



**EXAMINING REPRESENTATION OF TEACHERS' STRIKES IN MALAWIAN
NEWSPAPERS**

MASTER OF ARTS (APPLIED LINGUISTICS) THESIS

LISTON MPHEZA

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

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Degree of Master of Arts (Applied Linguistics)

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my work, which has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Where other people's works have been used, acknowledgements have been made.

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents, Mr. Fegson Mpheza and Mrs. Christina Mpheza (nee Zimba). Your encouragement and support have led to the completion of this paper. God bless you.

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ABSTRACT

This study employs a mixed approach, using the discourse historical approach to analyse linguistic devices and discursive strategies in the representation of teachers' strikes in two Malawian newspapers, *The Nation* and *The Daily Times*. The research investigates the similarities and differences in the utilisation of linguistic devices and identifies the dominant linguistic device within each newspaper. Additionally, the study describes the distinct discursive strategies employed by the two newspapers in their representation of teachers' strikes. The findings reveal that both newspapers utilise similar linguistic devices, with lexicalisation being prominently featured in their coverage. However, the analysis also demonstrates that the newspapers employ various discursive strategies, which have implications for shaping public perceptions. This study highlights the influence of media discourse on shaping readers' understanding of the use of linguistic devices, and discursive strategies towards the strikes by the Teachers' Union of Malawi. The researcher argues that linguistic devices and discursive strategies in the newspapers were used in an attempt to influence public perception.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CDA:	Critical Discourse Analysis
COVID-19:	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CDA:	Critical Discourse Analysis
DHA:	Discourse Historical Approach
DT:	<i>Daily Times</i> (newspaper)
EU:	European Union
MISA:	Media Institute of Southern Africa
MOEST:	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
TN:	<i>The Nation</i> (newspaper)
TUM:	Teachers' Union of Malawi
WHO:	World Health Organization

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter provides the background information for the study of the representation of teachers' strikes in *The Nation* and *The Daily Times* newspapers in Malawi with a focus on the socio-historical context. In addition, the chapter discusses the problem statement, the general and specific objectives and the significance of the study. It also highlights the operational definitions of the key terms used in the thesis. The chapter concludes with an outline of the organisation of the thesis.

1.2. Introduction

From January to April 2021, The Teachers' Union of Malawi (TUM) organised a nationwide teachers' strike demanding COVID-19 risk allowances for teachers in public schools and colleges who were teaching in person during the COVID-19 pandemic. The strike received extensive coverage in two major newspapers, *The Nation (TN)* and *The Daily Times (DT)*. This study aimed to examine the representation of the strikes in the said newspapers by looking at linguistic devices and other discursive strategies they employed.

One of the Studies conducted in the past such as Kimu (2016) revealed a binary representation in the newspapers, coverage of topical issues such as 'the budget vs section

65’ as well as difference in their ideological stances. These studies suggest that newspapers in Malawi have subjective representations of different issues.

The researcher argues that linguistic devices and discursive strategies were used in an attempt to influence public perception. Therefore, this study sought to provide insight into how the media shapes public perception of social events. This was done by examining the linguistic devices and discursive strategies in representation of teachers’ strikes in Malawi, particularly related to COVID-19 risk allowances.

1.3. Background

Covid-19 is a global pandemic that has caused a major disruption to life worldwide. Millions of people have suffered from this pandemic. It has hit hard businesses, schools, and development, in general. On 2 April 2020, the first cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in Malawi, and by 21 April 2020 eighteen cases of COVID-19 and two deaths had been registered (Ministry of Health, 2020:22). From then on, many districts in Malawi such as Lilongwe, Blantyre, Chikwawa, Zomba and Thyolo registered some more COVID-19 cases and deaths.

As the number of cases continued to rise, the Malawi government took some measures to curb the spread of the virus. In March 2020, the then-president of the Republic of Malawi closed all schools in the country, and a state of national disaster was declared (MOEST, 2020). A 21-day national lockdown was announced on 14 April 2020 to control the spread of the virus. However, following a high court order, the lockdown was suspended.

Recognising the dangers of the pandemic, the Malawi Government started paying COVID-19 risk allowances to some civil servants such as health workers and police officers, who were considered at risk of contracting the coronavirus in workplaces. This necessitated the teachers to demand COVID-19 risk allowances through the Teachers Union of Malawi (TUM). In her ministerial statement, Minister of Education, Agnes Nyalonje, said that the government would not provide teachers with risk allowances as they were not rated as a COVID-19 high-risk group (Singini, 9 March 2021). TUM president, Willie Malimba, said that his union had done its best to engage the government in negotiations as one way of avoiding industrial action, but the latter had taken those meetings for granted (Pasungwi, 22 February 2021). Therefore, when President Lazarus Chakwera ordered that schools should re-open after a COVID-19-induced five-week break, teachers through TUM agreed to start a national-wide strike (*Daily Times*, Kalimira, Chauluka, and Gausi, 23 February 2021). The strike occurred mostly in public schools and colleges and media outlets in Malawi began to report about it.

Just like the previous teachers' strike against the Malawi government, there has been little or no interest in analysing the representation of the COVID-19 risk allowance strike as if the reporting had been always objective. On the contrary, there have been instances where newspapers have been accused of bias in their reporting in Malawi. For example, Kimu (2016) found that Malawian newspapers tended to be biased toward certain political parties, individuals, and interest group.

Also, during the 2019 election, some media outlets were accused of favouring certain political parties over others. According to a report by the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA, 2019), some media outlets provided more coverage to certain parties and candidates, while others were marginalised or ignored.

This background motivated the researcher to examine the representation of linguistic devices and discursive strategies used in Malawian newspapers to frame Teachers' strikes. He explored how the media used linguistic devices and discursive strategies. He was also interested in examining how the press was constructing and reinforcing dominant narratives about the strikes, and how those narratives were being used to shape public opinion in line with the ideological stance of the newspapers.

The researcher focused on analysing linguistic devices used in Malawi's *The Nation (TN)* and *Daily Times (DT)* newspapers. *The Nation* and *Daily Times* are the two most widely read newspapers in Malawi, and they both have a wide reach (Kanyung'wa and Mkwaila, 2011). They also have a history of covering stories related to teachers' strikes in the country. By analysing the linguistic devices and the discursive strategies, readers can gain insight into how the papers interpreted the risk allowances debate, and how they position the teachers' unions and government in the dispute.

1.4. Problem Statement

The nationwide strikes staged by teachers in public schools and colleges between January 2021 and April 2021, demanding Covid-19 risk allowances received extensive media coverage in newspapers. In the realm of journalism, newspapers play a crucial role in informing the public about issues of national interest. To fulfil this responsibility

effectively, newspaper reporters are required to adhere to principles of objectivity and accuracy (Wasserman, 2013). By doing so, they contribute to an informed citizenry capable of making well-grounded decisions and fostering public trust in the media (Society of Professional Journalists, 2014). Upholding these principles ensures that newspapers serve as reliable and unbiased sources of information, enhancing the democratic fabric of society. Unfortunately, the discourses of newspapers have never been free from ideological biases (Fairclough, 1989). This is problematic because readers may be misled and duped into embracing the producers' worldview (McGregor, 2005). This is why it is important to critically examine how newspapers cover issues of public interest. Paradoxically, despite several studies on Malawian newspapers within the field of critical discourse analysis (CDA), there is a significant gap in research regarding the representation of teachers' strikes in the newspapers. For example, Kondowe (2015) examined the extent to which the newspaper displayed bias in its reporting, particularly in terms of favouring or not favouring specific political parties or candidates. The study found evidence of bias in the newspaper's coverage, suggesting that the media outlet exhibited partiality towards certain political actors, which could have potentially influenced public opinion and the electoral process. Similarly, Chilima (2019) argued that there are variations in the coverage of political parties in government radio station with more visibility of various political actors of the ruling party.

Other studies have also analysed the representation of political parties, individuals, and interest groups in Malawian newspapers and have identified instances of bias in their representation. This is why the researcher felt that there was a need to analyse the linguistic

devices and discursive strategies the newspapers employed to determine whether or not they represented the strikes objectively. The researcher argues that linguistic devices and discursive strategies in the newspapers were used in an attempt to influence public perception.

Addressing the gap in research on the representation of teachers' strikes in Malawian newspapers is crucial in determining how they uphold journalistic integrity, understanding political implications, and advancing academic scholarship.

1.5. Objectives of the Study

1.5.1 General Objective

The main objective of the study was to examine the representation of teachers' strikes in *The Nation* and *The Daily Times* Newspapers in Malawi.

1.5.2 Specific Objectives

Specifically, the study set to accomplish the following objectives:

- To identify the dominant linguistic devices employed in *The Nation* and the *Daily Times* newspapers when reporting teachers' strikes in Malawi from January 2021 to April 2021.
- To describe the discursive strategies *The Nation* and the *Daily Times* newspapers used to represent the teachers' strikes.
- To analyse how linguistic devices and other discursive strategies **were** used to manipulate the readers' perception.

1.6. Justification and Significance of the Study

The study examines teachers' strikes in the context of a global pandemic (COVID-19). Theoretically, this study contributes to our understanding of how the media manipulate language to shape people's views during industrial disputes. Thus, it adds to the overall body of knowledge in the discourse analysis of local newspapers' articles.

Practically, the Study is important because it provides a better understanding of how the media frames labour disputes to promote their underlying goals. It reveals potential biases in how the media presents labour issues and the strategies used to influence public discourse.

The study delivers significant value to educational and media stakeholders. It provides teachers with insights into media portrayal of their profession; helps school administrators to understand how the media can impact their institutional reputation during strikes; and shows policymakers how the media can shape education policy discussions. This study is also useful to media stakeholders because it provides them an opportunity for self-reflection on reporting practices and ethical guidelines, especially during educational labour conflicts. Further to this, this research is also beneficial to labour unions and mediators since it helps them gain some understanding of media representation strategies during disputes.

Academically, the study advances analytical frameworks for media language during overlapping crises and it provides a valuable historical case study of how COVID-19 influenced media framing of labour disputes, ultimately contributing to more informed public discourse.

1.7. Operational Definition of Terms

1.7.1. Topoi

Topoi, also known as argumentative topoi or argumentative formulas, are key elements in searching for and developing arguments (Zagar, 2009). According to Wodak (2004), topoi is the location where an argument is constructed. The researcher found this definition compelling, hence this is how “topoi” is understood in this study. The researcher adopted this definition mainly because it resonates with the aim and objectives of this research. It should be pointed out however, that the researcher is aware that "topoi" is defined differently by different scholars for different reasons but he found such debates to be beyond the scope of his study. In Ruth Wodak's discourse-historical approach, 'topoi' (singular: topos) are content-related argument schemes that connect premises to conclusions through standardised justification patterns. Wodak (2001) defines topoi as warrants or conclusion rules that function as socially shared, implicit premises in argumentation, serving to justify the transition from an argument to a conclusion without requiring explicit backing. Wodak particularly emphasizes how topoi operate in discriminatory discourse, identifying common patterns such as the topos of burden, danger, culture, or history that legitimize exclusionary practices. Her work demonstrates how these argumentative templates become normalised within public discourse, making controversial positions seem reasonable and natural, thus requiring critical analysis to expose their underlying ideological foundations.

The utilisation of topoi by the media can lead individuals to accept certain ideas without engaging in critical examination. For example, the topos of "common sense" is often

associated with everyday experiences and observations, while the topos of "authority" is associated with expert opinions and sources (Wodak, 2004). By examining the topos used in media reporting, we can understand better how public opinion is formed and how it is influenced by communication.

1.7.2 Discursive Strategies

It is important to note that many definitions of discursive strategies are proposed by different scholars, with each offering a unique perspective of the concept. According to van Dijk (1997), discursive strategies encompass various tactics employed in discourse production and interpretation that shape the representation of social groups, events, and issues. Fairclough (2003) defines discursive strategies as linguistic and semiotic resources, that individuals or social groups use to construct and negotiate meaning, power relations, and ideologies in discourse. Wodak and Meyer (2001) describe discursive strategies as deliberate choices made by communicators to construct particular versions of reality, influence public opinion, and maintain or challenge existing power structures.

