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Language and Normativity: Representation of queer people in the British tabloid press

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Tiivistelmä/Referat – Abstract Tässä tutkielmassa tarkastellaan queer-identiteettien ja seksuaalisuuden representaatiota Brittiläisessä iltapäivälehdessä Daily Mailissa. Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on selvittää kollokaattien kautta rakentuvien diskurssiprosodioiden avulla, jos ja kuinka sosiaalinen konstruktio heteronormatiivisuus vaikuttaa ei-normatiivisten seksuaalisuuksien diskursiiviseen rakentumiseen ja kuvaamiseen. Heteronormatiivisuuden ja normatiivisten ja ei-normatiivisten seksuaalisuuksien määrittelyssä ja kriittisessä tarkastelussa on hyödynnetty Queer-tutkimuksen sosiaalisten rakennelmien tutkimuksen teorioita. Samalla tutkimus pyrkii kartoittamaan iltapäivälehtimedian käyttämiä legitimointistrategioita näiden identiteettien kuvaamisessa ja valaista massamedian, etenkin uutisdiskurssin, vaikutusta sen yleisöön ja lukijakuntaan. Tutkielman aineisto koostuu 746 erillisestä vuosien 2017 ja 2019 välillä julkaistusta verkkoartikkelista. Artikkelit noudettiin News on the Web -korpuksen (NOW) kautta. Avainsanojen gay/homosexual, lesbian ja bisexual kollokaatit viiden sanan säteellä oikealle sekä vasemmalle haettiin ja analysoitiin oleellisuuden kannalta, ja niiden avulla muodostettiin 23 diskurssiprosodiaa pohjautuen Bakerin (2005; 2014) teoriaan ja prosodioihin. Näiden diskurssiprosodioiden avulla queer-identiteettien kuvaamista pystyttiin analysoimaan Daily Mailin uutisoinnissa esiintyvän heteronormatiivisen kielen, sen merkityksen ja seurausten kannalta. Legitimointistrategioita tunnistettiin kollokaatio-analyysin ja diskurssiprosodioiden avulla sekä julkaisussa tapahtuvia trendejä seuraamalla. Tutkielmassa nousi esille, miten queer-identiteettien representaatio valtavirtamediassa omaa edelleen enemmän negatiivisia konnotaatioita verrattuna positiivisiin tai neutraaleihin asenteisiin ja painottuu enimmäkseen viittauksiin homomiehen identiteettiin. Tutkimustulokset osoittivat miten negatiiviset asenteet tulevat myös esille implisiittisesti heteronormatiivisen kielenkäytön kautta eksplisiittisen homofobian lisäksi. Heteronormatiivisuus tuli ilmi iltapäivälehtimedian käyttämässä kielessä etenkin diskurssiprosodioissa, jotka ilmaisivat seksuaalisuuden tarpeetonta mainintaa, seksuaalivähemmistöjen liittämistä muihin vähemmistöryhmiin sekä queer-identiteettiin liittyvää häpeää. Merkittävimpinä legitimointistrategioina nousi esille viittaaminen historiallisiin tapahtumiin ja henkilöihin, uutisointi maista Britannian ulkopuolella, joissa ei-normatiivinen seksuaalisuus on kriminalisoitua sekä toistuva uutisointi samoista aiheista. Tutkielma osoittaa, miten heteronormatiivisuus vaikuttaa valtavirtamedian tapaan kuvata queer-identiteettejä ja näin ollen luo ennakkoluuloja ja vääristynyttä kuvaa ei-normatiivisista seksuaalisuuksista.			
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1 Introduction

Minority groups have been portrayed through four stages of representation in the mass media through history: non-representation, ridicule, regulation, and respect (Clark, 1969). Early representation of queer people, mainly gay men, heavily focused on negative stereotypes, hence the ridicule. Moving past the stereotypes, representation started slowly shifting towards showing queer people either as dangerous or as victims while still being at times used as comic relief (Netzley, 2010: 969). In the last few decades, queer presence in the mainstream media (both in fiction and non-fiction) has been portrayed predominantly either through tragedy and overcoming said tragedy or, especially in the case of bisexual characters, as a plot device to advance the overarching story line (GLAAD, 2020b). Socio-cultural movements and crises, such as the gay liberation movement and the AIDS epidemic, have had their impact on the public discussion and representation of queer people: on the other hand, showing queer people as humane and worthy of equal rights but on the other hand, politically militant and promiscuous and diseased thus, contributing to the “gay shame” (McCann & Monaghan, 2020: 91–102).

Essentially, little queer representation existed where queer people simply just existed without the constant battle of self-acceptance before the late 2000s and early 2010s. And although the 21st century has not proved to be the liberation of all queer people with new laws regulating queer identities and bodies, e.g., legal discrimination of trans people in the medical field in the U.S. and the yet to be prohibited “conversion therapy” in the UK, queer voices and representation have still increased outside of the niche queer media too. This increase in representation has happened along with and partly due to the legalization of same-sex marriage, legal adoption of children by same-sex couples, and bans on discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. More importantly, the mainstream media and culture are slowly giving space to queer perspectives created and represented by queer people and moving away from the representation of queer people through heteronormative lenses.

The quite extensive research on the influence of mass media based on cultivation theory has shown how language and media exposure can shape the audience’s attitudes and world views (e.g., Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Gerbner et al., 2002). For some audiences, mass media is also the primary and sometimes the only source of information and contact for other communities outside one’s own, and thus, “without recognition and respect on TV and other forms of mass

media, social groups are more likely to be devalued by society” (Raley & Lucas, 2006: 21). In the case of scripted and unscripted TV shows, the stereotypical tropes of queer people, e.g., exaggerated hypersexuality, campy gay men, and butch lesbians, heavily dominated queer representation until the 2010s. This representation was shown to reinforce people’s negative attitudes towards queer people and influence people’s perception of queer people and thus, reinforce the negative stereotype of the hypersexuality of the queer community and by extension the stereotype of seeing queerness as a sexual practice rather than identity (see e.g., Calzo & Ward 2009; Netzley, 2010).

It is worthwhile to consider that media exposure has also been proven to have positive effects, for instance, non-LGBTQ+ people who are frequently exposed to queer individuals and experiences in the media seem to generally have a more accepting and positive attitude towards LGBTQ+ people (GLAAD, 2020a). News discourse, in particular, has recently been a popular source of data for research around the representation of minorities because of its widespread reach and large readership (Baker, 2005; 2014b; Baker, Gabrielatos & McEnery, 2013; Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Zottola, 2018). Litosseliti (2002: 136) argues that “newspapers are a prime public site for moral arguments and for constructing values and ideologies”, and therefore, it is reasonable to argue that the news media is also able to shape the audience’s attitudes towards queer identities by this construction of values and ideologies through specific linguistic choices.

Despite the growing presence of queer identities and stories in the media, the mainstream culture that forms the dominant form of Western culture has yet to destigmatize the representation of differing (queer) identities and bodies. In heteronormative environments, the presence of queer people and queerness is still understood as deviance, diversity, or “the other” to the normative heterosexual identity rather than simple *variance*. Normativities and the power they hold regulating sexualities and sexual identities do not exist or work independently but are manifested and reinforced through language (Motschenbacher, 2019b; Cameron & Kulick 2003). Considering the power of normativities and exclusionary language together with the ubiquity of mass media, the importance of fair representation of different identities becomes explicit.

Queer theory and Queer Linguistics are used to question and problematize these existing normative belief systems in Western societies and in the language we use. The aim of queer studies is not to create new normativities out of anti-normativities but rather to challenge and resist existing subjectivities and fixed categories as well as show how normativities work to oppress and marginalize non-normative identities (e.g., Jagose, 2009; McCann & Monaghan 2020; Motschenbacher, 2011). Public discourses of the news media are well suitable for the interrogation of heteronormative language and constructions through their representation of queer identities for their ubiquity, ability to change quickly, and influence audiences.

Through misconceptions, misinformation, and personal biases, whether implicit or explicit, the views about queer people and the LGBTQ+ community remain polarized in the mainstream media, and thus, it is important to further examine the discourse around queer people. Furthermore, it is reasonable to examine and question the media, especially the news media, as a medium that creates, upholds, and reinforces the public's views, opinions, and attitudes as the power of mainstream media is not in only what it reports on but also in what it normalizes.

In this thesis, I examine the possible heteronormative bias in the language used by the British tabloid newspaper *Daily Mail* through its representation of queer people. The research questions I seek to answer are:

1. What kind of discourse prosodies form the representation of queer people in the *Daily Mail*?
2. Does the language used by the *Daily Mail* show heteronormative bias, and if so, how is it manifested?

A further objective of the study is to explore how the queer identity is discursively constructed through discourse prosodies in a way that highlights the gay male experience while ignoring and erasing other non-normative identities. The study focuses on the representation of queer people in the British tabloid newspaper the *Daily Mail* using methods from corpus linguistics, namely keyword and collocate analysis. As often the bigotry occurring in the media and via the mainstream media is expressed covertly the concept of discourse prosodies is employed in this study to uncover the possible implicit attitudes and opinions. Further, the legitimization strategies, i.e., “how the newspaper is able to legitimate its negative discourses” (Baker 2014b: 124) used by the *Daily Mail* are studied. Drawing from Queer Theory and using corpus linguistics methods, this study is situated within corpus-assisted discourse studies.

The study partly follows the methodology and theory introduced in Baker (2005; 2014b). However, as the focus is on the representation of queer people through a heteronormative lens in the British press, I will analyze the emerging discourses focusing on how they project heteronormativity and problematize how the heteronormative language is implicitly widely still considered the norm. Also, it is important to note that this study does not claim to be an exhaustive look into people's attitudes towards queer people in the UK but rather one option to examine the heteronormative language in the tabloid press, its persistence, and effect on the discursive construction of non-normative sexualities.

This thesis is divided into six chapters. To fully understand and problematize the extent and influence of heteronormativity and heteronormative language in the construction of sexualities, it is necessary to discuss Queer Theory and queer approaches in detail. Thus, in the following chapter, I discuss the theoretical notions of Queer Theory and Queer Linguistics further. I also provide an overview of corpus-assisted discourse studies and the theoretical framework of discourse prosodies and discuss their suitability for studying the construction of sexualities with reference to relevant previous research. Chapter Three, then, introduces the data and methodology of the study. Chapter Four provides a detailed analysis of the discourses found in the data as well as the specific legitimation strategies used by the *Daily Mail*, followed by a discussion relating the results to previous research and relevant socio-cultural situations in Chapter Five. Finally, the concluding Chapter Six will summarize the purpose of the study and provide relevant conclusions.

2 Theoretical Background

In this chapter, I present the theoretical frameworks and theories relevant to the study of discursive construction of sexualities and identities. First, Queer Theory is introduced with the concept of heteronormativity and power, followed by a look into the field of Queer Linguistics. By providing a detailed discussion of Queer Theory, I demonstrate how understanding Queer Theory, its aims, purpose, and development as well as the concept of normativities, makes it possible to deploy a queer approach to the analysis of public discourses around queer identities. A queer approach, then, allows the identification and problematization of the complex, intersecting, and often implicit issues in the representation of queer people in the mainstream media and can be used to emphasize why the way this representation manifests matters.

The following section is dedicated to corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) and the notion of discourse prosodies. In this section, I also discuss the purpose and suitability of CADS and discourse prosodies for studying the discursive construction of sexualities. The chapter will close with an introduction and discussion of previous research relating to language, normativity, and media to further contextualize the current study in the research of discursive construction of sexualities.

2.1 Queer Theory and Normativity

Queer originally existed as a term to refer to what was seen as “odd, strange, abnormal or sick” (McCann & Monaghan 2020: 2) and has then transformed from a colloquial slur into a reclaimed self-identifier by the LGBTQ+ community used as an umbrella term for non-normative sexualities and gender identities. McCann and Monaghan (2020: 2) argue that reclaiming the word queer was “about being *different*, but unapologetically so” (italics in the original). Queer can also be understood as “anyone who feels marginalised as a result of their sexual practices” (Sullivan, 2003: 44) such as S/M and fetishism. In the context of this thesis, queer is used to refer to non-heterosexual marginalized sexual identities.

Similarly, Queer Theory does not aim to normalize nor assimilate the existence of queer people into the mainstream culture. Queer Theory is used to “challenge, interrogate, destabilise and subvert” (McCann & Monaghan, 2020: 1), e.g., acknowledge different identities and lived experiences but simultaneously question the existence and creations of binaries into normativities and non-normativities. Queer thinking and theory aim to problematize our cultural products and subjectivities and resist fixed categorizations, e.g., dominant ideologies, institutions, power, and identity categories but is “a concept that prominently insists on the radical unknowability of its future formations” (Jagose, 2009: 158). In other words, Queer Theory is “simultaneously a way of naming, describing, doing and being” (Monaghan, 2016: 7) that is interlocked with its cultural and social surroundings and thus, it is important to understand Queer Theory not as singular but as comprising of intersectional perspectives and divergent voices.

“Queer Theory” as a term was coined in the 1990s by Teresa de Lauretis as a response to the language around gay and lesbian identities and the somewhat restrictive boundaries of lesbian and gay studies to:

avoid all of these fine distinctions in our discursive protocols, not to adhere to any one of the given terms, not to assume their ideological liabilities, but instead to both transgress and transcend them – or at the very least problematize them. (de Lauretis, 1991: v)

In addition to de Lauretis, postmodern and poststructuralist scholars such as Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Michael Warner (among others) are thought as the earliest queer theorists. Butler’s theory of gender as performative and the concept of the “heterosexual matrix” (1990) are among the most influential theories around gender and sexuality and their discursive constructions. Sedgwick brought queer theory “a methodology for deconstruction that enabled a deep interrogation of sexuality, gender, bodies, and pleasure in and across Western culture” (McCann & Monaghan, 2020: 136) as well as the criticism towards the binary oppositions of sexuality through the theorization and problematization of “the closet” (Sedgwick, 1990). Warner (1991) introduced the concept of *heteronormativity* which is discussed in greater detail shortly below. In combination with the work by these scholars, activism, and the research on the relationship between identity and desire in the field of language and sexuality (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004; Cameron & Kulick, 2005) further established the notion of gender and sexuality as socio-cultural constructions. To say that gender and sexuality, and identities in general, are social constructs is not to undermine the real implications, whether positive or negative, they have on people’s everyday life (Motschenbacher, 2019a: 286).

Queer Theory developed within academic and non-academic contexts such as gender studies, feminist studies, and gay and lesbian studies as well as social and political conditions and activism. McCann and Monaghan (2020: 6) suggest that “queer theory emerged in reflection on/conversation with prior theories of sexuality and gender, as well as histories of thinking around race, embodiment, ability, affects and more” and that it “emerged from postmodern theory in interaction with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender activists, especially those from the margins of race, class, and gender” (McCann & Monaghan, 2020: 9). Although queerness and thus Queer Theory is most often linked with sexuality and the study of sexuality and gender, it is not only limited to these fields of study. The intersectional potential of Queer Theory has the ability to extend the ways we think about power, identity, and politics of oppression beyond

sexual identity and same-sex desire. Perhaps even more characteristic for Queer Theory is to think about the word queer as a verb. To queer is to “make strange, to frustrate, to counteract, to delegitimise, to camp up - heteronormative knowledges and institutions, and the subjectivities and socialities that are (in)formed by them and that (in)form them” (Sullivan, 2003: vi), i.e., to interrogate, question and resist norms and/or expectations. To understand queer as a verb and as doing shows its potential to focus less on description and identity and more on subversion and non-normative ways of thinking.

