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DEUTSCHE WELLE’S COVERAGE OF PALESTINE AND ISRAEL FROM DECEMBER 1st TO DECEMBER 8th 2023: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT
The attacks on October 7th, 2023 sparked a new wave of escalation between Israel and Palestine with global news coverage. Though there is coverage on both sides, many are calling out the Western news media for being biased in their reports. This paper explores the diction used by Deutsche Welle (DW) when reporting Palestine and Israel from December 1st to December 8th, 2023. The paper will use the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) theory by Norman Fairclough to process the data using a qualitative approach. The study aims to examine whether the diction used by DW journalists in their reports reflects DW’s stance of being impartial. The findings show that although DW tries its best to seem impartial, its reports are still heavily influenced by Germany’s stance in supporting Israel.

KEYWORDS: Media, Impartiality, Palestine, Israel, Hamas, CDA

INTRODUCTION
Israel is a Jewish state established on May 14, 1948, by the Jewish Agency Chairman, David Ben-Gurion (History.com Editors, 2010). Leading up to its birth in 1948, more than 750,000 Palestinians were displaced from their homes. Palestinians then referred to this mass expulsion as The Nakba or catastrophe. Thus 1948 became a starting point of the Israel occupation of Palestine (Al Jazeera, 2023). “The creation of Israel in 1948 meant the destruction of the Palestinian Arab state and for that, the United Nations must take full responsibility.” (Arnold, 1997).

Over the years major escalations between the two nations have happened several times, with the most recent escalation happening on October 7th, 2023 when Hamas fighters launched an attack on a city bordering the Gaza Strip and took in several hostages. Approximately 1,200 Israelis died during this attack, and in return, Israel launched an attack on the Gaza Strip. Their primary objective was to retrieve the hostages and remove Hamas from the Gaza Strip. As a result, more than 20,000 Palestinian civilians have died and the UN (United Nations) reports that nearly two million have been displaced since
Israel started their assault on the Gaza Strip. On November 24th, 2023, the Israeli Government and Hamas agreed on a four-day humanitarian pause with an agreement on hostage exchange. This pause was then extended for another two days until November 30th, 2023. Almost immediately after the pause was lifted, the IDF (Israel Defence Forces) launched an attack in the Gaza Strip and caused the death toll in Gaza to rise.

Many modern news outlets are now reporting on Palestine and Israel since a major escalation happened on October 7th, 2023. One of the major news media in Germany reporting on the Israel-Palestine conflict is Deutsche Welle (DW). DW is an international news network from Germany that reports on global and local news. One of Germany’s pillars in foreign policy is international cooperation (Facts About Germany, n.d.); having DW have local and international branches helps establish that. According to their company profile, their main objective as an international news network is to deliver impartial news to their readers and uphold freedom of speech (Deutsche Welle, n.d.).

Studies about how Palestine and Israel are reported in the news have been conducted many times over the years. Sirhan (2021) wrote about how Palestine is reported in the British media in her book titled Reporting Palestine-Israel in British Newspapers: An Analysis of British Newspapers. She argues that language used in reports influences the reader’s perception of certain events, in this case, the conflict between Israel and Palestine. She highlights five points on how language affects the reader’s perception. First is the headline. This part of news writing functions as the main attraction for readers since it is the first thing they see when they click on an article. There are certain instances where headlines support Israel and its allies. Other points she highlights are voice, nominalization, language prevarication, and lexicon. How these five points are written heavily determines the flow of articles and how readers may perceive the Palestine-Israel conflict.

Online news about Palestine and Israel is not a new occurrence. Segev and Blondheim (2013) researched online news regarding Palestine and Israel from 2009 to 2010. They gathered reports from 37 international news outlets to see the prominence of both countries in the papers by using network analysis. In their paper, they found that Palestine and Israel rank among the top ten countries mentioned in international news. They also argued that “the particularly high prominence of Israel and Palestine in online news worldwide cannot be explained by the intensity of their conflict.” because, during the time of their research, there were simply no major escalations that happened between the two countries (Segev & Blondheim, 2013). They also suggested that the geographical distribution of the news gives insights into the ideals of the journalists that could influence foreign policies.

As mentioned by Sirhan (2021), media has the power to shape how readers view the Israel-Palestine conflict. Barkho (2008) conducted a study on how the BBC builds its discursive strategy when reporting on Israel and Palestine. It was found in 2003 that BBC had a guideline for words that were allowed to be used when it comes to reporting on Palestine and Israel to avoid showing forms of bias, but this guideline ended up backfiring and instead resulted in downplaying the conflict itself. BBC editors are aware that the terminologies they use are insufficient when describing the ongoing conflict. Still, they are mostly in the dark concerning the type of syntactic structures used in reporting it. BBC’s efforts to appear neutral and impartial on the conflict risk denting its overarching values. The choice of vocabulary reflects the unequal division of power, control, and status between Israel and Palestine, which are evident at multiple levels and reinforced by the editorial strategy and policy. The discursive strategy is divided into lexical and syntax levels.
Neureiter (2017) conducted a study on media bias when reporting Israel and Palestine. He found that among German, American, and British newspapers, the German papers were more critical of Israel despite their background history. He found that the ideologies of the newspapers he studied influenced how critical they were towards Israel. For example, liberal British media were more critical of Israel compared to their conservative counterparts. Other than the paper’s ideology Neureiter (2017) also found that a country’s foreign policy and a majority of the population can also affect how newspapers report on Israel and Palestine.