Notwithstanding the diversity of the definitions, this study adopted Wodak and Meyer's (2001) description. This choice was based on the relevance of their definition to the research objectives and the study's focus on analysing the topoi and discursive strategies employed in newspaper discourse to construct meaning, power relations, and ideologies. The definition provides a suitable framework for investigating how discursive strategies shape the representation of teachers' strikes in newspaper coverage.

1.7.3 Ideologies

Eagleton (1991) defines ideologies as “system of beliefs, values, and ideas through which individuals and social groups make sense of their world, interpret social relations, and justify their actions” (p.6). Jost, Glaser, and Sulloway (2003) define ideologies as “coherent sets of social and political beliefs and values that organize and justify the attitudes and behaviour of individuals and groups” (p.13). Faircough (2001) looks at ideologies as “systems of beliefs, values and norms which are organized around central concepts and which are shared by a social group, and which shape and constrain that group’s understanding of the world” (p.26).

In this study, ideologies are viewed as “complex cognitive and social system of beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and values that are shared by members of a social group and that legitimise or contest social practices and social relations” (Van Dijk, 1998 p. 17). Van Dijk’s definition is favoured over the others because it is perceived to offer a better understanding that would help in analysing linguistic devices and discursive strategies employed in newspapers effectively.

1.8. Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter one gives the background of the study, the problem statement, and the specific objectives of the study. It concludes by highlighting the significance of the study.

Chapter two contextualises the thesis by discussing literature relevant to this study as well as outlining the theoretical framework. In the literature review, the focus is on empirical

studies on newspaper texts through CDA. This is then followed by a discussion of Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach to the study of discourse.

Chapter three discusses the study's methodological perspectives. It presents the research design research approach, sampling techniques, data collection techniques, instruments and research ethics. The chapter also discusses how data was analysed and it wraps up with a discussion of the study's limitations.

Chapter Four presents and discusses the results of the study. It shows that lexicalisation was dominant in both *The Nation* and the *Daily Times* newspaper. The chapter also reveals that the two newspapers used similar discursive strategies.

Chapter five summarises the key findings of the study and their implications. It examines the specific linguistic devices and discursive strategies used by the two newspapers. The chapter concludes that objectivity is still elusive in the two newspapers.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter reviews empirical studies that provide the context for the current study. This is then followed by a discussion of the Discourse Historical Approach the theoretical framework used in this study.

2.2. Literature Review

The assertion that every discourse is inherently ideological has been echoed in numerous scholarly works (Fairclough, 1989 & 1995; McGregor, 2005; Van Dijk, 1992 & 2003). Discourse serves as a tool for both the exertion of power and resistance against it, as well as for critiquing such exertions of power (McGregor, 2005). Therefore, discourse studies are crucial in challenging or critiquing unwarranted discursive power and ideologies. This section delves into critical examinations of studies on media discourse, encompassing newspapers' coverage of political issues.

Studies in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) have extensively examined the ideological leanings of newspapers, shedding light on their role in legitimising governmental narratives. For instance, Manan (2001) scrutinised *The New Strait Times'* portrayal of the Reformasi Movement in Malaysia. The study focused on the leader of the movement, Anwar Ibrahim, the former Deputy Prime Minister, who was arrested during the movement's inception. Employing Fairclough's socio-economic approach, the study found that Anwar and his movement were predominantly depicted as 'victimisers' and 'perpetrators' of crimes, often associated with violence and property destruction. Conversely, the government was portrayed primarily as the victim of Reformasi's violent acts. This pattern mirrors Ngonyani's (2002) analysis of coverage of the University of Dar es Salaam protests for democratic reforms in 1978 and 1990 in *Uhuru* and *Mzalendo*. Using Fairclough's model, Ngonyani highlighted the portrayal of students as disobedient and spoiled, framing governmental actions as necessary disciplinary measures. Both studies underscore the frequent thematisation of students or Reformasi in headlines, the exclusion of their viewpoints, and the use of lexical items associating them with negative actions, while government agencies were portrayed positively. These findings reveal a consistent inclination of ideological stances of newspapers towards encoding governmental perspectives, thereby contributing to hegemonic reinforcement. This study examined the ideological stance of newspapers through the representation of teachers' strikes by focusing on linguistic devices and discursive strategies.

Astroff and Nyberg (1992) investigated the United States (US) media's portrayal of the French Socialist Party victories in 1981. The study revealed a construction of crisis discourse by the US media, projecting antagonism toward socialist ideals onto French and

American audiences. This was accomplished by excluding alternative voices, such as the French Socialist Party and its supporters, while foregrounding the perspectives of French conservatives and US officials. Similarly, Wenham, Harris & Sebar (2009) analysed the Australian print media's depiction of the HIV and AIDS pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa. Their findings unveiled a bias of medical, behavioural, and scientific solutions, sidelining integrated approaches like community participation and global economic changes. This bias was evident in the selection of news sources, predominantly favouring United Nations (UN) officials, NGO members, academics, businessmen, and celebrities, which portrayed Africans as passive victims. This narrative, in turn, perpetuated capitalism as the dominant global economic paradigm, contributing to the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa while stifling socialist alternatives.

Besides capitalist ideologies, national ideologies influence news reporting, sometimes overriding professional norms. Nir and Roel (1992) examined coverage of the Intifada in *Yedioth Aharonoth* and *Ha'aretz*, popular and quality Israeli newspapers respectively. Despite the Palestinians' resistance against the illegal Israeli occupation of the West Bank, both papers downplayed Israeli aggression while portraying Palestinian defensive actions as aggression. This framing normalised the Israeli military's response to the crisis. These findings parallel Dirks' (2006) analysis of 'quality' British and German press coverage of the Iraq conflict. The study explored the papers' presentation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and alleged connections between the Al Qaeda network and Saddam Hussein's government. The results revealed that right-wing papers in both countries were more willing to support the war on Iraq, while left-wing papers emphasised the need for authorities to provide sufficient evidence for disarmament before waging war. However,

the left-wing papers' editorial stance, despite opposing the war, tacitly accepted the existence of WMDs, implicitly justifying the necessity of war. This alignment with dominant views influenced policymakers, leading to war despite a lack of concrete evidence. In both cases, newspapers encoded prevailing national perspectives on the Iraq war.

Furthermore, Ozcan (2009) delved into the portrayal of gender, modernity, and the press in Turkey across six newspapers. The study explored how males and females were represented and how these depictions reflected broader Turkish societal views. The findings revealed disparities in visualisation between tabloid and serious newspapers, with tabloids featuring more visuals. However, a nuanced examination of gender representation across all newspapers unveiled a stark discrepancy: females were significantly underrepresented compared to males, and the two genders were depicted using distinct visual conventions. Males were often portrayed in profile views and from low angles, conveying both detachment from the viewer and a position of power. In contrast, females were predominantly depicted frontally and at eye-level angles, suggesting an equal power dynamic with the viewer. This not only marginalised women but also perpetuated misrepresentations. Thus, despite Turkey's modernisation, the media continued to encode prevailing societal views regarding women.

Moreover, examinations of newspapers' coverage of similar issues across different historical epochs underscore the influence of prevailing ideologies on news reporting. Amouzadeh (2008) scrutinised language use in Iranian newspapers across distinct ideological periods in post-revolution Iran, including Islamisation (1980-1988), economic reconstruction (1989-1997), and political reformation (1998-2004). This investigation

elucidates how varying socio-political climates are reflected and constructed in Persian newspaper headlines. The findings revealed the prominence of "Islamisation," "nationalism," and socio-political changes in newspaper discourse, contingent upon the historical context in Iran. Rahmani (2010) echoed these findings in an analysis of *The New York Times'* portrayal of Iran and Iranian affairs before and after Obama's presidency. Prior to Obama, US policy leaned towards coercive measures such as war threats and intensified economic sanctions to deter Iran's uranium enrichment. However, under Obama's presidency, a diplomatic approach emphasising negotiation with Iran emerged. The study revealed a shift in Iran's portrayal from a dangerous and powerful enemy to a partly moderate entity. Thus, media language use during post-revolution Iran or before and after Obama's presidency served as a social practice aimed at reinforcing hegemonic ideologies and power dynamics between Iran and the USA.

Erjavec (2001) investigated media representation of discrimination in the Slovenian press following an incident where villagers prevented a Romani family, an ethnic minority, from moving into a house they had legally purchased. The study revealed news reports portraying Roma as criminal, lazy, and idle, among other negative stereotypes, threatening the community's socio-economic interests. This alignment with the majority ideology resulted in a clear and several violations of minority rights. These findings resonate with Flowerdew, Li, and Tran's (2002) analysis of a leading liberal newspaper in Hong Kong regarding Chinese Mainlanders' claim to the right to abode in the country. The study unveiled a negative intra-ethnic dichotomy between the majority of Hong Kongers and minority Mainland Chinese. While both news reports and editorials generally discriminated against Chinese Mainlanders through scare tactics and delegitimisation, a

nuanced examination of editorials revealed some sympathy towards the migrants. However, the study did not conclude why conflicting portrayals of Mainlanders existed between hard news and editorials within the same newspaper.

Regarding minority groups, Richard (2004) scrutinised the coverage of 'Islam or Muslim-related topics' in British broadsheets. This study unveiled a negative portrayal of 'Islam or Muslims as military threats, extremists, terrorists, and despots, among other negative stereotypes. Conversely, the West was depicted positively as a civilising force, while Israeli aggression towards Muslims was nominalised to obscure the agents. Consequently, newspaper reporting served to normalise the actions of the majority British society and Israel towards Muslims, perpetuating the status quo.

Notwithstanding this, news discourse also has the potential to challenge unequal power relations in society. Retzlaff (2006) examined the portrayal of Aboriginals, a minority in Canada, and their issues in Canadian media. Contrary to dominant negative representations in Euro-Canadian papers, these newspapers portrayed a positive self-image, emphasising the existence of an independent and sovereign nation and the need for emancipation from external labelling. Thus, newspapers contribute to transforming the existing social structure.

Moreover, some studies on media discourse highlight the press's role in shaping public perceptions. Birks (2010) examined *Scottish tabloid* newspapers' coverage of the campaign against drug abuse and the proposed closure of a city's maternity hospital. The findings revealed that while articles referenced protests as evidence supporting the campaigns, these protests were often incited by the newspapers' reports, rather than stemming from pre-

existing public sentiment. Consequently, the public's role was reduced to merely recognising the newspapers as representative and supporting them through quantitative pressure, such as protests. In effect, newspapers bolstered themselves politically and commercially by presenting their views as populist impulses of the public, thereby stifling the democratic process. These findings align with Zubair's (n.d.) analysis of the portrayal of women in popular Pakistani women's magazines. This study revealed that both linguistic and visual features of popular magazines perpetuated traditional, reductive femininities by depicting the female body as a site of male voyeurism and pleasure, reinforcing societal views of female sexuality as strictly controlled within patriarchal marriage and women's reproductive roles.

In Zimbabwe, Chinyanganya (2014) analysed discourse surrounding land reforms within *The Herald* and *Daily News*. The study unveiled contrasting portrayals, with *The Herald* (state-owned) depicting local influencers as neutral or verbally active agents, while *The Daily News* (privately owned) presented ZANU-PF politicians and functionaries as actively involved in material actions like murder and rape against farmers, teachers, opposition party supporters, and villagers. This aligns with Kuo and Nakamura's (2005) examination of coverage by pro-reunification *United Daily News* (UDN) and pro-independence *Liberty Times* (LT) in Taiwan, following the visit of the Taiwanese First Lady to the USA. Despite both papers translating the same English interview, discrepancies emerged in editorial additions, deletions, lexical choices, syntax, and thematic emphasis. UDN headlines centred on controversial remarks about the First Lady's predecessor and downplayed negative aspects of the KMT party, while LT emphasised the First Lady's statements on Taiwan's sovereignty, highlighting a contrast between the authoritarian KMT

regime and the current democratic society. Thus, Kuo and Nakamura (2005) and Chinyanganya (2014) illustrate how language can shape divergent perceptions of the same social phenomenon based on newspaper ideologies.

These findings are echoed in De Wett's (2001) investigation of hard news coverage of racial violence in South African schools. The study revealed persistent racism despite South Africa's anti-racist constitution since democratic elections in 1994. Interestingly, black and white stakeholders denied being racist, and the attribution of discrimination or racial abuse depended on the racial affiliation of the newspaper's ownership. If the paper was white-owned, whites were depicted as victims of discrimination, and vice versa. Such reporting perpetuates racial discrimination in South African schools.