Queer Theory and queer approaches thus challenge the normativity and normative beliefs in societies. Normativity is “the notion that certain social practices are perceived as desirable and/or normal” (Motschenbacher, 2019b: 1) and it can be understood as “a cover term that unites various more specific normative discourses (normativities)” (Coimbra-Gomez & Motschenbacher, 2019: 567). Normativities can be divided into *descriptive* and *prescriptive* group norms (Hogg & Reid, 2006: 12–13). Descriptive norms refer to behaviors that people commonly do and are “quantitatively based” (Motschenbacher, 2019b: 5). Descriptive norms do not carry any stigma nor are behaviors differing from these norms regarded as deviant, i.e., no behavior is deemed better or more normal than the other. Prescriptive norms, then, refer to norms that dictate how people *should* act “simultaneously stigmatizing nonconforming behavior as deviant” (Motschenbacher, 2019b: 5). Normativities associated with sexuality and gender, e.g. heteronormativity, are understood as prescriptive normativities (Motschenbacher, 2019b: 5). Prescriptive normativities generally hold a lot of power and are closely related to social exclusion when individuals “deviate” from these norms. This power dimension is discussed in more detail in the following sections together with Queer Linguistics and the social and cultural construction of sexuality through language.

Normativities are always context-dependent, and often Queer Theory has been criticized for its critique of allegedly universal normativities from a (white) Western able-bodied perspective (McCann & Monaghan, 2020: 179–209). Additionally, the debate whether Queer Theory’s desire to question, problematize and dismantle normativity and normative beliefs and cultures is simultaneously creating a new normativity from anti-normativity has justly caused criticism around the theory (McCann & Monaghan, 2020: 14–16). However, it can be argued that rather than creating a new norm from the anti-norm, Queer Theory can be utilized to simultaneously problematize the concept of normativity and *destigmatize* the so-called deviation or to

destabilize and question sexual and gender identities rather than focusing on becoming identities (Cohen, 1997).

And as mentioned earlier, Queer Theory is not limited to the analysis of sexuality and gender, however, it is important to note the extensive, often implicit, ways sexuality and gender influence knowledges and the ways people operate the world (Sullivan, 2003: vi). The concept of heteronormativity further problematizes this idea. In this thesis, the focus point is on the media representation of queer identity and sexuality and the implications of heteronormativity, i.e., how heteronormative beliefs in societies and communities affect oppression and power and how the media perpetuates and upholds these beliefs through language. Furthermore, the negative repercussions of these norms and beliefs are considered, e.g., how constant reporting with negative connotations around queer people, or other minorities, will cause people to see queer people negatively, especially if media contact is the only exposure to queer people they have.

Heteronormativity refers to the set of beliefs and norms that push heterosexuality as the natural and normal sexual orientation while degrading other sexual gender identities as prescriptive normativities generally do (Warner, 1991). The concept of “compulsory heterosexuality” coined by Adrienne Rich (1980) preceded and influenced the theorization of heteronormativity. Heteronormativity and other prescriptive normativities “operate collectively, across social actors, and their power is, therefore, not so much a matter of individual powerful agents” (Motschenbacher, 2019b: 6). Heteronormativity, like other underpinning norms in Western societies, is present largely invisibly in everyday life in that the set of beliefs it carries and perpetuates are often mistaken or taken for granted as “natural” (McCann & Monaghan, 2020: 11–12). It should be noted that not all forms of heterosexuality are treated as equal under heteronormative belief systems, thus, the existence of the “heteronormative hierarchy” (Cameron & Kulick, 2006: 165). In Western societies, one form of heterosexuality rises above others: heterosexuality that is based on the strict gender binarism where the roles and statuses of men and women are seen as opposites and to some extent complementary and where this set of roles regulates the assumed societal norms for gender and sexual identities (Motschenbacher, 2010: 16). Heteronormativity therefore not only regulates sexual practice and identity but also dictates a normal way of life by reinforcing heteronormative ideals through, e.g., marriage institutions, family units, and monogamy.

What Queer Theory aims to address when it comes to sexual identities is the way heteronormative beliefs and societies fail to consider that “sexuality is a discursive construct that takes culturally and historically specific forms” (Sullivan, 2003: 19) and to “illuminate queer identities and formations that would otherwise be erased or invisible under heteronormative arrangements” (McCann & Monaghan, 2020: 12). This idea can be extended to cover the concept of gender in Western societies as well, especially to the division to sex (biological) and gender (social/cultural) where the biological sex is almost always without exception seen as existing prior to the culturally and socially constructed gender. The discussion and theorization of the division between sex and gender are multifold and out of the scope of this thesis. It is important to mention, though, that initially within gender studies and feminist studies the division of sex and gender helped to expose and address the constructedness and performative nature of our understanding of gender. However, seeing sex as *a priori* to gender is inherently problematic as it lays importance on the biological and thus “natural” aspect of sex over gender. Furthermore, Queer Theory is interested in questioning seemingly “natural” and primarily Western constructions and understanding of binaries that exist or have been created, e.g., female/male gender binary, homo/hetero binary, and possibly abandon them.

Relating to heteronormativity is the concept of homonormativity originated by trans people and trans activism that broadly refers to the norms existing within the LGBTQ+ community where certain kind of queer people and culture is more privileged and accepted, i.e., how Black trans women are more marginalized even within the queer community than the white cisgender gay man (McCann & Monaghan, 2020: 12). Normativities do not work or exist independently and when non-normative identities are increasingly validated in the “local” level outside mainstream culture, the originally non-normative identities become “normal” or at least more normal in the dominant culture (Motschenbacher, 2019b: 7). Concerning the queer community, queer identities have indeed been “normalized” or destigmatized but mostly in regards to the most digestible identities in the eyes of the mainstream, i.e., white cisgender gay (fe)males.

The idea of homonormativity has since developed to refer to the idea that heteronormative beliefs and ideals should be replicated and reproduced in the queer community thus, making it easier for some members of the community to “assimilate” into the mainstream or dominant heterosexual culture at the expense of others. Duggan (2003: 50) writes that homonormativity is “a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormativity assumptions and institutions but

upholds and sustains them while promising the possibility of a demobilised gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption”. For example, the constant fight for equal marriage rights is simultaneously seen as vital by some and as assimilation or “mainstreaming” to the dominant heteronormative culture by others. Queer Theory intends to also challenge this idea of assimilation and homonormativity as it strives “towards emphasising difference and the margins, rather than sameness” (McCann & Monaghan, 2020: 12).

Thus, Queer Theory not only “aims to denaturalise heteronormative understandings of sex, gender, sexuality, sociality, and the relations between them” (Sullivan, 2003: 81) but also how these heteronormative concepts and understandings carry across to the queer community. What often is dismissed in the discussion of implicit norms and normative beliefs in Western societies is the fact that these norms do not only impact the lives of marginalized groups, e.g., regarding sexuality or gender, but everyone existing in said society or community (see e.g., Motschenbacher 2019 on heterosexual males and sexual orientation obsessive-compulsive disorder (SO-OCD)).

As mentioned, normativities, in this case, heteronormativity does not exist independently, but it is the intersecting “forms of social organization and regulation” (Sullivan, 2003: 59), i.e., sexuality, race, gender, class, and thus, sexism, homophobia, and racism, that are inevitably intertwined and work together to uphold heteronormative societies. Motschenbacher (2010: 16) defines it as “a discursively produced pressure that requires everybody to position oneself in relation to it on a daily basis” and thus, normativities can be seen to be crucial in the discursive construction of sexuality (and gender). Motschenbacher (2019b: 12) summarizes heteronormativity and homonormativity and their relationship as follows: “heteronormativity denotes practices that sketch out certain forms of heterosexuality as the norm, and homonormativity denotes practices that construct certain forms of homosexuality as the norm”. These normativities and power structures, then, are produced and reproduced in language, which can be studied from the perspective of Queer Linguistics. The next section will explore Queer Linguistics and previous research in more detail.

2.2 Queer Linguistics

As a relatively new approach to studying the relationship between language, gender, and sexuality, Queer Linguistics (QL) was first introduced in *Queerly Phrased* edited by Livia and Hall (1997). Unlike previous approaches within Feminist Linguistics and in the field of language and gender generally, where the gender binary has been the starting point for research, for QL the focus shifted from gender-specific language and efforts to define and make distinctions between e.g., women's speech or "gay" talk. Much of the research in QL has been devoted to the critique of hetero-, homo-, and cisnormativity of language in different mediums and discourses (see e.g., Ericsson, 2008; 2018; Hall, 2013; Paiz, 2015). Barrett (2002: 28) defines QL as "linguistics in which identity categories are not accepted as a priori entities but are recognized as ideological constructs produced by social discourse". In other words, QL focuses and is motivated by, challenging, and deconstructing the normative biases in language, meaning, and society and the relationship between them (Motschenbacher, 2011: 150–151). Research in language and sexuality has recently given more attention to the study of discourses of "normative" sexualities as well due to the unintended phenomena of further treating heterosexuality as unmarked (see e.g., Coimbra-Gomez & Motschenbacher, 2019; Coates, 2013). That said, for studying discourses on non-normative sexualities in the mainstream media, in this case, the British tabloid press, these observations need to be considered in order not to further normalize heterosexuality as unmarked and queer sexualities as marked but rather to realize how heteronormative bias in language tends to treat heterosexuality as unmarked.

As was discussed in the previous section concerning Queer Theory, heteronormativity in relation to sexuality is the belief formed into a power structure where heterosexuality is seen not only as the preferred sexual identity or orientation but also treated as the norm. And language plays a crucial role in the construction of these sexualities and beliefs. Cameron and Kulick (2003: 12) argue that "language, arguably the most powerful definitional/representational medium available to humans, shapes our understanding of what we are doing (and of what we should be doing) when we do sex or sexuality". Therefore, language holds the power to create and uphold normativities regarding sexual constructions as the language that exists and is available for "representing sex and sexuality exerts a significant influence on what we take to be possible, what we take to be 'normal' and what we take to be desirable" (Cameron & Kulick, 2003: 12). This power does not only create dominant discourses

around sexualities, for example, heteronormativity but simultaneously erases and marginalizes other possible sexual discourses or even the possibility for alternative discourses (Motschenbacher, 2019b: 3).

Motschenbacher (2019b) suggests that rather than just taking normativities as universal structures that dictate and explain the acceptability of sexualities, attention should be directed to the linguistic practices and power structures that manifest these normativities. The power that these normativities have through linguistic practices can be seen for instance in the social exclusion of certain non-normative identities by the stigma that these identity labels have. For example, the mainstream media, news media as well as fiction media, still hold on to the habit of only explicitly labeling non-normative identities while heterosexuality is generally assumed on individuals and only implied through, e.g., kinship words and relations (see e.g., Coates, 2013; Rendle-Short, 2005). And as non-normative identities cannot “be performed with the same ease because of their marked or non-normative status” (Motschenbacher, 2019b: 9) this unavoidably creates further stigma. Thus, these linguistic practices that ultimately create the stigma around non-normative identities are inherently reproduced in the public discourse by the media, which, then, can be studied through discourse prosodies. The following section introduces the concept of discourse prosodies and corpus-assisted discourse studies for studying generalized discourses around non-normative sexualities.

2.3 Corpus-assisted Discourse Studies and Discourse Prosodies

Corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) is defined as a discourse analysis approach that uses methods from corpus linguistics, i.e., “the form and/or function of language as communicative discourse which incorporate the use of computerised corpora in their analyses” (Partington, 2013: 10). Additionally, like discourse analysis in general but unlike more traditional forms of corpus linguistics, CADS focuses on the analysis of language in context and thus, requires more use of “external” information and theories, e.g., social context, that is not directly found in the corpora used. CADS has largely focused on language use in politics and media (see Morley & Bayley, 2009; Partington, Morley & Haarman, 2004; Bayley & Williams, 2012).

Initially, corpus approaches were used in fields such as lexicography, grammar, and language description but have been increasingly used outside the linguistics field for “their ability to

explore any kind of discourse” (Ancarno, 2018: 132). As mentioned, a fair amount of research relating to gender, sexuality, and identity has focused on spoken discourse, e.g., feminist approach to *women’s language* (see Lakoff, 1975), the differences in language and power relations between men and women (see Cameron, 2007; Coates, 2004) or the gay/lesbian talk (see Baker 2005; Cameron & Kulick, 2003), i.e., gender/sexuality specific speech features. The increased use of corpus approaches in the study of language, gender, and sexuality has allowed a more generalized and broader analysis of the representation of gender and LGBTQ+ community and individuals in different social contexts.

Corpus methods allow the examination of the generalized discourse and representation, and thus attitudes, of certain topics giving motivation and reasoning for the application of corpus linguistics methods in this thesis. In handling large amounts of data, corpus approaches help reduce, but not eliminate, researcher’s bias further (Motschenbacher, 2018). With researcher’s bias, especially with news reporting and the media, I refer to the tendency to *cherry-pick* certain claims made by the press to build our views and representations without looking at the big picture. For instance, newspapers might make controversial statements about certain communities, people, or topics and while that is problematic on its own, it is also problematic to make generalized claims about a news outlet based on a few separate cases as these might reflect an individual reporter’s views rather than the entire publication’s.

In addition to analyzing large volumes of linguistic data, corpus approaches are suitable for the comparisons between datasets from different periods (modern diachronic corpus-assisted discourse studies or MD-CADS) and sources/registers (Baker, 2018; Partington, 2013). For this thesis, comparisons between time periods are relevant to study the possible change in discourses and heteronormative bias in language, and thus in representation and attitudes, through three different periods, namely 2001–2002, 2008–2009, and mid-2017 to mid-2019. Media discourses tend to change quickly and as the campaigning for equal rights and legislation to protect the LGBTQ+ community has increased leading to an increase in the representation (whether positive or negative) of the LGBTQ+ community and people in the mainstream media, it is sensible to study the diachronic change in discourses to an extent.

Additionally, CADS is “ideally positioned to examine questions around discourses and representations of sexuality, particularly so in cases where text producers are perhaps more

careful in terms of openly expressing prejudice” (Baker, 2018: 264) and therefore, ideal for examining and problematizing the often implicit normative biases in language. Studying collocates around certain terms to determine larger discourses is a useful approach for examining these implicit biases as they are not expressed openly. For example, a situation where words that are normally considered neutral appear frequently in negative contexts inevitably creates patterns of discourses with negative associations as the connotation of words “is not contained in a single item, but is expressed by that item in association with others, with its collocates” (Partington, 1998: 66). In other words, frequent collocations often influence the semantic association of a word as well as determine whether the connotation of a linguistic item is understood as positive or negative. This linguistic process is defined as semantic prosody (Louw, 1993; Partington, 1998). To determine these semantic associations of words, computational methods are often required (Louw, 1993: 159). Discourse prosodies, then, could be understood as an extension of semantic prosodies, i.e., grouping words with similar semantic prosodies to determine larger discourses. In this study, the concept of discourse prosodies is used to examine the discursive construction of sexualities and thus, possible heteronormative language.

Baker (2006: 87) defines discourse prosody as the discourse patterns that emerge from the set of related words (i.e., collocates) of a lemma that “suggest a discourse”. In this sense, discourse prosodies go above frequent collocates and consider “low-frequency combinations of words” (Baker, 2005: 68) together with other less frequent collocates with similar semantic meaning to reach an overall pattern or *prosody*. Collocates can be essentially divided into positive and negative collocates (Bednarek, 2008; Hunston, 2004) and as such, they contribute towards discourse prosodies that represent or construct the attitudes of speakers and hearers. For example, in Baker (2005) words like *fling*, *affair* and *experimenting* appeared with the words gay and homosexual in British tabloid news, thus suggesting that same-sex relationships are fleeting experiments and that a gay identity is somehow temporary. To draw on an example from another domain, Gabrielatos and Baker (2008) examined the representation of refugees and asylum seekers in the British press and found an overall negative discourse around the terms, especially in the conservative and tabloid media. Additionally, the use of nonsensical terms like *illegal refugee* contributed to the overall negative discourse. The study also pointed out the diachronic change in the occurrence of the terms due to sociopolitical events. When

these patterns in discourse appear repeatedly, they not only create negative associations but also affect the way of thinking by priming the audience and constructing social realities (Stubbs, 1994).