Other than just analyzing the use of language alone, other studies have also used other methods to see how Palestine and Israel are represented in media. Graber (2017) used Habermas’ (1979) discourse analysis to see how the news reports the human shield allegations towards Hamas. Graber (2017) conducted a study on 66 news articles from five prominent US papers during an escalation in 2014. He found that all of the articles he studied violated at least one of the four validity points of Habermas’ (1979) ideal speech. It was shown in his paper that when it comes to the language used, the papers frequently presented sensationalist language and dramatic imagery associated with human shield narratives, sometimes excluding essential context and background information. Regarding bias, the newspapers displayed a tendency towards imbalance and one-sided attribution and they also rarely provided a platform for alternative perspectives, thus limiting readers' exposure to diverse opinions and interpretations.

Others have also used another form of discourse analysis, namely critical discourse analysis (CDA) developed by Norman Fairclough, to study the Palestine-Israel conflict in the media. Suwarno and Sahayu (2020) studied the representation of Palestine and Israel in national and international news by comparing articles from the Jakarta Post and the New York Times using Fairclough’s (2011) CDA and Halliday’s (2004) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to see the relation between language and ideology and examine the textual features of the news articles. In a similar study, Heni and Chandra (2022) also used CDA to see the relations of ideology and language used by Detik News and Fox News to report on Israel and Palestine. Suwarno and Sahayu (2020) found that the Jakarta Post and the New York Times have similar transitivity structures with verbal and material processes being the most prominent ones. On the other hand, Heni and Chandra (2022) found that there was a tendency to use passive voice when it comes to describing Palestine as a victim in Detik News and active voice to describe Israel as the perpetrator. Fox News on the other hand uses active voice not to describe Palestine, but Hamas. They pin Hamas as an active perpetrator in the conflict and Israel as an opposition who has a right to self-defense.

By using CDA, they found that the ideologies of the papers heavily influenced the tendency of their reports. Although both studies showed that the newspapers tend to describe Israel as having greater power over Palestinians, Fox News and the New York Times in some cases still justify the violent acts done by Israel to uphold Israel’s image and be in line with The US’s political ideals. It is also important to note that Fox News is a known conservative US news network that is known to side with the Republican Party and its political ideologies. On the other hand, the Jakarta Post and Detik News are more sensitive towards Indonesia’s foreign policy of supporting Palestine and its predominantly Muslim readers.

The use of CDA in studying German media has also been conducted. Polon ska-Kimunguyi and Gillespie (2016) conducted a study on a French newspaper, France 24, and a German newspaper, Deutsche Welle (DW). The study discusses the framing of Boko Haram, with France 24 emphasizing military and religious connotations, while DW
explores a broader range of factors behind violent extremism in Nigeria. The study aims to uncover the ideological consequences and power relations embedded in the media's discourse on political extremism. When reporting on Boko Haram both news medias' coverage was in line with their respective states' foreign policies towards Africa. It concluded that foreign media, such as France 24 and DW may fall victim to extremists' objectives. News media are no longer mere publicity instruments but they unintentionally become active participants in the identity-creation process. (Polon'ska-Kimunguyi & Gillespie, 2016)

Other than comparing two news networks and how different countries' ideologies could affect reports, there are also studies using CDA to focus on one news outlet or at least one country and see how those news media compared to one another. Amaireh (2023) wrote about Al Jazeera English reports on Israel and Palestine in their papers. She found that Al Jazeera tended to use certain lexical choices and describe Palestine as an 'in-group' because of Al Jazeera’s background as an Arab Middle Eastern news network, and Israel as an 'out-group' because of their violence against other Arab nations. Their lexical choices emphasize one as a victim and the other as an attacker. Al Jazeera frequently emphasized the Palestinian narrative by shedding light on their feelings, thoughts, and attitudes towards what was happening during the tension. In contrast, the Israelis were silenced, and the reporters de-emphasized the Israeli narrative. (Amaireh, 2023)

Almedia (2011) conducted a study on US newspapers’ coverage of Israel and Palestine from the years 2002 to 2006 and utilized both CDA and corpus linguistics in her research. She examined six to seven papers, with 50 news articles from each year starting from 2002 to 2006. The sets of news were analyzed in six dimensions: patterns of direct quoting, patterns of indirect quoting, the use of words denoting violence, the presence of words and phrases indicating negative emotions, the use of words denoting conflict, and the use of positive words. The six dimensions were then processed using the ATLAS—ti program. She found that out of all sources, Israeli authorities were the most frequently cited, followed by Palestinian authorities, civilians, and international figures. The discourse was characterized by expressions of violence, including the destruction of homes, bridges, and wells, as well as casualty statistics. Negative emotional language dominated the discourse, reflecting a narrative of conflict and suffering. Moreover, Israeli civilians received significantly more attention than Palestinian civilians, suggesting unequal representation. She argued that this disparity in coverage perpetuates stereotypes and misconceptions, contributing to a distorted understanding of the conflict.

