles was left in both newspapers: 124 in *The Daily Telegraph* and 120 in *Mladá fronta*. The focus is first placed on the investigation of topics in the British newspaper and then in the Czech one.

The semantic macrostructures of 124 articles in *The Daily Telegraph* can be divided into eight main categories: teachers’ faults and wrongdoings (39 articles); problems regarding the teaching profession (22 articles); teachers’ critiques of government and official policies (20 articles); teachers as victims (15 articles); teachers’ critiques of parents (11 articles); teachers being instructed to do something (8 articles); teachers’ accomplishments (6 articles); and teachers as advocates of a healthy lifestyle for students (3 articles) (see Table 1). The provided numbers include not only articles, the topic of which featured in the newspaper for the first time, but also follow-up articles, which are counted as separate tokens. The reason is that by writing a follow-up article, the newspaper gives the particular news prominence and reinforces or sometimes challenges and modifies the image of a teacher created in the original article.

Most of the articles (almost every third article) in the British broadsheet reveal some kind of teachers’ faults and wrongdoings and thus explicitly or implicitly criticize teachers. The reason for the critique is most commonly a legal or a moral misconduct (64% of the articles in this category). Two major topics in such articles include a sexual relationship that a teacher develops with their student (*Physics teacher banned after sex with pupil aboard plane (DT 27 Jul 2017)*<sup>1</sup>; *Judge jails teacher for ‘full-blown’ relationship with pupil, 15 (DT 7 Oct 2017)*) and cheating of teachers by providing students advance knowledge of exams (*School cheat scandal spreads (DT 28 Aug 2017)*). Other examples of teacher’s misconduct covered by the newspaper are a teacher allowing students to watch porn, a teacher using homophobic insults and a teacher using offensive language. A less common reason for the critique is a flaw in the quality of teaching (28% of the articles in this category), such as a failure to offer religious education, poor teaching skills of newly qualified teachers, and teachers’ neglect of children from deprived backgrounds. The remaining eight per cent of the articles in this category criticize strict rules imposed by some teachers. Apart

from the sensational appeal, the focus on teachers' legal or moral misconduct rather than flaws in teaching reflects and, at the same time, reinforces the society's expectations of teachers to provide an ethical and moral example for students and fulfil the role of a socio-political agent that promotes social justice.

	<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	<i>Mladá fronta</i>
teachers' faults and wrongdoings	31%	6%
problems regarding the teaching profession	18%	25%
teachers' critiques of government and official policies	16%	3%
teachers' accomplishments	5%	22%
teachers as victims	12%	17%
teachers' critiques of parents	9%	–
teachers being instructed to do something	6%	–
teachers as advocates of a healthy lifestyle for students	3%	–
tangible and intangible resources provided to teachers	-	13%
explicit praise of teachers	–	9%
tragedies involving students and teachers	–	5%

**Table 1: Semantic macrostructures**

The second most frequent category of semantic macrostructures in *The Daily Telegraph* is topics revealing problems concerning the teaching profession, namely a shortage of teachers (especially in Scotland) and its impact on children's education, an increase in unqualified teachers, low teachers' salaries and work overloads. Such topics establish the teaching occupation as rather unattractive; yet, by criticizing the situation, they also call for a change and urge the necessity of improvement of teachers' working conditions, implying the importance of the profession.

The news value of negativity prevails in the other commonly employed categories of topics in *The Daily Telegraph*. Quite a large number of articles focus on teachers' critiques of government and official policies (*Teachers 'fear Muslims are stigmatised by terror scheme' (DT 4 Jul 2017)*; *SNP under fire over fall in student numbers in core subjects (DT 14 Aug 2017)*) and on teachers' complaints about and implicit critiques of parents (*Do we need to nanny parents*

*these days?* (DT 1 Jul 2017)). Although confrontational in tone, such articles give teachers a ‘voice’ and attribute to them an active role. In contrast, the categories including topics of teachers as victims (*Rise in pupils attacking their teachers* (DT 21 Jul 2017); *Friends raise Pounds 31,000 to fly sick teacher home* (DT 7 Jul 2017)) and teachers as being instructed to do something, such as being guided on transgender issues and being told not to give marks, position teachers in a passive, powerless role.