The analysis of language through discourse prosodies can provide insight into a society and the extent of its heteronormativity or even intolerance as bigotry, hatred, and stereotyping of queer identities is “enabled through discourses or negative representations ... which are articulated through language” (Baker, 2014: 107). As this thesis focuses on heteronormativity and language, discourse prosodies together with more quantitative corpus linguistics methods are well-suited to offer insight into the implicit and explicit (prescriptive) normativities in the British press (Coimbra-Gomez & Motschenbacher, 2019: 570). Newspaper reporting does not only reflect the society but can produce, reproduce, and change the attitudes through repetitive discourses projected to the audience (Baker, 2005: 61, see also Baker, Gabrielatos & McEnery, 2013; Partington, Duguid & Taylor, 2013). Thus, the next subsection will introduce previous research regarding normativities in language used across media platforms using corpus methods in more detail.

2.4 Previous Research on Language, Sexuality, Gender, and Media

Newspapers and other media have been popular sources for discourse studies as the mass media plays a significant role in today’s society affecting and shaping the values of individuals. Therefore, it can be argued that the language used by the media is in turn a significant factor influencing people’s opinions and attitudes toward LGBTQ+ people (see e.g., Anderson, Fakhfakh & Kondylis, 1999; Pan, Meng & Zhou, 2010). However, previous research in language, gender, and sexuality with corpus approaches analyzing the representation of queer people in the media has predominantly involved gay men and masculinity (Baker, 2005; 2014b), trans people (Baker, 2014a; Zottola, 2018), or marriage equality (Bachmann, 2011; Paterson & Coffey-Glover, 2018; Vigo, 2015) while relatively little research exists addressing the lack of studies around other queer identities.

Gay men and masculinity were studied in Baker (2005; 2014b) through the focus point of the discourse around gay men in the *Daily Mail*. Baker (2005; 2014b) studied the representation using collocational patterns to distinguish discourse prosodies. The discourse prosodies in

Baker (2005; 2014b) were established by examining collocates and concordances of the words *gay* and *homosexual* along with their plural forms. Altogether 15 distinct discourse prosodies were distinguishable in the tabloid news concerning or mentioning gay men. In Baker (2005), the data were collected from 2001–2002 and contained mostly negative representations of gay men, linking being gay to shame, crime, and violence. Additionally, being gay was represented more as a sexual act rather than an identity. In Baker (2014b: 107–108), the data were collected from 2008–2009, the time when “the United Kingdom’s (New) Labour government introduced legislation to improve the lives of gay men and lesbians”. In the latter corpus, the most negative discourse prosodies (i.e., shame, crime, violence, promiscuousness) declined compared to the 2001–2002 corpus. In addition, the 2008–2009 corpus showed a slight increase in the discussion of gay people wanting their own community, access to adoption, and being effeminate. The latter corpus also contained disapproval towards gay rights campaigners describing their behavior as *militant*. And although the focus was on the representation of gay men, the research also shed light on the construction or *performance* of hegemonic masculinity that considers gay men (and women) as the deviant or subordinate counterpart to the default or “preferred” heterosexual one.

Overall, the 2008–2009 corpus, showed more representation of the existence of the gay community, gay rights, and on the other hand, the existence of homophobia while the 2001–2002 corpus connected being gay to negative traits and behavior, such as violence and promiscuity. The established discourse prosodies seem to tell that “the during 2008–9 Mail’s discourses on homosexuality are following rather than leading” (Baker, 2014b: 131), i.e., the paper does not straightforwardly support the ongoing equality legislation but does not condemn it either. Baker (2014b) suggests that the audience of the newspaper has expanded due to the power of social media and thus, the paper might have become more hesitant about publishing the most controversial stories and editorials.

The research by Baker acts together with the theory of critical heteronormativity as the framework for the present thesis. But rather than focusing on just the representation of gay men and masculinity in the media, this research focuses more on the heteronormativity affecting the queer community at large and its dominating effect on the media language and thus on the social meaning. This is extended to examine the existing hierarchies within the queer community and

how those are created and shaped by the persistent presence of heteronormativity in Western societies.

Baker (2014a) and Zottola (2018) have studied the representation of trans people in the British press. Baker's (2014a) corpus study included articles from both the broadsheet as well as tabloid papers. He found that while the most used term found in the corpus was *transgender*, i.e., the preferable term according to GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation), some tabloid papers showed more use of *transsexual* and *transvestite*. This indicates that looking into the naming strategies alone does not tell us much and therefore, it is sensible to study the collocates and the context they appear in to achieve the correct representation. The broader look into the collocates revealed that although the use of strongly derogatory terms was not common, trans people were represented as:

receiving special treatment lest they be offended, as victims or villains, as involved in transient relationships or sex scandals, as the object of jokes about their appearance or sexual organs and as attention-seeking freakish objects (Baker, 2014a: 233).

Similar to and partly influenced by the studies by Baker (2005; 2014a), Zottola (2018) examined the naming strategies and representation of trans people in the British press between 2013–2015. Similarly, to this thesis, Zottola (2018: 238) argued that “the choices made by the press with regard to specific terminology when addressing transgender people are key, as they set an example for its readership” especially if the news discourse and media, in general, is the only source of contact between the audience and queer people. Using corpus methods to study discourse and semantic prosodies, the study analyzed how heteronormative bias is present in language when describing non-normative identities and how language can be seen to influence significantly the discursive construction of trans people. The main conclusions drawn from the analysis were that the British press continues to use terms for trans people (such as *transgender*, *transsexual* or *trans*) in the nominal function when the use of these terms is preferred to be in the adjectival function and that both broadsheet and tabloid media tend to favor “a collective type of representation” (Zottola, 2018: 258) of trans people. Furthermore, the representation in the broadsheet publications was found to be generally more positive whereas, in the tabloid papers, the representation changed to a more negative one when moving from the collective level to the representation of single trans individuals.

While referencing guidelines for media and academics by queer advocates, such as GLAAD, GIRES (Gender Identity Research & Education Center), and NCTE (National Center for Transgender Equality), Zottola (2018: 238) stated that the intent of her study was not to impose “preferred” language that should be used by cisgender people when writing about and referring to trans people or further any identity categorizations but to analyze the language used by the British press and its societal impact. She further elaborated that:

while many websites and associations that fight for trans people’s rights offer guidelines to support people and journalists in choosing non-discriminatory language, they also maintain that gender identity is strictly related to each and every individual expressing their own identity. Therefore, no definition, labelling, or category will ever be satisfactory in addressing all individuals (Zottola, 2018: 238)

This same perspective is adapted for this thesis when analyzing the heteronormative bias in language and the collective representation of gay, lesbian and bisexual people in the *Daily Mail*.

In the case of the representation of bisexual people outside of television media, no extensive research exists. Wilkinson (2019) examined the representation of bisexual people in *The Times* between 1957 and 2017 and found that bisexual people are rarely discussed independently of other sexual minorities. In the rare cases that bisexual people were discussed in the corpus, they tended to refer to fictional characters or to the victims of the HIV/AIDS crisis implying “that bisexual people simply do not exist as social actors in reality” (Wilkinson, 2019: 264). The present study aims to further explore and explain the erasure of other queer identities, especially the bisexual identity.

As mentioned earlier, the research around heteronormativity and queer linguistics, in general, has heavily focused on Western society and communication. Li and Lu (2020) studied the possible replication of heteronormative ideologies in queer spaces in Taiwan using methods from corpus linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis. Through “a synergy between CDA and CL” they examined how heteronormativity influences “the linguistic construction of homosexual desires, dating preferences, and queer relationships” (Li & Lu, 2020: 1499) in two same-sex dating websites catering to gay men and lesbians in a non-Western cultural context. The study showed that although gay men and lesbians construct their identities and their desire for their partner differently, heteronormative ideals and concepts of gender persist even in the queer dating websites that “may strengthen the influence of the gender hierarchy and undermine the value of gender equality” (Li & Lu, 2020: 1519).

Furthermore, discourse around marriage equality in the UK has been studied applying corpus methods by, e.g., Bachmann (2011) and Paterson and Coffey-Glover (2018). Paterson and Coffey-Glover (2018) examined the representation of the marriage equality debates in the British press between 2011–2014 through a Queer Linguistic lens using methods from corpus linguistics. They focused on how social binaries and dichotomies, e.g., gay/straight and state/church, uphold the heteronormative ideals around marriage through linguistic choices and mechanisms and who dominated the discussion around marriage equality and which social actors were not given any agency. They chose to focus on online and print news media for their ubiquity in people’s everyday life and as news media texts have “the ability to influence public opinion and inform the stances that individuals take towards same-sex marriage in the UK” (Paterson & Coffey-Glover, 2018: 176). In addition to keyword and concordance analysis to identify lexical and semantic patterns, grammatical patterns were analyzed to determine the “prominent social actors in same-sex marriage debates” (Paterson & Coffey-Glover, 2018: 182). Paterson and Coffey-Glover concluded that the marriage equality debates in the UK did not challenge any discursive constructions of sexualities, gender, or the institution of marriage but rather reinforced the existing constructions and heteronormative understandings by giving agency to the opposition the authority of the church and the state creates as well as privileging the gay (male) identity over other queer voices leading to erasure of, e.g., bisexual, lesbian and trans people.

In this thesis, the theory of critical heteronormativity is applied together with the idea of media reinforcing and to some extent creating these ideas of heteronormativity and the gender and sexual binary through linguistic and cultural practices. The decision to focus on gay, lesbian and bisexual people and exclude trans persons was twofold. First, the inclusion of trans identities would have required more detailed discussion about the theory of gender, and secondly and more importantly, trans people and trans identity are too often used as an exemplary tool and a look into the queer life without acknowledging the marginalized lived experience of trans persons (McCann & Monaghan, 2020: 168–172). Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the research of queer representation and the influence of heteronormativity in the discursive construction of sexual identity.

3 Data and Methods

In this chapter, I present the data and methods used in the current study in more detail. The first section provides a look into the British tabloid press and further reasoning for the decision to focus on tabloid media, and especially British tabloid media, followed by a description of the data collection. In section 3.2, I lay out the stages of the keyword and collocate analysis as well as the formation of the discourse prosodies. I first describe the methods used to further analyze the created subcorpora, the grammatical use of the keywords, and the heterosexual discourse in the *Daily Mail*. Lastly, I present the methodology of the collocate analysis and demonstrate how the collocates were used to form the discourse prosodies following the framework established in Baker (2005; 2014b).

3.1 The Tabloid Media: The *Daily Mail*

In addition to practical reasons, the decision to focus on news discourse to study the representation of queer people and heteronormative language came from its earlier mentioned ubiquity, wide reach, and influence. Furthermore, the different British press outlets are outspoken about their political standpoints and “actively attempt to influence the populace (for example, by backing particular political parties during elections)” (Baker, Gabrielatos & McEnery, 2013: 13). Also, the tabloid papers seem to reach a larger readership making them more popular compared to their broadsheet counterpart (Baker, Gabrielatos & McEnery, 2013: 14). For instance, according to the Published Audience Measurement Company (PAMCo), the Mail brand, including the *Daily Mail*, *Mail on Sunday*, and *MailOnline*, was reported in 2019 to have a monthly reach of over 30 million readers. This further solidified the decision to choose news discourse and specifically the British tabloid press as the representation for queer people for this thesis.

Following Baker (2005; 2014b), the *Daily Mail* was chosen to be examined as it has been accused of bigotry and conservative, far right-wing attitudes, e.g., publicly endorsing the conservative party. The *Daily Mail* is also rated as right-wing by the media bias rating site *allsides.com* (2020). The Times (2017) also reported on the political bias of the UK press and through a poll conducted through YouGov, they found that British people would classify the *Daily Mail* as right-wing or very right-wing making it the most right-wing press in the UK.

Additionally, a poll conducted by Baker in 2010, showed that the *Daily Mail* was considered the most homophobic news outlet in the UK (Baker, 2014b: 109). The data used for this thesis is comprised of articles from the *MailOnline*, the online publication of the *Daily Mail* published in *dailymail.co.uk*. The *MailOnline* is produced exclusively from the print version and much of its content is not featured in the print version. However, I will continue to refer to the data source as the *Daily Mail* as the online publication still represents the same brand.

Although the broadsheet and tabloid may become misleading terms as the distinction is based on the layout and size of the papers and in many cases, especially with online news, it does not hold anymore, in this thesis the terms broadsheet and tabloid will be continued to use as they remain the more common terms compared to “quality” and “popular” newspaper. The distinction between broadsheet and tabloid newspapers is becoming blurrier every day, again especially with online news. Nevertheless, the sensationalness of the tabloid newspapers still surpasses the broadsheet papers and thus, is more likely to show more polarized attitudes. Sensationalism here refers to the editorial tactic of provoking emotions and response in the audience (Molek-Kozakowska, 2013: 179) and thus is more present in the tabloid media compared to the more intellectual broadsheet publications. Additionally, tabloid newspapers favor the short headlines and shorter articles that focus more on the “popular” and “gossip” whereas broadsheets publish longer articles with more sophisticated language (Bednarek, 2006).

The data was accessed through the *News on the Web* (NOW) Corpus (Davies, 2016-). Containing over 12 billion words, the NOW Corpus provides recent news from web-based newspapers from 2010 to the present time. The NOW Corpus allows the user to create individual virtual subcorpora according to web domain, article title, country, dates, and/or keywords in text. Virtual subcorpora of the articles published in the *Daily Mail* between July 2017 and June 2019 was created using the following keywords: *gay*, *homosexual*, *bisexual*, and *lesbian* as well as their plural forms. These articles then formed The Daily Mail Gay Corpus (henceforth GayCor), The Daily Mail Bisexual Corpus (henceforth BisexualCor), and The Daily Mail Lesbian Corpus (henceforth LesbianCor). Although the use of *gay*, *homosexual*, and *bisexual* as nouns is considered offensive, the plural forms were taken into consideration as otherwise a significant amount of discourse would have been ignored.

The reason for the time span was the source for the news used by the NOW Corpus: before July 2019, the sole source for all the articles was Google News, and to ensure consistency, it made more sense to focus on the two years before July 2019. Further, to be able to compare the results to Baker (2014b), it made sense to similarly focus on two years. Altogether, the subcorpora created ended up containing 746 distinct online articles from the *Daily Mail*. Some of the news articles appeared in more than one subcorpora as more than one of the keywords might have appeared in a single article, i.e., a single article could mention both gay and bisexual people and thus, that article was added to both the GayCor as well as the BisexualCor. Individually the corpora showed disproportion in size the GayCor containing 935,741 words while the LesbianCor contained 231,252 words and the BisexualCor only 119,347 words.

The keywords were chosen as they represent the largest or “most common” subgroups in the LGBTQ+ community. Additionally, these groups are mostly mentioned and discussed in the media and in the case of the *Daily Mail*, for example, the term *intersex* in the context of humans occurred in only eight articles and *asexual* in only one article during the determined two-year time span. Furthermore, a decision was made to only focus on the discourse around the keywords and to ignore all discourse that would appear to be about queer people but where none of the keywords were explicitly mentioned as it would be too time-consuming and out of the scope of this thesis to consider all discourse around queer people.

Only perfect duplicates were removed from the data. In some instances, the *Daily Mail* tends to publish multiple similar articles surrounding the same topic within the same day or within a few days, for example, some articles showed the use of the same quotations or they were quoting or referencing to a previous article. These were not considered duplicates as they usually had a different headline or some other minimal differences and were taken into consideration as distinct individual publications.