In Malawi, research indicates that newspapers' portrayal of political figures in hard news is shaped by the prevailing political system and the ideological stance of the newspapers.

Kimu (2016) analysed Malawian newspapers' coverage of 'Budget vs Section 65' between 2006 and 2008. The study found a dichotomous representation of the ruling party and budget on one hand, and opposition parties and section 65, on the other. The privately-owned newspapers presented the ruling party positively while members of the opposition parties were negatively represented despite their position being justified by the country's constitution. The newspapers consistently focused on the UDF's shortcomings and ignored its successes, leading to a biased representation of the parties' performances.

Kasonga and Mkwaila (2021) looked at the coverage of COVID-19 in Malawi's newspapers and found evidence of bias in reporting some issues. The researchers found

that some newspapers focused on negative news and sensationalised stories about the pandemic, while others provided more balanced and informative coverage. The study highlights the need for Malawi's media to strive for objective and balanced reporting, especially during times of crisis.

The existing literature on newspapers in Malawi has extensively discussed their lack of neutrality, particularly evident in their reporting on various societal issues (Kimu, 2016). Moreover, recent events such as teachers' strikes have been widely covered by newspapers, yet little attention has been paid to examining the representation of these strikes thereby creating a picture that the reporting was neutral despite the empirical evidence cited above pointing to the contrary. While prior studies have explored broader aspects of newspaper bias, such as political affiliations or sensationalism, there remains a significant research void regarding the portrayal of teachers' strikes. Therefore, this study aimed to bridge this gap by scrutinizing the representation of teachers' strikes in Malawian newspapers, thereby providing valuable insights into how the media uses linguistic devices and discursive strategies to influence public perception and policy discourse in labour issues in the education sector.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

This study sought to examine the representation of teachers' strikes in Malawian newspapers. To achieve this, it adopted a Discourse Historical Approach (DHA). Unlike Social Cognitive Approach (SCA), Framing theory, and Agenda theory that could be used, the DHA by Wodak explores the interplay between language, power, and historical context in shaping discourse, which is often overlooked by other approaches focusing solely on the

linguistic or historical aspect in isolation (Iedema, 2001). It involves an “analysis of meaning from text by examining the linguistic structures, historical context, and social power relations to understand how discourse constructs and shapes reality” (Wodak, 2001). Understanding complex power dynamics and influences in society requires interdisciplinary research as envisaged by this approach.

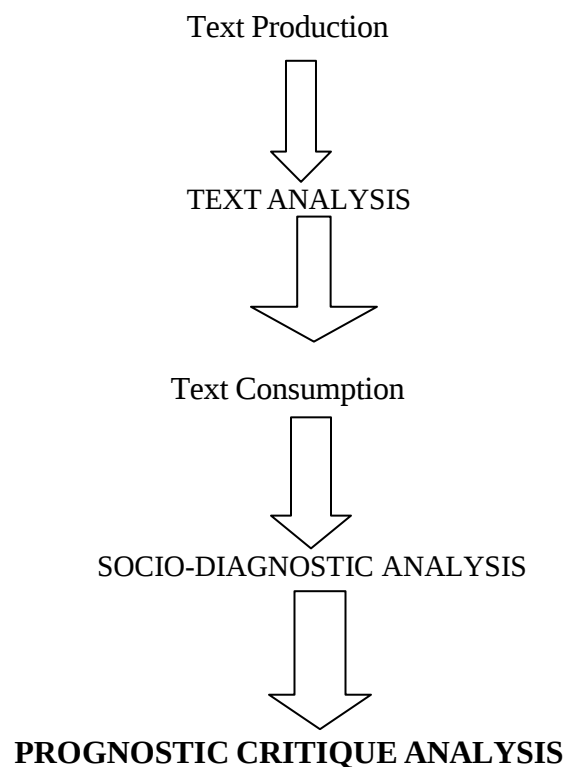
2.3.1. Discourse Historical Approach

The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) was proposed by Ruth Wodak, a prominent Austrian linguist, from a critical discourse analysis (CDA) perspective (Wodak, and Meyer, 2001). Wodak's model of DHA encompasses three dimensions of discourse which maps analysis onto one another: It involves:

... (1) "**Text or discourse immanent critique**," which involves scrutinising linguistic features and discourse structures to uncover underlying power dynamics and ideologies; (2) "**Socio-diagnostic critique**," which exposes the potentially manipulative nature of discourse by situating it within broader social and political contexts. It also examines the broader societal and historical factors shaping discourse practices; and (3) "**Prognostic critique**," aimed at improving communication by proposing practical solutions to language barriers and promoting inclusive language use in various institutional and public settings. It involves investigating the strategic use of language to achieve particular discursive goals and maintain power relations (Wodak, 1996).

In contrast to some perspectives on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which focus on moral judgments, the essence of CDA lies not in determining what is "right" or "wrong," but rather in making transparent choices throughout the research process and justifying these choices theoretically. One method for critical discourse analysts to mitigate bias is through triangulation, a principle embraced by the discourse-historical approach, which emphasises employing various approaches, methods, and empirical data sources to ensure

robust analysis. This approach, as exemplified by Wodak (1999), seeks to integrate extensive historical, organisational, and political knowledge into the analysis of discourse events, examining how discourse genres evolve and employing social theories to elucidate the contextual factors shaping discourse. The three dimensions of analysis are illustrated in the figure below:



(Figure created by Liston Mpheza, based on information from Wodak (2001))

Figure 1: Wodak's Three-Dimensional Conception of Discourse Historical Approach

Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) framework incorporates a comprehensive analysis of discourse events by integrating diverse approaches, employing multiple methods, and incorporating extensive empirical data alongside historical, organisational,

and political knowledge (Wodak, and Meyer, 2001). These three elements of the theory are, discussed in subsequent sub-sections below.

2.3.1.1. Textual analysis

A "text" is defined as a materially durable product of linguistic actions, characterised by Fairclough (1999) as a conventionalised use of language associated with a particular social activity. In textual analysis, one examines various text elements to uncover its meaning and implications. These elements include linguistic features such as vocabulary, metaphors, and topoi. Additionally, textual analysis considers the social conventions and expectations reflected in the text, and the ideological concepts promoted by specific social groups. The analysis also extends to the context of the text in which the text, including the fields of action or societal segments that shape and constitute the discourse frame. The subsequent paragraphs, discuss each of these elements in brief.

First, word choice (lexicalisation) is usually the first step of textual analysis. Lexical choice not only constructs a particular ideological representation of experience or events but also shows the producer's positive or negative evaluation of such actions, participants, and events (Fairclough, 1989). The first step is to select a text or set of texts for analysis. These texts could be speeches, interviews, articles, or any other form of discourse that is relevant to the research question or topic of interest. Lexicalisation is, therefore, a deliberate choice of words that projects the producers' intended meaning (Fairclough, 1992a). The choice of one name over another equally correct alternative implies foregrounding one social category while back grounding another (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). In addition, word choice

can also encode ideology through over-lexicalisation. This is a surfeit repetition of synonyms in news discourse to give a sense of over-completeness (van Dijk, 1993).

In text analysis, Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) incorporates various linguistic devices to uncover underlying ideologies and power structures (Wodak, 2001). It uses tools such as lexical choice, which examines the selection of words and their connotations; metaphor, which analyses figurative language to reveal conceptual frameworks and ideologies; topoi, which identifies argumentative strategies that underpin discourse. Together, these devices enable a nuanced dissection of discursive practices, illuminating how language shapes and is shaped by historical, cultural, social and political contexts (Wodak, 2001).

Metaphors are linguistic devices used to convey abstract concepts or ideas by drawing parallels with concrete objects or experiences. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) define metaphors as "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another." On the other hand, euphemism, as determined by Lewis (2008), is "a mild or indirect word or expression substituted for one considered to be too harsh or blunt when referring to something unpleasant or embarrassing" (p. 240). Metaphors and euphemisms are pervasive linguistic devices that play a significant role in shaping discourse and conveying ideological perspectives. Researchers can uncover the underlying ideologies and cultural assumptions embedded in discourse by analysing metaphors and euphemisms. Additionally, metaphors and euphemisms are often used strategically by actors to frame issues in a particular way, to influence public opinion, and legitimise certain actions or policies. Therefore, by focusing on these linguistic devices, researchers can gain insight into how discourse constructs and reflects social reality, power dynamics, and ideological

struggles. Furthermore, lexicalization, metaphors and euphemisms are relatively concrete and identifiable linguistic features in the study, making them suitable for systematic analysis of the dominant linguistic devices in the current study.

Third, analysis at text levels also involves gathering background information about the text and its context. This includes information about the author or speaker, the time and place of production, the intended audience, and the social, political, and historical context in which the text was produced. Analysts also identify the genre(s) of the text. A genre is a conventional use of language associated with a particular social activity (Wodak. 2001). By identifying the genre(s), analysts can understand the social norms and expectations that shape the discourse.

Based on the above discussion, text analysis provides a detailed description of the text itself. The analyst examines the linguistic devices of the text. The comprehensive analysis helped the researcher to understand how language was used to portray the strikes, revealing underlying biases, framing techniques, and ideological positioning within the media discourse. By examining historical context alongside linguistic elements, the researcher was able to discern patterns in representation over time, shedding light on the evolving narratives surrounding teachers' strikes and their socio-political implications.

2.3.1.2. Social – Diagnostic Analysis

Social-diagnostic analysis in the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) involves examining discursive practices (discursive strategies) to expose and understand the socially constructed nature of discourse, particularly regarding exclusion, discrimination, and power dynamics (Wodak and Meyer, 2001). Discursive practice is analysing a text as it relates to its production, distribution, and consumption (Fairclough, 1992a).

There are five discursive strategies in news reports: Referential/nomination, Predication, Argumentation, Perspectivation or framing or discourse representation, and Intensification or mitigation (Wodak, and Meyer, 2001:73). However, only “argumentation,” “discourse representation” and “nomination.” will be discussed here as they were only found to be useful in the current study. A detailed explanation of the other strategies is provided in appendix 3.

Perspectivation or discourse representation involves expressing involvement and positioning the speaker's point of view (Wodak and Meyer, 2001). In DHA analysis, quotations of discriminatory events and utterances are examined to understand how discourses represent different perspectives. There are several modes of discourse representation in news reports. However, only two appears to be relevant for this study.. The first is direct quotation which Fairclough (1995a) calls Direct Discourse (henceforth DD). In this case, readers' interpretation of the quotations and principal responsibility is framed by the reporting clause that the producer employs (Fairclough, 1995; Richardson, 2007 & Pajuneni, 2008). In this case, while reporting verbs ‘say’ and ‘tell’ are considered neutral, some reporting verbs like ‘claimed,’ ‘admitted,’ ‘revealed,’ and ‘charged’ are evaluative (Pajuneni, 2008).

Reported speech can also be included in news reports through indirect quotation. Fairclough, (1995a) calls this mode Indirect Discourse (ID). Here, the producer summarises “the contents of what was said or written, not the actual words used”

(Richardson, 2007: 103). In this case, as indicated in DD, it is also the verb chosen to characterise the reported speech that is of paramount importance in analysis although a quantitative analysis of all IDs may also be helpful.

Furthermore, analysis of the discursive practice of news requires attention to "nomination." There are several ways of analysing nominations (see appendix 3). However, only anthroponyms will be discussed because of the scope of this study. Anthroponyms, as defined by Holmes (2000), are "name-giving practices, involving the personal or place names which are associated with language, society, and culture" (p. 213). They are a key aspect of identity and social relations. In a text, they can provide information about the cultural background or ethnicity of individuals mentioned in the text or convey an individual's social status or hierarchy.

2.3.1.3. Prognostic Critique Analysis

Prognostic critique analysis in the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) involves examining social practices to contribute to the transformation and improvement of communication (Wodak, and Meyer, 2001: 73). Social practices refer to "the text's socio-cultural goings-on which the communicative event is part of" (Fairclough, 1995b: 57). This involves examining discourse within public institutions such as hospitals, schools, courtrooms, public offices, and media reporting institutions to identify instances of language barriers and sexist language use. Analysts should consider the broader societal structures, power relations, and historical factors that contribute to the existence of language barriers. Analysts should develop proposals and guidelines for reducing language barriers based on the analysis. At this level, the analysis focuses on ideology and hegemony

within public institutions and proposes guidelines for improvement. In the two sub-sections below, these issues are discussed.