Arifuddin (2022) explained in his proceedings how the politics of revisionist Zionism and the limitations of global media in representing gender issues, impacted Palestinian women and children during the May 2021 crisis. By using CDA he found that the Zionist ideology has driven Palestinians, especially women and children, into suffering and somehow throughout history has been downplayed. False history, religious misinterpretation, and contemporary Zionist-revisionist politics have contributed to Israeli settler colonialism, leading to gender invisibility and prolonged adversity for Palestinian women and children (Arifuddin, 2022). In his paper, he suggests that there is a need for an international social media campaign against the Israeli occupation. He calls for political change at both the global and internal levels in Israel and Palestine.

Reflecting on previous research, it is shown that there are relations between media ideology and how they report the Palestine-Israel conflict whether through the choice of words, narrative, or writing structures. Most of these researches are limited to just one newspaper to make sure the data studied is valid and narrowed down. Many of them focus
on the British and American media since both countries are often revered as global news networks. Though there are studies conducted using CDA on how extremist ideology is reported in the French and German media, there aren’t many that focus on Palestine and Israel itself. This study will focus on how German media, especially DW, reports on the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

DW’s impartiality is an interesting case to study because in 2021 a Turkish news outlet, Anadolu Ajansı (AA), called out DW for censoring critical reporting on Israel by banning reporters from covering Israel’s colonialism, apartheid, and persecution of Palestinians. In the recent escalation, the general public has also called out DW’s bias. Some claim its articles contain anti-Israel language while others claim that it is biased towards Israel. “DW you are a disgrace to professional news by having such a strong bias towards Israel. All trustworthy news is already focusing on the genocide of Palestinians but you keep focusing on the "Israeli tragedy", wake up.” X (Twitter) @CaioDaisuki user expressed their concerns in their account. Another user with the handle @rollostuttgart expressed that DW should stop their anti-Israel bias reports.

DW’s stance was also questioned when in 2021 they conducted an independent investigation on anti-Semitism on their workers. As a result, some staff in DW’s Arab department were fired based on antisemitic statements from the staff (Alhindi, R., & Eid, R., 2023). The Euro-Med Human Rights Watch deemed this as biased and dangerous. The staff who were fired also filed a lawsuit and the court ruled in their favor of their dismissal being unlawful (Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, 2022).

This paper intends to use critical discourse analysis by Norman Fairclough to study DW’s reports on Palestine and Israel from December 1st to December 8th, 2023, and how they reflect DW’s stance of being an impartial news network funded by the German state. The use of CDA in this study criticizes the fact that although DW claims to be impartial in its company profile, they have had a history of bias during its anti-Semitic probe that resulted in the firing of several Arab employees. This study adds to the discourse a more in-depth analysis of how a major German news media such as DW reports on Palestine and Israel. With that, I propose the following research question: How does the choice of nouns and sentence structure in DW’s report of the events on the first week of December reflect DW’s ideology of being impartial?

METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study will use a qualitative method using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Norman Fairclough to analyze the data. Cresswell (2012) explains in his book that qualitative research is usually text-based and focuses on analyzing words or pictures that center on a phenomenon. A qualitative method here helps explore the nuance of the texts analyzed in the study. The articles were taken from DW’s “Israel at War” section on their website. I chose three articles from December 1st to December 8t, 2023. Once the articles are collected, the words, specifically nouns, and sentence structure that are used to report both sides will be analyzed to see DW’s choice of diction when reporting the conflict between Israel and Palestine, and whether or not it reflects DW’s ideology of being impartial.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a form of analytical research that studies the relationship between discourse and text in society (Fairclough, 2010). At its core, CDA analyzes the relations of discourse and other objects as well as the ‘internal relations’ of discourse. Another important aspect of CDA is its function to critique. One of the main focuses of CDA is the effects of power in relation to inequalities. According to Fairclough, critical analysis aims to generate interpretations and explanations of social
life, focusing on identifying the root causes of social injustices and producing knowledge that could, under favorable circumstances, contribute to improving or easing these issues. CDA can contribute a specific discursive point of view that has a relational focus on dialectal relationships between discourse and other social elements. It is also highlighted that CDA has a linguistic approach in terms of text as it analyzes different forms of semiotic modes.

Fairclough (2010) states that there are three elements in conducting CDA: social practice, discoursal practice (text production, distribution, and consumption), and text. To understand a certain discourse we have to analyze these three elements and how their relation with each other. Ideology influences language in various ways at various levels. Fairclough (2010) argues that ideology is both a property of structure and events. Ideology itself can also be presented as a discursive text. Therefore we have to see how DW’s ideology is upheld in relation to the Israel-Palestine discourse in Germany. The study will focus on nouns and sentence structures used to describe the conflict and nouns and sentence structures used to describe people and organizations like Hamas and the IDF. By examining these elements, we can see how they reflect DW’s impartiality.