3.2 Identifying Discourse Prosodies Through Collocate Analysis

The GayCor, BisexualCor, and LesbianCor were firstly analyzed from a broader perspective before continuing to the actual discourse prosody analysis in order to obtain a bigger picture of the discourse and possible disparities between the corpora. First, I analyzed and compared the number of occurrences and normalized frequencies (normalized per 100,000 words) of the

keywords used to create the subcorpora, i.e., *gay*/homosexual**, *lesbian**, *bisexual**, in each GayCor, BisexualCor, and LesbianCor. The frequencies with which these keywords occur in the corpora can further reveal the possible erasure of lesbians and bisexual people.

Next, the use and occurrences of the keywords were analyzed from a syntactic perspective. First, I analyzed the difference in use between *gay** and *homosexual** in more detail. *Gay* is the preferred term whereas *homosexual* is deemed as more of a derogatory term when it is used outside of medical discourse as it was first coined to be used as a term referring to a diagnosis. Thus, the use of the word *homosexual* perpetuates pathological connotation and negative stereotypes, i.e., it refers to gay people being “diseased” or something that can be “cured” (GLAAD, 2016), as in the following examples:

Ms Stroud, as head of the Centre for Social Justice, was revealed to have once founded a church that tried to ‘cure’ homosexuals by driving out their ‘demons’ through prayer. (*Daily Mail*, 2 December 2017)

Gay campaigners within the Church have long protested about attempts, led by conservative evangelicals, to convert homosexual people to heterosexuality. (*Daily Mail*, 20 February 2019)

Furthermore, the word *homosexual* has been connected to physical acts, for example in legal texts forbidding “homosexual acts” between men. Therefore, the use of *homosexual* can link the gay identity to physical acts even in instances where it is not supposed to:

The Shia man's homosexual relationships appeared in lines alleging he confessed to hating the state and the Sunni sect, the court documents obtained by CNN showed. (*Daily Mail*, 27 April 2019)

But because it is still rather widely used in media, for example, it made sense to include it as a keyword while other more explicit derogatory terms were not included.

Next, the use of *gay**, *homosexual**, and *bisexual** as nouns and as adjectives was studied in more detail. Apart from *lesbian*, it is preferred to use the above terms as adjectives while it is considered offensive to use them in the nominal function as it objectifies the persons and refers only to the characteristics of the individual while removing the person from those characteristics (GLAAD, 2016). In other words, the nominal use turns the person’s entire identity into what should be only one aspect of their identity.

After the grammatical function of the keywords was analyzed, I examined the discourse around heterosexual people to further show the persistent heteronormativity and heterosexual bias in the language in the tabloid media. An additional search was made with the word *heterosexual** for the entire NOW Corpus for the same time period from July 2017 to June 2019. The word *straight* was not included in the search as its use is too common in other contexts that are not referring to sexuality or sexual orientation. Additionally, words referring to relationships and love (e.g., couple, marriage) as immediate collocates of *heterosexual* were studied. These were then compared to the occurrences of relationships words as collocates of the keywords *gay**, *homosexual**, *lesbian**, and *bisexual** to determine whether heterosexual relationships are still considered the norm and thus, occur unmarked.

After the subcorpora and the use of the keywords were analyzed in more detail, the next stage of analysis comprised of the retrieval and identification of all relevant collocates. For each keyword, all collocates within a five-word span (left and right) were retrieved. The span of five words to left and right was chosen as it has been proven to be the most efficient one when examining larger discourse without using strength or confidence-based calculation methods (Baker, 2014b). The collocates were retrieved using the NOW Corpus interface and stored into separate spread sheets for qualitative analysis.

The relevancy of the collocates to the keywords in most cases was able to be determined by looking at the concordance lines. For example, considering how the verb *reveal* occurring with the keywords could be seen to suggest a discourse where being queer is considered a (shameful) secret. The concordance of *reveal* would then need to be considered in more detail to filter out any cases that do not contribute to the discourse of secrecy. Table 1 shows an example of the concordance of *reveal* with *gay*. Here, for example, I decided then to discard line two as the word *reveal* refers more directly to *untold stories* and *gay* occurs as a modifier for the word *soldiers*. However, line seven was included even though it shows similar use of the word *gay* as on line two, but the context can still be considered to contribute to a representation of being gay as a secret as the object of revelation is a gay relationship and thus, is more connected to the secrecy of the queer identity.

Table 1. Concordance of reveal* with gay.

Concordance	
1	his older brother, paying him? 75,000 not to reveal he was gay . They were estranged when Justin (pictured left with John
2	As brave as any: Letters reveal untold stories of gay soldiers who risked being shot for ' gross indecency'
3	He attempted to kill them because Amina had revealed her sister was gay . More than 5,000 women are murdered in so-called
4	president of the LGBTQ group GLAAD said he only revealed he is gay ' to deflect from allegations of sexual assault.' # ' This isn't
5	features the fictionalised version of a teenage Ben revealing he is gay - and real-life Ben confessed the scenes are pretty true to life
6	Thiel, who had a long grudge against Gawker for revealing he was gay in a 2007 blog post titled ' Peter Thiel is totally gay, people'
7	is it, Jen?' I felt goaded into revealing I was in a gay relationship. One colleague rolled her eyes and said: ' Is that

All relevant collocates that occurred within the five-word span of the search terms were considered even if they only occurred once as multiple distinct words can end up referring to or creating a single discourse prosody. For example, the phrase *come out* or *out* occurring with the keywords suggests that some queer people are shameless about being queer: “he came out as gay at the age of 15, in the same year he experienced his first sexual encounter” (*Daily Mail*, 15 November 2017). But other collocates seem to have the same effect and thus, contribute to the same discourse prosody:

Thomas, who **announced** in 2009 he is gay (*Daily Mail*, 23 November 2018)

Paul was **openly** gay since age 16 (*Daily Mail*, 8 March 2019)

The model and actress, who **publicly confirmed** she is bisexual last summer (*Daily Mail*, 19 February 2019)

At the height of his fame in 1970 he **declared** that he was bisexual (*Daily Mail*, 18 January 2019)

After the relevant collocates of the keywords were retrieved and all the words not referring to the terms were filtered out, discourse prosodies were determined by grouping the collocates based on their semantic prosody. As mentioned, Baker’s (2014b) discourse prosodies were used as the starting point for the prosody categories but were not bound to only these. As the analysis progressed some categories in Baker (2014b) still seemed relevant whereas others did not. The GLAAD Media Reference Guide (2016) was used to help establish new discourse prosody categories. The guide “is intended to be used by journalists reporting for mainstream media outlets and by creators in entertainment media who want to tell LGBTQ people's stories fairly and accurately” (GLAAD, 2016). As such the guide is useful in that it clearly states the preferred language when reporting about the queer community and individuals in the LGBTQ+ community and can be used to point out when a media outlet diverges from said language use.

In instances, where the keyword appeared as an adjective acting as a pre-modifier to a noun with a seemingly neutral connotation, the larger context was analyzed to determine whether the context was in actuality neutral or whether the mentioning of sexuality was unnecessary and thus, contributing to a specific discourse prosody. For example, in the following excerpt the sexual orientation of the accused couple is highly irrelevant to the story:

A gay couple were charged on Tuesday with conning their 92-year-old neighbor who suffers from dementia into handing over her house and \$2 million in savings. (*Daily Mail*, 6 December 2017)

Other times, the larger context would already imply the same-sex desire without the explicit use of e.g., *lesbian* kiss or *gay* wedding.

If a single collocate seemed to belong to more than one prosody or it was impossible to determine only one category for a single collocate, this overlap was considered and analyzed more closely. Overall, the overlap was studied from two perspectives: first, how the determined prosodies overlapped, i.e., which prosodies seemed to prominently occur together or *intersect* and *reinforce* each other and second, how the discourse prosodies overlap regarding their occurrence with the different keywords, i.e., are the same discourse prosodies prominent with all the keywords or do they show differences.

Lastly, the legitimization strategies for the emerging discourse prosodies used by the *Daily Mail* were examined through the collocate analysis as well as following possible peaks in publishing during the chosen two years to determine if and why during certain times queer people were more newsworthy.

4 Analysis and Results

This chapter is divided into four sections: first, I provide the results from the keyword analysis and heterosexual discourse analysis together with an analysis of the created subcorpora. In section 4.2, I explain and present the emerged discourse prosodies as well as provide a more detailed analysis of the overlap between the formed prosodies. Next, section 4.3 moves to the quantitative results of the collocate analysis. Lastly, the determined legitimization strategies are introduced in section 4.4.

4.1 Keyword Analysis and Heterosexual Discourse

As mentioned, the BisexualCor, as well as the LesbianCor, were relatively small, 119,347 words and 231,252 words in total, respectively, compared to the GayCor with 935,741 words. Interestingly, looking at the frequencies of the keywords in each corpus revealed that *gay*/homosexual** occurred more in the BisexualCor than the word *bisexual* and more than *lesbian* in the LesbianCor. In other words, the actual keywords that were used to create said corpora had lower frequencies than *gay*/homosexual**. Table 2 shows the raw and normalized frequencies of each keyword in the three subcorpora. The results were normalized per 100,000 words due to the difference in the size of the corpora.

Table 2. Frequencies of the keywords in the GayCor, LesbianCor, and BisexualCor.

	GayCor		LesbianCor		BisexualCor	
	Raw freq.	Normalized freq.	Raw freq.	Normalized freq.	Raw freq.	Normalized freq.
<i>gay*/homosexual*</i>	1,719	183.70	310	134.05	290	242.99
<i>lesbian*</i>	103	11.00	240	103.78	53	44.41
<i>bisexual*</i>	77	8.23	36	15.57	116	97.20

The GayCor showed more use of *gay* over *homosexual* as was expected. The word *gay(s)* occurred 1543 times while *homosexual(s)* was only used 176 times. However, as mentioned *homosexual* is only preferred in medical discourse and context, and of the 176 occurrences of the word *homosexual(s)*, only three appeared in context about medical studies. Furthermore, as the *Daily Mail* is a tabloid newspaper the three occurrences easily could have been replaced with the word *gay*, *lesbian*, and/or *bisexual* (the word *homosexual* is understood to refer to men as much as the word *gay*):

Research suggests that our sexuality is determined in the womb and is dependent on the amount of male hormone we are exposed to or the way our individual bodies react to that hormone, with those exposed to higher levels of testosterone being more likely to be bisexual or **homosexual**... They found that the **homosexual** twin tended to have a greater difference between the length of their index and ring finger, with the difference most pronounced among women. (*Daily Mail*, 17 October 2018)

Furthermore, the most common lexical collocate for the word homosexual(s) was *acts/activity* which suggests that the word *homosexual* is still heavily linked to physical acts rather than a stable identity.

The grammatical function of the keywords showed similar results as was presented in Zottola (2018) with respect to trans people, i.e., although the keywords *gay*/homosexual** and *bisexual** were used more as adjectives than nouns some use of the nominal function occurred. From the total 1,719 occurrences of *gay*/homosexual**, 1,588 times the keyword was as an adjective and 131 as a noun. *Bisexual** was used as a noun only three times and 114 times as an adjective.

As was discussed in the methodology section of this thesis, to examine the discourse around heterosexuality a keyword query with the term *heterosexual** was conducted. The search resulted in only 58 *Daily Mail* articles where the word occurred and in these articles *heterosexual(s)* was mentioned only 89 times during the two years from July 2017 to June 2019 whereas 90 articles occurred with *bisexual(s)*, 630 with *gay(s)/homosexual(s)* and 151 with *lesbian(s)*. This alone tells us that sexual orientation is still considered something worth mentioning or reporting when it deviates from the considered the “norm” or “assumed”, i.e., heterosexuality. Furthermore, more often than not each time heterosexual people were mentioned explicitly the larger discourse and context was actually about queer people, and straight people were just used as the other “end” of the binary or when straight people were portrayed as innocent victims as in the following excerpt from one of the *Daily Mail* articles:

A bearded gay man who tricked four straight men into having sex with him by posing as a woman and covering their eyes with a blindfold has today been convicted of six sex crimes. (*Daily Mail*, 5 October 2018).

Words related to relationships and love were studied in more detail for both the heterosexual as well as for the queer discourse. The word *couple(s)* occurred as a collocate in the heterosexual discourse 10 times while in the queer discourse it occurred 37 times. *Relationship(s)* were mentioned only 8 times with *heterosexual** while with *gay*/homosexual**, *bisexual** and *lesbian** the number was 44. The word *partnership(s)* occurred as a collocate in the heterosexual discourse slightly more compared to the queer discourse as generally and historically civil partnerships have referred to official partnerships between queer people or same-sex couples and thus, no clarification with pre-modifiers is seen as needed. *Marriage(s)*

acted as a collocate only twice in the heterosexual discourse whereas in the queer discourse it occurred as a collocate 136 times.

4.2 The *Daily Mail* Discourse Prosodies

Analysis of the relevant collocates of the keywords *gay*/homosexual**, *bisexual**, and *lesbian** resulted in 23 distinct discourse prosodies. The prosodies were partly formulated building on the observations made by Baker (2014b). However, as the study was conducted in a data-driven manner, existing prosody categories were adapted, and additional categories were developed accordingly and with reference to the GLAAD Media Reference Guide (2016).

Prosodies 1–4 refer to queer identity and queer relationships in a broader sense. The prosodies and examples of collocates from the data are shown in Table 3. The first category *being queer described as an unstable identity* refers to discourse where the queer identity was described as a somewhat fleeting state, a “phase” or something that can be cured. The collocates ranged from referring to quite absurd ideas about the possibility of a medication “turning” someone gay to more serious topics, e.g., “conversion therapies”. The following example shows an excerpt from an article discussing the still legal “conversion therapies” in the UK:

Bishops will take evidence from people who have gone through the so-called 'treatments' to turn people from gay to straight. The treatments range from counselling to 'corrective rape', where victims are forced to have sex with someone of the opposite gender. (*Daily Mail*, 9 December 2018)

Collocates that described and emphasized queerness as an activity rather than a valid identity framed the prosody category two *being queer is a practice not an identity*. In the following example, being gay is first of all referenced as “homosexuality” and a “lifestyle” but also diminished into “tendencies”:

Pope Francis has offered mixed signals on his stance on homosexuality and gay marriage, telling reporters on Rome as recently as April that homosexual tendencies 'are not a sin,' but stopping short of ordaining a gay lifestyle or gay marriage. (*Daily Mail*, 25 June 2019)

The third category *queer people linked to other minorities or identity markers* refers to discourse where individuals in the queer community were discussed with other minority groups, be it other sexual and gender minorities or e.g., ethnic minorities. Other identity labels were also included in this category. Most often this occurred in the form of a list of minorities, e.g.,

“the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) youth” (*Daily Mail*, 16 March 2019) or “such as being gay, transgender, disabled, black or from other ethnic minorities” (*Daily Mail*, 30 May 2019). Words such as fling or affair contributed towards a representation of queer relationships as being unstable, fleeting, or unimportant. This discourse was labeled *queer relationships are transitory* (4):

She and Larry divorced in 1987, but not because of the lesbian affair, he insists. They had simply grown apart. He remarried and lives in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California. (*Daily Mail*, 24 November 2017)

Table 3. The *Daily Mail* discourse prosodies 1–4.