2.3.1.4. *Ideology*

Etymologically, the term ideology is traced to French philosopher Destutt de Tracy in 1796 who used it to describe a systematic study of ideas (Sonderling, 2001). However, the concept acquired a negative connotation as in Marxism where it was viewed as ‘false consciousness’ (van Dijk, 1998). Wodak (2001) defines ideology as “a set of political and social systems of ideas, values and prescriptions of the group or rather collectivities that have the function of organising or legitimising actions of the group.” Sonderling (2001) adds that ideologies are not only particular world views of a group but also the basis for such a belief. Hence, as Zaidi (2012) observes, ideology is a *raison d’etre* for all human actions, and as such it is not inherently negative as one may conclude from the Marxist point of view because apart from legitimising power abuse (dominance), it can also reinforce resistance (van Dijk, 2009). Ideologies are, therefore, reproduced and changed largely through socially situated discourse like the media (van Dijk, 1998).

The objective of analysing how linguistic devices and other discursive strategies were used to manipulate readers' perceptions aligns with Wodak's (2001) emphasis that newspapers serve as important vehicles for disseminating ideological messages which construct and reproduce dominant narratives, values, and beliefs. Ideology in newspapers is manifested through various discursive strategies, including framing, selection of sources, and linguistic choices, which legitimise certain viewpoints while marginalising others (Fairclough, 2001). Wodak argues that a critical analysis of newspapers within the DHA

framework is crucial for uncovering the underlying ideologies embedded within discourse, as well as for exposing power imbalances and promoting critical awareness among readers. By examining how *The Nation* and the *Daily Times* newspapers reported on the teachers' strikes in Malawi, the study uncovered how strategic linguistic and discursive choices may potentially shape readers' perceptions.

2.3.1.5 *Hegemony*

Hegemony is a relationship of domination based on consent rather than coercion, which involves the naturalisation of practices and their social relations as well as relations between practices as a matter of 'common sense' (Sheyholislami, 2001). This is done when the dominant class projects its own way of seeing the world to the subordinated so that they accept it as 'natural'. As Fiske (1992:291) observes, such a "consent must be constantly won and re-won, for people's material social experience constantly remind them of the disadvantages of subordination and thus, poses a threat to the dominant class..." Hence, ideology sustains hegemonic leadership in society.

Hegemonic authority, therefore, has power over society as a whole through its alliance with other social forces like the media (Fairclough, 1995). Journalistic work therefore, mediates between the ideology of the ruling class and news content and support the hegemony by naturalising or taking for granted the inequalities of contemporary societies (Richardson, 2007). Through their training, journalists accept the frames imposed on events by officials and marginalise voices that fall outside the elite circle (Fowler, 1991).

In the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) advocated by Wodak newspaper hegemony is viewed as a complex interplay of power relations and discursive practices that shape

societal perceptions and maintain dominant ideologies (Wodak, 2001). Wodak emphasises that newspapers play a significant role in reproducing hegemonic discourses by framing issues, controlling the flow of information, and legitimising certain perspectives while marginalising others. Hegemony in newspapers is manifested through various discursive strategies such as selective reporting, framing and agenda-setting. Framing refers to how news stories are constructed to emphasise certain aspects while downplaying others, shaping the audience's perception of the issue. For instance, in the context of teachers' strikes, framing might involve portraying the strikes as either justified expressions of labour rights or disruptive actions harming students' education, influencing public opinion accordingly. Additionally, agenda-setting entails the selection and prioritisation of certain topics over others, influencing what issues the public deems important (Harts, 2010:17).

Hegemony operates in newspapers through the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), aligning with the study's objectives to identify dominant linguistic devices, describe discursive strategies, and analyze their impact on readers' perceptions. Wodak's (2001) and Fairclough's (1995) discussions of how newspapers reproduce hegemonic discourses through framing, selective reporting, and agenda-setting directly inform the study's examination of how *The Nation* and the *Daily Times* reported teachers' strikes in Malawi.

2.4 Chapter Summary

In a nutshell, the literature reviewed underscores the ideological construction inherent in media discourse, which serves to either perpetuate, normalise, or justify the dominance of powerful social groups, or to challenge and transform such dominance. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) emerges as a valuable tool for unravelling and exposing the ideological

underpinnings of media discourse, enabling readers to critically engage with it. However, it is important to note that, contrary to Barthes' (2012) contention that the meaning of linguistic features is always contingent upon historical formal links, newspaper reports, like any written communication, comprise historical features where writing represents only one facet (de Gregorio-Godeo, 2012). The potential for meaning within both linguistic features and historical features cannot be fully conflated or opposed to each other. Consequently, contemporary scholarship integrates the analysis of both linguistic features and historical features to provide comprehensive insights. Therefore, this study aimed to contribute to this evolving scholarship by examining ideological stances through both linguistic devices and discursive strategies within hard news reports on the representation of teachers' strikes.

The study adopted the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) which encompasses a comprehensive understanding of discourse analysis, ideology, and hegemony. Developed by Wodak, DHA is characterised by three interconnected dimensions: text analysis, social-diagnostic analysis, and prognostic critique analysis. This framework employs discourse analysis to uncover how language constructs and reflects social reality, power relations, and ideological struggles (Wodak, 2001). Wodak emphasises that newspapers play a significant role in reproducing hegemonic discourses and disseminating ideological messages. Ideology in newspapers is manifested through various discursive strategies, such as framing, selection of sources, and linguistic choices, which serve to reinforce dominant narratives and marginalise alternative viewpoints.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter discusses the methodological and research paradigms that were used in the study. Specifically, it explains the research design, approach, and sampling procedures. It also deals with data collection techniques, tools, and analysis procedures that were used in the research.

3.2. Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive design on the one hand and a mixed-method approach on the other to examine the representation of teachers' strikes in Malawian newspapers. The descriptive design was chosen because it allowed the researcher to thoroughly examine the news structures, identify the discursive strategies, and determine the linguistic devices used. This design facilitated a comprehensive understanding of how the newspaper articles represented the teachers' strikes. The descriptive design in this study provided a structured framework to systematically capture and analyze the representation of teachers' strikes in Malawian newspapers. The descriptive design thus ensured that the analysis was thorough and aligned with the study's goal of uncovering the subtleties in media representation.

As Mustafa, Ahmed and Adham, (2021) put it, the qualitative approach is credited for being highly exhaustive and reliable in making deep exploration of information from respondents. Thus, its use in this study enabled the researcher to obtain detailed non-quantifiable information through in-depth research and evaluation of available information. The qualitative approach facilitated a rich, nuanced understanding of the discursive strategies and linguistic devices used in the newspapers, allowing the researcher to delve into the complexities of how teachers' strikes were represented.

The quantitative approach allowed the researcher to identify, count, and analyse the presence of linguistic devices and discursive strategies in the articles. This allowed the researcher to identify any trends across the articles and to determine overall patterns in using these elements. Through the quantitative analysis, the researcher identified how the articles varied in terms of the numbers and types of linguistic devices and discursive strategies used.

3.3. Sampling Procedures

3.3.1. Sources of Data

The Nation and *Daily Times* newspapers were selected because they are the dominant ones in Malawi (Kanyung'wa & Mkwaila, 2011) and they covered much on teachers' strike on COVID-19 risk allowances. Print media, specifically newspapers, were chosen for this study because they have historically played a significant role in shaping public opinion and informing citizens about national issues, such as the teachers' strikes. Unlike digital or

broadcast media, newspapers provide a more permanent, tangible record of how events are reported, which allows for a detailed, in-depth analysis of language, framing, and discursive strategies. Furthermore, print media's influence on public perception, particularly in Malawi, remains strong, making it a crucial medium to study for understanding the potential ideological biases in the coverage of public issues.

To ensure the availability of adequate data, the researchers received approval from the University of Malawi Research Ethic Committee to use the archives where copies of the targeted papers are deposited.

3.3.2. Data Collection Techniques and Tools

The data for the study were collected from January 2021 to April 2021 since this was the time when extensive coverage of the issue was being studied. The researcher went to the newspaper houses with an approval letter from the University of Malawi Research Ethics Committee (UNIMAREC) and asked permission to go through their archives. To ensure comprehensive coverage of the teachers' strikes for COVID-19 risk allowances, all articles about the topic were collected from *The Nation* and *The Daily Times newspapers*. The decision to include all relevant articles from these publications was based on the substantial data availability during the specified period from January 2021 to April 2021. Both *The Nation* and *The Daily Times* extensively reported on the teachers' strikes, as evidenced by the sample population of 66 articles from *The Nation* and 48 articles from *The Daily Times*. This approach aligns with similar studies that have employed exhaustive data collection methods to capture a complete picture of events or phenomena (Schutt, 2001).

By focusing on all articles published during this period, the study ensured the relevance and timeliness of the data, thereby enhancing the validity of the findings. Moreover, the prominence of *The Nation* and *The Daily Times* as reputable newspapers with a wide readership, including all articles published by these sources strengthens the comprehensiveness and representativeness of the sample (Schutt, 2001). This approach is consistent with best practices in research methodology, which emphasise the importance of maximising data inclusivity to mitigate potential biases and enhance the robustness of the analysis (Richardson, 2007).

3.4. Data Analysis

The data were analysed using thematic analysis alongside text analysis, following Wodak's (2001) theory of the Discourse Historical Approach. The researcher employed thematic analysis as a qualitative method to scrutinise the data. Thematic analysis involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. This study used thematic and text analysis to uncover the most commonly used linguistic devices and other discursive strategies in the articles of the two targeted newspapers.

The researcher used predetermined linguistic devices and discursive strategies to examine the representation of teachers' strikes in the newspapers. He carefully read and analyzed the articles to identify linguistic devices. These identified linguistic devices were then classified based on their type and frequency of occurrence, allowing for a structured and organized categorization of the dominant linguistic devices and main discursive strategies in the context of the teachers' strikes.

In addition to identifying the most commonly used linguistic device, the researcher also classified the data into various discursive strategies. The researcher utilised a qualitative content analysis approach, wherein the data underwent deconstruction into phrases or sentences, without predetermined categories for discursive strategies. This process encompassed a meticulous examination of the text, coding of the data, and subsequent analysis of the coded phrases or sentences to discern and categorise the inherent discursive strategies. This method allowed the researcher to identify subtle nuances and discursive strategies, such as metaphors or linguistic devices such as lexicalisation, and modality. By employing a qualitative approach, the researcher was able to analyse the data thoroughly to gain a better understanding of the texts.

Finally, the researcher examined the language and context used by the journalists to determine how they were using discursive strategies to manipulate the general meaning of the linguistic devices and other discursive strategies. This task helped him to understand how the journalists were attempting to shape the audience's perception of topics in the news. For example, by exaggerating certain facts, framing events in a particular way, and removing context from a story, the journalists tried to manipulate the meaning of the topics and create an opinion that they wanted the public to hold.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in the research process were addressed, aligning with the framework outlined by Leedy and Ormrod (2005). The researcher initiated the process by submitting a detailed research proposal to the University of Malawi Ethics Committee, seeking their approval. Throughout the research journey, paramount importance was placed on

maintaining transparency and accountability. This was achieved through documentation of data sources and methodologies at every stage. To ensure compliance with intellectual property rights, the researcher actively sought permission from the respective newspapers and authors before utilising their articles though the newspaper articles were considered part of the public domain. Additionally, rigorous steps were taken to guard against potential biases in data interpretation and reporting. These measures included employing diverse perspectives in data analysis and cross-checking findings with peers to ensure objectivity. These ethical safeguards reflect the researcher's commitment to integrity and transparency, in line with guidelines established by organisations such as the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE, 2019).

3.6. Limitations of the Study

One limitation of the study is the inability to determine whether the representation influenced the perception of the readers, as the voices of consumers are absent from the findings. This limitation is primarily due to the timing of the study, which took place after the pandemic had dominated the news cycle. Consequently, it would have been challenging for the researcher to identify individuals who had recently read news articles on the pandemic and could recall how reporters covered the news. Moreover, assessing whether the representation of the teachers' strike affected their perception would require fresh memories and a direct connection to the specific news coverage, which may have been difficult to ascertain. The absence of consumer perspectives in the findings limits the depth of understanding regarding the impact of media representation on public perception, highlighting a notable gap in the study's insights.