![Dimensions of Discourse and Discourse Analysis](image)

**Figure 1. Dimensions of Discourse and Discourse Analysis**

**DISCUSSION**

**DW and Impartiality**

_Deutsche Welle_, commonly known as DW, is a global news network from Germany. Their company profile mentions that they strive to deliver impartial news to their readers. “We provide impartial news and information, allowing people worldwide to form their own opinions, assess issues of local and global significance, and participate in social debates as active and informed citizens.” (_Deutsche Welle_, 2024). According to the Merriam-Webster English Dictionary, impartial means not partial or biased; treating all sides equally. In this case, DW aims to be a news outlet that does not lean towards one side but is neutral in its reports.

This study will focus on the events after the humanitarian pause with a time frame of the first week of December, from the 1st to the 8th of December 2023. During the first week of December DW published around 15 articles about the conflict between Israel and Palestine on their website. Out of the 15 articles I chose three news articles from DW titled _Nahost: Rakete aus Gaza - Waffenruhe beendet_ (Middle East: Rockets From Gaza - Ceasefire Ends), _Nahost: Israel weitet Gaza-Bodenoffensive aus_ (Middle East: Israel Expands Ground Offense in Gaza), and _Nahost: Intensive Angriffe auf Ziele in Chan Junis_
(Middle East: Intensive Attacks on Targets in Khan Yunis). Each article respectively reports the attacks conducted by both sides after the humanitarian pause ended and their effects on civilians. By using CDA from Fairclough (2010), I aim to examine nouns and sentence structures used by DW when reporting on Israel and Palestine and how it reflects their claimed ideology of being impartial while being a state-funded news network.

The three articles were selected because they cover major events during the first week of December. The first article explains what happened soon after the humanitarian pause in brief. It contains a lot of coverage of Hamas’ attack and how the IDF (Israel Defence Forces) reacted to it. The article also briefly mentions the hostage exchange between Hamas and the Israeli government. The second article focused more on Israel’s intensified ground assault in the Gaza Strip and how the international community reacted. The last article highlights Israel’s attacks on Khan Yunis, a city in the Gaza Strip, and how it affects civilians.

The Impact of Ideology on Discourse: A Case Study of DW’s Coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

In the three articles examined, one of the most repeatedly used nouns is ‘Terror’. Overall the word ‘Terror’ was used 27 times in the three articles, either written as the word itself or in other variations such as composites and affixation. The most used form of the word ‘Terror’ is ‘Terroristen’ (Terrorists), which can be found 11 times: 2 in the article Nahost: Rakete aus Gaza - Waffenruhe beendet, 4 in the article Nahost: Israel weitert Gaza-Bodenoffensive aus, and 5 in the article Nahost: Intensive Angriffe auf Ziele in Chan Junis. A form of composite that is commonly used is ‘Terrororganization’ (Terror Organization) which can be found 8 times: 4 in the article Nahost: Rakete aus Gaza - Waffenruhe beendet, 2 in the article Nahost: Israel weitert Gaza-Bodenoffensive aus, and 2 in the article Nahost: Intensive Angriffe auf Ziele in Chan Junis. These words are often used to describe or are associated with Hamas or the Al-Quds Brigade.

Another word that is often used to describe Palestinian fighters is ‘Islamist’ (Islamist). It can be found 9 times throughout the three articles with a distribution of 6 in the article Nahost: Rakete aus Gaza - Waffenruhe beendet, 2 in the article Nahost: Israel weitert Gaza-Bodenoffensive aus, and 2 in the article Nahost: Intensive Angriffe auf Ziele in Chan Junis.

Not only that but the words involving ‘Terror’ are also used to describe other militant organizations. Out of the 8 times the word ‘Terrororganization’ is found, the word was used twice to describe Hezbollah, a Lebanese political and militant group, and the words associated with ‘Islamist’ are exclusively used to describe Palestinian fighters. It can be concluded that 95% of the time words involving ‘Terror’ are used to describe Palestinian militant groups while words involving ‘Islamistisch’ are used to describe them 100% of the time.