The number of topics with a positive tone is disproportionately low in *The Daily Telegraph* (9 articles, i.e. 7%). Such articles mention teachers’ accomplishments, including the set-up of *an outstanding nursery* (DT 19 Oct 2017) and the establishment of *a class for autistic children* (DT 20 Dec 2017) and the teachers’ role of an advocate of a healthy lifestyle, as in articles on teachers’ *call for a ban on the sale of energy drinks to under 16s* (DT 11 Dec 2017) and *encouragement of healthy eating among pupils* (DT 3 Oct 2017).

The main difference in the topics of the studied articles in *Mladá fronta* from those in *The Daily Telegraph* is their overall more positive and less confrontational character and a frequent attribution of an active, favourable role to teachers (see Table 1). The semantic macrostructures of 120 articles gathered from the Czech newspaper fall into eight categories: problems regarding the teaching profession (30 articles); teachers’ accomplishments (26 articles); teachers as victims (20 articles); tangible and intangible resources provided to teachers (16 articles); explicit praise of teachers (11 articles); teachers’ wrongdoings (7 articles); tragedies involving students and teachers (6 articles); and teachers’ critique of government and official policies (4 articles).

The most frequent category in the Czech broadsheet includes topics revealing problems regarding the teaching profession, which are similar to those noted in the British newspaper, namely teachers’ low salaries and a consequent decrease in the number of teachers (*Učitelské platy, horké téma/Teachers’ salaries, a hot topic* (Mf 22 Aug 2017)). The foregrounding of these topics is connected with the general election that took place in October 2017, before which most politicians drew public attention to teachers’ low salaries, promising at least a 15 per cent increase. *Mladá fronta* describes teachers’ salaries as shameful since they are much below the average in the EU and points out that an increase is not only deserved by teachers but will also raise the prestige of the occupation (*učitelé by měli získat mnohem důstojnější a více motivující odměnu za svou práci/teachers should receive a much more dignified and motivating reward for their work* (Mf 4 Sep 2017)). Overall, the news belonging to this category views teachers sympathetically, encouraging a change in the problematic situation.

Apart from problems, the articles in *Mladá fronta* foreground teachers' positive actions and accomplishments, ascribing them an agentive as well as a beneficial role. Importantly, all but one such article were placed in the local content section. The lack of such topics in *The Daily Telegraph* thus may be due to the absence of a section with regional content. The community-binding character of the local content section in *Mladá fronta* is reflected in the focus on teachers' preparation of events with a positive impact on both students and the public, such as a students' performance night, a festival, a project at the local cemetery and a students' contest. Teachers are thus portrayed as important social agents building the minds of students as well as the society. Furthermore, eleven articles (eight of which appear in the section with regional content) offer an explicit praise of teachers (*Magistrát ocení nejlepší učitele/Town hall will award the best teachers* (Mf 2 Nov 2017)), with some of them attributing a heroic role to the teacher (*Učitelka – hrdinka./Teacher – a heroine.* (Mf 9 Nov 2017)). A favourable attitude towards teachers is also employed in articles depicting a tragedy in which a student got injured or died when under a teacher's supervision. All such articles defend the teacher by freeing them of blame (*policie vyloučila pochybení učitelek/the police ruled out that the teachers erred* (Mf 25 Jul 2017)).

Similarly to *The Daily Telegraph*, *Mladá fronta* recurrently portrays teachers as victims, namely of bullying and mistreatment by students and the head (*Šikana? Oběti jsme my, myslí si učitelé/Bullying? We are the victims, think teachers.* (Mf 30 Nov 2017)). By pointing out difficulties that teachers have to face in their job, these articles evoke sympathy; yet, they also reduce teachers' position of power and authority.

Another role that the Czech broadsheet assigns teachers is that of beneficiaries of help from authorities (16 articles), including the provision of new facilities and training courses. This stands in contrast to the *The Daily Telegraph*, which allocates teachers to the passive role of objects of instruction (8 articles), placing them in a submissive position.

As can be seen in Table 1, the topics of teachers' critiques of government policies and parents, to which *The Daily Telegraph* pays high attention, are backgrounded in the case of the critique of the government and absent in the case of the critique of parents in *Mladá fronta*. Similarly, teachers' faults and wrongdoings are focused on much less frequently in *Mladá fronta* than in *The Daily Telegraph*. Although the population of the United Kingdom is approximately six times larger than the population of the Czech Republic, and thus it can be argued that newsworthy topics dealing with teachers' wrongdoings are to occur six times more often in the British newspaper than in the Czech one, it is rather the relative frequency of individual topic categories gathered in the



corpus (see Table 1) that points to the difference of focus in each newspaper. Out of the seven articles on teachers' wrongdoings in *Mladá fronta*, only one concerns a fault in teaching per se, namely teachers' failure to use effective teaching methods at one school, while the other articles reveal a teacher's wrong treatment of students and thus a failure in the role of moral guide and protector of students (*Návrat učitelky, která týrala děti/Teacher who maltreated children is back* (Mf 7 Jul 2017); *Zneužil mě, řekla bývalá žačka o učiteli. Soud jí dal za pravdu./He abused me, said a former student about her teacher. Court agreed.* (Mf 5 Dec 2017)).

