

Our blessed homeland, their barbarous wastes

Analyzing ideologies in news reporting of the Hamas-led attack on Israel in October 2023

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Master's thesis

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April 2025

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75 pages, appendix 6 pages

Language in news media has long been and continues to be researched as a powerful proponent of ideas and ideologies. In this thesis I examine the ideological language that is present in the news reporting of two news outlets, The Times and the Irish Times, during and after the Hamas-led attack on Israel on October 7th, 2023. The purpose of this thesis is to highlight that despite the perception of news outlets often being that they report as neutrally as possible, some ideological bias still exists in that reporting. My research questions home in on the lexical choices in the articles and how they function to represent ideologies, and whether there are any differences between the reporting of the two outlets. My analysis is qualitative in nature and draws from Critical Discourse Analysis, with a focus on Marxist tradition and van Dijk's theories on ideology.

In my research I found that all examined article datasets exhibit some ideological biases towards both Israeli and Palestinian entities. Israeli entities initially get described with more positively connoted lexical choices than Palestinian entities, but this changes as the timeframe under examination moves further from the October 7 attack. The Times increase positive representation of Palestinian entities, whereas the Irish Times increases negative representation of Israeli entities. These results may indicate that existing power structures and the ideologies within them in both the UK and Ireland manifest through the news outlets of these two states.

Key words: Critical Discourse Analysis, ideology, lexical choices, news discourse, October 7 attack, Israeli-Palestinian conflict

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1 Introduction

The times we currently live in have been labeled the era of “post-truth” by some epistemologists and described as “an epistemic crisis” that is affecting (Western) democracies and media systems, with political content intent on manipulating citizens and the popular opinion (Cosentino 2020, 3–4). Whereas it is recognized that this tends to primarily affect social media communication (ibid.), more people than ever have also become increasingly critical and even grown distrusting of traditional news media partially due to rising amounts of mis- and disinformation (Reuters 2024, 9). This type of criticism and low trust are sometimes linked to political polarization in news media (Reuters 2024, 25). Sometimes, however, accusations of ‘fake news’ may be reactionary and sometimes do not contain genuine critique of the media they call out: for example, US President Donald Trump tends to call any unfavorable polling ‘fake’ (Shafer 2018). From this it can be extrapolated that critiquing the sources that give us information is vital, but it must be done in good faith.

Many different types of news media outlets, such as the traditional newspapers or the more modern news podcasts, have been an important area of research both generally in linguistics and specifically in discourse studies. Historically, in the public mind, the idea seems to have been that established news outlets are the most trustworthy way to get information about current events. This may not be completely false, but researchers nowadays agree that news articles are written by humans and humans make mistakes. Fowler (1991, 208) argues that a journalist’s own values and implicit propositions are always going to be present in the language they use and “discourse is always a representation from a certain point of view”. Whether we as readers perceive these propositions is not up to the journalist but to us.

On the 7th of October 2023, the Islamic Resistance Movement, more commonly known as Hamas (Robinson 2024), launched an attack from Gaza on several towns and cities within the Israeli border, including the major city Tel Aviv (Kingsley and Kershner 2023). In response, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) carried out several air raids on the Gaza Strip (Al-Jazeera 2023a; Kokkonen 2023), and subsequently performed a ground invasion there, which, at the time of writing, is still ongoing (Ferreira Santos 2024; Mohamed and Jamal 2024). These events were obviously significant on both a local and global scene, as they brought the ongoing occupation of the Palestinian territories back into the zeitgeist (Kokkonen 2023). Protests have been organized by all kinds of people all around the globe, on the one side advocating for Hamas to free the hostages they took during the attack, and on the other side

campaigning for an immediate ceasefire for humanitarian reasons, to shield Palestinian civilians, and for freedom of Palestine from Israeli occupation (Anderson 2023; Tress 2023).

The way the 7 October attack and its aftermath have been discussed in different established news outlets has been varied. For example, the specific events that get coverage in the first place may vary between news outlets. Al-Jazeera, which often has reporters on the ground in Gaza, may have more intricate information than any given news outlet in, for example, Finland. Consequently, what even makes headlines is a decision that is in the hands of each news outlet's editors and their journalists, and "reveals the operation of a complex and artificial set of criteria for selection" (Fowler 1991, 2, 11). These kinds of differences in conveying information to the public are a fascinating aspect of news reporting and thus facilitate interesting research.

In this thesis I answer the following research questions:

1. What kinds of ideologies can be found exhibited via lexical choices in the news articles of The Times and the Irish Times?
2. How are these ideologies presented in said lexical choices?
3. Are there any differences between the ideologies present in The Times' articles compared to the ideologies in The Irish Times' articles?

Through these research questions, I take a critical approach to two news sources operating on the British Isles and their reporting on the 7 October attack and its aftermath. I analyze the news articles that were published by The Times and The Irish Times following the 7 October attack and extract the implicit values and biases that are necessarily exhibited in them. My hypothesis is that the Irish Times tends to be more sympathetic toward the Palestinian cause than The Times due to historical burdens that still affect Irish and British politics today, and that this ideological bias will be visible in the Irish Times articles via lexical choices that work to represent Palestinian entities positively and Israel entities negatively.

Following this introduction, in section 2 I introduce the wider sociopolitical context and background information necessary to sufficiently understand the situation under scrutiny. I continue by detailing the theoretical framework used in the analysis of the thesis in section 3, with a subsection dedicated to ideology in Critical Discourse Analysis. In section 4, I elaborate the material and data that I analyze, the methods I use to analyze said data, and the ethical considerations relevant to this thesis. In section 5, I conduct the analysis of the data,

based on the theoretical framework explained in the previous section. In section 6, I further discuss the results and their implications regarding inherent power structures in global political society and provide recommendations for possible further study of this topic. I conclude my thesis in section 7 with a summary.

2 Sociopolitical background

In order to effectively and comprehensively examine the ideologies present in the data of this thesis, in this section I provide a brief overview of the major and complex social and political relations between the states and parties that are discussed in this thesis. I track some historical developments of the political dimension of news media and how that ties in with their perceived objectivity today. I introduce some relevant historical information about both Israel and Palestine, draw connections between these states and the states of the news media under scrutiny, and explain how some relevant discourse analytical concepts may already arise in the political background that comes before any data analysis. I also shortly introduce relevant history between Ireland and the UK.

2.1 News media and its objectivity

In this section I lay the groundwork for my analysis by introducing the linguistic genre of journalism and how news tend to be written. I consider the different angles that may affect what is written and what gets published, either due to editorial concerns or business matters. I also explore the history of politically motivated news reporting and the claims that media is once again increasingly polarized.

2.1.1 News media discourse

Journalism and news writing is a linguistic genre with established conventions and customs for journalists to follow, and its shape or content are affected by context of writing, structure of the news, and interaction between actors (Cotter 2010, 15). Newspapers of the printing press era are considered to have an important role as the major link between chains of information and how they cycle in communities (Smith 1979, 1). Cotter also acknowledges the sociologically important communal aspect of newswriting and argues that “communication patterns [in journalistic writing] derive from the needs or values of a particular community” (2010, 19). To connect these viewpoints to research in the field of discourse analysis, van Dijk, for example, argues that whereas the writing style of news reporting is highly formulaic and constrained, it still contains rhetorical structures and thus indicates presupposed ideological backgrounds (1988, 82).

Many different actors, such as states, journalistic organizations, or even individual newspapers have their own codes of ethics or guidelines for journalists to follow and maintain

the integrity of the field (for example, see National Union of Journalists n.d.; Press Council of Ireland n.d.). These principles often include, for example, always striving for truth and integrity in their writing, avoiding producing hatred and discrimination, and upholding media freedom (ibid.). Guidelines such as these appear to imply that exhibiting any bias in news reporting is not tolerated. However, as mentioned in section 1 and further elaborated on in section 3, the language that is used by the journalist writing news reports ends up representing a certain viewpoint, whether they intend to do so or not (Fowler 1991, 208). Whether it gets published by the news outlet depends on the editorial standpoint of said publication.

The individual journalist may be more limited in what they can or cannot publish based on the editorial policy of the publication. Editorial policies can be, for example, in line with journalistic guidelines as sets of rules that certain news outlets or journalists have agreed to accept and follow (IPSO n.d. b). These kinds of guidelines and policies help to bind individual journalists to the will of the news outlet to a certain degree. However, these guidelines are not strict laws and sometimes they are broken. To exemplify, the British news outlet BBC was recently accused of biased coverage regarding Gaza, downplaying atrocities and portraying Israel in a favorable position (Al-Jazeera 2024; Jones 2024). BBC's editorial policy explicitly states that they are committed to providing "impartial news and information to help people understand [...] the world around them" (BBC n.d.), yet these allegations directly go against this commitment. For the sake of transparency, I mention here that neither of the two news outlets under scrutiny in this thesis have similar allegations against them at the time of writing. The specific editorial policies of *The Times* and *The Irish Times* are expanded upon in section 3.