Discourse Prosody	Example of collocates
1. being queer described as an unstable identity	become, turn into, choose, wannabe, born, pretending, attempt (to go gay), preferred
2. being queer is a practice not an identity	trend, cravings, play, tendencies, thing, sex, cheating, celibate, acts, behaviour, thoughts, consensual, activity, experimented
3. queer people linked to other minorities or identity markers	people of color, cross-dressing, feminist, transgender, queer, Trump-hating humanist, trans, asylum seeker, African-American, homeless, intersex, bi-curious
4. queer relationships are transitory	relations, lover, encounter, affair, flings, romp

Prosodies 5–10 more explicitly refer to and describe the bigotry that occurred in the *Daily Mail* (see Table 4). Categories *being queer is a crime* (5) and *being queer is a secret shame* (6) are rather self-explanatory and refer to discourse where queerness was described as a crime or a criminal activity and as something shameful, respectively. The fifth discourse category was separated from other instances where queer people were associated with crimes because it was important to highlight the discourse where the simple act of being queer was considered or referenced as a criminal act, e.g., “Those caught engaging in lesbian sex will be punished by 40 lashes.” (*Daily Mail*, 4 April 2019). The seventh category *queer people are promiscuous and sleazy* refers to representation where queer people were described as sexually promiscuous or otherwise disgusting. The category labeled *bigotry exists* (8) refers to more general modes of discrimination that occurred in the *Daily Mail*. The data did not show any considerable number of explicit slurs used. However, a few instances of “ewwwwww gays” (*Daily Mail*, 8 May

2019) occurred in the data, and although as interjections these were not considered as shaping the discourse prosodies but nevertheless are worth mentioning.

Where category six described queerness as shameful, e.g., “vague bisexual rumours” (*Daily Mail*, 6 April 2019), the ninth category *some people are shameless about being queer* includes collocates that described queer people as being *publicly out* or *openly* queer and, thus seen as shameless: “At the height of his fame in 1970 he *declared* that he was bisexual, instantly propelling him to the status of gay icon.” (*Daily Mail*, 18 January 2019, italics added). These two categories can be seen to “reinforce each other, as the negative construction about people who are not ashamed about being gay implies that they ought to be ashamed” (Baker, 2014b: 116). The tenth prosody category *queer people cause harm to children* was based around collocates that described queer people as individuals or as a group that wants to cause harm to children by making them queer or by taking advantage of them as in the following excerpt:

Bolsonaro even once said he would rather have a dead son than a gay one...He went on to accuse 'homosexual fundamentalists' of brainwashing children to 'become gays and lesbians to satisfy them sexually in the future'. (*Daily Mail*, 26 April 2019)

Table 4. *The Daily Mail discourse prosodies 5–10.*

Discourse Prosody	Example of collocates
5. being queer is a crime	arrested, illegal, caught, punished, conviction, death penalty, persecution, guilty, imprisoned
6. being queer is a secret shame	rumours, exposing, gossip, alleged, shocking, spilled, confesses, hints, reputation, revelation, secretly, repressed, closeted, admit, outed, discovered, taboo, declared
7. queer people are promiscuous and sleazy	sex scenes, porn, bathhouse, haunt, pornography, tourism paradise, parlour, marketplace, indulged, passionate, prostitute, sex scenes, satisfy, sleazy
8. bigotry exists	victim, death, discrimination, killings, suicide, controversial, out-of-control, harassed, violence, suffer, struggled, abuse, devils, torture, bullies, struggles, purge, conversion therapy, prejudice, stoning
9. some people are shameless about being queer	out, declared, openly, live as, announced, publicly, statement, live as
10. queer people cause harm to children	propaganda, brainwashing, promotes, lessons, literature, breeding factories, scheme, indoctrinating

Categories 11–15 more generally describe the habit of unnecessarily mentioning people’s queerness (see Table 5). The category *queer people associated with crime/violence/offenses* (11) refers to discourses where queer people were described to have committed crimes. However, in most cases mentioning the person’s sexual orientation could be considered highly irrelevant to the story and is something that is never done in the case of straight people, e.g., “a straight person murdered six people”. Additionally, this category includes occurrences where queer people were mentioned together with other offenses, offenders, or criminal activity and thus, were treated like ones as well, for example: “Israel Folau was found guilty of a 'high level breach' of his contract with a post saying 'hell awaits' the likes of 'homosexuals, adulterers, liars, fornicators' and more” (*Daily Mail*, 8 May 2019).

Queerness as attribute or insult (12) refers to discourse where queerness was described as something measurable, or the keywords were used as insults, e.g., “She added: 'I don’t think I have a *bisexual or gay bone* in my body, but I don’t know! Who knows?!.’” (*Daily Mail*, 14 March 2018, italics added). This category also includes instances where the keywords occurred with the adjectival function to inanimate objects such as cars and TV programs (e.g., calling an object/event gay is rarely done with a positive connotation). Category 13 *unnecessary mention of queerness* refers to a more neutral discourse but where mentioning the person’s sexuality was considered irrelevant and unnecessary and at times seemed to be used to “balance” or sensationalize the discourse.

Granted, category 13 does not include all of the instances where queer people were mentioned unnecessarily or articles that were in their entirety dedicated to addressing a person’s sexuality (which could be argued as unnecessary if it is not done with respect and with a positive intention and impact) as that would require a closer reading of all of the articles in the data. Rather, it represents instances where the larger context already quite clearly referred to same-sex desire or queerness without the need for the explicit specifying with the keywords *gay*, *lesbian* or *bisexual* and where the use of the keywords as unnecessary specifying words contribute to the implicit heteronormative nature of media language. In the following excerpt from the *Daily Mail*, for example, the mentioning of *lesbian* is irrelevant and even feels out of place in this context:

The family - identified as two young siblings, their mother and the woman's lesbian partner - were found bound and with their throats slashed inside an apartment in Troy on Tuesday. (*Daily Mail*, 28 December 2017)

The 14th prosody *queer people described through stereotypes* is somewhat self-explanatory and refers to the use of outdated and often inaccurate stereotypes to describe queer people. The category labeled *heteronormativity* (15) includes collocates that quite straightforwardly referred to the heteronormative bias in the *Daily Mail* but did not specifically belong to any other category. These collocates were mainly words that are stereotypically linked to non-normative sexualities but would rarely be used when referring to heterosexuality, e.g., “He'll also talk about his *journey* as a gay actor and the *struggles* and opportunities that created for him.” (*Daily Mail*, 24 June 2018, italics added).

Table 5. *The Daily Mail discourse prosodies 11–15.*

Discourse Prosody	Example of collocates
11. queer people associated with crime/violence/offenses	drug lord, killers, adultery, drunks, jailed, accuser, tricked, inmates, adulterers, pedophilia, cocaine, rape, fundamentalists, drugs
12. queerness as an attribute or insult	enough, full-blown, bit, too, full, very, (gay) cars
13. unnecessary mention of queerness	engagement, kiss, wedding, partner, marriage, dream, relationship, nickname, couple, codebreaker, coward
14. queer people described through stereotypes	butch, male-typical, camp, effeminate, limp-wristed, stereotyped
15. heteronormativity	label, identify, awakening, courage, diversity, known to be, self-discovery, masculinity, experience, realise, voyage, assumed, potentially

Categories 16–19 describe the political and societal discourse queer people appeared in the *Daily Mail* (see Table 6). Category *queer people have/or want rights* (16) describe queer people’s fight for equal rights and justice discourse. The next category *queer people in political and religious discourse* (17) includes collocates that more broadly refer to the political and religious environment queer people were often discussed. That is not to say that this discourse was entirely negative, but it still reinforces the idea of placing someone’s queer identity among debates about differing “political views”:

The result will be announced on Wednesday. If a majority calls for marriage equality, Parliament will vote on a bill in the final two-week session of the year...Other opponents have

said they would vote against legalizing gay marriage in Parliament regardless of the survey result. (*Daily Mail*, 12 November 2017)

This category also shows the use of church and state as authorities and how these two societal and governmental bodies are often given agency in the “debate” around queer issues:

The Utah-based faith widely known as the Mormon church has long opposed gay marriage and same-sex intimacy. But it has spent much of the last decade trying to carve out a more compassionate and welcoming stance toward LGBTQ members. (*Daily Mail*, 6 April 2019)

The next prosody category labeled *other people’s opinion* (18), then, includes collocates that also expressed opinions, positive and negative, about queer people and being queer in general but more explicitly compared to the previous category as in the following excerpts from the *Daily Mail*:

Pence voted against laws protecting workers from discrimination on sexual orientation, and in favor of defining marriage as between a man and a woman... Pence's 2000 campaign website said 'Resources should be directed toward those institutions which provide assistance to those seeking to change their sexual behavior' (*Daily Mail*, 8 February 2018)

She then began second life, where she became a popular personality in the gay community, thanks in large part to the years she spent espousing her beliefs of acceptance towards gay Americans and those with HIV/AIDs. (*Daily Mail*, 18 January 2019)

Category *queer people in medical or mental health related discourse* (19) describe instances where queer people were discussed together with medical issues and epidemics, e.g. AIDS, or together with mental health related conditions.

Table 6. The *Daily Mail* discourse prosodies 16–19.

Discourse Prosody	Example of collocates
16. queer people have or want rights	rights, movement, activist, pride, equal, effort, visibility, activist, parade, campaigner, campaign, equality, organization, fight, legalization
17. queer people in political or religious discourse	Christians, church, abortion, gun control, euthanasia, religious, issues, Sharia law, atheist, voting, freedom of speech, federal orders, passages, baptisms
18. other people's opinions	approve, acceptance, opposes, support, solidarity, accommodate, idea, opponent, refusal, decision, views, backed
19. queer people in medical or mental health related discourse	AIDS, transmitted, health issues, eating disorders, healthcare, epidemic, treatment, give blood, sociopath, bipolar

The last categories 20–23 describe the more positive representation of queer people in the *Daily Mail* (see Table 7). Collocates that described queer people as having good and positive attributes, succeeding, and generally framed the queer community in a positive light contributed towards the prosody labeled *queer people in positive discourse* (20). This prosody category also includes collocates that implied (positive) representation of queer people in the media, generally through characters in movies, TV shows, and theater as in the following example: “A Mexican soap opera that debuts on Sunday is set to make television history as the country's first telenovela to feature a gay couple as the leading characters.” (*Daily Mail*, 21 June 2019).

Category *queer people have their own culture* (21) refers to discourse where it was acknowledged that queer people have their own culture that is native to their community. As argued in Baker (2014b), this prosody could be viewed as:

a more neutral or even a descriptive discourse, although it could also be argued that such a representation is somewhat homogenizing and separating as it groups gay people together, implying that they have similar interests that are different from heterosexual people (Baker, 2014b: 166)

The following examples show both the positive and negative discourses appearing in the *Daily Mail* around queer culture:

Oxford Street, the harbour city's iconic gay district, has been washed over by a sea of rainbows and joy. (*Daily Mail*, 15 November 2017)

Three years later, Mr Reynolds wrote: ‘Homosexuality is a perversion from the norm and gay culture has been allowed virtually to extinguish heterosexual influence in the fashion industry.’ (*Daily Mail*, 16 December 2018)

The 22nd category that emerged from the data, *queer people in a ‘neutral’ discourse* includes the instances where the sexuality of the person being talked about was necessary for the overall story and where the collocates were considered neutral, e.g., *gay men* or *bisexual people*. However, although these contexts were considered neutral, one could argue looking at the larger context of the *Daily Mail* and its readership that some of these articles and stories could be considered unnecessary in their entirety. In other words, these collocates, and contexts were understood as neutral in the light and comparison to the other emerged prosodies. The last prosody category *queer people have or want children* (23) includes collocates that implied the existence of queer families or queer people’s desire to have children and families, mostly discussions about the right to adopt.

Table 7. *The Daily Mail discourse prosodies 20–23.*

Discourse Prosody	Example of collocates
20. queer people in positive discourse	confident, star, character, happy, character, portrayed, iconic, influential, love, stories, celebrations, outspoken
21. queer people have their own culture	publication, district, -focused, icon, specialty, nightclub, culture, community, festival, event, scene, symbol, village, dating app
22. queer people in 'neutral' discourse	man, sister, teens, women, adults, woman, male, people, soldiers, son, student, teacher, teenager
23. queer people have or want children	parents, adoption, donor insemination, children, baby, child

The established discourse prosodies were based and influenced by Baker (2005; 2014b). The categories *being queer is a practice not an identity* (2), *queer people linked to other minorities or identity markers* (3), *queer relationships are transitory* (4), *being queer is a secret shame* (6), *queer people are promiscuous and sleazy* (7), *some people are shameless about being queer* (9), *queer people associated with crime/violence/offenses* (11), *queer people described through stereotypes* (14), *queer people in positive discourse* (20) and *queer people have their own culture* (21) were adapted with minimal modification straight from Baker (2014b) while the rest of the categories were developed and shaped by the emerged collocates.

The categories *being queer described as an unstable identity* (1), *being queer is a crime* (5), *queerness as an attribute or insult* (12), *heteronormativity* (15), *queer people in medical or mental health related discourse* (19), and *queer people in 'neutral' discourse* (22) were added as they became prominent in the data. The category labeled *bigotry exists* (8) was referred to as “Some people claim homophobia exists” (Baker, 2014b: 119) in the framework study but was modified as homophobia is not an accurate description of the dislike or antipathy of queer people. The term homophobic would in a literal sense refer to behavior done out of fear but homophobic practices stem from disgust and hatred more than anything (Herek, 2004). Additionally, the word phobia generally refers to fears that cannot be helped (GLAAD, 2016). The category “Gay people want (access to) children” (Baker, 2014b: 117) was divided into two distinct categories, namely, *queer people cause harm to children* (10) and *queer people have or want children* (23). Similarly, the categories *queer people have/want rights* (16), *queer people in political and religious discourse* (17), and *other people's opinion* (18) were based on

the discourse prosodies established in Baker (2014b: 117–119) named “Gay people have or want rights” and “Gay people are politically militant”.

Furthermore, a decision to abandon the category “Gay relationships exist” (Baker, 2014b: 119) was made. Instead, the category *unnecessary mention of queerness* (13) includes all occurrences where the *Daily Mail* referred to relationships and partnerships between queer people, e.g., gay marriage, as the GLAAD Media Reference Guide (2016) states that: “avoid labeling an activity, emotion, or relationship gay, lesbian, bisexual, or queer unless you would call the same activity, emotion, or relationship “straight” if engaged in by someone of another orientation”. Taking into consideration the stance and audience of the *Daily Mail* (and often tabloid media as a whole), i.e., not queer-friendly, together with the GLAAD reference guide, the *unnecessary mention of queerness* was more relevant in pointing out the often-implicit heteronormative language of the tabloid media whereas “equal marriage” or “marriage equality” would have referred to queer relationships more neutrally.

Although 23 discourse prosodies were distinguished from the data, they did not exist individually but rather can be seen to reinforce or overlap with each other. As mentioned above, the discourses of shame (*being queer is a secret shame* and *some people are shameless about being queer*) reinforce each other through the idea of expecting people to be ashamed of their queer identity. Similarly, the discourse where queer people are portrayed as promiscuous is linked to the discourse of secret shame:

But this became a problem when his wife Leslie discovered Billy’s naked profile picture on a gay dating app. It only made matters worse when she learned that Billy had been seeing the same man over the course of a year. Instead of coming clean, he furiously denied it. (*Daily Mail*, 22 February 2019)

...his Muslim family accessed his computer and was shocked to discover he had been secretly going to bathhouses in the Gay Village and was on gay dating apps for older and large men. (*Daily Mail*, 11 April 2018)

In the above examples, queer people are portrayed as promiscuous with the instances of “naked profile pictures” and “bathhouses” but at the same time indicating secret shame with words like “discovered” and “shocked”. Further, the discourse of promiscuity can also be linked to the discourse of shamelessness:

Although Versace had a long-term boyfriend, Antonio D'Amico – played in the show by singer Ricky Martin – Orth claims the designer regularly trawled for sex in gay clubs, inviting strangers home for orgies. (*Daily Mail*, 20 January 2018)

Here the promiscuity is referenced with possible cheating, sex, and orgies but simultaneously the phrase “regularly trawled” suggests that this was enjoyable and done without shame. In addition to promiscuity overlapping with the discourse of shamelessness, the discourse *queerness as an attribute or insult* can also be seen to relate to the shamelessness of queer people as it implies that there is an acceptable level of queerness, but that queer can exist shamelessly as “too” or “very” queer. Furthermore, using queerness as an insult relates to the discourse of bigotry as this practice of calling people gay or lesbian for example, just to insult them is antiquated and could be labeled as homophobia.