## 5.2 Transitivity analysis

By means of the investigation of recurrent transitivity patterns of clauses in which one of the participants is a teacher, this part of the analysis aims to reveal in more detail social roles and attributes repeatedly allocated to teachers and thus made salient in the data. It pays attention to both what is included and foregrounded, and what is omitted and backgrounded in each newspaper. While teachers recurrently participate in material, mental, verbal and relational processes in both newspapers, they are rarely involved in existential and behavioural ones.

### 5.2.1 Material processes

In both *The Daily Telegraph* and *Mladá fronta*, teachers commonly occupy the role of the Agent of material processes, which can be divided into three main categories: processes that portray teachers in a positive light, processes that portray teachers in a negative light, and processes that point to problems regarding the teaching profession. As far as the positive processes are concerned, both newspapers portray teachers as transmitters of knowledge, as in *primary teachers have revolutionised the way children are taught to read in this country* (DT 5 Dec 2017) and *učitelka naučí nejen číst a psát, ale také základy fyzioterapie/ the teacher teaches not only how to read and write, but also the basics of physiotherapy* (Mf 4 Dec 2017). Both newspapers also assign teachers the role of students' leader, helper and guide, such as *a PE teacher who heads the training of Wimbledon's 250 ball boys and girls* (DT 14 Jul 2017); *pomocnou ruku přidávají [učitelé]/[teachers] give a helping hand* (Mf 18 Oct 2017) and *[teachers] are guiding young people's work experience choices* (DT 14 Sep 2017).

Overall, the variety of roles ascribed to teachers in clauses where they occupy the semantic position of the Agent of positive processes is wider in *Mladá fronta* than in *The Daily Telegraph*, with the Czech newspaper repeatedly portraying teachers as agents of socially beneficial work. More specifically, it depicts a teacher as an organizer of non-curricular events (*[učitelky] pořádají dobročinný*

*jarmark/[teachers] organize a charity fair (Mf 13 Dec 2017)), a supervisor ([učitelky] dohlížejí na zvýšenou hygienu dětí/[teachers] supervise children's hygiene (Mf 10 Oct 2017) and an actor of creative processes and activities with students (učitelka dokázala se svými žáky ze sedmé třídy vyrobit dvacet oveček/a teacher managed to make twenty sheep with seven grade pupils (Mf 5 Dec 2017); učitelé se studenty model nafotí, změří a rozkreslí/teachers and students take a photo of, measure and draw the model (Mf 31 Oct 2017)). Such an emphasis on creative material processes that teachers conduct is missing in *The Daily Telegraph*. By highlighting their achievements, *Mladá fronta* provides teachers with an image of capability, as in *učitelé to všechno zvládli dobře/teachers managed everything well (Mf 13 Oct 2017) and učitelé dokážou rozeznat nadané žáky/teachers can distinguish gifted students (Mf 20 Sep 2017).**

Both newspapers also allocate teachers the role of the Agent of negative processes, representing them as culprits of wrongdoings. As shown in Table 1 in the previous section, such a portrayal is more common in *The Daily Telegraph*. One of the types of material processes used in such a transitivity pattern in both the Czech and British newspapers is sexual abuse. In these articles, the teacher recurrently occupies the role of the Agent, being represented as the initiator of the act, having the blame directly ascribed (*David Fenwick, 44, kissed the girl at her school prom (DT 16 Dec 2017); she [teacher] gave him [student] oral sex (DT 7 Oct 2017); [učitel] nalákal svou tehdy třináctiletou začku do kabinetu/[teacher] lured his then thirteen-year-old student to his office (Mf 5 Dec 2017)). The other negative material processes the Agent of which is a teacher differ in the two newspapers. In the Czech newspaper, a teacher is depicted several times as failing in his/her interpersonal, caring role, being guilty of mistreatment of students (e.g. *učitelka týrala děti/a teacher tormented children (Mf 7 Jul 2017); učitelka ponižovala dívku/a teacher humiliated a girl (Mf 22 Sep 2017)). In contrast, in the British newspaper the negative material processes either point to a teacher's dishonest behaviour (e.g. *Teacher 'invented' a sick partner to get time off (DT 20 Sep 2017); he gave pupils "advance knowledge" on two exams (DT 28 Aug 2017) or to their failure in the role of an educator (teachers were sacrificing children's wider instruction to improve their examination results (DT 12 Oct 2017); reception teachers are failing one in three five-year-olds by focusing on playing and not being able to teach reading, writing or maths properly (DT 30 Nov 2017)).***