However, whether it is the primary definition or not, journalism is still a booming business, and the objective of businesses is to make money. Some concerns have been raised about news values and their compatibility with the capitalist business model: news outlets are "shaped by powerful economic incentives" (Uscinski 2014, 3). Economic research has shown that news outlets can incur more profit by "slanting" their reporting to appeal to a smaller segment of the audience, which suggests that journalistic integrity suffers under profit incentives (Uscinski 2014, 24–25). This phenomenon has been researched in the context of "clickbait journalism", or journalism that intends to drive as much interaction as possible by marketing a piece of news but withholding some critical information about it in the title (Mukherjee, Dutta and De Bruyn 2022, 483–484). Munger argues that in the social media landscape, newspieces gain more credibility the more they are liked and shared, and that is

why baiting for clicks in the title matters (2020, 376–377). News stories must compete for attention in a relatively new setting, and whereas attention-grabbing titles are nothing new, the dynamic between the media industry and political news is (Munger 2020, 378–379). Sensationalization in this vein functions to “meet[...] demands for entertainment” and happens because media firms need audience engagement to stay in business (Uscinski 2014, 76).

As per Uscinski, then, the interests of capital end up affecting news cycles. This, consequently, affects the news values that get space in the news cycle. Fowler also notes that the individual journalist can do little when it comes to the inclusion or exclusion of values conveyed in news, since they are “employed to write for an organization which is governed by the very same institutional constraints which build the ideology [of a given journalistic style]” (1991, 46). Journalism is a form of institutional discourse (Fowler 1991, 47), and thus journalistic writing is constrained not only by specific editors but also the conventions of the genre. The institutional nature of news media and its functions are discussed further in section 3. However, even with extensive research throughout decades, it is difficult to link popular mass opinions regarding politics to a single cause, such as news media (Uscinski 2014, 22).

2.1.2 Partisanship and political polarization

As briefly mentioned in section 1, concerns over news media becoming less trustworthy due to political polarization are on the rise. The history of the media industry, at least in the United States, suggests that the current state of partisan polarization in “Clickbait Media” is not an anomaly, and that the valuing of objectivity and truthfulness in the post-war era is the abnormal situation (Munger 2020, 377). In the early 19th century, newspapers were often financed by political parties or even governments, and objectivity was not held in high esteem or even considered in their reporting (Munger 2020, 378). Thus, partisanship was expected and even encouraged: independent newspapers were “rare and of little account” (Baldasty 1992, 36). Editors were themselves often “party strategists” and important parts of guiding political campaigns (Baldasty 1992, 35).

Within one generation, this approach changed: editors and publishers started declaring independent positions from parties and politics, though some continued to explicitly endorse candidates (Baldasty 1992, 36). By the year 1900, most newspapers “not only often avoided political advocacy but sometimes even scorned it” (Baldasty 1992, 37). Some reasons cited for this change towards independent journalism include new visions about what the role of

journalism could be and the increased importance of advertisers as funders rather than parties (Baldasty 1992, 37–38). Thus, the decline of partisan media came hand in hand with the incline of a business view of media (Baldasty 1992, 58). This idea then feeds back into what Uscinski discussed regarding media agenda-setting and the impact that advertisers and audiences have to it (2014, 49).

Some consider news media now to have turned back to, if not partisanship, political polarization and ideological bias. Partisan media bias presents events or “media products” in ways that criticize, emphasize, downplay or favor their qualities to keep to a narrative of certain political ideologies (Shultziner and Stukalin 2021, 372). This can manifest either as description bias, i.e. how a media product is described, or as editorial production mechanisms, i.e. what gets prioritized in news cycles (Shultziner and Stukalin 2021, 373). Since news outlets are no longer explicitly funded by political parties, these relationships of political bias are obscured from the reader and thus only discoverable implicitly. Political parties do still have the capability to influence news media agenda setting. For example, according to Hopmann et al. (2012, 185–186), correlation and causation between party press releases and news is particularly prominent during election seasons due to necessary interaction between parties and news media.

2.2 Israel and Palestine: a short history

The geographical areas known today as the states of Israel and Palestine are located in West Asia, in the Middle East bordering Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt (Gelvin [2006] 2021, 1–2). Israel and Palestine have both declared themselves independent states. Israel is recognized by 168 out of 193 UN member states and enjoys full UN membership (United Nations n.d. a; World Population Review 2024). Palestine is recognized by 143 members, with non-member observer state status of the UN General Assembly (AJLabs 2024; United Nations n.d. b). The two states have been locked in a “dispute over real estate” for over seventy years, with both Israeli (Jewish) Zionists and Palestinian Arab inhabitants claiming ownership of the historical land area that is also called Palestine (Gelvin [2006] 2021, 3). For Gelvin, this dispute is a struggle of control of two nationalist movements ([2006] 2021, 6).

In what follows, I explain the main points of the historical developments in the area and how they affect and determine the complicated conflict situation that Israel and Palestine are locked in today, and how this background facilitated the October 7 attack. I also address some concerns regarding the terms that are used to refer to said attack and the subsequent events.

2.2.1 Historical developments

The earliest known mentions of Palestine are from the sixth century, as Palaistine Syria, “Palestinian Syria” to describe the area in the Levant spanning between Egypt and Phoenicia, though the term has experienced some shift in meaning throughout different time periods (Bryce 2009, 522). During the height of European discoveries in the nineteenth century Palestine was considered the “Holy Land” that was “waiting to be reclaimed both spiritually and physically” by the followers of both Judaism and Christianity (Doumani 1992, 6). Since the mid-1800s, Palestine was controlled and “modernized” by “rulers [...], reformers [...] and consuls” of Egypt, the Ottoman Empire, and Europe variably (Pappé 2006, 4–5). Before this modernization, it was largely a rural society with a diverse population of Muslims, Christians, Jews, Ottoman soldiers and Europeans (Pappé 2006, 14).

Best et al. suggest that, above all, the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict lie in competing national projects, namely Zionism and Arab nationalism, but they recognize that religious wars and Western colonialism have also played a part in upholding the conflict ([2004] 2008, 107). Pappé argues that as much as the establishment of Israel was a Zionist project, it was a British expansionist one (2006, 50). The modern state of Israel has its origins in the rise of Zionism, i.e. the European nationalist movement that seeks to re-establish a nation state for the Jewish people in Palestine as a response to the Jewish experience of rejection and humiliation during and after the Holocaust (Best et al. [2004] 2008, 108–109). This approach has attracted criticism and continues to do so to this day. With regard to Arab nationalism, it is often brought to question whether a distinctly Palestinian nationalist movement developed alongside Zionism or only after as a counter-reaction to it, but the broader Arab nationalism movement did grow in parallel to Zionism (Best et al. [2004] 2008, 110). Large-scale Zionist Jewish immigration into Palestine had however already started prior to the establishment of either the British mandate or Israel (Pappé 2006, 39–40).

During World War One, Palestine was, alongside the rest of the Arab world, severely impacted by the war waged between Britain and the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East. In 1915 and 1916 the British promised to ensure Arab independence in return for Arab support against the Ottomans (Best et al. [2004] 2008, 111–112). This agreement ultimately ended up not including Palestine, which left Arab nationalists disappointed (Best et al. [2004] 2008, 112). Britain gained control of Palestine, and the rest of the Arab territories were divided up under French and British mandates (Best et al. [2004] 2008, 113). At the same time, in 1917,

Zionist influence in Britain facilitated a guarantee for “a Jewish home in Palestine”, which then left both Palestinian/Arab nationalists and Jewish Zionists to compete in a mutually exclusive state-building project (ibid.).

The official establishment of Israel on Palestinian land began in the wake of Britain relinquishing its mandate on the 14th of February 1947 and the UN drawing up a partition plan for the Palestinian land after deciding that both Zionist and Arab claims on the land were of equal validity (Best et al. [2004] 2008, 118–119). The solution was unsatisfactory on many fronts, for example in lack of territorial contiguity for either state (Best et al. [2004] 2008, 121). Israel declared its own statehood after the British Mandate expired, on the 14th of May 1948 (Meir-Glitzstein 2018, 114; Tal 2003, 157–158), which led to the first Arab-Israeli war, when neighboring states “crossed the international boundary into Palestine” the following day (Tal 2003, 158). The goal of this war was to liberate Palestine and to destroy Israel (Best et al. [2004] 2008, 125). This war was eventually resolved via armistice negotiations that came after it was clear that the Arabs could not win and resulted in Palestine losing some territories allotted under the UN partition plan to Israel (ibid.).