The discourse of representing queerness as a practice, not an identity is also quite closely linked with the discourse of transitory queer relationships as in both the sexual acts are emphasized. The following example shows how “enjoyed a lesbian romp” clearly refers to something transitory but at the same time indicates the physical aspect of their “lesbian encounter”:

Mel meanwhile sparked controversy ahead of the launch of the tour in May, when she alleged to have enjoyed a lesbian romp with her Spice Girls bandmate Geri Horner in the group's heyday however Geri denied the claims. (*Daily Mail*, 23 June 2019)

4.3 Discourse Prosody Frequencies with *gay*/homosexual**, *lesbian** and *bisexual**

The above analysis identified the 23 distinct prosodies that were prominent in the corpora. However, the presence of the categories or the number of collocates with the keywords were not balanced. Overall, 2,689 collocates were taken into consideration with the keyword *gay*/homosexual** while only 337 and 212 relevant collocates were found with *lesbian** and *bisexual**, respectively. Further, the number of collocates with *gay*/homosexual** were spread more evenly across the discourse prosodies whereas with *lesbian** and *bisexual** certain prosodies were clearly more dominant than others.

For both *lesbian** and *bisexual** the most common discourse prosody was the prosody that represented queer people with other minority groups or identity markers. With *bisexual** the prosody covered over half of all relevant collocates and with *lesbian** almost a fourth of all

collocates. With *gay*/homosexual** 253 collocates contributed to the said category but overall, it comprised only close to 10 percent of all its relevant collocates. With each keyword, most of the collocates in this prosody were references to other sexual minority groups with fewer instances of e.g., ethnic minorities. Interestingly, collocates contributing to the fourth prosody *queer relationships are transitory* occurred most with *lesbian** ($N=30$). Only 22 collocates occurred with *gay*/homosexual** contributing to the fourth prosody and no instances referring to transitory bisexual relationships were found. Looking more closely at the concordance lines with the keyword *lesbian** in this discourse, it was revealed that almost half of the collocates related to the same event: to the “discovery” that two of the former members of Spice Girls were romantically or physically involved in the past.

Relatively, the prosody referring to unstable queer identities was also most prominent with *lesbian**. The last prosody relating to identities, *being queer described as a practice not an identity*, unsurprisingly, occurred more in the discourse around *gay*/homosexual** compared to lesbians and bisexual people. Table 8 shows the number of collocates in each discourse prosody referring to queer identities and the frequencies of the discourse prosodies with each keyword.

Table 8. Frequencies for the Daily Mail discourse prosodies 1–4.

Discourse Prosody	Freq. <i>gay*/homosexual*</i>	Freq. <i>lesbian*</i>	Freq. <i>bisexual*</i>
1. being queer described as an unstable identity	24 (0.893%)	6 (1.780%)	1 (0.472%)
2. being queer is a practice not an identity	75 (2.789%)	6 (1.780%)	3 (1.415%)
3. queer people linked to other minorities or identity markers	253 (9.409%)	75 (22.255%)	109 (51.42%)
4. queer relationships are transitory	22 (0.818%)	30 (8.902%)	—

From the discourse prosodies that represented queer people negatively more explicitly (see Table 9), collocates contributing to the quite explicit bigotry and to the shamefulness of being queer were the most common in the data. With *gay*/homosexual** 441 collocates expressed bigotry against gay people making it one of the most common discourse prosodies overall with *gay*/homosexual**. With *lesbian** and *bisexual** the number was lower, 33 and 10 respectively, but however relatively significant. With *lesbian** 35 collocates indicating that being queer is a secret shame were counted, here again, most of the collocates referring to the same event

involving the Spice Girls. In addition to being linked to other minorities or identity markers, the word lesbian or lesbians occurred mostly in the discourse of shame. With *gay*/homosexual** the number of collates contributing to the category *being queer is a secret shame* was 61 and with *bisexual** 11. As mentioned, reinforcing this discourse is the discourse of shameless of queer people where 166 collocates occurred with *gay*/homosexual**, 16 with *bisexual**, and 6 with *lesbian**.

Bisexual people were not mentioned in the discourse *being queer is a crime* nor in the discourse labeled *queer people cause harm to children*. These were less common with *gay*/homosexual** and *lesbian** as well. Collocates indicating that queer people are promiscuous and/or sleazy were not common in the data but quite heavily relying on stereotypes, especially with gay men, with references to porn, bathhouses, and sauna parlors.

Table 9. Frequencies for the Daily Mail discourse prosodies 5–10.

Discourse Prosody	Freq. <i>gay*/homosexual*</i>	Freq. <i>lesbian*</i>	Freq. <i>bisexual*</i>
5. being queer is a crime	51 (1.897%)	3 (0.890%)	—
6. being queer is a secret shame	61 (2.269%)	35 (10.386%)	11 (5.189%)
7. queer people are promiscuous and sleazy	57 (2.120%)	6 (1.780%)	1 (0.472%)
8. bigotry exists	441 (16.400%)	33 (9.792%)	10 (4.717%)
9. some people are shameless about being queer	166 (6.173%)	6 (1.780%)	16 (7.547%)
10. queer people cause harm to children	19 (0.707%)	1 (0.297%)	—

The discourse prosodies that represented the more generally questionable mentioning of people’s sexual identity (11–15) were most common with *gay*/homosexual** and *lesbian** (see Table 10). The discourse labeled *queer people associated with crime/violence/offenses* showed some instances of rape, murder, pedophilia, and sodomy but mostly collates where queer people were grouped together with socially condemned or frowned upon acts:

The controversial rugby star was issued with a 'high-level' breach notice last month for taking to Instagram to proclaim 'hell awaits drunks, homosexuals, adulterers, liars, fornicators, thieves, atheists, and idolators' unless they repent and turn to Jesus. (*Daily Mail*, 4 May 2019)

Other than the more general heteronormative discourse, *bisexual** was not present in these discourses often. The direct reference to the habit of unnecessarily mentioning sexual identity was one of the most common discourses with *lesbian** together with linking lesbians to other minority groups and indicating that being a lesbian is something to be ashamed about. Also, queer people were rarely discussed through stereotypes that the dominant mainstream culture holds, e.g., gay men as effeminate and lesbians as butch or manly.

Table 10. Frequencies for the Daily Mail discourse prosodies 11–15.

Discourse Prosody	Freq. <i>gay*/homosexual*</i>	Freq. <i>lesbian*</i>	Freq. <i>bisexual*</i>
11. queer people associated with crime/violence/offences	71 (2.640%)	6 (1.780%)	4 (1.887%)
12. queerness as an attribute or insult	23 (0.855%)	3 (0.890%)	2 (0.943%)
13. unnecessary mention of queerness	200 (7.438%)	43 (12.760%)	3 (1.415%)
14. queer people described through stereotypes	6 (0.223%)	3 (0.890%)	—
15. heteronormativity	89 (3.310%)	14 (4.714%)	18 (8.491%)

Overall, the keyword *gay*/homosexual** occurred more with collocates contributing to social, political, and religious discourse compared to *lesbian** and *bisexual** (see Table 11). Where the discourse about equal rights included 189 collocates, political and religious discourse included 153 collocates and queerness discussed through other people’s opinions included 101 collocates with *gay*/homosexual**, bisexual people occurred in these discourses only once or not at all. The medical discourse found in the data was not particularly common with any of the keywords. However, a closer analysis of the collocates revealed that the majority of them referred to health issues and the queer community collectively from a socio-political perspective, e.g., the AIDS epidemic, and thus, worth including. And after looking more closely at the overall discourse around AIDS and HIV in the *Daily Mail* from the two-year time period (July 2017–June 2019), the corpus showed that it is still more common to explicitly link AIDS with gay men compared to heterosexual identities. The most frequent adjective collocate with AIDS was *gay* and no instances of *heterosexual* as a five-word span collocate was found. In addition, in all of the articles that mentioned AIDS or HIV ($N=248$), *gay/homosexual* was mentioned 197 times whereas *heterosexual/straight* only occurred 14 times.

Table 11. Frequencies for the Daily Mail discourse prosodies 16–19.

Discourse Prosody	Freq. <i>gay*/homosexual*</i>	Freq. <i>lesbian*</i>	Freq. <i>bisexual*</i>
16. queer people have or want rights	189 (7.029%)	9 (2.671%)	1 (0.472%)
17. queer people in political or religious discourse	153 (5.690%)	9 (2.671%)	1 (0.472%)
18. other people's opinions	101 (3.756%)	7 (2.077%)	—
19. queer people in medical or mental health related discourse	20 (0.744%)	4 (1.187%)	3 (1.415%)

Again, *gay*/homosexual** occurred more in the discourses around positive attributes and representation as well as culture compared to *lesbian** and *bisexual** (see Table 12). All the keywords occurred with collocates contributing to the neutral discourse prosody relatively often. However, as mentioned, when considering the reasoning behind writing and publishing articles about queer people or articles that mention queer people, it can be questioned whether any “newsworthy” story about queer people appearing in a largely known homophobic publication is ever neutral. Finally, queer people wanting or having children and families were not discussed with bisexual people at all and to some extent surprisingly, only 21 collocates referring to children and queer families occurred with *gay*/homosexual** and only 3 with *lesbian**.

Table 12. Frequencies for the Daily Mail discourse prosodies 20–23.

Discourse Prosody	Freq. <i>gay*/homosexual*</i>	Freq. <i>lesbian*</i>	Freq. <i>bisexual*</i>
20. queer people in positive discourse	64 (2.380%)	2 (0.593%)	3 (1.415%)
21. queer people have their own culture	145 (5.392%)	3 (0.890%)	3 (1.415%)
22. queer people in 'neutral' discourse	483 (17.962%)	30 (8.902%)	23 (10.849%)
23. queer people have or want children	21 (0.781%)	3 (0.890%)	—

Overall, the collocates show more negative discourse around queer people but with some instances of neutral or positive discourses as well. Compared to Baker (2005; 2014b), the reporting seems to be moving towards more collective level issues, such as equal rights, and

away from the judging of individual queer persons or their traits. However, the sensationalism of scandals and the lives of celebrities persist which then again, is characteristic of tabloid newspapers. Furthermore, less explicit bigotry and collocates referring to promiscuity and sleaziness were found, thus suggesting that the *Daily Mail* could be moving into a more tolerant stance or that they have moved to use more implicit ways of implying negative attitudes towards queer people. These possible legitimization strategies are discussed in the following subsection.

4.4 Legitimation Strategies

The results clearly show that being queer is still considered newsworthy by the tabloid paper *Daily Mail*. When looking into legitimization strategies used by the paper, i.e., “a way of justifying a particular state of affairs or stance towards that state of affairs” (Baker, 2014b: 124), it is first and foremost important to consider the sensational value of tabloid news and how sensationalist topics are used to reach a wider audience. But additionally, as stated in Baker (2014b: 124–125), even though the *Daily Mail* is known for its conservative and often openly critical views about non-normative identities, the national opinion in the UK is becoming more and more tolerant and therefore it can be argued that the *Daily Mail* relies on more implicit legitimization strategies to convey their heteronormative and often negative opinion about queer people. The strategies found from the data through the collocate and concordance line analysis as well as following the peaks in publishing are discussed next with reference to socio-cultural events and conditions in the UK.

The collocate analysis and a closer concordance line analysis showed that the *Daily Mail* still tends to publish articles that focus on past events and to a past time before the decriminalization of homosexuality whether around 20th-century British history or “scandals” around famous people and homosexuality:

Soldiers who were discovered to be homosexual could be court martialled and thrown out of the services. Other gay men were sent to prison, and there was even the possibility of being shot. (*Daily Mail*, 27 July 2017)

This can be understood as the *Daily Mail* referring to a time that was more in line with the paper’s own views on queerness but with an uncritical manner as was suggested in Baker (2014b: 125). In other words, the paper publishes articles that focus on the past when being queer was criminalized but does not question the poor treatment of queer people of that time

rather discusses the bigotry of the time (e.g., arrests, beatings) without criticizing it while at times focusing more on the person's or people's sexuality. While reporting on LGBTQ+ issues is newsworthy and vital, the *Daily Mail* and media, in general, could make a clearer distinction between “opposing viewpoints on LGBTQ issues and the defamatory rhetoric that fuels prejudice and discrimination” (GLAAD, 2016), i.e., the sensationalism of defamatory language should not be used to “balance” a news story or discourse.

Related to the references to past events and time, was the *Daily Mail*'s tendency to focus on other countries where being queer is still criminalized:

Aceh is the only province in Indonesia that has implemented the Sharia law and considers lesbian, gay, bisexual relationships and sex outside of marriage as Sharia law violations. (*Daily Mail*, 20 September 2018)

The draconian new clause sanctioning the death by stoning of gay and bisexual men [in Brunei] — and presumably transsexuals and the gender fluid — has caused particular outcry around the world. (*Daily Mail*, 4 April 2019)

This has been found to work as a way to create *homonationalism* which refers to the practice of especially Western government's “that presents them as sexually tolerant societies to the world, often to divert attention from other aspects in which the respective societies are clearly less tolerant” (Motschenbacher, 2019b: 13). In other words, as homonationalism relies on xenophobia and the divide into us vs. them, queer rights are “utilised and promoted by some nation-states for the purpose of evidencing progress and exceptionalism, to assist in maintaining border regimes against certain outside populations” (McCann & Monaghan, 2020: 162). By relying on homonationalism, the *Daily Mail* is thus, distancing itself and emphasizing the tolerance of the UK towards queer people by pointing out the bigotry happening in other parts of the world.

Another legitimization strategy found in Baker (2014b) was the *Daily Mail*'s tendency to publish the reader's opinions through the letters section but as the data for this present study came from the online publications only, the letters page was not included. However, the distancing the *Daily Mail* is possible to achieve through the letters page is similar to the act of publishing direct quotes from people. This came forward for instance through the quotes from authorities like the church or homophobic tweets from well-known people or celebrities:

Folau, 30, shared a 'warning' to 'drunks, homosexuals, adulterers, liars, fornicators, thieves, atheists and idolaters' to Instagram last Wednesday (pictured), saying 'hell awaits' them. (*Daily Mail*, 20 April 2019)

Bolsonaro even once said he would rather have a dead son than a gay one. And he told the British actor Stephen Fry, who is openly gay, 'Brazilian society doesn't like homosexuals.' He went on to accuse 'homosexual fundamentalists' of brainwashing children to 'become gays and lesbians to satisfy them sexually in the future'. (*Daily Mail*, 26 April 2019)

Yet another strategy found in the *Daily Mail* involved giving space for news that frame queer people as themselves reinforcing the negative discourse. Unlike in Baker (2014b), this was not achieved through the letters page but rather through celebrity scandals where the sexuality of the person was more or less emphasized where it could have been left out completely:

Rapp said the actor, who was 26 at the time, had drunkenly picked him up 'like a bride' before lying down on top of him in the alleged 1986 incident. Spacey, who came out as gay after the allegations surfaced, issued an apology via social media saying the story 'horrified' him but that he didn't recall the encounter. (*Daily Mail*, 20 November 2017)

The above example is from one of the articles involving the Kevin Spacey scandal. His abusive past towards young men and boys was reported in the *Daily Mail* quite thoroughly but with unnecessary mentions of his sexuality and coming out linked to his abusive behaviors suggesting that being gay or being in the closet might have had an impact on his actions. Here the story of Kevin Spacey is used by the *Daily Mail* in a way to prove that their negative stance towards queer people is justifiable because queer people themselves prove that they are e.g., predatory through their actions. That is not to say that the discourse around the Kevin Spacey scandal was entirely homophobic from the *Daily Mail's* part and there were mentions about the criticism from queer activists surrounding Spacey's coming out amidst the scandal. However, the majority of the coverage was far more sensationalist and revolved around his specific abusive actions towards young men and boys and the possibility of the end of his career. The following examples show another case of how the *Daily Mail* uses celebrity scandals to reinforce negative discourse around queer people:

Trump defends his 'tens of millions' of fans and blasts Jussie Smollett for 'racist and dangerous' lies after police charge actor with faking attack that he said was committed by men wearing iconic 'Make America Great Again' hats. (*Daily Mail*, 21 February 2019)

He admitted that he thinks Smollett is guilty and said the evidence stands up but claims because Smollett has no prior criminal background, justice has been served. Few are satisfied with that answer and say the real reason is more nefarious. (*Daily Mail*, 27 March 2019)

Jussie Smollett has refused to pay more than \$130,000 to reimburse Chicago investigative costs and the city said Thursday it will sue the "Empire" actor for money spent investigating what officials say was a phony racist, anti-gay attack that Smollett staged. (*Daily Mail*, 4 April 2019)

The above excerpts are from some of the pieces reporting on the Jussie Smollett scandal where the actor was attacked which was reported as racially motivated as well as homophobic, but it was later found that the actor had allegedly staged the attack himself. The extensive reporting around the issue further proves how the *Daily Mail* articulates its conservative beliefs through a negative portrayal of queer people by emphasizing an isolated incident rather than for instance condemning the extensive hate crimes toward minorities happening all over the world. These kinds of stories are often used to implicitly denote negative attitudes towards queer people in the tabloid media as well as profiting from the sensationalist nature of celebrity scandals. This relates also to the way queer people have persistently been represented in the media through tragedy.