The third type of processes the Agent of which is a teacher is processes that point to problems connected with the teaching profession. Both newspapers employ the same two semantic domains of verbs belonging to this category, namely those denoting processes of leaving the profession and those denoting

processes of protesting against the government's policies (*secondary school teachers are leaving in droves* (DT 12 Sep 2017); *učitelé odcházejí za lepším/teachers are leaving for the better* (Mf 6 Dec 2017); *teachers attacked the "punctuation police"* (DT 12 Jul 2017); *učitelé chystají v pátek protest kvůli platům/teachers are planning a protest against their salaries on Friday* (Mf 29 Aug 2017)). All such articles provide justifications for teachers' actions (mainly low salaries and much work and stress) and omit opposing views, i.e. the voice is given only to the critics of official policies, while the government's comments are excluded. Both newspapers thus sympathize with the teachers' actions and advocate the need for a change. *Mladá fronta* also explicitly calls attention to the problem of the low prestige of the teaching profession, as in *učitelé se potýkají s nízkou prestiží svého povolání/teachers fight against the low prestige of their profession* (Mf 4 Nov 2017).

Another semantic role recurrently ascribed to teachers in the data is the Patient. The material processes repeatedly employed in such a transitivity pattern are similar in both newspapers, falling into four main categories. The first category is beneficial processes conducted by authorities, such as *train and help* (*trenér školí učitele/a coach trains teachers* (Mf 13 Nov 2017); *the Personal Finance Education Group has developed a framework to help teachers deliver money education* (DT 25 Jul 2017)). As the outcome of these processes enhances teachers' capabilities, they can be considered as contributing to a positive image of the profession; yet, at the same time, the role of the Patient strips teachers of power. The second category is processes with a negative impact on teachers, portraying teachers as victims of negative actions of others, namely students, parents and the government (*rise in pupils attacking their teachers* (DT 21 Jul 2017); *tři studenti šikanovali svou učitelku/three students bullied their teacher* (Mf 4 Jul 2017); *40 per cent of primary teachers are exposed to negative parental behaviour* (DT 8 Sep 2017); *matka jednoho z žáků dala na chodbě facku učitelce/the mother of one of the pupils slapped a teacher in the corridor* (Mf 18 Oct 2017); *a system that puts innocent teachers under unfair suspicion; [inkluzí] učitele zatížila papírováním/inclusion burdened teachers with administration* (Mf 19 Oct 2017)). Such clauses place teachers in a pitiful, powerless position. The third category includes processes denoting the punishment of teachers for their wrongdoings, such as *was dismissed, was banned, byla odsouzena/was sentenced*, providing a negative representation of some teachers. The fourth category consists of processes denoting 'search for' teachers, implicitly depicting teachers as 'scarce goods' (*a school in the Hebrides spent six months searching for a Gaelic teacher* (DT 23 Dec 2017); *zoufale hledali učitele/they were desperately looking for a teacher* (Mf 23 Sep 2017)).

The third semantic role ascribed to teachers in material processes in both newspapers is the role of Recipient. Teachers are represented as benefiting from government actions, namely a pay rise. Yet, this role tends to be ‘Ideal’ rather than ‘Real’, as the pay rise is mainly talked about in reference to the government’s plans rather than actions (*the budget could help boost the salaries of teachers* (DT 1 Jul 2017); *členové vlády se shodli na tom, že chtějí učitelům přidat/the government agreed that they want to raise teachers’ salaries* (Mf 6 Sep 2017)). *Mladá fronta* also foregrounds the portrayal of teachers as Recipients of awards, enhancing teachers’ positive image (*byl oceněn za tvůrčí a pedagogický přínos/was awarded for a creative and educational contribution* (Mf 30 Sep 2017)).