2.2.2 Current issues

Many wars have been fought between the Arab nations and Israel since the latter’s establishment (Best et al. [2004] 2008, 429), and Palestinian territories have been contested and occupied by Israel since, for example by annexing East Jerusalem and continuing to expand settlements in the West Bank (Haddad and Chughtai 2023). The progression of changing territories and Israeli occupation is outlined in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Four map images of the areas of Palestine (represented in green) and Israel (represented in blue), from 1917, 1948, 1967, and 1995. In the third and fourth map images, the red line represents Israeli occupation of Palestine. Source: Haddad and Chughtai (2023), AJLabs, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Since these geographical developments, Israel has faced and continues to face serious criticisms regarding human rights violations in Palestine. One of the most appalling claims made is that Israel is illegally harvesting organs of Palestinians and using them for research and transplants. These allegations and some proof of them first emerged in the 1990s but they continue to crop up today even after Israeli denial of them (Euronews 2023; The New Arab 2023). During the attacks that have followed the October 7 attack there have also been repeated calls that Israel is violating human rights by continuously preventing humanitarian aid from entering Gaza (Refugees International 2024).

Israel, as a Zionist project, is often conflated with Judaism and Jewish people. In contrast, to a lesser extent, Palestine may also be conflated with Islam and Muslims. As mentioned in section 2.2.1, Pappé and Best et al. consider religion to be a major driving force in the very establishment and thus existence of Israel. Thus, issues of geographical dominance, war and occupation might also become issues of religion. The proponents of “Christian Zionism” believe that in Genesis, the first book of Moses, the area in the Middle East was promised Jewish people and the state of Israel as part of God’s plan (de Fresnes 2024). This belief has since started showing up in, for example, foreign policy in the Finnish government (ibid.).

Pappé suggests that recognizing early Zionist history as a colonial project is a valuable paradigm (2012, 40–41) and that the racist assumption of referring to Palestinian natives as an ‘other’ is something that Zionists have used to justify their belonging on the land as reported in NGO censuses (2012, 54, 56). Palestinian scholar Edward Said states that it was customary to refer to Palestinians as “so-called Palestinians” in Israel in the 1970s, when US foreign policy had just started to acknowledge Palestinian representation and not consider it antisemitism (1979, 4–6). It can thus be argued that an integral part of the instalment of Israel onto the Levant has both required and caused the othering and ostracization of Palestinians.

2.2.3 The October 7 attack

On October 7, 2023, Hamas carried out a surprise attack on Israel, capturing hostages and, according to Israeli media, killing up to 700 Israelis (Al-Jazeera 2023b). In addition to Hamas, several other Palestinian nationalist militant groups took part in the attack (Raleigh, Carboni and Mehvar 2023), though most reporting tends to name Hamas as the sole perpetrator. This attack consisted of “a deadly barrage of rockets and [Hamas sending] gunmen into southern Israeli territory” (Gold et al. 2023) and has been called one of Israel’s worst security failures ever (*ibid.*; see also Berlinger 2023). Almost immediately, Israel officially declared war on Hamas and retaliated by air strikes and stopped the supply of electricity, fuel, and goods into Gaza (Gold et al. 2023). These immediate strikes reportedly killed over 400 Palestinians and injured 2,300 more (*ibid.*). Palestinian civilians were instructed to evacuate Gaza immediately, but the area has been heavily blockaded by Israel since 2007 and the civilians’ freedom of movement is very restricted (*ibid.*). Following the declaration of war, Israel started executing raids into Gaza on October 13th, 2023, and started a full ground invasion on October 27th, 2023 (Fabian 2023, Mackenzie and Lubell 2023).

Hamas is an Islamist and Palestinian nationalist political organization (Law 2020, 96). It is considered a terrorist organization by many different organizations and states (Papademetriou 2007; US Department of State n.d.) and, consequently, this attack has been largely described as a terror attack. However, some may consider it to be an organization of militants or even freedom fighters that strive to liberate Palestinians from the Israeli occupation (Youngs and Glynn 2023). The dichotomy of the terms terrorist and freedom fighter is a commonly used example to illustrate the murkiness of discussing topics with no universal definitions (Akbari 2023, 76; see also van Dijk 1995, 259–260).

On the 29th of December 2023, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) stated in a press release that the state of South Africa had filed an application to bring Israel before the court, “concerning alleged violations [...] under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (the “Genocide Convention”) in relation to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip” (International Court of Justice 2023). In the application, Israel’s behavior on the Gaza Strip was described “genocidal in character” (ibid.). On the 24th of May 2024, the ICJ ruled that Israel must, under the aforementioned Convention, “immediately halt its military offensive in the Rafah Governorate”, alongside a list of other demands intended to protect civilians in Rafah and the Gaza Strip and allow humanitarian aid to enter said areas (International Court of Justice 2024a). Following up in July, the ICJ ruled in an advisory opinion that Israel has enforced racial segregation and apartheid in occupied Palestinian territories and thus must “end its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as rapidly as possible” (International Court of Justice 2024b, 2). This decision, of course, does not have any direct implications on how the attacks conducted by both Hamas and Israel were discussed in the relevant news media back in October 2023, but reflects the current ideological frame of them during my writing of this thesis. In January 2025, Hamas and Israel agreed to a ceasefire deal, in which hostages and prisoners were to be swapped and returned to their families, yet Israel has since violated this ceasefire by continuing to bomb Gaza in March (Salaterä and Eromäki 2025).

Both in “official” media discourse and casual online discourse, there exist two conflicting viewpoints that are seen as the driving forces of what we can name either the conflict or war between Israel and Palestine, the assault of Hamas, or the genocide of Palestinians by Israel (American Jewish Committee n.d.; Amnesty International 2024). These viewpoints are sometimes referred to as “historical narratives” of what has happened in the area (Pappé 2022, 1–2) and depend on whether one sees the geographical territory that these states inhabit as historically belonging to Palestinians or Israelis (ibid.; see also Gelvin [2006] 2021, 1–14). Thus, there exists no common consensus on the question of how to refer to what exactly is happening in the Southern Levant. For the purposes of this thesis, I resolve this difficulty in referring to the conflict by turning to the recent ICJ rulings, and I conclude that the most appropriate title for the events following October 7th is Israel’s genocide of the Palestinian people.

2.3 The relationships of England, Ireland, and the United Kingdom

In this section I underline some historical currents that may affect the news reporting that is considered appropriate or accepted in England/the United Kingdom and Ireland. This primarily includes the history of the colonial relationship between the two actors. I also very briefly consider the states' foreign policy regarding Israel and Palestine and whether that could be a fruitful point of analysis. In addition, I touch upon why I chose to contrast the news reporting of Ireland and the United Kingdom, which is then expanded upon in section 3.

2.3.1 Colonial history

English control of Ireland originated from the Norman invasion in the late twelfth century, but the English crown only asserted full control in the 15th century (Stamp 2014). It was the Pope who supposedly had the right to grant authority to someone to reform the Irish Church as a papal agent and this right was initially granted to Henry II, which meant that England gained a formal claim on Ireland in the twelfth century (Ranelagh [1983] 2012, 39–40). During the Crown's rule, Ireland was led partly colonially and subsequently partly assimilated into a British cultural context (Jackson 2004, 124). Nationalist ideology began to rise in response and was visible through, for example, the creation of the Sinn Féin political movement in 1906 (Hennessey 1998, 26). In 1922, the Irish Free State was established via the signing of the Anglo-Irish treaty in 1921, only becoming fully independent as a nation state later in 1937 (Simpson 2022; Stamp 2014). In the same agreement, Ireland was partitioned, and Northern Ireland was left a part of the United Kingdom (Stamp 2014). This move was followed by the Irish Civil War, fought over the treaty between the pro-treaty Sinn Féin leaders and the anti-treaty IRA (Simpson 2022). The civil war ended as the IRA agreed to a ceasefire in 1923, which led to the “transfer of sovereignty from the British state to the Irish people” (Kissane 2005, 235). However, the violent colonial legacy continued with Northern Ireland and the Troubles in the 1960s: unionists today still wish to join the Irish island under one state (Kenny 2004, 23–24).