A. Structural Analysis

In the first section, we have to identify how the articles are constructed by analyzing their choice of lexicon, grammar structure, and so on. This section in particular will focus on the nouns and sentence structure that DW uses. Of the three articles examined, all of them mention how Germany labeled Hamas as a terror group. This statement comes up at least once in all of the articles and is associated with Hamas. The following excerpts in the example show how they are written in each article:

497
### Table 1.
Passages mentioning Germany classifying Hamas and Hezbollah as terror organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Article Title</th>
<th>Passage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nahost: Rakete aus Gaza - Waffenruhe beendet</td>
<td>Middle East: Rockets From Gaza - Ceasefire Ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nahost: Israel weitet Gaza-Bodenoffensive aus</td>
<td>Middle East: Israel Expands Ground Offense in Gaza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nahost: Intensive Angriffe auf Ziele in Chan Junis</td>
<td>Middle East: Intensive Attacks on Targets in Khan Yunis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Image](https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/irhs/vol9/iss2/12)

DOI: 10.7454/irhs.v9i2.1318
We can see from the table above, that the passages written in bold from all three articles are written as a Relativsatz or relative clause. According to Duden (n.d) Relativsatz or relative clause is a clause introduced by a relative. It is usually indicated by the use of pronouns or Pronomen that refer back to the clause or subject that is being explained. According to Merriam-Webster (n.d), a relative clause has purely descriptive or limiting purposes. In this case, the pronoun ‘die’ is the relative that refers back to Hamas and is used to describe Hamas as a terrorist organization.

The relative clause is also used when describing Hezbollah. In the third article, DW mentions the IDF’s attacks in Lebanon that resulted in Hezbollah coordinating an attack against Israel. Here, the main clause is Hezbollah’s announcement of Israel’s attack, and the subordinate clause is the countries labeling them as a terror organization. Interestingly, Hezbollah in this sentence is not mentioned by its name but as ‘der vom Iran unterstützten Miliz’ (The Iranian-backed militia).

Another word often found in the three articles is ‘Terorristen’ (Terrorists). The following examples are how they are written in the articles:

Table. 2 Passages using the word ‘Terorristen’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Article Title</th>
<th>Passage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nahost: Rakete aus Gaza - Waffenruhe beendet</td>
<td>Überfall auf Israel am 7. Oktober hatten Hamas-Terroristen mehr als 240 Menschen nach Gaza verschleppt und 1200 Menschen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle East: Rockets From Gaza - Ceasefire Ends</td>
<td>Hamas terrorists abducted more than 240 people in Gaza and killed 1,200 after the attack on Israel on October 7.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the two articles, DW uses hyphens to connect the words ‘Hamas’ and ‘Terroristen’ into one word. Hyphens are not widely used in German when it comes to composites, but there are some instances where hyphens are used. According to Duden (n.d.), hyphens can be used in many ways and one of them is to emphasize individual components in composites. Hyphenated variations of the word ‘Terroristen’ in the articles come up as ‘Hamas-Terroristen’ (Hamas Terrorists) which can be found as much as 5 times and ‘Hisbollah-Terrormiliz’ (Hezbollah Terror Militia) which can be found once. Here DW uses hyphens to emphasize the names of militant groups and their association with being labeled as terrorist organizations.

The use of hyphens also shows with the word ‘Islamist’ (Islamist). According to Duden (n.d.), ‘Islamist’ is a group that follows Islamism, an ideology that follows Islamic laws. In the article, Nahost: Israel weitet Gaza-Bodenoffensive aus DW wrote “der radikal-islamischen Palästinenserorganisation” meaning “The radical Islamist Palestinian organization.” In this case, DW tries to emphasize the words ‘radikal’ and ‘islamischen’ and use them to describe what Germany has deemed as a terror group. In this case, we can see that DW paints Hamas as hostile and seen as a threat emphasizing words like ‘Terorristen’ and ‘Islamist’ when describing them.

DW categorizes articles according to certain themes and the three articles examined can be found under the theme Israel-Hamas Krieg (Israel-Hamas War). The word ‘Krieg’ (War) is also repeatedly used throughout the three articles to describe the escalation between Hamas and Israel. According to Duden (n.d.), ‘Krieg’ (War) is an armed conflict between states or peoples. Describing the situation using the term ‘Krieg’ (War) could be incorrect. Although Palestine could be considered a state, it is not a sovereign state and is under the occupation of Israel. Saying that the war is against Hamas is also incorrect because Hamas is a Non-State Actor. According to the Oxford Languages Dictionary (n.d.), a Non-State Actor (NSA) is an individual or organization with political influence but does not ally itself with any particular state or nation. By that definition, Hamas does not represent Palestine as a state even in an armed conflict.
The article titled *Nahost: Intensive Angriffe auf Ziele in Chan Junis* talks about how the IDF attacked a city that was presumably a safe zone for civilians to flee. It mentions that the reason for the attack was because the IDF had found a target in the city but the specifics of the attack were never described in detail. On December 5th, 2023, Israel launched an attack on Khan Yunis, a city in the Gaza Strip, causing the death toll to rise and civilians to further evacuate North towards Rafah (Al-Jazeera, 2023). In the article written by DW, the fact that the IDF stormed the city using war vehicles was never mentioned in detail and was only described using terms like ‘*Intensive Angriffe*’ (Intensive attack) or ‘*Angriff*’ (attack).