Another strategy that was significant in the data was the habit of discussing fictional queer characters in literature, movies, or other media. That is not to say that this was always done with a negative connotation and there were some instances where the information of a queer character was included without any remarkable opinions around it. In other instances, however, there was for example discussion about straight actors playing queer characters and the *Daily Mail* often did not consider the collective consequences nor the persistence of this phenomenon but rather treated them as individual instances regarding high-profile actors and thus sensationalist news:

'Hi everyone, Andrew Garfield is an ally who said something a tiny bit silly about enjoying watching a very good programme that is very gay,' one man tweeted. And that tweet is true. Garfield has been a vocal supporter of the LGBTQ community. ... Garfield also gave Ryan Reynolds a smooch at the 2017 Golden Globe Awards. 'I just wanted Ryan to know that I loved him no matter whether he won or lost,' Garfield told Stephen Colbert after the kiss went viral. (*Daily Mail*, 19 July 2017)

The above example shows an excerpt from one of the articles involving Andrew Garfield, his portrayal of a gay character on stage, and his somewhat insensitive comments regarding the situation. Here too, the *Daily Mail* does not explicitly show a negative attitude towards queer people but looking at the article in its entirety, it was visible how the paper portrayed the (queer) people who criticized Garfield more negatively and how the paper defended Garfield for making a mistake regarding his comments. Further, the example shows how the *Daily Mail* sees

Garfield as an LGBTQ+ ally and therefore should not be criticized so heavily and goes so far as to represent two straight men queerbaiting in the mainstream media as a positive thing (i.e., the kiss between Garfield and Reynolds). Additionally, references to upcoming biographical movies were at times used as an excuse to bring up and further discuss the queerness of the character as was done in the case of *Bohemian Rhapsody* and Freddie Mercury as well as *Rocketman* and Elton John:

The film introduces Paul Prenter as a confident gay man who seduces Mercury, manipulates him into turning against his band-mates and leads him to a self-destructive world of promiscuous sex and illicit drug-taking. (*Daily Mail*, 8 March 2019)

Alternatively, what became apparent from the collocates analysis was that the *Daily Mail* tends to publish exact or very similar copies of previously issued articles and this was further studied by looking at the possible peaks in publishing from the two years. Figure 1 shows that the publishing around queer people was rather even but the peaks in later parts of 2017 and the beginning of 2019 were worth analyzing in more detail. The peak in 2017 can be explained by the above-mentioned Kevin Spacey scandal and the vote for marriage equality in Australia. For example, within approximately a month, 15 articles were published around the Kevin Spacey scandal. Early 2019 was then explained by the upcoming U.S. primaries and 2020 presidential election where one of the democratic nominees was openly gay. During the spring of 2019 two of the former members of the Spice Girls also mentioned being involved with each other romantically and that then got a lot of coverage in the *Daily Mail*. Additionally, the above-discussed scandal involving the actor Jussie Smollett was reported on in 18 distinct articles during early 2019. Although not necessarily a legitimization strategy in the same way as the above-discussed strategies it is still worth noting how this repetition of certain news stories reinforces the stereotypes around queer people and heteronormative language.

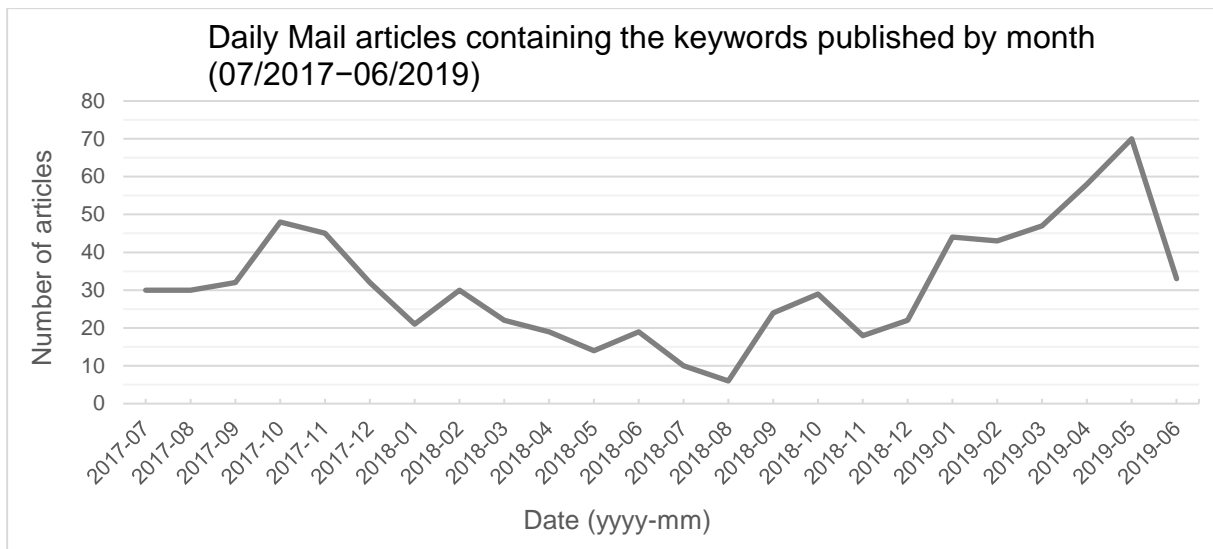


Figure 1. Articles containing the keywords published by the Daily Mail by month.

5 Discussion

In this chapter, I discuss and problematize further the heteronormative bias in the language used by the *Daily Mail*. First, I address the apparent lack of explicit heterosexual discourse and provide a detailed discussion about the established discourse prosodies and how these prosodies can reveal something about the representation of queer people in the mainstream media and the heteronormativity still existing in this representation. Lastly, I discuss the erasure of lesbians and bisexual people in the *Daily Mail* and consider its possible reasons and implications.

5.1 Heteronormative Bias in Language

The emerging discourse prosodies individually do not necessarily straightforwardly reveal how queer people are discussed. But considered collectively together with a more detailed discussion about the workings of heteronormativity they form a solid understanding that the representation and reporting on queer people and the community in the *Daily Mail* still heavily focus on sensational news and thus, projects negative connotation about queer people. Additionally, the lack of heterosexual discourse and the mentioning of straight people almost exclusively with queer people further proves that heterosexuality is deemed to be the norm and only worth mentioning when paralleled with the opposite, i.e., queer people, again, further proving the existence of heteronormative bias in the language used by the *Daily Mail*. Similar patterns in normativities with heterosexual males and SO-OCD on an online discussion forum were found

by Coimbra-Gomes and Motschenbacher (2019). They similarly found that the label straight was “regularly used as the binary antonym of gay” (Coimbra-Gomes & Motschenbacher, 2019: 574) in the discussion posts by straight men, treating heterosexuality as the base norm for all sexual behavior or orientation.

The prosodies *being queer described as an unstable identity* and *being queer is a practice not an identity* and their persistence in mainstream media discourse can be seen as problematic as they diminish the validity of the queer identity to a physical act or a phase. Choosing to linguistically refer to queer identities as something fleeting and non-permanent further shows the heteronormative bias in the language used by the *Daily Mail*. In other words, this habit reinforces the position of heterosexuality as the universal norm from which every other sexual orientation deviates and how every other sexuality can be seen as experimentation that will eventually pass or be “cured”. Furthermore, referring to queer sexualities as practices rather than identities automatically stigmatizes queer people as sex and sexual activity is so inherently stigmatized and shamed in Western societies, especially if it is not marital heterosexual sex behind closed doors (Warner, 2000). Additionally, modifying phrases such as “gay sex” with adjectives like “consensual” further produces the imagery of sex between non-heterosexual people involuntary or related to rape as the emphasis to consensual is needed as in the following example:

Homosexuality is not illegal in South Korea but there is currently no legislation outlawing discrimination. It is also the world's only advanced economy to make consensual gay sex between soldiers a crime under military rules. (*Daily Mail*, 1 June 2019)

Related to the above-discussed prosodies are the discourses labeled *queer relationships are transitory* and *queer people are promiscuous and sleazy* as they both reinforce the false notion about the hypersexual nature of queer identities and relationships. Because the mainstream media often reproduces and reinforces this sexual aspect of non-normative identities through language, it can further create the general want in queer people to separate sex and identity. In Coimbra-Gomes and Motschenbacher (2019: 575), being gay was also found to be understood as first and foremost an attraction relating only to physical activity with keywords relating to the “domain of desire” solely representing the physical sexual arousal. As Coimbra-Gomes and Motschenbacher focused on heterosexual men and considering the assumed heterosexual stance and production of the *Daily Mail*, this suggests that people living and identifying outside the

queer community have a distorted understanding of queerness and often reinforce the idea of queerness as a physical sexual act only as well as the hypersexuality of queer people and not seeing it as an alternative form of identity.

As was discussed in the analysis chapter of this thesis, the discourse prosody where queer people were referenced with other minority groups (*queer people linked to other minorities or identity markers*) was common with each keyword indicating that minorities are often grouped together. One reason for this could be the fact that the discussion around the oppression faced by minority groups often takes place in similar spaces and contexts, e.g., issues with equal legislation and rights or hate crimes. On the other hand, as most of the collocates in this prosody referenced other sexual minority groups, this can be interpreted as an attempt at inclusiveness, i.e., not only mentioning gay men but also lesbians, bisexual and trans people (Baker 2014b: 119).

Gay and bisexual people also occurred in the discourse labeled *queer people in 'neutral' discourse* quite often which shows that, to some extent, the *Daily Mail* is not solely focusing on the bigotry queer people face at least not explicitly. However, the collocates occurring with *bisexual(s)* tended to refer to men and gay men more often than women or gender-neutral words which considering the lesser presence of lesbians in this discourse can be interpreted as heteronormative language where a gay man is the norm of queer people. The erasure of lesbians and bisexual people is discussed in more detail in the next section.

The other more positive discourses, *queer people in positive discourse* and *queer people have their own culture*, also showed that there is some balance in the language used by the *Daily Mail*. However, as mentioned, the positive nature of these prosodies is debatable as referring to a specific queer culture further creates a monolith out of the community and separates it from the so-called mainstream culture. Furthermore, these discourses were not as prominent as their more negative counterparts and appeared mainly in the context of gay men.

The reason for the small number of collocates contributing to the discourse around family and children (*queer people have or want children*) could be that same-sex couples have legally been able to adopt children since 2002 in the UK and thus, the discussion around adoption and queer parents and families is not necessarily considered newsworthy anymore. Also, very few instances of queer people being described with stereotypes with negative connotations (*queer*

people described through stereotypes) were found which can be interpreted as positive progress. This can also be credited to the fact that generally queer people seem to be discussed nowadays more as a community rather than focusing on characteristics of individuals. That is not to say that the discourse is necessarily more positive, rather that it revolves around the collective oppression and the want and need for equal rights. In addition, social media has created the possibility to have access to all kinds of non-normative identities all around the world and thus, arguably the sensationalism has shifted from the disapproving headlines about campy gay men to the homophobia queer people face and the tragedies they are represented through.

The presence of the discourse prosodies implying shame about being queer (*being queer is a secret shame & some people are shameless about being queer*), as well as the discourse where the mentioning of sexuality was found questionable or unnecessary (*unnecessary mention of queerness*), can be understood and discussed through the concept of “the closet” and the act of coming out. Often the act of coming out is regarded as transgressive and self-affirming to one’s queer identity (Motschenbacher, 2019a: 286). But at the same time, coming out can be seen as a compulsory disclosure of non-normative identities in a predominantly normative environment which further reinforces the heteronormative assumptions of a structured binary opposition in the context of sexuality (Morrish & Sauntson, 2007: 98; Sedgwick 1990). Coming out is defined as a “lifelong process of self-acceptance ... publicly sharing one's identity may or may not be part of coming out” by GLAAD (2016) and what is important here to note is that the act of coming out continues throughout queer people’s lives and is often more expected from the heteronormative outside environment than the queer person themselves. As these discourse prosodies were relatively prominent in the data, the *Daily Mail* can be seen to reinforce these heteronormative binary structures as well as the normative expectation for queer people to come out and disclose their sexuality through language, i.e., treating the act of coming out or being out as newsworthy and having the need to contextualize non-normative identities (Motschenbacher 2019a: 295–296). However, it is worthwhile to mention that the discourse around coming out in the *Daily Mail* also included discussion about professional athletes coming out and as the sports world is still heavily homophobic, this can be considered to contribute to a more positive outlook on the act of coming out.

The act of coming out has been said to have politicized identity (McCann & Monaghan, 2020; Sullivan, 2003) and is heavily present in the mainstream media's discourse of queer people and so was true in the case of the *Daily Mail* as well. The problem here is not only that the act of coming out and the language implies that being queer is shameful and people who are out are shameless about it, i.e., breaks the heteronormative assumptions and norms, but it is also often portrayed as an act of bravery. When coming out occurs with collocates such as "brave" or "courageous" it automatically, though perhaps implicitly, suggests that people who are not out or who do not have the possibility or opportunity to come out are not brave thus shifting the blame on queer people and not on the heteronormative society and its expectations and obligations laid on queer people.

Additionally, cases where the keywords appeared in contexts where someone was thought to be queer, e.g., "people said we were in a relationship but where they got the idea I'm a lesbian is beyond me! It's a shame people believe that rubbish." (*Daily Mail*, 24 February 2019), were not included in the prosodies as these were not considered as straightforwardly molding the discourse through collocates but rather required a larger context. However, these instances relate to the expectation of queer people disclosing their sexuality when the same is not required from straight people. In other words, the media does not mention straight people's sexuality unless it is absolutely crucial to the story thus, reinforcing the idea of heterosexual people as the unquestionable norm through language.

The discourse representing being queer as a crime, although not very common, was still present in the data. And although being queer is not criminally sanctioned in the UK anymore, this discourse can be seen to extend the ideology of understanding queerness as a crime (Baker 2005: 76). This discourse appeared often in reference to history, past legislation, or to countries where being queer is still sanctioned by governments as a part of the *Daily Mail's* legitimization strategies.