Ireland's relationship with the British Empire has been described as complex, ambiguous, and even paradoxical (Kenny 2004, 3). For the sake of brevity, I have not detailed every phase that the relationship of Ireland and UK have gone through. One of the reasons recognized for the weakening of native Irish culture is the prominence of the English language in Ireland, which is recognized to partly be the product of “the eradication of Gaelic culture” (Kenny

2004, 2). Irish is a language that belongs to the Gaelic branch of languages, having been established as the dominant language in Ireland by the 5th century but largely obsolete by the 19th century (An Coimisinéir Teanga n.d.). The status of Irish as the first official language was only codified in the constitution in 1937, and it is in a minority language position today (ibid.). These factors show that even after the British Empire has dissolved and the colonial relationship between Ireland and the Crown ended, the cultural influences are still prominently visible and affect the lives of Irish people.

2.3.2 Standpoints on Israel and Palestine

Ireland officially recognized Palestinian statehood on May 28th, 2024 (Department of the Taoiseach 2024). Several government leaders were quoted as specifically emphasizing the importance of the two-state solution and the future of peaceful coexistence that Palestine and Israel could have (ibid.). This recognition has garnered criticism from, for example, the Ireland Israel Alliance and the Embassy of Israel in Dublin; it was claimed in a statement that “terrorism pays” (O’Connor 2024).

The UK, as of the time of writing this thesis, does not officially recognize Palestine as a state, but the sentiment seems to be that a two-state solution is preferred (The House of Commons Library 2022, 2). The current government has also expressed sentiments that this may be about to change: prime minister Keir Starmer made promises during his campaign that Labour is committed to “recognizing a Palestinian state” which would facilitate “a safe and secure Israel alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state” (Reuters and ToI Staff 2024). As detailed in section 2.2.1, the British crown was a major player in the fact that the state of Israel came to be and exists today. This, combined with the contemporary standpoints that UK and Ireland hold towards the two-state solution and recognition of Palestine, could suggest that in some way the continued dominance of Israel over the Levant still benefits the UK.

3 Theoretical framework

In this section I introduce the field of discourse analysis my own analysis relies on, namely Critical Discourse Analysis and ideology within Critical Discourse Analysis. I begin by providing a short introduction of Critical Discourse Analysis, the umbrella category that my analysis falls under, in section 3.1. I follow up by detailing how ideology is understood in studies of this genre and explain how I use the concept for my analysis in this thesis.

3.1 Discourse and Critical Discourse Analysis

The term *discourse* has, throughout history, had many different meanings and referent phenomena attached to it. For the purposes of this thesis, Mills ([1997] 2004) provides a functional aggregation of how the term has been used in several fields of study, including linguistics, particularly related to Foucault's conception of discourse. Within linguistics, 'discourse' has historically been contrasted with 'text' and called "naturally occurring spoken language" (Mills [1997] 2004, 3). Linguists are described to use the term 'discourse' in order to turn away from viewing sentences as the sole exemplars of language use and focus on analysis of language in use instead (Mills [1997] 2004, 8). Mills adds that, in the wider sphere of research literature, "discourse [...] cannot be pinned down to one meaning, since it has had a complex history and it is used in a range of different ways [...]" ([1997] 2004), 5–6). In this thesis I consider discourse in line with this definition, as a broad umbrella term that encompasses natural language use in all its forms.

Critical Discourse Analysis (hereafter CDA) is a linguistic approach that studies the ways in which discourse is used to achieve certain social goals (Bloor and Bloor 2007, 2). This, in turn, indicates that there are some necessary power dynamics at play in CDA analyses. For Fairclough (1995, 23), critical discourse analysts are particularly interested in the relationships between language, power, and ideology. In Blommaert's ([2005] 2009, 24) view, "institutionally reproduced power" is of particular importance. This approach seems sensible, considering that as a discipline with 'critical' in its name it draws from the tradition of the neo-Marxist Frankfurt school of political analysis, among other critical traditions such as poststructuralism and postmodernism (Locke 2004, 26). In this tradition, criticality refers to the aim of emancipation from existing power structures and oppressive institutions (Locke 2004, 25–26). CDA also draws from a variety of other critical approaches, such as postcolonial, postmodern, feminist, and globalization studies (Blommaert [2005] 2009, 28).

Some scholars have started to refer to CDA as CDS (Critical Discourse Studies) to denote either its expansion into a wider transdisciplinary scope or a rejection of language-based analysis as its focal point (Catalano and Waugh 2020, 2). As my thesis stays quite put within language analysis, I continue to use the term CDA.

Some criticisms that have been levied against CDA have to do with the theories that have informed it; CDA has drawn from a variety of theorists in somewhat contradictory and incompatible ways, coming across as not concerned of the necessity to justify its sources (Breeze 2011, 501). Specifically, the theoretical foundations of Marxist and poststructuralist influences in CDA are sometimes called contradictory (Breeze 2011, 500). Even the tradition of referencing Marxist analysts has received criticism, since orthodox Marxist theory is considered discredited as mechanistic and irrelevant in academia today (Breeze 2011, 498). However, even with these criticisms I conclude that regarding this topic, the advantages of using CDA methodology do outweigh the disadvantages.

In this thesis I focus on CDA through an analysis of power dynamics. Firstly, as mentioned in section 2.1.1, the press does not neutrally reflect social reality. Instead, it contributes to the construction of said reality via linguistic means (Fowler 1991, 2). This, by extension, means that the press is exercising power not only to determine which words are used to describe certain events but also in choosing what gets published in the first place (Fowler 1991, 19). In what follows, I explain in more detail how these power dynamics appear in ideology and word choices that appear in journalistic texts.

3.2 Ideology

Here I explain what is meant by *ideology* in CDA and how this definition is useful in my analysis. I also draw connections to how ideology has been connected to news reporting in previous research. I continue by elaborating on the different discursal structures that may exhibit ideologies in discourse, especially focusing on lexical choices, as they are the focus of this thesis.

3.2.1 Ideology and CDA

In broader contexts, ideology also tends to be defined as many times as there are people to define it. The most common definition for the term ‘ideology’ is “a set of ideas, beliefs and attitudes, consciously or unconsciously held, which reflects or shapes understandings or

misconceptions of the social and political world” (Freeden 2005, 438). Some people may understand the term as something negative in connotation, as everyday use may refer to “rigid, misguided, or partisan ideas of others”, i.e. the opposite of ‘objective knowledge’ (van Dijk 2006b, 728–729). For example, it has become increasingly popular for topics related to education about race or sexual orientation to be labeled ‘political’ in nature and described as “pushing an ideology in schools” (The Learning Network 2020). In the field of political science, ‘ideology’ may also be used to refer to specific political belief systems, like liberalism or Marxism, in a neutral, descriptive sense, or even as separated, individual ‘ideologies’ (Freeden 1996, 15; van Dijk 2006b, 729). In sociological terms, ideology can also be defined as “a system of ideas elaborated in the light of certain conceptions of what “ought to be””, or a certain projection of an ideal future that an individual holds and strives for (Roucek 1944, 479).

Within a CDA context, ideology is one of the most well-known concepts, and many scholars have taken to defining and studying it. In line with the popular definition, Bloor and Bloor define it as a set of attitudes or beliefs shared by members of a social group, these attitudes being either conscious or unconscious (2007, 10, 174). Some theorists agree that the study of ideologies in discourse is intrinsically linked to analyses of class, power structures, and other sociological foci (van Dijk 1998, 7–8). Fairclough, for example, has suggested that “discoursal practices are ideologically invested in so far as they contribute to sustaining or undermining power relations” (1995, 32). He also draws connections between ideology as used in discourse studies compared to traditional Marxist analytical approaches, such as Althusser’s (Fairclough 1995, 75–77). In Marxist thought, societies are made up of the infrastructure or base, which consists of the relations of production, and the superstructure, which consists of the politico-legal and ideological frames (Althusser [1971] 2001, 90). This idea illustrates how, for example, linguistic choices in news articles prop up existing structures. Van Dijk emphasizes the multidisciplinary framework that brings study of ideologies in CDA closer to sociocognitive approaches (2001, 96; 2006a, 115) and calls ideologies “hegemonic ideas [...] as part of [dominated groups’] common sense” (1998, 23), which is also in line with the Marxist tradition.