**B. Discourse Practice**

DW is one of the biggest news outlets in Germany. Although it is founded in Germany, DW’s mainly targets a more international audience. In 2023, DW saw an increase in usage rates, reaching 320 million globally (Deutsche Welle, 2023). They claim that their target audience understands quality and that DW attracts global leaders who have a strong influential demographic (Deutsche Welle, 2015). Though they claim to be impartial, DW is still a German state-funded news network. Fairclough (2010) argues that ideology is both a property of structure and events, which means that ideology can be reflected in how a text is written in a specific time frame. Since the creation of Israel in 1948, Germany has been one of the countries that actively supports its existence and there seems to be a general consensus being supportive of Israel. Fischer (2019) argues that this consensus is not primarily driven by moral considerations related to the Holocaust but rather by a contemporary historical context of evolving political priorities. Germany benefits from doing an arms deal with Israel and both countries’ arms manufacturers engage in developing a new weapons system (Fischer, 2019). The consensus of supporting Israel is also shown in DW’s articles regarding the Palestine-Israel conflict.

Following Fairclough’s (2010) method, DW’s ideology is seen here by interpreting the relative clause in the articles. Here the journalists describe Hamas as an organization that is seen as hostile in most of the Western world and it is written several times in several articles. It can be concluded that DW’s ideology is reflected by the language used in the articles. DW believes that Hamas and Hezbollah are terror organizations, which can be seen from how they used the word ‘Terrororganization’ to describe both parties. Their choice of words here can be interpreted as in line with Germany’s policy on Israel and their stance towards Hamas.

In the articles, we see that the journalists describe Hamas as a terror group that coincides with Germany’s foreign policy and have avoided detailed descriptions when it comes to reporting the IDF’s war efforts. As mentioned in an article from *Anadolu Ajansı* (AA), *Germany’s Deutsche Welle censors critical reporting of Israel*, “**the DW’s editorial board has banned its reporters and editors from covering Israeli government’s crimes of “apartheid” and persecution of Palestinians, in a new reporting guide sent to the staff amid recent escalation in the region.”* (Anadolu Ajansı Editors, 2021). This statement indicates that DW still tends to censor words that could paint Israel in a bad light. In the same article, AA quoted Editor-in-Chief Manuela Kasper-Claridge saying, “We respect freedom of speech and opinion and people’s right to criticize any of the sides involved. However, criticism of Israel becomes antisemitism when it attempts to tarnish, discredit, and delegitimize the state of Israel or Jewish people and culture per se.”(Anadolu Ajansı Editors, 2021). AA’s article shows that even though the paper is critical of Israel, it still does not paint Israel in the wrong. DW’s attempt to censor the articles examined is shown in how they use the word ‘*Angriff*’ to describe the IDF’s operation. DW evades describing the operation as it is, which downplays the scale and effects of the attack. By reducing
the IDF’s action to just an attack and excluding details, DW evades putting the IDF in a negative light.

DW’s tendency to censor words, evade a detailed depiction of Israel’s actions, and their reluctance to harshly critique Israel has led to the creation of an Islamophobic and anti-Arab, especially Palestinian, narrative in their articles. The censors can be seen in the three articles examined by seeing what words DW chooses to describe Hamas and the IDF. This indicates that DW tends to be more biased towards Israel compared to Palestine when it comes to reporting the conflict within the regions.

As mentioned before, Hamas is a Non-State Actor (NSA) in the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Even though the driving political party in the Gaza Strip is Hamas, the Israeli government still has the power to take over the occupied region. The use of the word ‘Krieg’ to describe the conflict in the articles waters down the fact that Palestine is under the occupation of Israel and that one side has more power than the other. The areas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are under Israeli military surveillance and Palestinians’ mobility is restricted.

C. Social Practice

As it stands now, Germany has very close ties to Israel. Fischer (2019) mentions that as one of the countries with a leading role in the EU, Germany plays a major role in making decisions and has acted as Israel’s lobbyist on many occasions. After the escalation on October 7th, 2023 until December of 2023, Germany has expressed its support towards Israel either through verbal support or aid. Regarding its stance on Palestine becoming an independent and sovereign state, Germany insists on the two-state solution (Alipour, 2023). In November of 2023, German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser stated that she had implemented a ban on all activities by or in support of Hamas and continues to label Hamas as terrorists.

DW evades strong words to critique Israel to avoid anti-semitic allegations. Their stance on not wanting to be viewed as anti-semitic caused trouble when DW conducted a probe on their employees in 2021 after a known German newspaper, Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ), published an article alleging DW’s Arab department had shared antisemitic remarks (Alhindi & Eid, 2023). The investigation conducted by DW resulted in the firing of several Arab staff and many had viewed this as unlawful. One of the ex-employees, Farah Maraqa, who also happened to be Palestinian, went to court and sued DW after her dismissal in February 2022. The court ruled in her favor and deemed her dismissal, along with six other Arab employees as legally unjustified (Alsaafin, 2022). This shows that DW’s impartiality is still based on the ideals that Germany upholds and has severely disadvantaged their employees.