3.7. Chapter Summary

Chapter three has discussed the study's methodological perspectives. The chapter has outlined the research design, sampling techniques, data collection techniques, and research ethics. The chapter has also discussed how the data were analysed and it has concluded with a discussion of the study's limitations.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter presents and discusses the results of the study. The discussion corresponds to the study objectives and relates the findings to the theory and literature outlined in chapter two. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first part looks at the representation of linguistic devices focusing on the newspapers' choice of lexis, metaphors, and euphemisms. The second part presents the findings on the discursive strategies of newspaper reports in general followed by an in-depth discussion of how the discursive strategies employed manipulate readers' perceptions.

4.2. Identifying the Dominant Linguistic Devices

One of the study's objectives was to identify linguistic devices employed in *The Nation* and *The Daily Times* newspapers. The study achieved this by examining the headings and texts extracted from the stories. From these headings and extracts, the researcher identified and isolated sentences, phrases, and words that exhibited specific linguistic devices such as the choice of lexical items, metaphors, and euphemisms. The researcher is aware that there are numerous linguistic devices used in newspaper articles (see appendix 3), but

lexical choice, metaphors, and euphemisms were used because they were common in both newspapers. As Wodak (2001) argues, the choice of words is not arbitrary but is influenced by the socio-political and historical context, reflecting underlying power dynamics and ideologies.

The figures presented in Table 1 were derived through a systematic analysis of linguistic devices in *The Nation* and *The Daily Times* newspapers. Lexical choice, in this study, refers to the selection of specific words or expressions that contribute to the framing of news discourse. To identify lexical choices, the researcher extracted headlines and key excerpts from selected news articles and isolated sentences and phrases for linguistic examination. Words and phrases were categorised as lexical choices if they appeared frequently, conveyed subjective or evaluative meaning, or reflected ideological framing in line with Wodak's (2001) argument on discourse and power. This classification process involved qualitative content analysis, where emphasis was placed on identifying connotations, stylistic variations, and framing patterns in news reporting. Table 1 below is a summary of the results.

Table 1. Linguistic Devices in News Articles

Newspaper	Lexical Choice	Metaphor	Euphemisms	Total
TN	72 (49%)	26 (18%)	48 (33%)	146 (100%)
DT	56 (56%)	16 (16%)	28 (28%)	100 (100%)
TOTAL	128 (52%)	42 (17%)	76 (31%)	246 (100%)

From Table 1, several observations can be made. Firstly, in *TN*, the dominant linguistic device employed was "Lexical Choice," which accounted for 49% of the total instances,

while in *DT*, "Lexical Choice" also dominated, representing 56% of the total cases. This indicates that both newspapers relied heavily on lexical choices to convey meaning. The emphasis on lexical choice may be attributed to the ability of this device to shape the tone and ideological stance of the articles. According to Wodak and Meyer (2001), lexical choices reflect the author's or publication's ideological position by emphasising certain values, beliefs, or perspectives while downplaying or omitting others, thereby shaping the narrative to align with their worldview.

Although not as dominant as lexical choice, metaphorical language was also prevalent in both newspapers. In *TN*, metaphor accounted for 18% of the total instances, while in *DT*, it represents 16%. According to Charteris-Black (2004), metaphors can simplify complex concepts and evoke emotional responses, and may explain their consistent use across both newspapers. Furthermore, both newspapers utilised euphemisms to structure their narratives. In *TN*, euphemisms accounted for 33% of the total instances, while in *DT*, they represent 28%. Euphemisms provide a familiar framework for readers and can reinforce ideological perspectives (Wodak, 2001), suggesting a shared journalistic practice aimed at framing news stories within established narratives.

These results suggest that both newspapers preferred the use of the same linguistic devices in their articles and that both of them exhibit a similar trend: lexical choice is the most favoured, followed by euphemisms, and finally metaphor. The differences between the two newspapers in quantity are relatively minor, with a 7% difference in lexical choice, 2% in metaphor, and 5% in euphemisms. Both newspapers converge closely in their use of metaphors (16% for *DT* and 18% for *TN*). *DT* leads slightly in the use of lexical choice

(56%) compared to *TN* (49%) but trails in using euphemisms and metaphors. This pattern suggests that both newspapers prioritise certain linguistic strategies. Similarly, *DT* emphasises lexical more strongly, potentially aiming for clearer or more impactful language. According to Wodak's discourse-historical approach, such similarities and differences can reflect varying editorial policies and audience targeting strategies (Wodak, 2001). These subtle variations in linguistic device preference can signal differing ideological stances or journalistic styles, contributing to the broader discourse by shaping the readers' understanding and engagement with the news. The subsections below discuss how each of these linguistic elements contributed to a dichotomous representation of the teachers' strike on their demand for COVID-19 risk allowances.

4.2.1. Lexical Choices

Lexical choice refers to the deliberate selection of words or phrases to convey a particular meaning or evoke a specific response in communication (Rundblad & Annaz, 2010). Lexical items depict the producer's positive or negative evaluation of actions, participants, and events (Fairclough, 1989). Every communication, therefore, has an ideological basis as the communicator chooses a set of vocabulary that is best suited to one's ideology. Therefore, this study found two common phenomena in lexical choices: lexicalisation and over-lexicalisation. The subsections below discuss these processes.

4.2.2. Lexicalisation

This is a deliberate process of assigning lexical items to conceptual elements in language production that project intended meaning (Jackendoff, 2002). From the available data, the

lexical items chosen revealed that the teachers and members, and their actions were portrayed negatively, while government officials were portrayed positively. The excerpts in text box 1 below illustrate this:

Text Box 1: Negative Lexicalisation

Excerpt 1

Malimba declares teachers' strike on (DT, Chauluka and Symon, 25 March 2021).

Excerpt 2

government forced to sign a commitment to Teachers' COVID-19 allowances (DT, Kasanda, 8 March 2021).

Excerpt 3

TUM's position on strike Unaltered (TN, Pasungwi, 22 February 2021).

Excerpt 4

Negative lexicalisation is the use of language to portray something as undesirable or negative. In the excerpts above, the use of negative lexicalization serves to shape readers' perceptions of TUM and their strike. For example, according to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* 5th edition (OALD) the word 'declare' as used in excerpt 1, means to make known or state formally, publicly, or officially; or to announce something clearly and emphatically. In Excerpt 2, the word 'force' was used to suggest that the government was in a fix and therefore was compelled to sign a commitment to give teachers COVID-19 risk allowances. In this case, TUM was projected as powerful organisation capable of forcing the government to do what the teachers want. The word "unaltered" in Excerpt 3 implies

that the Teachers Union of Malawi (TUM) was not swayed by public opinion or government pressure to change their stance, which was perceived as negative by the government and some members of the public. The base form of "unaltered" is "alter," suggesting that TUM was unwavering in their position. Similarly, the word "adamant" in Excerpt 4 suggests stubbornness and inflexibility on the part of TUM, as represented by their spokesperson, Malimba. TUM was therefore depicted as an undemocratic and authoritarian grouping that was difficult to negotiate with. On the other hand, the government and its members who were against the implementation of giving teachers COVID-19 risk allowances were portrayed in positive terms. Both media houses used lexical terms to discredit teachers' demands and lexical terms that supported the government's position.

Text Box 2: Positive Lexicalisation

Excerpt 1

Ministry of Education statistics indicate that the government has 93,888 primary school teachers and 8,686 secondary school teachers on its book. This means that if the government make a *decision* to pay the risk allowances to teachers, in a month, the teachers will need a minimum of K3,590,090,000 in allowances, and, in six months, the bill will *balloon* to K21,540,540,000 (DT, Kasanda, 8 March 2021).

Excerpt 2

Positive lexicalization is the use of language to portray something as desirable or beneficial (Wodak, 2001). In the excerpt 1 above, positive lexicalisation serves to reinforce the government's position on the teachers' strike. For example, the words "*minimum*," "*balloon*," and "*bill*" are used to emphasise the costliness of the proposed risk allowances,

suggesting that the government is financially responsible and concerned about fiscal sustainability. In both excerpts, the word "decision" is linguistically analysed as a positive lexicalization due to its connotation of agency and autonomy. In the context of governmental actions, "decision" implies a deliberate choice made by authorities, suggesting a sense of responsibility and accountability. By framing the government's stance as a "*decision*" rather than a directive or mandate, it portrays a proactive and deliberate approach, indicating that the government has taken an active role in making a thoughtful judgment. While the word "*decision*" may appear to have a positive connotation in the excerpts, its use in this context is somewhat ambiguous. The authors do not fully explain how they arrived at this characterisation, apart from presenting the figures involved in the proposed risk allowances. This could suggest that the authors are attempting to present the government's position in a positive light, even if the details are not fully fleshed out. This implies that the government is actively considering and implementing policies, rather than passively adhering to predetermined rules or regulations. Therefore, it highlights the government's capacity to exercise authority and make informed choices, thereby elevating its perceived efficacy and leadership. This is why Wodak (2001) posits that language can manifest power and ideology. Therefore, in

DHA, lexical choices are scrutinised to uncover how language reflects and perpetuates power structures and ideologies.

4.2.3. Over Lexicalisation

One of the dominant linguistic devices established in the study was overlexicalisation. This is a method of encoding ideology in news discourse through surfeit repetition of synonymous or quasi-synonymous terms to give a sense of over-completeness (van Dijk,

1993). It is simply a repetition of a particular lexis for ideological reasons. This sub-section, describes how the newspapers employed over-lexicalisation to project their ideological representation of TUM's strike.

Over-lexicalisation was identified in the text by analysing repeated and excessive use of specific words or phrases that emphasised particular themes, perspectives, or ideologies within the news articles. The researcher examined headlines and key excerpts, isolating instances where multiple synonymous or near-synonymous terms were used to reinforce a particular stance or narrative. Through qualitative content analysis, words that appeared frequently and carried strong evaluative or ideological connotations were classified as over-lexicalisation.

Over-lexicalisation was rarely used in the headlines. It was a common phenomenon in the leads. A careful analysis of the lexis that collocated with TUM, depicted the teachers as irresponsible and inconsiderate. This is illustrated in the Table 2 below:

Table 2: Frequent of Lexical Collocations with Strikes

Newspapers	Frequent Lexical Collocations	Frequency
<i>TN</i>	<i>unjust</i> strike <i>unfair</i> strikes <i>unwarranted</i> strike	72 (56%)
<i>DT</i>	<i>unreasonable</i> strike <i>unjust</i> strike <i>unfair</i> strikes	56 (44%)

As can be seen in Table 2 above, both newspapers preferred to collocate the strikes with “unjust” and ‘unfair’. Over-lexicalization in news articles emphasises certain

interpretations. These lexical items contributed about 56% of all instances of over-lexicalization in *TN* and 44% in *DT*. These lexical items may imply that the strike is not based on valid or reasonable reasons and that it is not appropriate or necessary. In the news articles, the lexical items "unjust" and "unfair" were used to collocate with the term "strike," contributing significantly to overlexicalisation. This overlexicalisation suggests that the strike lacked valid reasons and is deemed inappropriate or unnecessary. In this case, through over-lexicalisation, both newspapers depicted the strike as unnecessary.

4.3. Metaphors

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) define metaphor as a linguistic and conceptual phenomenon that predisposes one understanding of reality over others. Metaphors have the effects of highlighting and hiding what they convey. They call our attention to some aspects of an experience that are consistent with them and blind us from other features (Ng, and Bradac, 1993; Hart, 2010). The following subsections focus on the findings of the newspapers' usage of metaphors of war, competition, and drama.

4.3.1 Metaphors of War

Metaphor of War refers to using war-related language to describe non-military situations, framing these situations as battles, conflicts, or struggles. This metaphor is commonly employed to convey the intensity, urgency, and gravity of issues, suggesting a need for decisive action and resilience. The study found that war metaphors were used by both in newspapers to describe the teachers' stand for COVID-19 risk allowances to be implemented. Excerpts below illustrate this.