For van Dijk (1998, 135), “[a]ll traditional approaches [to study of ideologies] agree that ideologies are social” and groups and group relations are considered an important aspect of the development and expression of ideologies. Here I focus on what van Dijk (1998, 135, 186) refers to as the institutional and organizational dimension of ideologies as a reproducing

force of ideologies. He explicitly names the mass media as an institution that is central to how ideologies are reproduced: news is produced according to practices that are governed according to the attitudes and views held by experts, and these practices are guided by “news values” as an ideology (van Dijk 1998, 187). News values include, for example, the preference for news about elites or one’s own cultural group and world region, or negative events, especially ones caused by others (van Dijk 1998, 187–188). In van Dijk’s (1998, 188) view, “the routines, actors, events and institutional arrangements in newsmaking are biased towards the reproduction of a limited set of dominant, elite ideologies”.

Since groups and group relations are so central to examination of ideologies, I also introduce a theoretical concept by van Dijk that has been used to classify how ingroups and outgroups can be portrayed. The ideological square model is a way of understanding how in-groups and out-groups are represented in discourse, based on a largely polarized model of seeing the discursal situation and with a set of strategical moves that can be used to represent said groups (van Dijk 2011, 396–397). These moves are listed as such (van Dijk 1998, 267):

1. Express/emphasize information that is positive about Us.
2. Express/emphasize information that is negative about Them.
3. Suppress/de-emphasize information that is positive about Them.
4. Suppress/de-emphasize information that is negative about Us.

This Us vs. Them model can be applied to all levels of multimodal discourse (van Dijk 2011, 397). For example, a journalist can make lexical choices by using hyperbolic descriptions to emphasize the ‘bad’ properties that are linked to a given political party or actor (ibid.).

Van Dijk also suggests that it is possible to define ideologies based on their social functions: ideological groups may be constituted, for example, via their common goals and their organization in defending group interests (1998, 146). This organization may eventually lead to institutionalization, as “many ideological groups [...] tend to organize in institutions” (ibid.). Fairclough deems that (social) institutions contain diverse ‘ideological-discursive formations’ with different discursive and ideological norms, one usually being the dominant one in any given institution (1995, 27). These ‘IDFs’ have the capability of naturalizing ideologies (ibid.). Naturalization of an ideology happens when one certain type of ideology dominates over other discourses: this particular ideology is given the status of common sense and thus becomes opaque and no longer ‘visible’ explicitly as an ideology (Fairclough 1995,

42). Fowler refers to a similar concept as “the ideology of consensus” in news media (1991, 48–49).

Naturalized or opaque ideologies connect to the wider sphere of Marxist political or linguistic theory via, again, cultural hegemony, and the structures that uphold it. Althusser ([1971] 2001, 98–100) sketches a definition of the state as a repressive apparatus and proposes that the state in this role is supplemented by ideological state apparatuses (ISAs). Some ISAs include organized religion as an ISA, educational ISA, cultural ISA, and informational ISA, which includes mass media and the printing press (Althusser [1971] 2001, 101). Althusser elaborates that holding control of the repressive state apparatus requires control of ISAs as well ([1971] 2001, 98). They provide this hegemonic power by working via ideology, in contrast to the state, which works via violence (Althusser [1971] 2001, 101). Thus, the printing press, and subsequently its modern forms, have historically been recognized as powerful proponents of ideology and ideological frames, and Marxist thinkers, such as Althusser, suggest that that ideology is most often the dominant one within a given state; the press replicates what the state says. This idea has been widely adopted: for example, Herman and Chomsky state that mass media serves “to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behavior that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society” ([1988] 2002, 1).

Regarding journalism, Richardson argues that especially during wartimes, “journalists are exposed to propaganda from all sides”, (2007, 180), and this propaganda then shapes journalism as a whole. He also connects this phenomenon to the social forces that powerful institutions, such as the government and military organizations, hold: these institutions “want to use journalism to promote their version of the war to the world” and by doing so they sway the public to accept their views (Richardson 2007, 181). It can thus be argued that journalism as the informational ISA is at least partially controlled by either other relevant ISAs, or naturalized ideologies in a given culture.

3.2.2 Discourse structures, lexical choices and ideology

To acquire a useful classification scheme for the different types of ideologies that may be present in news articles, I draw from van Dijk (1998) in this thesis. He argues that any expression of ideology in discourse mostly has a “persuasive function”, in the sense that speakers try to change the minds of hearers to align with their own (van Dijk 1998, 241, 263). This persuasion happens in relation to “hundreds, if not thousands, of relevant units, levels,

dimensions, [...], types of acts, [...] and other structures of discourse” (van Dijk 2001, 98). Some examples of these different levels of discourse structures include graphics, sound, morphology, syntax, semantics, and interaction (van Dijk 1998, 185–193).

To limit my analysis to a feasible size, I utilize a modified version of the framework used in a study conducted on news articles of The New York Times about their representation of the Egyptian army (El-Nashar 2014). Considering the topic and aims of this study, I deem that the framework is a working basis for mine as well. In his study, El-Nashar analyzes the articles using the analytical tools of labeling, lexical choices and collocations, transitivity and verbal collocations, and sentiment orientation (El-Nashar 2014, 268). In my thesis I conduct an analysis of the lexical choices taken in the news articles and how their positive or negative connotations effect the representations of the events at hand.

Van Dijk (1998, 205) argues that “knowledge about events is [...] mapped on verbally expressed meanings of text and talk, and hence partly constrained by the possible word and sentence meanings in a given language or culture”. Thus, the lexicon and the lexical choices that are used in discourse are a fruitful way of analyzing ideological meanings: substitution of one word to another might immediately show the differing semantic and ‘ideological effects’ that the first word had (ibid.). This may often manifest in discourse by the given ingroup being described with words with positive connotations, and the outgroup with neutral or negative ones (van Dijk 1998, 270). Hypothetical substitution is an important analytical tool in finding the hidden ideological effects any given lexical choice has. However, the context of the words matters just as much as the individual words themselves: merely using a word does not mean that the user believes that it should be so applied (van Dijk 1995, 260). Studying a language user’s intentions, however, is difficult at best and arbitrary at worst.

Within the context of this analysis, the entities that are most often referred to and are thus interesting points for analysis are, on one hand, the state Israel, their military the IDF, and Israeli civilians, and on the other had the state of Palestine (with a pointed interest in Palestinians as a people) and the militant organization Hamas. I take particular interest in the nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs used, since these word classes tend to also carry connoted meanings in addition to the explicitly denoted ones (Richardson 2007, 47). In section 5, I analyze these word classes and look at how the lexical choices taken present either Israel/Israelis/the IDF, or Palestine/Palestinians/Hamas. I have opted for this division, because that is the primary division that exists in the articles I analyze. I believe it is most fruitful to

assess the source material the way it is organized. By doing this I do not imply that, for example, the IDF represents every Israeli, nor that Hamas represents every Palestinian.

4 Materials and methods

In what follows, I present and justify the material and data that I collected for the analysis of my thesis, the methods I use to analyze said data, and the ethical factors that I weighed in the selection of the material and collection of the data. In addition, I weigh the ethical concerns of this research and the importance and prominence of my own ideological lens and political viewpoint in the analysis of the data.

4.1 Materials

Here I introduce the two news outlets I contrast in this study. I provide a brief overview of the history and the current standing of The Times and The Irish Times. I also detail the criteria I used in selecting the data from the output of the news outlets.

4.1.1 The Times

The Times, founded in 1785, is the oldest still-standing daily national newspaper in the UK (The Times n.d.). It has been grouped with The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph as one of Britain's "big three" of traditional newspapers (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2024). The Times is also generally considered to be a newspaper of record, i.e. a newspaper that is "touted as the preeminent and most authoritative news source documenting current events", a newspaper that is held in high esteem (Sterling 2009, 1020). According to the Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2023, 48% of members of the public surveyed trust The Times as a news source, whereas 22% do not trust them and 31% neither trust nor distrust them (Reuters 2023, 59). In 2024, the numbers stayed consistent, with 49% trusting them, 20% distrusting them and 31% neither trusting nor distrusting them (Reuters 2024, 65). Alongside its sister paper The Sunday Times, The Times has historically leaned towards a center-right policy position (Schäffner and Bassnett 2010, 35). For example, The Sunday Times supported the "Leave" position in the 2016 Brexit referendum (The Times n.d. a).