Sirhan (2021) describes how the language used by media can influence how readers perceive the situation between Israel and Palestine. One of the things she highlights in her book is the choice of terminology and lexicons when it comes to reporting the conflict. The constant use of the words ‘Terror’ and ‘Islamistisch’ creates an association between acts of terrorism and the practice of the Islamic religion and implies an Islamophobic message to readers. Though not explicit, these associations reflect badly not only on the Palestinian people with over 90% of the population being Muslim, but also on the whole Muslim community.

About 5.5 million Muslims are living in Germany and after the events of October 7th, many in the Muslim community in Germany feel alienated. Connolly and Feldmann (2023) wrote in the Guardian that many Muslims feel frustrated by Germany’s backing of Israel. Many pro-Palestinian marches throughout the country have been banned and deemed as an act of anti-semitism and the federal commissioner for human rights policy,
Luise Amtsberg, stated: “Terrorism must not be celebrated. We have banned demonstrations when they intend to incite antisemitism and freedom of expression must not be abused to propagate hate.” (Connolly & Feldmann, 2023). Many in the community feel unfairly targeted and there have been reports of an increase in Islamophobic attacks. As of the time this study is written, Israel has backing from the EU and the U.S. in terms of support and arms supply, not only from government officials but also from citizens. There have been marches in support of Israel throughout the globe that have been done without any restrictions. During a march in Berlin in December of 2023, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier joined in support of Israel (Deutsche Welle, 2023)

When talking about Hamas many news outlets, including DW, ignore the history of how Hamas came to be. The creation of Hamas was a result of the rise of intifada among the Palestinian people (Abu-Amr, 1993). Hamas was built in the spirit of freedom from the people after enduring years of occupation. In many instances, freedom fighters are labeled as a radical or terror group and the situation in Palestine is no different. In the effort to dismantle colonization, physical resistance almost always happens. This type of resistance also occurred during World War II when Jewish people were being stripped of their rights. On April 19, 1943, during World War II, there was a Jewish uprising in the Warsaw ghetto after German troops entered the area to deport the population. The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was one of the largest Jewish Uprising during World War II (Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, n.d.). Omidi and Mobini (2022) state that the labeling of groups as terrorists is an effort to ‘other’ a group. By painting an occupied group as hostile, it helps justify the actions being done by the occupier

CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the discussion of media bias when it comes to reporting the Israel-Palestine conflict. Focusing on one German news outlet gives a chance to see the nuance of one paper and how the company upholds its belief in impartiality in news. The study conducted on three articles from DW ranging from December 1st to December 8th, 2023 shows that though DW may be seen as impartial in passing, their reports are still heavily influenced by Germany’s foreign policy and German society’s consensus of supporting Israel. This can be seen from the nouns they use such as ‘Terroristen’, ‘Terrororganizatin’, and ‘radikal-islamischen’ that are used to describe Hamas and DW’s tendency to censor or water down terms.

DW also uses certain grammatical structures such as Relativsatz and hyphens to describe and further emphasize their views of Palestinian fighters as terrorists. Throughout the articles, DW actively avoids painting Israel in the wrong even in moments where they are critical of Israel. Their fear of being seen as anti-semitic by harshly critiquing Israel has resulted in undermining their overarching ideals. The findings show that although DW claims to be impartial, their reports show implicit bias and align with Germany’s ideals.

This study is limited to the nouns and sentence structures used in three articles from DW ranging from December 1st to December 8th, 2023. From the data collected, there is still room to explore the topic of a newspaper’s stance on not just Israel-Palestine but other global conflicts as well. Analyzing other linguistic aspects present in articles, such as verbs, adjectives, grammatical structure, and transitivity can bring more nuance to the table. By being aware of how a paper’s stance is reflected in its articles, readers can be more mindful of the narrative that a newspaper brings and not turn a blind eye to the implicit bias it may present despite claiming to be impartial.
REFERENCES


KpopDaisukiFeed. [@CaioDaisuki]. (2023, December 24). DW you are a disgrace to professional news by having such a strong bias towards Israel. All trustworthy news are [Post]. X (Twitter). https://twitter.com/CaioDaisuki/status/1738836215363723412
Rolf Diekmann. [@rollostuttgart]. (2023, October 23). Stop calling the Hamas terror organisation an "Islamist militant group". As a German tax payer I am forced to fund. [Post]. X (Twitter). https://twitter.com/rollostuttgart/status/1716461842959085714
## ATTACHMENTS