Text Box 3: Metaphors of War

Excerpt 1

TUM caught in cross-fire (*DT*, Chauluka and Symon, 25 March 2021).

Excerpt 2

Government directive shot down (*TN*, Pasungwi, 22 February 2021).

Excerpt 3

Teachers laid down their arms yesterday, after holding a strike for three weeks (*DT*, Chauluka and Symon, 25 March 2021)

Metaphors of war, as exemplified by the excerpts provided, involve the appropriation of language typically associated with armed conflict to describe nonviolent situations, such as labour disputes. These metaphors serve to intensify the rhetoric surrounding the issue at hand. In the cited examples, phrases like "caught in cross-fire," "shot down," "laid down their arms," and "locked in a fierce battle" vividly evoke imagery of warfare, heightening the tension and drama surrounding the labour disputes. What sets these metaphors apart is their explicit invocation of violence and confrontation, effectively framing the labour disputes as battlegrounds where opposing sides engage in struggle and conflict. Such language not only sensationalises the issue but also underscores the high stakes and dire consequences involved. In the context of labour disputes, these metaphors can exacerbate tensions, polarise opinions, and hinder constructive dialogue and resolution efforts, potentially prolonging and escalating the conflict. It should be stated here that although both newspapers used war metaphors when reporting on the impasse, the war imagery was more pronounced in *DT* reports than in *TN* articles. This representation of verbal discourse

as an armed conflict implies that teachers and the government see each other as enemies such that each has to defend their position just like in a war. The analysis of war metaphors in labour dispute narratives confirms Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) which suggest that language choices reflect and perpetuate power dynamics and ideological stances.

4.3.2. Metaphor of Competition

The study also found that the teachers' insistence on COVID-19 risk allowance was depicted as a legal tussle or sporting competition. The excerpts below illustrate this.

Text Box 4: Metaphors of Competition

Excerpt 1

Government vs TUM: Teachers' Strike on (TN, Chitete, 3 March 2021).

Excerpt 2

TUM plays a *delaying tactics* in ending the strike: As it demands MoU (DT, Chauluka and Symon, 15 March 2021)

Metaphors of competition, as evidenced by the excerpts provided, involve framing the situation as a contest or rivalry between opposing parties. In these metaphors, the language used suggests a competitive dynamic where one side is pitted against the other, vying for dominance or advantage. In the cited examples, phrases like "*Government vs TUM*" and "*TUM plays delaying tactics*" portray the labour disputes as competitive struggles between

the government and the teachers' union, with each side striving to assert its interests and achieve its objectives. These metaphors serve to highlight the adversarial nature of the situation, emphasising the clash of interests and the need for strategic manoeuvring to gain the upper hand. Authors may choose metaphors of competition over others to emphasize the confrontational aspects of labour disputes, emphasising the power dynamics and the stakes involved. Framing the situation as a competition, authors may effectively convey the sense of rivalry, tension, and urgency inherent in the conflict, thereby engaging readers and heightening their interest in the outcome.

4.3.3. Metaphor of Drama

Text Box 5: Metaphors of Drama

Excerpt 1

Teachers' Drama: As They are Divided (*TN*, Chitete, 12 March 2021).

Excerpt 2

The tired song that has been on the stage will resume tomorrow as teachers' strike continues (*DT*, Kasanda, 8 March 2021).

The study also found that the teachers' strikes on COVID-19 were also depicted using drama metaphors. As illustrated in the excerpts from *TN* and *DT*, metaphors of drama frame the teachers' strike in a theatrical context, thereby adding a layer of emotional and narrative engagement to the coverage. The metaphor of "drama" suggests a sense of conflict, intrigue, and heightened emotions, which can make the situation seem more sensational

and captivating to readers. This framing implies ongoing internal strife and spectacle among teachers, potentially trivialising their grievances by presenting them as part of an entertaining storyline.

The metaphor of drama in excerpt 2, was evoked by the phrase "*on the stage*." By framing the teachers' strike as a performance that was happening "*on the stage*," the metaphor implies that it was a spectacle being played out for the public to observe and react to. The use of the drama metaphor in this text heightened the emotion and tension surrounding the strike, suggesting that there was a sense of spectacle and performance associated with the events. The metaphor also hinted at the potential for drama and conflict as the strike continues, as if the teachers and the government were actors engaged in a high-stakes performance.

4.4. Euphemisms

Another lexical feature found in newspapers was euphemisms. According to Wodak (2001), a euphemism is a linguistic device that involves using a milder or less direct term to replace one that might be considered harsh, blunt, or offensive. In a text, euphemisms soften the impact of unpleasant or controversial subjects, making the information more palatable for the audience. Writers use euphemisms to avoid alienating or upsetting readers, and adhere to social norms of politeness, sensitivity, and potential negative reactions. By employing euphemisms, writers can navigate delicate topics with greater tact and discretion, thereby maintaining a more neutral or positive tone in their discourse and this is what we see in the excerpts which follow.

Text Box 6: Euphemism

Excerpt 1

Economist Milward Tobias, executive director of the Centre for Research and Consultancy, advises the government *to reconsider* providing additional teacher allowances. (TN, Chitete, 3 March 2021).

Excerpt 2

“The task force believes that offering additional allowances to teachers *may*

The term "*reconsider*" in excerpt 1 suggests a polite and thoughtful deliberation, which might mask the potentially strong opposition or resistance against the allowance. It softens the stance of the economist, making it sound less confrontational. They could use a direct alternative by saying "*Warns the government against granting risk allowances to teachers.*"

The phrase "*Offering additional allowances to teachers may not be suitable at this moment*" in excerpt 2, avoids directly stating that the task force is against the allowance, instead implying that the timing or circumstances are the issue. It deflects the focus from the outright denial of the request to a matter of timing or appropriateness. The writer could say "The task force opposes giving risk allowances to teachers at this time."

All euphemisms in these excerpts soften statements, reduce potential conflict, and present actions or opinions in a more positive or less confrontational light. While this made communication appear more diplomatic, it can obscure the true nature of the situation and

hinder transparency. To avoid euphemisms and ensure clarity, the language should be more direct, accurately reflecting the realities of the circumstances.

4.5. Discursive Strategies Used by The Nation and the Daily Times Newspapers in the Representations of the Teachers' Strikes.

The study's second objective was to describe the discursive strategies deployed by the two newspapers to represent the teachers' strikes. This study acknowledges that Wodak's DHA identifies several discursive strategies, including nomination, predication, argumentation, discourse representation, and intensification. However, due to the scope and focus of this study, the study deals only with discursive strategies that were common in both *The Nation* and the *Daily Times* newspapers in representing the teachers' strikes for COVID-19 risk allowances. The researcher acknowledges that some devices may overlap across multiple discursive strategies in Wodak's DHA (see appendix 3). However, the categorisation of these devices into a particular discursive strategy was guided by the following considerations: Firstly, the primary objective of the study was to analyse how specific devices shape readers' perceptions, rather than to provide a comprehensive analysis of all DHA devices in the articles. Secondly, the selection of discursive strategies for each device was based on the device's primary function or impact in the articles.

4.5.1. Argumentation

Wodak (2001) defines argumentation as a discursive strategy used to persuade or convince an audience by presenting reasons and evidence to support a particular point of view or action. One of the key elements in argumentation is the use of topoi. This study acknowledges that argumentation can involve a variety of devices, but in this dissertation

the focus is on topoi because they are fundamental to the persuasive power of argumentation, as they provide common grounds for reasoning and persuasion (Wodak, 2001). According to Wodak (2001), topos can be defined as the specific location where an argument is constructed. From the available data, both newspapers consistently reported on teachers' strikes over COVID-19 risk allowances using the topoi of authority and number. Topoi of authority and numbers are particularly relevant in reporting contentious issues like teachers' strikes, as they are often used to establish the credibility of claims or to highlight the scale of a problem (Wodak, 2001). The following sub-sections discuss the findings on the newspapers' usage of topoi.

4.5.1.1. Topoi of Authority

Topos of authority is a rhetorical strategy identified by Wodak (2001) in her Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) to Critical Discourse Analysis. This topos involves using authoritative figures, institutions, or sources to justify arguments and claims, thereby lending them legitimacy and persuasive power. In analysing the topos of authority, researchers look for instances where speakers or writers invoke authority to support their positions, often through references to laws, regulations, experts, or institutional endorsements. Common features of these topoi include the appeal to expertise, official status, or established norms, which are used to bolster the credibility of the argument. The study found that both newspapers used topoi of authorities to describe their stand on TUM's demands for COVID-19 risk allowances. Excerpts below illustrate this:

Excerpt 1

Economist Milward Tobias, executive director for the Centre for Research and Consultancy, warns the government against granting teachers risk allowances. (TN, Chitete, 3 March 2021).

Excerpt 2

The task force does not think giving teachers the risk allowances is appropriate this time,” said Nyalonje who is the Minister of Education (TN, Singini and Pasungwi. 25 February 2021).

As stated above, topoi of authority, involve leveraging statements from individuals or institutions with recognised authority to lend credibility and weight to an argument (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). In Excerpt 1 and 2, reporters chose to attribute what they wanted to tell the readers to the authorities to make their perspectives valid and legitimate. They cited experts in economics and educational institution, respectively to support or validate a particular standpoint. In newspaper articles, a topos of authority can be identified through quotations, references to official statements or reports, appeals to expert opinion, and references to institutional positions (Wodak, 2001). By invoking an economist, the excerpt 1 utilises the topos of authority to present an expert opinion against the teachers' demands. The inclusion of an expert opinion adds weight to the government's position and in the process seeks to make the readers view the strike negatively. Similarly, using the Minister of Education's position as an authority overseeing teachers' affairs strengthens the argument against granting risk allowances to teachers.

4.5.1.2. *Topoi of Numbers*

Topos of numbers employs specific numerical data and statistics to bolster an argument by providing concrete evidence and a sense of scale (Wodak, 2001). The two newspapers used statistical data to emphasise the effects of not paying the teachers risk allowances on the one hand and the impact of paying the same on the economy on the other. The excerpts that follow show the topoi of numbers.

Excerpt 1

If the government were to pay the risk allowances to teachers, it would need K4 billion per month or K40 billion for the 10-month period covering the school calendar up to December, according to a document compiled by the Ministry of Education (TN, Chitete. 3 March 2021).

Excerpt 2

Ministry of Education statistics indicate that the government has 93,888 primary school teachers and 8,686 secondary school teachers on its book. This means that in a month, the teachers will need a minimum of K3,590,090,000 in allowances, and, in six months, the bill will balloon to K21,540,540,000 (DT, Kasanda, 8 March 2021).

In the excerpts provided above, numerical figures are employed to quantify various aspects of the labour disputes, such as the financial implications of paying risk allowances to teachers, the number of teachers affected, and the impact on different segments of the

education system. Authors use these numerical representations to lend credibility and specificity to their arguments, grounding their assertions in empirical evidence and quantifiable data. For example, in excerpt 1, the author cites the Ministry of Education's estimate of the cost of risk allowances, providing readers with a concrete figure to understand the financial burden on the government.

4.5.2. Discourse Representation (Perspectivisation)

Discourse representation refers to the various discursive strategies employed to portray events, individuals, or issues within a discourse. These strategies encompass linguistic choices, narrative structures, and rhetorical devices that are used to construct a particular representation of reality within texts (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). This study focused on the analysis Direct Discourse (DD) and Indirect Discourse (ID) as devices of discourse representation (perspectivisation) in newspaper articles. The analysis of direct and indirect discourse was more relevant to the objective of the study than deixis because direct and indirect discourse can reveal the perspectives or voices that are privileged or silenced in the reporting. On its part, deixis establishes the context and social relationships in discourse, but its role in shaping readers' perceptions as this study sought to explore may be less central.

4.5.2.1. Direct Discourse

The study found that both newspapers employed Direct Discourse. Pajunen (2008) calls these Direct Discourse as strategic quotations or other views. The Excerpts below illustrate this:

Text Box 7: Direct Discourse

Excerpt 1

“---We wish to warn the government that once the stay away resumes, it shall only be called off after all the public primary and secondary school teachers plus TTC lecturers have been provided with the appropriate PPE in the cash-coasted---” *Malimba said* (DT, Chauluka and Symon, 23 March 2021).