On its website (The Times n.d. b), The Times states that it is committed to following the Editor's Code of Practice as detailed by the Independent Press Standards Organisation IPSO (IPSO n.d. a). This Code of Practice is described as a "system of voluntary self-regulation" for journalists to follow to ensure "the highest professional standards" in news reporting (ibid.). These guidelines include instructions such as striving for accuracy, avoiding harassment in information gathering and avoiding discrimination based on superficial traits,

among other considerations (ibid.). Perhaps most importantly for this thesis, the Code of Practice notes that “[i]n cases involving personal grief or shock, enquiries and approaches must be made with sympathy and discretion and publication handled sensitively” (ibid.), which may be considered to include situations regarding conflict and mass violence. However, the guidelines do not provide any explicit guide on news reporting on such situations.

I selected The Times to be one of the news sources under scrutiny in this thesis because of its status and prestige both in the UK and worldwide. It is the first newspaper to use the naming pattern ‘The [place name] Times’ (The Times n.d.), after which The Irish Times as well has been modeled. While the level of trust that the public has in The Times may not be as high as a ‘newspaper of record’ would wish it to be (Reuters 2023, 2024), I still deem that its history and continued standing make it a suitable point of analysis for my thesis.

4.1.2 The Irish Times

Like The Times, The Irish Times is one of Ireland’s leading newspapers, alongside the Irish RTÉ Times and the British BBC News and Sky News that are also distributed in Ireland (Reuters 2024, 89; see also Ayling 2023). Of the public surveyed in 2023, 70% trust The Irish Times as a news source, 12% do not trust them, and 18% neither trust nor distrust them (Reuters 2023, 83), which is noticeably better than the public perception of The Times. These numbers, too, stayed consistent in 2024, with 72% trust, 13% distrust, and 16% unsure or undecided (Reuters 2024, 89). The Irish Times has gone through a variety of labels for political positioning, including “conservative”, “Protestant nationalist”, and “unionist” regarding Northern Ireland, but nowadays considers itself politically independent (The Irish Times DAC n.d. a). External sources have also described the publication to be center-right, at least in issues regarding economic policy (Brown 2015, 448).

Unlike The Times, The Irish Times does not have an explicit editorial policy stated on their website. They have instructions, for example, for people writing letters to the editor or for other user submitted content. They also state that “[a]ny member of the public may send a formal complaint about inappropriate or unacceptable content” (The Irish Times DAC, n.d. b), regarding both news articles and user content, such as comments. Having no editorial policy visible to readers does not mean that The Irish Times does not have an editorial policy at all, but it does remove that throughline from the reader’s reading of their news texts.

I selected The Irish Times as one of the news sources for this thesis because of its trusted status within Ireland, like The Times has in the United Kingdom. Even though there are differences in the polling numbers of trustworthiness between The Times and The Irish Times, I determine that, for the purposes of my thesis, these two outlets are suitable to compare.

4.1.3 Criteria for data collection

I selected to contrast these news sources as materials for this study, because their regional distributions and historical political leanings are largely similar. This means that, hypothetically, were there to be major differences in how the articles they publish exhibit ideologies, it could imply that the editors of the newspapers are explicitly choosing what can or cannot be published. As detailed in section 2.3, Ireland also has a history of being colonized, and England of colonizing, which may affect what is acceptable or unacceptable to publish in the press.

I gathered the articles based on a set of criteria, namely two dates that correspond to major events in the ongoing Palestinian genocide. The first two sets of data consist of news articles published from October 7th, 2023, to October 8th, 2023, i.e. news articles written right after and mostly concerning the 7 October attack. The second sets of data are articles from October 25th, 2023, to October 26th, 2023, i.e. news articles written right before the next major event, Israel's ground invasion of the Gaza strip on October 27th, 2023 (Boxerman 2023), took place. I selected these timeframes because I wanted to explicitly focus on the discourse surrounding the October 7 attack. By choosing to use only material from before Israel's subsequent invasion, I ensure that the articles only discuss one major event and its aftermath, which limits the number of variables I need to consider in my analysis. By also including the second timeframe, I extend the reach of my analysis beyond the initial reaction of the news outlets, which may be rushed or incomplete.

I first conducted a preliminary search on both websites by searching the terms 'gaza', 'palestine', and 'hamas' within both timeframes. I chose these search terms due to their relevance in the event under scrutiny. On The Irish Times' website, I used the internal search engine provided by their service. On The Times' website, the internal search engine had issues when attempting to look up older articles, so instead I used Google's advanced search function to find the timeframe I wanted and retrieve the articles. After narrowing down the material in this way, I chose to only include articles that directly report on the events and their

direct aftermath locally and globally, and thus exclude any political analyses, opinion pieces, letters to the editor, and other types of texts that a news publication may publish. This criterion required I hand-pick the articles included in the thesis from the preliminary search, since just searching the websites with the search terms returned all types of articles in which the terms had been used within the timeframe.

4.1.4 Data

After conducting the selection detailed above, the data analyzed in this thesis comes to consist of 26 news articles in total. From The Times' website, the data collected for this study is made up of 11 articles in total, three of which were published between Oct 7th and Oct 8th, and eight between Oct 25th and Oct 26th. The data collected from The Irish Times' website consists of 15 articles, out of which seven were published between Oct 7th and Oct 8th and eight between Oct 25th and Oct 26th. I hereafter refer to these datasets as TT1, TT2, IT1, and IT2, respectively. In IT2, three of the articles are originally published to another newspaper's site, e.g. The New York Times, but have then been republished by The Irish Times. I chose to include them, because by publishing them, The Irish Times has deemed them to match their editorial policy and thus to be suitable for them to publish under their name. The articles making up each dataset are listed here in a short format, and the precise sourcing information can be found in the References section.

Table 1. Datasets

TT1	TT2	IT1	IT2
Stubley et al. 2023	Dawber & Spencer 2023	Weiss and Wall 2023	The Irish Times 2023c
Lazareva, Agnew and Callaghan 2023	Spencer 2023	Wall 2023a	Weiss 2023a
Shakib 2023	Scott and Maguire 2023	Wall 2023b	Weiss 2023b
	Scott 2023a	The Irish Times 2023a	Leahy 2023a
	Scott 2023b	The Irish Times 2023b	Leahy 2023b
	Grylls 2023	Malone and McGee 2023	Cave 2023
	Cheeseman 2023a	McGee 2023	Khaled and Saleh 2023
	Cheeseman 2023b		Kingsley 2023

I retrieved the articles that form the data from the respective online publications of the two newspapers due to the ease of accessibility. The Irish Times website allows anyone to read up to five articles a week for free; all articles on The Times' website are only available to subscribers. I gathered the data into two separate Word files, one for The Times' articles and one for The Irish Times', to make handling the whole of it easier. Though most of the articles have pictures and videos to illustrate the topics they discuss, I chose to omit them from my analysis and only focus on unimodal written material due to limitations of scope. Captions attached to the pictures and videos are, however, taken into consideration in the analysis. In addition, some of the articles include links to other relevant articles within the running text: I chose to omit these linked titles from analysis, since they bear no direct relevance to the language that is used in the news articles proper.

4.2 Methods

Having presented the data, I now go over the methodology I use to scrutinize it. This includes the theoretical framework I detail in section 3, and the methodology of Close Reading I use to apply that framework to the data.

4.2.1 Analysis of ideologies via Close Reading

In this thesis I utilize a qualitative method rather than a quantitative one. I analyze the lexical choices of the articles through Close Reading. It is a "mindful, disciplined reading of an object with a view to deeper understanding of its meanings" that is utilized in criticism or critical analysis (Brummett 2019, 8). Methods are ways in which theories can be applied to the world, as explained by Brummett (2019, 34). He goes on to introduce some techniques that can be used to conduct a close reading of any given discursal interaction: one of them is the detection of form (Brummett 2019, 45). Form is the structure that organizes text, and it goes hand in hand with content, which is the information relayed by text (Brummett 2019, 45–46). A narrative is a kind of form that information may take; a newspaper reporter is described as gathering a bunch of facts and then writing a story with them by combining them into a form called a story, or a narrative (Brummett 2019, 47). In addition to other elements of narrative (Brummett 2019, 50), this can be done via alignment and opposition, i.e. being 'for' and 'against' things (Brummett 2019, 55).

Constructing a narrative via lexical choices can be compared to exhibiting an ideology. Brummett defines ideology in the Close Reading context to be "a systematic network of

beliefs, commitments, values, and assumptions that influence how power is maintained, struggled over, and resisted” (2019, 69). Ideology like this is mostly both maintained and resisted in day-to-day interaction, so any text can exhibit ideology (Brummett 2019, 70). Questions that can be asked of a text when conducting a close reading of ideologies include “what does the text ask the audience to assume?” and “who is empowered or disempowered?” (ibid.). Considering these questions among others helps guide my analysis in section 5.