**Table 1. Passages using different forms of the word ‘Terror’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article Title</th>
<th>Passages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Nahost: Rakete aus Gaza - Waffenruhe beendet</em></td>
<td>“Israel wirft der Terrororganisation Hamas den Bruch der Vereinbarung zur Feuerpause vor.” (DW Editors, 2023)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Israel verstärkt den Krieg gegen die terroristische Hamas - auch im Süden des Gazastreifens, in den viele Zivilisten geflohen waren.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ein Sprecher fügte hinzu, der seit Wochen dauernde Einsatz gegen die Hamas, die von Israel, den USA, der EU und weiteren Staaten als Terrororganisation eingestuft ist, sei auch im Norden von Gaza noch nicht beendet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Nach genau einer Woche ist die Waffenruhe zwischen den israelischen Streitkräften und der Terrororganisation Hamas im Gazastreifen seit Freitagfrüh beendet.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Israels Armee hat im Kampf gegen die radikalislamischen Terroristen der Hamas ihre Bodenoffensive im &quot;gesamten Gazastreifen&quot; ausgeweitet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hamas-Terroristen haben aus dem Gazastreifen heraus in den vergangenen Wochen Tausende von Raketen auf Israel abgefeuert.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Die Streitkräfte begegnen den Terroristen von Angesicht zu Angesicht und töten sie.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>die noch in der Hand der terroristischen Hamas im Gazastreifen sind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nahost: Israel weitet Gaza-Bodenoffensive aus</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nahost: Intensive Angriffe auf Ziele in Chan Junis</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"wenn der Vernichtungsterror der Hamas keine Chance mehr hat, sich neu zu formieren"

Die Hamas, die von der Europäischen Union ebenso wie den USA, Deutschland und weiteren Ländern als Terrororganisation eingestuft wird, feuerte ihrerseits hunderte Raketen auf Israel ab.


Damit presste die Hamas, die von Israel, der EU, den USA und anderen Staaten als Terrororganisation eingestuft ist, 240 palästinensische Häftlinge aus israelischen Gefängnissen frei.


die Tunnel zu zerstören und die Terroristen aus ihrem unterirdischen Versteck zu vertreiben

Überfall auf Israel am 7. Oktober hatten Hamas-Terroristen mehr als 240 Menschen nach Gaza verschleppt und 1200 Menschen getötet.

Die Protestierenden warfen den Vereinten Nationen Untätigkeit angesichts der Berichte über die Vergewaltigung und Misshandlung zahlreicher israelischer Frauen während der terroristischen Hamas-Attacken vor.

Das Militär hat laut eigenen Angaben seit Beginn des Kriegs gegen die Hamas-Terroristen mehr als 800 Tunnelschächte entdeckt

"Diese seien die Befreiung aller Geiseln aus der Hand der Hamas und die Vernichtung der Terrororganisation." (DW Editors, 2023)

Hisbollah-Terrormiliz beschießt Ziele in NordIsrael

Die Terrororganisation Hisbollah im Libanon übernahm die Verantwortung für eine Attacke auf israelische Soldaten in der Nacht zu Montag sowie den Beschuss weiterer Ziele.

die neben Israel von Deutschland, den USA sowie einigen sunnitischen arabischen Staaten als Terrororganisation gelistet ist.

Tunnelsystem befinden sich nach Erkenntnissen israelischer Armeeexperten auch Kommando-, Kontroll- und Kommunikationsräume, Vorratskammern sowie Abschussrampen für Raketen der Terroristen.
hunderte Terroristen der Hamas vom Gazastreifen aus nach Israel eingedrungen und hatten Gräueltaten überwiegend an Zivilisten verübt. Auch "Terrorinfrastruktur und ein Militärgelände" seien unter Feuer genommen worden.

| Israeliischen Angaben zufolge töteten die Terroristen etwa 1200 Menschen in Israel und verschleppten 240 Menschen als Geiseln in den Gazastreifen. |

| hunderte Terroristen der Hamas vom Gazastreifen aus nach Israel eingedrungen und hatten Gräueltaten überwiegend an Zivilisten verübt. Auch "Terrorinfrastruktur und ein Militärgelände" seien unter Feuer genommen worden |

| Table 2. Passages using different forms of the word ‘Islamistisch’ |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nahost: Rakete aus Gaza - Waffenruhe beendet</td>
</tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Die islamistischen Al-Kuds-Brigaden erklären sich verantwortlich für die Angriffe auf Israel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israels Armee hat im Kampf gegen die radikalislamischen Terroristen der Hamas ihre Bodenoffensive im &quot;gesamten Gazastreifen&quot; ausgeweitet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nach der Ausweitung des israelischen Militäreinsatzes gegen die militant-islamistische Palästinenserorganisation Hamas auf den Süden des Gazastreifens sorgen sich Hilfsorganisationen zunehmend um die Hunderttausenden von Zivilisten dort.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Kampfflugzeuge bombardierten Ziele der militant-islamistischen Organisation in dem abgeriegelten Palästinensergebiet |
| Flaggen, forderten die Befreiung der noch in der Gewalt der radikal-islamischen Palästinenserorganisation befindlichen Geiseln und trugen Transparente mit Slogans wie &quot;Schande über die UN&quot;. |
| Unterkünfte errichtet, um Geflüchtete aufzunehmen. Israel wirft der islamistischen Hamas vor, regelmäßig Angriffe aus Wohngebieten und Krankenhäusern heraus zu verüben und Zivilisten als Schutzschild zu missbrauchen. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Die islamistischen Al-Kuds-Brigaden bekannten sich dazu, israelische Städte am Freitagnachmittag anzugreifen zu haben.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>teilte der militärische Arm der extremistischen Palästinenser-Organisation Islamischer Dschihad mit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>