Excerpt 2

“The task force does not think giving teachers the risk allowances is appropriate this time,” *said Nyalonje* who is the Minister of Education (TN, Singini and Pasungwi, 22 February 2021).

Direct discourse entails directly quoting the speech or statements of individuals within a text, typically indicated by quotation marks. In the excerpts provided, direct discourse was employed to convey the exact words spoken by specific individuals, such as Malimba in excerpt 1 and Nyalonje in excerpt 2. Direct discourse adds immediacy and authenticity to the text by presenting the exact words of the speakers, allowing readers to engage with their viewpoints and expressions directly. Authors use direct discourse to lend credibility and transparency to their reporting. By directly quoting individuals, writers aim to provide readers with firsthand information and insights from key actors involved in the events being reported. In the given examples, the use of direct discourse distances the writers from what is being said so that if anyone has issues with what is being reported, they know who to engage with. Additionally, by presenting these statements verbatim, the writers aim to accurately represent the positions and opinions of these individuals, thereby facilitating informed analysis and interpretation by readers.

4.5.2.2. Indirect Discourse

The study found Indirect Discourse (ID) in both the *TN* and the *DT* from the analysed newspapers. The excerpts below exemplify this.

Text Box 8: Indirect Discourse

Excerpt 1

Ministry of Education officials appealed to striking teachers to return to work today while also urging head teachers to record the names of absent teachers (*DT*, Gausi, 2 March 2021)

Excerpt 2

Mulanje Bale lawmaker, Victor Musowa threatened to walk out of Parliament and never return until the country's children return to school (*TN*, Pasungwi, 2 March 2021).

Indirect discourse involves reporting someone else's speech or thoughts without quoting them directly. Instead of using quotation marks, the writer summarises or paraphrases what was said or thought by the individual. In the excerpts above, indirect discourse was employed to convey the messages or sentiments by Ministry of Education officials and Mulanje Bale lawmaker Victor Musowa. For example, in excerpt 1, the author reports that Ministry of Education officials appealed to striking teachers to return to work and urged head teachers to record the names of absent teachers, without directly quoting their exact words. Similarly, in excerpt 2, the author reports that Victor Musowa threatened to walk out of Parliament until the country's children returned to school, without providing a

verbatim quote. Authors choose to use indirect discourse for several reasons. Firstly, it streamlines the text by condensing lengthy statements or conversations into succinct summaries, making it easier for readers to grasp the main points. Additionally, indirect discourse allows writers to maintain narrative flow and coherence without losing the essence of what was said or thought by the individuals involved. Overall, indirect discourse serves to effectively communicate the messages, intentions, and sentiments of the individuals. This is a common journalistic practice for summarizing statements or paraphrasing remarks made by individuals (Wodak, 2001). It ensures that the message is conveyed accurately while maintaining a neutral tone in the reporting (Fairclough, 1998).

4.5.3. Nomination

Nomination is the strategy by which discourse constructs or represents social agents or groups and assigns specific characteristics. It involves selecting words and expressions that categorise people and groups in meaningful and relevant ways in a particular context and culture (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 145). While the study acknowledges that there are varieties of devices related to nomination, including deictics, personal pronouns, and collective terms, the focus of this study was on the analysis of anthroponyms. The reason for this focus was twofold: Firstly, Anthroponyms are particularly useful in representing social agents or groups in discourse, as they are the most direct and explicit way of referring to specific individuals or groups (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; Wodak, 2015). Secondly, previous research has demonstrated the significance of anthroponyms in media discourse, and how they can be used to construct or reinforce particular identities or stereotypes (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; van Dijk, 1985). The study found that there was a frequent use of anthroponyms in both newspapers as can be seen in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Anthroponyms in Newspapers

Newspaper	Personal Names	Titles	Total
<i>TN</i>	77 (46%)	91 (54%)	168 (100%)
<i>DT</i>	60 (42%)	84 (58%)	144 (100%)
Total	137 (44%)	175 (56%)	312 (100%)

From Table 3 above, the findings revealed that personal names and titles were forms of anthroponyms commonly used in media reporting. These forms were used in both newspapers to represent both individuals and groups in the discourse, often in ways that reinforced particular identities. The excerpts that follow illustrate this.

Excerpt 1

Malimba, President of the Teachers Union of Malawi, addressed the media yesterday and made it clear that teachers will go on with the strikes planned for next week, citing the government's disregard for their concerns. **Malimba** stated that the teachers feel 'taken for granted' by the government, and that they will no longer tolerate the lack of respect and recognition for their work. 'We have been negotiating with the government for months,' **Malimba said**, 'but they have not listened to our demands. (DT, Chauluka and Symon, 20 March 2021).

The use of the anthroponym "Malimba" in this excerpt serves to construct a specific social agent, namely the President of the Teachers Union of Malawi. This nomination not only identifies the individual in question but also establishes him as a representative of a particular group of teachers who feel marginalised and disrespected by the government.

The naming of Malimba as the leader of the Teachers Union reinforces his authority and credibility as a spokesperson for the teachers' grievances. This analysis agrees with the findings from previous studies on the role of naming in discourse. For example, Levinson (1983) notes that anthroponyms "individuate" speakers and anchor them within a particular social context (p.62). In the case of Malimba, this naming strategy adds weight to his argument and credibility to speak on behalf of all teachers concerned.

4.6. Use of Linguistic Devices and Discursive Strategies to Manipulate the Readers' Perception

The third objective of this study was to analyse how linguistic devices and discursive strategies were used in an attempt to manipulate readers' perceptions. The findings of this objective have been alluded to in the preceding discussions (see sections 4.2 and 4.5). This section aims to provide a brief and focused discussion on how the newspapers used these linguistic tools to influence the perceptions of the readers. To avoid being too repetitive, this section discusses a few selected findings.

4.6.1. Use of Linguistic Devices to Manipulate Readers' Perceptions

The study revealed that lexicalizations, metaphors, and euphemism in the articles attempted to manipulate readers' perceptions. However, owing to a reason stated earlier, the discussions in this section centre on the first two.

From the data collected, it has been established that the lexical choices made by both newspapers were purposeful. This is what we see in the excerpts that follow:

Excerpt 1

Malimba *declares* teachers' strike" (DT, Chauluka and Symon, 25 March 2021)

Excerpt 2

TUM's position on strike *Unaltered*" (TN, Pasungwi, 22 February 2021)

In the first excerpt, the choice of the verb '*declares*' can be seen as an attempt by the newspaper to portray Malimba as an arrogant and authoritative person. The use of words like this one created the impression that TUM representatives such as Malimba were difficult to negotiate with. On the other hand, the term "*Unaltered*" in the second excerpt conveys a sense of steadfastness and stability regarding TUM's position on the strike, implying that they are maintaining their stance without change or compromise. This framing could make the readers think that TUM was resolute or obstinate in their position. Thus, through strategic lexical choices, the newspapers attempted to shape the narrative surrounding the teachers' strike thereby creating the possibility of influencing the readers' interpretations of the stories. According to Billig (1987), some linguistic devices promote or reinforce particular ideologies. Therefore, this can also influence readers' perception of the feasibility and desirability of providing teacher allowances.

The study also found that certain metaphors employed by both newspapers had the potential of shaping and manipulating the readers' perceptions of teachers' strikes. Through the use of metaphorical language, the newspapers were able to draw analogies that could influence readers' attitudes and opinions on the issue. The following excerpts illustrate this tendency:

Excerpt 1

"The Teachers' Strike: A War on Education" (DT, Kalimira, Chauluka, and Gausi, 23 February 2021).

In this headline, the newspapers used the metaphor of "war" to frame the teachers' strike. This projected the strike as an aggressive act against education, implying that the teachers are enemies of the system. This portrayal could manipulate readers into viewing the teachers' actions as disruptive and harmful, thus painting a negative picture of the strike. In contrast, the headline:

Excerpt 2

"Educators Seek Justice in the Storm of COVID-19" (TN, Chitete. 3 March 2021).

The metaphor "Storm of COVID-19" in the above excerpt can potentially manipulate readers' perceptions in several ways. Firstly, it presents the COVID-19 pandemic as a destructive force, likening it to a storm or hurricane that is devastating the education sector. This metaphor can evoke a sense of fear and uncertainty, which could influence readers to view the teachers' strike as a necessary response to an overwhelming external threat. The metaphor can also imply that the teachers are fighting for justice against injustice or danger caused by COVID-19, which may align with certain political or ideological discourses on the pandemic. Koller and Reeves (1996) found that metaphors in political discourse can influence readers' evaluations of politicians and their policies, particularly when the metaphors are aligned with the readers' existing political beliefs. By calling it a "storm," the newspaper shows teachers dealing with a

tough and unpredictable situation, making readers feel sympathetic and see their demands as fair. This is why Wodak's (2001) says that metaphors in news can influence how readers see issues by framing them in a certain way.

4.6.2. Use of Discursive Strategies to Manipulate Readers' Perceptions

As stated in section 4.3. this study analysed the discursive strategies that were dominant employed in both newspapers in their attempt to manipulate readers' perceptions regarding teachers' strikes.

4.6.2.1. Use of Topoi of Numbers in Argumentation

In this section, we will examine the use of topoi of numbers in argumentation and how they can potentially manipulate readers' perceptions. Topos of numbers refers to numerical information, such as figures or statistics, to support or refute an argument (Wodak and Meyer, 2001). This rhetorical strategy is often used in news reporting to provide an impression of objectivity and credibility. However, as we will see in the following excerpt, numbers can also be used to manipulate readers' perception of an issue:

Excerpt

The Teachers Union of Malawi (TUM) has requested that the government pay a K30,000 risk allowance to every teacher per month, arguing that teachers are exposed to increased health risks during the pandemic. However, the Minister of Finance has stated that the government cannot afford such a large amount, citing a budget shortfall of K30 billion. TUM responded by pointing out that the government has allocated more than K35 billion for constructing a new Malawi Electoral Commission building, highlighting the disparity in priorities.

In the excerpt above, the numerical figures can potentially manipulate readers' perception of both the teachers' demands and the government's response in several ways. The large

amount requested by TUM (K30,000 per month) may seem excessive or unrealistic to some readers, especially compared to the number of teachers in public institutions. This could lead to a perception that the teachers' demands are unreasonable or self-serving. On the other hand, the budget shortfall of K30 billion cited by the Minister of Finance may evoke sympathy for the government's financial constraints, leading readers to view the teachers' demands as unaffordable or unnecessary.

The manipulation of readers' perceptions by using topoi of numbers is a well-documented phenomenon in discourse analysis. For example, Wodak (2015) argues that numerical information can create a sense of reality or objectivity, which can influence readers' beliefs and opinions.

4.6.2.2. Use of Direct Discourse in perspectivisation (Discourse Representation)

In this section, the discussion focuses on how direct discourse can manipulate readers' perceptions. Direct Discourse involves the direct quotation or representation of speech or thoughts of individuals involved in the event (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). This strategy is crucial in shaping the narrative and tone of news articles, as it determines how information is conveyed to readers and how individuals or events are depicted. In the coverage of the teachers' strike, Direct Discourse was common. The excerpt below exemplifies this discursive strategy.

Except

"We will not back down until our demands are met," declared the TUM president.
(TN, Chitete, 7 March 2021).

Direct discourse, such as the one above, can potentially manipulate readers' perceptions, as opposed to indirect discourse. Direct Discourse allows readers to "hear" the speaker's words in their voice, which can increase the emotional impact of the statement and make it more memorable. This can evoke empathy or sympathy for the speaker, which may influence readers to align with their position. Furthermore, Direct Discourse also provides a sense of immediacy and authenticity that is lacking in Indirect Discourse. The tone of the words quoted in the excerpts above was that of defiance and commitment to the strike and therefore the newspaper discursively distanced itself from the same by using a direct quotation. At the same time, by using actual words spoken by the TUM president the newspaper projected him and his group as disruptive and uncompromising. This finding echoes Van Leeuwen's (2008) who examined media coverage of immigration issues and found that Direct Discourse was often used to amplify negative stereotypes and portrayal of immigrants as threats. It is not surprising therefore, that, Reisigl and Wodak (2017) contend that reporters can utilise Direct Discourse among other strategies to manipulate readers' perceptions.