### 5.2.2 Mental processes

In clauses with mental processes, teachers occupy both the role of the Senser and the Phenomenon. When the role of the Senser is ascribed to a teacher, both newspapers employ emotive and desiderative processes rather than cognitive and perceptive ones. They mainly foreground negative feelings of teachers, often directed at official policies (*teachers are “worrying themselves sick” over the Scottish Government’s named person scheme* (DT 5 Oct 2017); *čeští učitelé se cítí dlouhodobě finančně podhodnoceni/Czech teachers have felt financially undervalued for a long time* (Mf 10 Oct 2017)). A slight difference between the two newspapers is that, in *Mladá fronta*, teachers’ negative feelings are also directed at their bosses (*cítíme se ukřivděné, jakým způsobem tady s námi bylo jednáno/we feel aggrieved because of the way we have been treated* (Mf 4 Jul 2017)), while *The Daily Telegraph* includes articles on teachers’ worries about social injustice (*teachers fear Muslims are stigmatised* (DT 4 Jul 2017)) and bad health effects of some products on students (*teachers fear that the health monitors [...] are having a bad effect on teenagers* (DT 13 Jul 2017)), depicting teachers as human rights defenders and well-being advocates. Desiderative processes the Senser of which is a teacher focus in both newspapers on teachers’ good intentions in their job, as in *I want to teach them to go looking at resources, looking at where your source comes from, are they respectable?* (DT 29 Dec 2017); *učitel, který jen chtěl dělat svou práci co nejlépe/a teacher who just wanted to do his job as best as he could* (Mf 15 Jul 2017). Overall, the employed transitivity patterns the Senser of which is a teacher represent teachers as concerned and caring social actors in both newspapers. Commonly adopted mental processes of which a teacher is the Phenomenon denote positive emotive processes with a teacher in the role of a target of students’ affections and respect (*my son just wants to show how much he appreciates his teacher* (DT 8 Dec 2017); *I [student] absolutely adored him [teacher]* (DT 5 Sep 2017); *nejradši [student] mám paní učitelku/I*

[student] like our teacher the best (Mf 13 Oct 2017)). This results in a strong positive image of teachers.

### 5.2.3 Verbal processes

Another role recurrently allocated to teachers in both *The Daily Telegraph* and *Mladá fronta* is the role of the Sayer. The newspapers often include quotations of teachers and thus give them voice. The British newspaper provides teachers with a strong voice by repeatedly representing them as having demands and complaints, such as calling for *a ban on the sale of energy drinks to under 16s* (DT 11 Dec 2017); *the scrapping of the National 4 qualification* (DT 14 Aug 2017), and complaining *about a new marking scheme* (DT 12 Jul 2017); *to the supermarket after seeing sexist descriptions* (DT 11 Aug 2017). The portrayal of teachers as active promoters of change is also included in *Mladá fronta*; yet, the newspaper tends to select less authoritative verbal processes, as in *učitelka navrhla třídít odpad ve škole/a teacher suggested recycling at school* (Mf 4 Jul 2017). As shown in the examples, the Verbiage of teachers' demands and suggestions does not concern only their jobs but also social and environmental issues, reinforcing the teachers' role as advocates of humanistic ideas. Other verbal processes employed in the two newspapers are 'encourage', 'warn', 'explain' and 'advise', portraying teachers as caring about their students (*we encourage students not to work during the exam period* (DT 15 Jul 2017); *warnings from his teacher not to slide down a banister* (DT 21 Oct 2017); *postup studentům vysvětloval odborný učitel/a specialist teacher explained the method to students* (Mf 25 Oct 2017); *učitelka češtiny jí poradila, aby po maturitě zkusila přijímačky na [...] /a Czech teacher advised her to try the entrance exam at [...]* (Mf 8 Jul 2017)).

### 5.2.4 Relational processes

The last major semantic role played by teachers in the data is the Carrier in attributive relational clauses. There are two main categories of the Attribute employed in both newspapers: those that attribute a positive quality to teachers and those that attribute a negative emotion or attitude to teachers, reinforcing their portrayal as victims. A wide range of positive qualities is attributed to teachers in relational clauses in both the British and the Czech newspapers, such as *Helen [a teacher] is so hard working* (DT 9 Sep 2017); *his teachers were determined to show him the right way* (DT 15 Sep 2017); *učitelky byly báječné/teachers were brilliant* (Mf 10 Aug 2017); *učitelé jsou zodpovědní, důstojní/teachers are responsible and dignified* (Mf 2 Sep 2017), enhancing thus the teachers' image. With regard to the Ideal, the two newspapers promote the significance of teachers