With this analogy in mind, in conducting my analysis via Close Reading, I also draw from the theoretical framework I detail in section 3. This includes extracting lexical choices, i.e. nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs, that exhibit either positive or negative connotations and considering how they implicitly or explicitly reflect authorial opinions, in the light of how ideology is detailed in section 3. This study is qualitative in nature, but I use illustrative examples and tables throughout to underline and validate my analysis.

4.3 Ethical considerations

When it comes to newspaper articles and news publications in general, there are next to no glaring research ethical issues in analyzing them. News media are often elevated to the position of Fourth Estate, or fourth branch of government, traditionally alongside the legislative, the executive, and the judicial branches of government, with some regional differences in naming the actors. Thus, it is imperative that they are also subject to similar scrutiny under a system of checks and balances to monitor their influence and performance.

When discussing such volatile topics as in this thesis, it is important to acknowledge one’s own values and possible biases as a researcher. As already briefly touched upon in section 2.1, this thesis topic has required I make explicit value judgments to analyze the data.

Personally, I hold the opinion that Israel is currently committing a genocide in Palestine against Palestinians, and world governments should be advocating for at least an immediate ceasefire and subsequently consequential punishments for Israel. I believe that Hamas is not as significant a threat to Israelis as Israel and IDF are to Palestinians. These judgments I have made, and my personal ideology, both obviously affect the lens through which I assess the world. To avoid my personal political stance affecting the objectivity of the analysis and results of this thesis, I have detailed the theoretical framework I adhere to in my analysis in sections 3 and 4.2.

5 Analysis

In this section I conduct my analysis on the data I present in section 4.1. I examine the lexical choices that are used to represent or refer to the actors in the events and consider the connotations that come with the lexical choices and thus are applied to said entities. I specifically look at the nouns, noun phrases, adjectives, adverbs, and verbs in the articles. I focus on the lexical choices made in the articles that make up the datasets. I consider each dataset as a whole, and weigh the lexical choices taken according to the positive or negative connotations that they have exhibited. In the following subsections, I detail the ways in which lexical choices in each dataset either exhibit or do not exhibit ideological values with the positive or negative connotations they have. I present these lexical items in tables, and where context is necessary to understand what is meant by a given item, I provide it in square brackets. If a given lexical choice is used throughout the dataset to refer to both Israel, Israeli people or the IDF, and Palestine, Palestinians or Hamas, I mark it with an asterisk. Regarding verbs, I consider the basic form and its conjugations as separate tokens of one type.

The research questions I answer in this analysis and subsequently expand upon in section 6 are as follows:

1. What kinds of ideologies can be found exhibited via lexical choices in the news articles of The Times and the Irish Times?
2. How are these ideologies presented in said lexical choices?
3. Are there any differences between the ideologies present in The Times' articles compared to the ideologies in The Irish Times' articles?

5.1 Lexical choices in TT1

Here and in the following sections I detail the exact lexical choices that connote ideologies that are present in each dataset. As explained above, I focus on nouns and noun phrases (hereafter NPs), adjectives and adverbs, and verbs, as they most often tend to exhibit ideological characteristics.

5.1.1 Nouns and noun phrases in TT1

In TT1, there is some variation in terms of generally value neutral nouns and NPs and explicitly positively or negatively charged terminology. Most instances of ideologically connoted nouns and NPs appear in reported speech from politicians and not in the words of

the journalist per se. However, there are also some instances in which the words a journalist has chosen do reflect ideological bias via positive and negative connotations.

Table 2. Nouns and noun phrases referring to Israel, Israeli people, or the IDF in TT1

Positive	Negative
Innocent people, victims	Colonialists, occupation & occupation forces, extremist settler groups
Vengeance	Aggression
Right to defend themselves/itself	Crimes, massacres [towards civilians]
Passers-by, friends	Annihilation [of Israel's newish state]
	Failure [of the Israeli army]
	The enemy*

The NP “right to defend themselves/itself” is used three times in TT1, each time describing Israel, and all instances are reported speech by American and French politicians. By using the more convoluted NP “right to defend itself/themselves” instead of, for example, the nouns ‘attack’ or ‘counterattack’ or even ‘right to attack/counterattack’, the politician in question is conjuring an image of a victim entity that is responding to injustice it has faced, therefore justifying the actions it takes in facing and resisting this injustice. The noun “vengeance”, used by Israel’s prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu, serves the same purpose: Israel and the IDF will commit violence as a justified response, and an Israeli revenge is validated. When this idea of justified defense is combined with the terminology and recognition of the settler colonialism Israel has enacted and enacts in Palestine, it implies an ideologically colonial framework: Israel is called colonial and the people are called colonialists and settlers, but “the right to defend itself” still grants them the right to be there.

The Israeli people are assigned several labels that depict them positively. “Innocent people”, “victims”, “passers-by”, and “friends” are labels exclusively attributed to Israeli people. These descriptions of people conjure an image of helpless, blameless individuals who deserve to be saved. Out of all instances of these terms, most appear in reported speech lamenting the violence Israeli people experienced, but “passers-by” is used by the writing journalist twice to describe Israeli civilians. This turn of phrase especially emphasizes the innocence of the Israelis and in turn also the injustice in the violence they experienced: these people might not have even intentionally been in the area where the attacks happened, but experienced violence by a stroke of bad luck. These terms are used alongside the more ideologically neutral ‘civilian’, which also appears throughout the dataset to refer to mostly Israeli entities. This

word appears in each subsequent dataset as well, sometimes to refer to Palestinian entities too, but I do not go over these instances again.

On the negative side, Israel's status as a colonial settler state is brought up multiple times in varying terms. "Colonialists", "occupation forces" and "extremist settler groups" are nouns and NPs attributed to Israel and IDF by the president of the Palestinian National Authority Mahmoud Abbas, and the head of Hamas' military wing Al-Qassam Brigades at the time Mohammed Deif. In total, these terms are used six times in reported speech and only refer to Israel and related entities. In addition, "aggression" is used twice by Abbas to describe Israeli action against Palestinians and "Islamic and Christian sanctities" (Stubley et al. 2023), and "crimes" is used by once by Deif and once by Hezbollah to invalidate the actions committed by the Israeli occupation now and in the past. Stating that a given state is a colonial entity and has committed crimes towards a population is obviously a negative judgment about that state.

Interestingly, some negative qualities are also assigned to Israel and the IDF by a journalist and some interviewed Israelis. The IDF's relatively slow response to the October 7 attack is described as a "failure", which implies that this army, which is recognized as one of the most advanced in the world, has failed in its task, and thus places Israel in a position in which it could be seen as weak. "Annihilation" is a noun presented by the journalist and referring to the supposed destruction of the state of Israel. Using a violently charged word like this facilitates the idea that Israel is under an existential threat, be it from Hamas or, as implied in this use context, other neighboring states. "Annihilation" could also imply that Israel would be powerless in this hypothetical scenario to stop their destruction from taking place.

Table 3. Nouns and noun phrases referring to Palestine, Palestinians, or Hamas in TT1

Positive	Negative
Martyrs	Terrorist(s), terrorism
Divine backing	The enemy*, enemies, our [Israel's] enemy
	Tool [in Iran's campaign against the West]
	A grave mistake
	Infiltration

The word 'terrorist' has been recognized as highly value-laden by scholars (e.g. Akbari 2023) and consequently reflects ideological bias when used. In TT1, the words "terrorist" or "terrorists" are used 21 times in total to refer to Hamas exclusively, with one additional instance referring to an Iranian organization. Out of the 21 instances, 14 are reported speech,

i.e. “terrorist” has been used by, for example, leading politicians like Netanyahu, and The Times is directly reporting on it. Two of these instances happen when legislation is being referred to. For example, in Lazareva, Agnew and Callaghan (2023), it is explained that “ Hamas [...] has been designated a proscribed terrorist organization by the UK and the US”. However, in five instances, “terrorist” is clearly assigned to Hamas by the journalist writing the article. For example, Israeli hostages are described as being “paraded through the street by Hamas terrorists” (Lazareva, Agnew and Callaghan 2023) and a question is posed about how “a terrorist group [...] [could] break through and launch a brazen and effective attack [...]” (Stubley et al. 2023). Out of these five instances, four appear in one singular news article (Lazareva, Agnew and Callaghan 2023), and one appears in an article that has collected information into one concise packet (Stubley et al. 2023). It appears in a section that quotes an analysis piece also written by Louise Callaghan. In addition to the one instance mentioned, Shakib (2023) and Stubley et al. (2023), exclusively refer to Hamas as “fighters”, “gunmen”, “militants”, “combatants”, “troops”, and interestingly, “Palestinians” and “Palestinian fighters”, outside of reported speech. The former are relatively value-neutral ways to describe the militant organization. The latter may be due to other Palestinian militant groups aside from Hamas also being implicated in conducting the attack, yet by using the noun of the national population it still equates the attack to being committed by the entire population. In addition, the articles in TT1 do not mention any of these other Palestinian groups by name and only directly refer to Hamas as the perpetrator, thus leaving the reader with knowledge of only Hamas’ responsibility. Naming “Palestinians” as the perpetrators of the violent attacks described also obscures the responsibility of a handful of groups/actors. This, combined with the simultaneous use of “terrorist(s)”, may end up implying that all Palestinians are terrorists. These factors may indicate that in Lazareva, Agnew and Callaghan (2023), one or multiple of the authors are indicating ideological bias by using negatively charged nouns to describe a group that is referred to via more neutral terms by other authors. However, it could also be that The Times as a publication has an implicit policy about, for example, referring to groups internationally recognized as terroristic as such that the other articles in TT1 are not following.