4.6.3. Use of euphemisms in intensification and predication

This study has revealed that news reporters often employed euphemisms in their reporting. Euphemisms are words or phrases substituted for more direct or offensive terms, often to avoid offending or shocking the audience. However, these linguistic substitutions can also alter the perceived meaning of an event or situation, which can influence readers' understanding and attitudes. The following excerpts illustrate how the newspapers used euphemisms in an attempt to shape readers' perceptions of events:

Excerpt 1:

The teachers' *industrial action*, which has been ongoing for several weeks, results from the government's inability to negotiate a fair compensation package with the union representatives (DT, Chauluka and Symon, 25 March 2021).

In Excerpt 1 above, "*industrial action*" is a euphemism for "strike," which carries a more negative connotation. By using the term "*industrial action*" instead of "*strike*," the reporter can affect readers' perception of the teachers' actions. Readers may be less likely to view the teachers' actions as disruptive or unreasonable if they see it as an "industrial action," which suggests a legitimate labour dispute. This choice of language frames the teachers' actions in a more positive light, emphasising their right to protest for fair compensation rather than portraying them as obstructive. This was particularly important in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, where teachers were demanding additional compensation to account for the increased risks and challenges they faced. Hence, the term "*industrial action*" helped to garner public sympathy and support for the teachers' cause.

Excerpt 2

In the latest development, the government and the Teachers Union are engaged in *a spirited dialogue* concerning the educators' requests for additional compensation amidst the *pandemic challenges* (TN, Chitete, 3 March 2021).

The phrase "*spirited dialogue*" in the excerpt 2 above, was used to soften the reality of a conflict or argument, suggesting that the discussions were lively and perhaps contentious, but it avoided explicitly stating that there was a serious disagreement or impasse. A more direct way of saying this would be, "*The government and the Teachers Union are arguing*

over the educators' requests for additional compensation." Similarly, the phrase "*pandemic challenges*" downplays the severity of the situation faced by educators during the COVID-19 pandemic, generalising the specific dangers and hardships that teachers are experiencing. A more straightforward way to express this would be, "*The educators' requests for additional compensation due to the risks and hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.*" This direct language highlights the gravity of the educators' demands and the contentious nature of the negotiations between the government and the Teachers Union.

The use of euphemisms in reporting can contribute to the manipulation of readers' perceptions. DHA posits that discourse has the power to shape and structure social reality, often through subtle linguistic choices. The use of euphemisms in reporting, as seen in the excerpts above, is one of such linguistic choices that can shape readers' perceptions. This is why DHA emphasises on the power of language to influence attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours.

4.7. Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented a thorough discussion of the study's findings, structured around its specific objectives. The discussions are enhanced with empirical evidence, from literature, and theoretical constructs. The most striking features were the use of linguistic devices and discursive strategies by reporters to influence readers' perceptions. Journalists deliberately framed the strikes, either positively or negatively, through specific linguistic devices and discursive strategies in an attempt to shape narratives and manipulate readers' perceptions.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter highlights the major study findings based on its objectives. Furthermore, it discusses the potential implications of the findings on news reporting in Malawian newspapers and proposes avenues for future research in different domains. The researcher argues that linguistic devices and discursive strategies in the newspapers were used in an attempt to influence public perception.

5.2. Summary of the Findings

This study examined the representation of teachers' strikes in *The Nation* and *The Daily Times* Newspapers in Malawi. It employed the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) to analyse the linguistic devices and discursive strategies in newspaper articles in a period starting from January 2021 to April 2021. The study had the following three specific objectives:

- To identify the dominant linguistic devices employed in *The Nation* and the *Daily Times* newspapers when reporting teachers' strikes in Malawi from January 2021 to April 2021.

- To describe the discursive strategies *The Nation* and the *Daily Times* newspapers used to represent the teachers' strikes.
- To analyse how linguistic devices and their discursive strategies were used to manipulate the readers'

On the first objective, the study has established that both newspapers, *TN* and *DT*, employed lexical choices, metaphors, and euphemisms to frame their articles. The dominant linguistic device in both newspapers was lexical choice although its use was higher in *TN* than it was in *DT*. Though not dominant, metaphorical language was also used in both newspapers to simplify complex concepts and evoke emotional responses, thereby, contributing to the persuasive power of the articles. War metaphors, in particular, intensified the rhetoric surrounding the labour disputes, framing them as battlegrounds with high stakes and dire consequences. In the same regard both newspapers utilised euphemisms.

Regarding the second objective on the use discursive strategies to represent the teachers' strikes on COVID-19 risk allowances, the study found that argumentation, discourse representation (perspectivation) and nomination were common in both newspapers. On argumentation, topoi of authority and numbers were common in both newspapers. On representation, two modes were found namely: direct discourse (DD) and indirect discourse (ID). Both newspapers utilised these although *The Daily Times* tended to employ direct discourse more frequently than *The Nation* newspaper.

Through the analysis of lexicalization, metaphors, argumentation, discourse representation, and nomination, on the last objective, the study revealed deliberate efforts by reporters to use language to shape narratives for purposes of manipulating readers' perceptions. Linguistic devices such as specific word choices and metaphors were used to frame teachers' strikes either positively or negatively. In general, the linguistic devices selected such as metaphors and euphemisms; and discursive strategies like direct and indirect discourse, anthroponyms were presumably used to manipulate or control the presentation of information, in an attempt to guide readers' interpretations. Ultimately, this research reveals the importance of media literacy in recognising and understanding the underlying agendas present in journalistic reporting.

5.3. Implications of the Study

The implications of this study are multi-faceted and extend to various aspects of news reporting in Malawian newspapers. The findings highlight that *The Nation (TN)* and *The Daily Times (DT)* newspapers employed various linguistic devices. This suggests that readers need to critically analyse news sources to understand the implicatures of the choice of linguistic devices.

The study has revealed the persuasive power of linguistic devices such as lexical choices, metaphors, and euphemisms on the one hand and the argumentation, discourse representation and nomination on the other. This implies that readers should be aware of how these devices are used to frame narratives and eventually shape their perceptions. By understanding how linguistic devices and discursive strategies are employed in news

reporting, individuals can develop the skills needed to critically evaluate media content and discern biased or manipulative narratives.

5.4. Suggestions for Further Studies

While this research has provided valuable insights into the representation of teachers' strikes in Malawian newspapers using the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) and the analysis of dominant linguistic devices and discursive strategies, there is need to investigate the impact of the media's portrayal of teachers' strikes on public opinion formation and discourse in Malawi. This study could involve surveying or conducting focus group discussions with members of the public to explore whether or not the media's representation of teachers' strikes influenced their perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs towards the same. This research would provide valuable insights into the dynamics of media influence and agenda-setting in Malawian society, contributing to a deeper understanding of the relationship between media and public opinion.

Future research should also investigate the relationship between journalists' professional backgrounds and their linguistic choices when covering educational labour disputes. A comprehensive analysis of how reporters' qualifications, educational specializations, career trajectories, and personal experiences with labour issues might influence their framing strategies, lexical selections, and implicit positioning would add valuable depth to discourse analysis in this domain.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Teachers to resume strike

GEORGE SINGINI
STAFF REPORTER

Teachers Union of Malawi (TUM) has resolved to resume their strike following government's failure to provide teachers with allowances for personal protective equipment (PPE) as agreed earlier this month.

In a statement issued yesterday, signed by TUM president Willie Malimba and addressed to principal secretaries (PSs) for ministries of Education and Local Government, he indicated that the Parliamentary Committee on Education chairperson Brainax Kaise communicated to the union that the Presidential Task Force on Covid-19 rejected the proposal to have teachers provided with cash equivalent to PPE for three months.

TUM has since given government seven days notice for the strike as prescribed by law.

Reads the statement in part: "We wish to warn government that once the



Teachers chant during a previous strike

stay-away resumes, it shall only be called-off after all the public primary and secondary school teachers, plus TTC [teachers training college] lecturers have been provided with the appropriate PPE in cash-costed package as a once-off payment covering three (3) months."

However, TUM leadership says it remains committed to continued dialogue within the

notice period.

Kaise did not pick up his phone when called for comment and the phone was later unreachable.

Minister of Education Agnes NyaLonje also did not pick up her phone when called for comment, while her PS Chikondano Mussa referred the matter to the ministry's spokesperson Chikondi Chimala.

Chimala, however, said the Presidential Task Force

on Covid-19 was better placed to comment on the issue as it is Covid-19 related.

Asked what the impact of the strike on schools would be, he said briefly: "It is too early to comment considering that TUM has said it is open to dialogue and has given a seven-day notice."

When contacted, Minister

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« PAGE 1

Task force rebuffs teachers

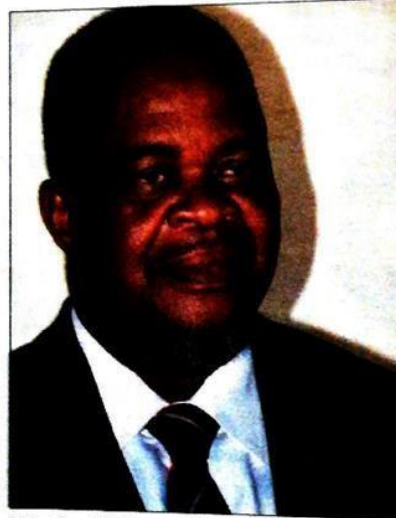
failed to resolve the allowance issue. President Lazarus Chakwera also referred the question of allowances to the task force after meeting TUM on Tuesday.

TUM also demanded personal protective equipment, decongestion of schools and recruitment of more teachers which the ministry addressed.

A Ministry of Education document titled Estimates of Possible Risk Allowances in Respect of Teachers and Lecturers we have seen projects an extra K4 billion per month based on rates for health care workers.

The ministry states in the document that there are 93 888 primary school teachers, 8 686 secondary school teachers and 439 tutors in teacher training colleges.

It also estimates that for 10 months in the 2021 academic calendar, government would spend an additional K40.3 billion



Msaka: Who will resolve the allowance impasse?

as the lowest paid teacher would receive K30 000 while the highest paid teacher would receive K60 000 per month in risk allowances.

Reads the document in part: "The tables do not include front line staff in these institutions like cooks, matrons, boarding masters, accounts/bursar,

messengers and security guards, some of whom might be equally at risk especially those managing isolation centres in boarding schools."

But Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) spokesperson on legal affairs in Parliament Bright Msaka wondered who will resolve the teachers risk



Lunji: Give teachers the risk allowances

allowances impasse. He said the teachers were key to the reopening of the schools.

DPP deputy whip Martha Lunji called on government to give teachers the Covid-19 risk allowances, saying they are at risk. She also

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Appendix 3

A selection of discursive strategies

Strategy	Objectives	Devices
nomination	discursive construction of social actors, objects/phenomena/ events and processes/ actions	• membership categorization devices, deictics, anthroponyms, etc. • tropes such as metaphors, metonymies and synecdoches (<i>pars pro toto</i>, <i>totum pro parte</i>) • verbs and nouns used to denote processes and actions, etc.
predication	discursive qualification of social actors, objects, phenomena, events/ processes and actions (more or less positively or negatively)	• stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative or positive traits (e.g. in the • form of adjectives, appositions, prepositional phrases, relative clauses, conjunctive clauses, infinitive clauses and participial clauses or groups) • explicit predicates or predicative nouns/adjectives/pronouns • collocations • explicit comparisons, similes, metaphors and other rhetorical figures

		• (including metonymies, hyperboles, litotes, euphemisms) • allusions, evocations, and presuppositions/implicatures, etc.
argumentation	justification and questioning of claims of truth and normative rightness	• topoi (formal or more content-related) • fallacies
perspectivisation, framing or discourse representation	positioning speaker's or writer's point of view and expressing involvement or distance	• deictics • direct, indirect or free indirect speech • quotation marks, discourse markers/particles • metaphors • animating prosody, etc.
intensification, mitigation	modifying (intensifying or mitigating) the illocutionary force and thus the epistemic or deontic status of utterances	• diminutives or augmentatives • (modal) particles, tag questions, subjunctive, hesitations, vague expressions, etc. • hyperboles, litotes, euphemisms • indirect speech acts (e.g. question instead of assertion) • verbs of saying, feeling, thinking, etc.

(Reisigl and Wodak, 2017)