by stating that they should be *well-rewarded* and considered *profesní skupina se silným hlasem a vlivem/a professional group with a strong voice and influence* (Mf 22 Aug 2017). The second category of attributes that both newspapers highlight is negative emotions and attitudes of teachers, such as *the majority [of teachers] are dissatisfied in their role* (DT 8 Sep 2017); *Scottish teachers are 'on their knees'* (DT 14 Oct 2017); *učitelé jsou unavení, demotivováni/teachers are tired, demotivated* (Mf 11 Dec 2017); *spousta učitelů v padesáti je vyhořelá/a lot of teachers at the age of fifty are burnt out* (Mf 4 Nov 2017), reinforcing the portrayal of teachers as victims who struggle with many problems in their profession. The current unattractiveness of the teaching profession is confirmed in both newspapers by the repeated adoption of the possessive relational process 'lack', with teachers in the position of a missing object, as in *the lack of trainee teachers* and *nedostatek učitelů/lack of teachers*. Since the two newspapers provide external reasons for the lack, they call attention to the need for change.

## 6 Discussion

The analysis revealed many similarities between representations of teachers in *The Daily Telegraph* and *Mladá fronta*. Both newspapers highlight problems regarding the teaching profession, namely a high number of teachers leaving the profession and a consequent lack of teachers. The newspapers call attention to poor working conditions and the low salary of teachers, advocating social change and consequently a higher prestige for the teaching profession. This is reinforced by a common depiction of teachers as victims of negative actions by authorities as well as students, pointing to a degradation of teachers' social status. Although teachers are allocated the powerless position of the Patient in such representations, they are at the same time granted a voice to express their concerns and demands, and their frustrations and personal feelings are given space in the news. Both broadsheets foreground teachers' perspectives when discussing problems regarding their profession, showing a sympathetic and supportive attitude.

Another similarity between the two newspapers is that, apart from transmitters of knowledge, teachers are allocated the roles of students' guides, caring about them and shaping their lives, as well as moral guides concerned with social issues, namely social justice, protection of the environment and health. This corresponds to the findings of Alhamdan et al.'s (2014) study. By boosting teachers' social image, such representations have the potential to raise the public level of respect towards this profession.

The positive portrayal of teachers is enhanced in both newspapers by a recurrent ascription of positive characteristics to teachers (e.g. *brilliant*



and *hard-working*). In addition, teachers repeatedly occupy the role of the Phenomenon of students' affection and respect, being *adored* and *appreciated*.

The main difference between the newspapers is that *The Daily Telegraph* foregrounds teachers' wrongdoings, criticizing individual teachers, while *Mladá fronta* foregrounds teachers' accomplishments, praising individual teachers. The British newspaper mainly focuses on teachers' moral misconduct, emphasizing their expected role of social actors who set a moral example. Although the critique of teachers is less common in the Czech newspaper, when present, it also concerns a failure in the role of moral and caring students' guides rather than in their professional role of transmitters of knowledge. In line with the news value of negativity, *The Daily Telegraph* focuses on confrontational news depicting teachers' critiques of the government and parents. In contrast, the Czech newspaper highlights the positive agency of teachers, recurrently ascribing to them the semantic role of the Agent of creative and beneficial processes. Such a portrayal occurs mainly in the regional or local section (cf. Teplá's (2010) findings of the predominance of negative topics over positive ones in the articles on teachers in the Czech broadsheet *Lidové noviny*, which lacks a section with regional content). It seems unfortunate that an empowering agentive depiction of teachers, which has a potential to enhance the prestige of the teaching profession, is restricted to local news.

Due to the study's focus on a relatively short time period and the impact of topical social issues (e.g. the general election) on the media portrayal, the findings cannot be generalized. Nevertheless, the original hypothesis based on the 2013 study by the Varkey GEMS Foundation that the British broadsheet portrays teachers in a more positive light than the Czech one has not been confirmed. On the contrary, by foregrounding a favourable and appreciative portrayal of teachers, the Czech newspaper presumably incites respect towards teachers. This seems to be mainly because of a specific feature, the inclusion of a section with a local focus, in *Mladá fronta*. To arrive at more generalizable conclusions, a follow-up research study analysing newspaper articles published over a longer time span should be carried out.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> *DT* stands for *The Daily Telegraph*; *Mf* stands for *Mladá fronta*

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*Mladá fronta*

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