The discourse around queer people proselytizing or harming children in other ways (*queer people cause harm to children*) was not very common in the data but was included as its own discourse category because of the extensive and controversial history and beliefs around this ideology in the UK. The Clause or Section 28 prohibiting the "promotion" of homosexuality in the UK was introduced in 1988 and was in effect until 2000 in Scotland and 2003 in England

and Wales. This clause clearly condemned homosexuality as a negative thing as only good things should be promoted (Baker, 2005: 85). As the results showed, this discourse was mostly occurring with gay men. Understandably, compared to Baker (2005) where the discourses around gay men were studied between 2001–2002 when the Clause was still in effect (except for Scotland), this discourse was less common in the present data. However, it is worth noting that this ideology is being referenced in the *Daily Mail* after almost 20 years of the over-turn of Clause 28.

Similarly representing queer people as criminals were the collocates contributing to the prosody labeled *queer people associated with crime/violence/offenses*. As stated in Baker (2005: 75), noting the sexuality of the accused might not seem so “objectionable” at first, but the problem is once again in that the same is not done with heterosexual people. When the sexuality of the accused is made explicit, in this case gay, lesbian, or bisexual, it produces a link between the crime and the marked sexuality (Baker, 2005: 75). Also, grouping queer people with socially questionable acts or people, such as adultery or drunks, further links queer identities to debauchery and crime. On a more positive note, although rape occurred multiple times in the subcorpora, it occurred as a collocate only once. In the past, it has been far too common to refer to, especially, “gay/homosexual rape” which then can be seen to put the blame on the gay identity rather than on the accused male (Baker, 2005: 75–76).

A rather extent coverage on the issues of marriage equality and the discussions around law reforms in the UK and around the world emerged through the collocates referring to partnerships and contributing to the discourse of *unnecessary mention of queerness*. It can be argued that when the media is constantly referring to “gay marriage” it further separates it from “authentic” marriage, whether intently or not. The media could as easily refer to the marriage topic as “marriage equality”, “equal rights to marriage” or “equal marriage”, for example, as neither “gay marriage” nor “same-sex marriage”, are inclusive. This again reinforces the heteronormative idea laid down in Motschenbacher (2019b: 9) that “heterosexuality widely functions as the normative default, which means that, without contrasting contextual information, people will assume that social actors are heterosexual”, i.e., sexuality is explicitly mentioned only if people are assumed to be something else than heterosexual. Furthermore, marriage equality rights have been a prominent issue in gay liberation movements from the very

beginning and are still used to “sanctify” other couples at the expense of others (Warner, 2000: 81–82).

As mentioned earlier, marriage equality is also seen as assimilation to the dominant heteronormative culture and should be problematized or at least questioned by Queer Theory. These linguistic choices, such as “gay/same-sex marriage”, made by the *Daily Mail* to further perpetuate the heteronormative ideals around marriage and civil union institutions leaving the heterosexual marriage unmarked are also supported by the finding in Paterson and Coffey-Glover (2018). They found that whilst heterosexual marriage was mostly unmarked in the debate around marriage equality in the British press, some instances of “traditional marriage” emerged from the data. In the *Daily Mail*, the phrase “traditional marriage” occurred only twice. However, using words such as “traditional” to refer to heterosexual marriage but prefacing same-sex marriages with “gay” is in no means neutral and furthers the heteronormative ideologies of Western societies. As the instances where partnerships between queer people were mentioned occurred mostly in the context of the legislation and in the debates to have the right to marry whomever, phrases such as “lesbian/gay marriage” could have been replaced with more inclusive and neutral expressions. Additionally, as stated in the GLAAD Media Reference Guide (2016), a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity should only be included “when it is pertinent to a story”. However, this does not mean that no reporting should be done on queer individuals or the community, but the press should limit the mentioning of sexual orientation or gender identity as well as the linguistic choices perpetuating heteronormative bias in the language.

The collocates contributing to the discourse prosodies *queerness as an attribute or insult* and *heteronormativity* also reinforced the heteronormative bias in the language used by the *Daily Mail*. Although neither of these prosodies was particularly common in the data, they were still included as they collectively reveal the (un)conscious bias of the mainstream media as they both emphasize linguistic choices and vocabulary that is rarely used with heterosexual identities in any context. Also, suggesting that queerness is somehow measurable, e.g., “full lesbian”, or using words such as gay or lesbian as an insult, e.g., calling inanimate objects gay, is not only highlighting the negative connotation that those words and identities still possess but also diminishing the validity of the queer identity. These adverbs also relate to the shamelessness discourse and seem to indicate that some people are “unable to hide their sexuality” even when

they should (Baker, 2005: 79). And not only is it harmful to refer to queer identities as something measurable but when the collocates appear to suggest that someone is “too gay” it automatically indicates that there is a “level of gay” or a version of queerness that is acceptable, again showing the heteronormative and homonormative.

Furthermore, as the results show, queer people occurred in political discourse in the data quite often. This is understandable considering the political climate of the past years with new legislation around marriage equality and the U.S. presidential election. However, this political and religious discourse further reinforces heteronormative ideals and beliefs and positions queerness as unnatural and politically debatable. Regarding marriage equality, Paterson and Coffey-Glover (2018: 199) suggest that legal and political debates and “definitions of consummation and adultery ... reduce relationships to sexual practices and endorse heteronormative notions of (marital) sex”. By extension, this can be applied to all kinds of political debating and discourse in which queer people are discussed and is not limited to the debates around marriage equality.

Additionally, the discourse around queer people in the *Daily Mail* included a considerable amount of discussion about queer folks and equal rights as something that people automatically have the right to have an opinion about or treat like an opinion matter. Queer people occurring with words such as *liberal* indicates that being queer or accepting queer people is considered politically liberal and that it is okay as conservatives to refer to political views when discussing queer people (and not accepting them). Furthermore, queer folks also occurred with collocates referring to matters that have been highly discussed in the political sphere, such as, “abortion”, “euthanasia”, and “gun control”. Ergo, too many times the media tends to reinforce the idea through specific linguistics choices that minorities are people that the dominant culture and people simply can have an opinion about or a political debate when it could or *should* use language that furthers the understanding of equal people and rights regardless of identity politics. Granted, some of these occasions were not included in the prosodies presented above as they manifested mainly in more implicit ways through neutral wordings in a larger context revealing opinions and tendencies to use queer people as props for political discussions and would require closer reading of the articles.

The medical discourse found in the data (*queer people in medical or mental health related discourse*) can be understood as relating to the political discourse as most of the collocates in this prosody referred to health issues and the collective mental health of queer people from a more socio-political perspective. A lot of the discussion still revolved around HIV, AIDS, and the (in)ability of gay men to donate blood. And as mentioned, heterosexuality was rarely explicitly mentioned in the discourse of AIDS or HIV whereas *gay* and *homosexual* were more common. That is not to say that no coverage about AIDS or HIV without it being linked to gay men specifically was found in the *Daily Mail*, but it is significant that there still exists the effort to explicitly link AIDS with gay men more than other sexual identities and this naturally then leads to certain negative connotation by the readership.

The prosody *bigotry exists* not only reflects the reality of existing as a queer person and the homophobia that comes with that but also the way mainstream media has been portraying queer people as victims for decades. This victim mentality, in the *Daily Mail* and other publications and media in general, is often framed linguistically by emphasizing the victim and their stance rather than more straightforwardly focusing on the accused as an active agent. And while hate crimes or bigotry should not be ignored, it is still questionable why the *Daily Mail* chooses to mention the victim's sexuality more than once in one article, for example:

Pence begins his South Korea visit before the Olympics as vice president's team says he is NOT for gay conversion therapy and reveals his efforts to reach out to gay Olympic skater Adam Rippon after diss... Mike Pence has tweeted in support of openly gay Team USA figure skater Adam Rippon after the athlete refused a sit-down meeting with him at the Pyeongchang Olympics... Pence has spoken out in support of the openly gay Team USA figure skater who refused a sit-down meeting with him at the Winter Olympics. (*Daily Mail*, 8 February 2018)

And as was mentioned, no considerable number of explicit slurs referring to queer people were found in the data contributing to the discourse of bigotry which implies that the *Daily Mail* does not seem to be as homophobic as what is possible. However, this does not mean that the tabloid media has changed its stance on queer people, rather it reinforces the idea of implicit heteronormative bias in the language used as well as implicit use of the discussed legitimization strategies.

It should be noted that although the negative prosodies around queer people, i.e., the prosodies that refer to negative connotations and negative stereotypes around gay, lesbian and bisexual people, dominate the prosodies over the more neutral or positive categories, they do not portray

the *Daily Mail's* stance on non-normative identities straightforwardly. For example, the prosody *bigotry exists* does not refer to instances where the *Daily Mail* directly said something offensive or homophobic but rather that they reported on some homophobic incident or someone's homophobic comments. However, it can be argued that when a publication decides to do this without clearly condemning the bigotry together with specific linguistics choices, e.g., placing concepts such as "conversion/cure therapy" in quotations which was rarely done by the *Daily Mail* but which is highly recommended (GLAAD, 2016), it does reveal something about their opinion on the matter or at least about the fact that they probably care more about the sensationalism and thus sales than depicting a fair image on certain communities or individuals.

5.2 Erasure of Lesbians and Bisexual People

The initial results show how the heteronormative bias in language is still persistent in the tabloid press in the UK. Additionally, the representation of queer people still heavily focuses on gay men. The sizes of each subcorpora created already revealed the suspected erasure of lesbians and bisexual people relative to gay men. The frequencies of the keywords in each of the subcorpora further proved that the discussion around bisexual people in the *Daily Mail* is almost non-existent in itself and compared to the counterparts of gay (and to some extent lesbian). Similarly, to Paterson and Coffey-Glover (2018), who found that *gay* appeared 5,063 times while *lesbian* was used only 252 times in their corpus centering around the marriage equality debates in the UK. In addition, they found that bisexuality was barely mentioned and when it was, it often appeared together with other minority groups, e.g., gay, lesbian, transgender, which further supports the findings in this thesis. This together with the largest discourse prosodies with bisexual and lesbian (*queer people linked to other minorities or identity markers*) further proves that while bisexual people and lesbians are rarely discussed in the media, they are most often included when linked together with other minorities, especially gay men.

Adding to the bisexual erasure was the fact that the keywords *bisexual** and *gay*/homosexual** shared two of the most common discourse prosodies as well as the fact that almost 40% of all occurrences of *bisexual** in the corpora appeared with *gay*/homosexual**. Again, this shows how homonormativity favors the (white) gay male as the representation of sexual minorities.

This representation of bisexual people and lesbians with other groups parallels with the representation of trans people in the British press (Zottola, 2018). The bisexual erasure is also supported by the findings in Wilkinson (2019).

The lesser presence or absence of lesbians and bisexual people in some of the discourse prosodies can be seen as diminishing queer identities into gay identities. Although technically both *gay* and *homosexual* are gender-neutral words, they still heavily connote and refer to males. This is especially visible in the discourses that involve more general topics such as queer culture where often phrases such as “gay icon”, “gay anthem” and “gay culture” seem to dominate. Furthermore, when discussing equal rights, the data shows almost exclusively the use of “gay rights”. This use of *gay* as a modifier for words and phrases that refer to more collective concepts should be avoided as it does not represent the entirety or the diversity of the queer community (GLAAD, 2016).

This phenomenon of diminishing other queer identities under the term *gay* occurred frequently in the discourse of marriage and relationships. And although the relationship words were treated as a single unit when comparing to the heterosexual discourse, it was apparent that the words occurred mostly only with *gay* and *homosexual*. This further proves how e.g., marriage between non-heterosexual people is still referred to as *gay* marriage. With these linguistic choices, heteronormative values are laid on queer people by the mainstream culture (or by themselves) thus, creating homonormativity. Similar erasure of other queer people was again found in the study of the marriage debate in the British press by Paterson and Coffey-Glover (2018). While referring to non-heterosexual marriages as *gay* already in itself reinforces the heteronormative ideals about marriage, it also centers gay men and indicates that queer marriages are first and foremost between two men.

The more frequent use of the term *gay* when referring to non-normative identities collectively can also be understood as heteronormative language moving to homonormative language where the gay man’s experience is emphasized and thought of as the universal. This was also present in the more negative discourses. For example, most of the collocates contributing to the discourse of bigotry occurred with *gay*/homosexual** suggesting that the media tends to generalize the victim of discrimination and intolerance to gay identities rather than making the effort to use more inclusive terms. Similarly, the discourses indicating that being queer is a

crime or a practice rather than an identity were more common with *gay*/homosexual** compared to *lesbian** and *bisexual**. The data showed that the discourse of crime included a lot of references to criminalizing or sanctioning “homosexual acts/activity” which then was also present in the discourse where queer identity was seen as a practice. Also, in the UK, there never was an explicit ban that sanctioned homosexual activity between women. Although “homosexual acts” is, in theory, inclusive, in practice it still refers more strongly to men and further suggests that for example, bisexual people are not considered perhaps as visible as gay men because of the “closeness” of the bisexual identity to heterosexuality and that they are only considered queer when involved with a person of the same-sex.

The erasure of especially bisexual people was also present in the study by Magrath, Cleland, and Anderson (2017) who analyzed the news in the British press after the Olympic athlete Tom Daley came out. What seems to be common in this erasure by the British press is the diminishing of the bisexual or queer identity to strictly gay or heterosexual thus, representing sexuality as polarized into a binary. For instance, while coming out Tom Daley did not use the words *gay* or *bisexual* explicitly to refer to his identity but was still labeled as gay in the following weeks in the British press due to having a male partner. Bisexuality thus seems to be generally reduced to being gay in the case of people in same-sex relationships or to heterosexuality in the case of people in opposite-sex relationships.

6 Conclusions

This study was created to further illustrate the heteronormative bias in language and its implications in the discursive construction of sexual identities in the tabloid press and mainstream Western culture in general as well as to consider the influence of mainstream media and specifically news discourse have on their audience. With corpus linguistics methods, I was able to create and identify dominant discourse prosodies around queer people occurring in the British tabloid paper *Daily Mail*. With a queer approach, the discourse prosodies were able to be analyzed critically regarding heteronormative language.

Overall, the results showed that the *Daily Mail* seems to use more implicit heteronormative language compared to the previous studies made by Baker (2005; 2014b) examining the discourse around gay men. Furthermore, while negative discourses dominated the

representation, neutral and positive discourses also occurred. However, much of the reporting could be classified as unnecessarily mentioning people's sexuality or gender identity which then proves the presence of heteronormative bias in the language used by the *Daily Mail*. Another notable aspect in the representation of queer people is the constant erasure of other non-normative identities apart from gay men as was further proven and supported by the results of this study.

Regarding legitimation strategies used by the *Daily Mail* to justify their negative representation of queer identities, the paper tended to rely on a few different strategies: distancing their agency by reporting on past events and foreign countries and governments (creating homonationalism), quoting authorities or celebrities, giving voice to queer people who articulate or justify negative discourse, using fictional media and characters to bring up the discussion about sexuality and finally, repetition.

There are many possible future research prospects in the study of heteronormativity, language, and news discourse using corpus methods, especially in the discursive construction of sexualities. Such possibilities include, for instance, increasing the scope of this present study to allow comparisons between broadsheet papers as well as regions or going beyond explicit identity words and focusing on how gender and sexuality binarism are reinforced implicitly. Additionally, as research in Queer Linguistics has heavily focused on Western perspectives, a sensible choice for future research would be to focus on discursive constructions on sexualities, relationships, and/or desire outside the Western region.

The representation of queer people has increased during the last decades in both mainstream media and niche media and while this representation matters, so does the quality and the purpose behind the representation. This study aimed to shed light on the workings of heteronormative bias in language and has aimed to problematize its influence in the linguistic construction of non-normative identities as well as hopefully presented evidence and discussion on the influence of mass media. The study on representation and the constructions of binaries in media is important as this exploration can help eventually change the way the media works and treats minorities.

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