Due to these ambiguous characteristics, it may not be constructive to claim that “terrorist” here is always intended to be used to construct an ideological frame of an enemy actor, since it is also used to refer to legislation and existing institutions. However, the nouns “(the) enemy” and “enemies” are very explicit calls for the recipient to start seeing the entity that is

referred to in a negative light. In total, these variations are used eight times throughout TT1. One of these instances is by Deif, referring to Israeli actors, and the other seven are by Netanyahu, Israel's at the time security minister Yoav Gallant, and Israel's opposition leader Yair Lapid, all referring to at least Hamas and supposedly other Palestinian groups as well. All instances appear in reported speech, which means that the journalists are not making these ideological judgments. However, Netanyahu alone is quoted using 'enemy/enemies' five times, and the Israeli viewpoint thus gets more visibility. This lopsided representation of Hamas and other Palestinian actors as an Other, an 'enemy', implies that the ideological framework that is presented in TT1 favors the Israeli representation of events. Since many important people from the Israeli government seem to agree that they have an enemy that will, according to Netanyahu, "pay an unprecedented price" (Lazareva, Agnew and Callaghan 2023), and even the opposition agrees, it can be seen as more validated. Deif is only quoted to use it once, which could be seen as representing Hamas' viewpoint, but could also be dismissed as one person's opinion.

"Martyrs" is very explicitly intended to conjure an image of someone heroic who died for a cause. In TT1, it is used by Deif to describe "hundreds" of Palestinians who "died [in 2023] due to the crimes of the [Israeli] occupation" (Lazareva, Agnew and Callaghan 2023). This turn of phrase combined with the noun 'martyr' construes an image of Israel as an unjust aggressor and Palestinians as the innocent victims, who, regardless of their surroundings, continue to resist oppression. However, this message may be watered down in the press, since it is coming from the leader of a group that is often deemed terroristic, and not the journalist writing this text.

Some of these lexical choices in TT1 manage to diminish the agency of Palestine, Palestinians, or Hamas regarding the attack. More blatantly, an unnamed source who is hinted at being a British government employee calls Hamas "just another tool in Iran's campaign against the West" (Stubley et al. 2023), which attempts to shift blame of the October 7 attack and Hamas' influence in Gaza onto Iran. This, firstly, negatively construes Iran as an additional 'enemy' to the West in this conflict, and secondly, negatively construes Hamas as an entity that has no political will or agency. On the positive connotation side, Hezbollah states that Hamas' attack had "divine backing", which is in reference to the common ground the organizations share in being Islamic. This NP may also be a way to shift agency from Hamas to a higher power, in that they have acted at this higher power's will. "Divine backing" is thus also used to justify Hamas' actions regarding the October 7 attack. In

addition, when Gallant states that by attacking Israel Hamas made “a grave mistake”, he implies that the attack was not intentional and perhaps happened by accident, or at least happened without due consideration of the risks and rewards involved.

5.1.2 Adjectives and adverbs in TT1

As for the adjectives and adverbs that are used in TT1, most of them in general appear in reported speech, and only a few ideologically charged words are used by the journalist explicitly. In contrast to the nouns and NPs in Tables 2 and 3, in which ideologically connoted words used were quite balanced, Tables 3 and 4 show that Israel and related entities are noticeably more often represented positively and Palestine and related entities negatively.

Table 4. Adjectives and adverbs referring to Israel, Israeli people or the IDF in TT1

Positive	Negative
Overwhelming [force]	[people have been] brutally [murdered]
Mighty [vengeance]	Unconscionable [Israeli suffering]
Heartbreaking [violence in Israel]	Supposedly [state-of-the-art security]
Unwavering [US support for Israel's security]	
Best-funded, most developed [military]	
Plucky	
Retaliatory [war]	

Most of the ideologically connoted adjectives and adverbs that are found in TT1 are related to either actions that the IDF is recommended to take or properties the IDF has. In addition, most are once again used in reported speech and not by the journalist. For example, “overwhelming” and “mighty” are used by Trump and Netanyahu, respectively, to describe and justify how much force Israel should or will use in reacting to the October 7 attack. In contrast, “heartbreaking” and “unwavering” are used by US President at the time Joe Biden to express and specifically emphasize US solidarity with Israel, Israelis, and the IDF. However, “best-funded”, “most developed”, and “plucky” are lexical choices made by the journalist. The first two refer to the IDF and assign universally positive qualities to said entity. The last one refers broadly to Israel, personifying the state itself “against its Arab neighbours” (Stubley et al. 2023) and thus describing this personification as courageous or full of determination, literally against a perceived Arab Other.

In TT1, the Israeli invasion is described once by Netanyahu as a “retaliatory war” and once by the journalist as a “retaliatory assault”. The connotation that “retaliatory” here holds can be

contested. When regarding the context of the October 7 attack, the Israeli response and subsequent invasion can be seen as a retaliation and a response, but as detailed in section 2.2, the conflict in the Levant has much deeper roots and such a complicated history that this interpretation may not always be satisfactory. However, whether we read it as a true or a false description, “retaliatory” here provides the function of, once again, justifying Israel’s actions following the October 7 attack, and thus places them in a positive light.

Contrary to what one might expect, the lexical items with negative connotations in Table 3 do not particularly paint Israel, Israeli people, or the IDF in a bad light. Instead, whereas these adjectives and adverbs do hold negative connotations, the effect they have in portraying said entities is mostly a victimizing, and not a villainizing one: Israelis are described as “brutally murdered”, and their consequent suffering is described as “unconscionable”. Being the victim in a situation is undoubtedly a negative situation for one to be in, but it evokes sympathy rather than anger or disdain. The only exception here is the adverb “supposedly”, used by the journalist in the sentence “[t]he Israeli-Gaza border is one of the most heavily fortified on earth, defended [...] by Israel’s supposedly state-of-the art security and surveillance systems” (Lazareva, Agnew and Callaghan 2023). It suggests that whereas Israel’s fortifications are considered top-notch, this consideration might not be justified in the context of the October 7 attack.

Table 5. Adjectives and adverbs referring to Palestine, Palestinians or Hamas in TT1

Positive	Negative
Extraordinary [moment of success]	Bloody [moment of success]
	Brazen, murderous, inadmissible, brutal [attack]
	Appalling [that civilians are held hostage]
	Horrific [violence], exceptional [brutality toward Israelis]
	Proscribed [terrorist organization]

The only positive quality that is assigned to either Palestine, Palestinians or Hamas in TT1 through adjectives and adverbs is via the lexical item “extraordinary”. It is used by the journalist to describe how the October 7 attack was a success for Hamas in working toward their goals, but it is then immediately contradicted by the journalist also using the negative adjective “bloody” in the same sentence to describe the same event.

In line with the positive qualities, the negative lexical choices in TT1 also only represent Hamas and do not directly consider Palestine or Palestinians at all. Hamas' attack is described as “brazen”, “murderous”, “inadmissible” and “brutal”, and its aftermath as “appalling”, “horrific” and “exceptional” in brutality. This, in connection with how Israel and Israelis are represented in TT1, facilitates a victim/perpetrator ideological representation. “Brazen” and “brutal” are used by the journalist, whereas “murderous”, “inadmissible”, “appalling” and “horrific” appear only in reported speech. In addition, Hamas as an organization is described “proscribed”, which is also used as a verb within TT1, meaning that anything the organization does is technically forbidden in the eyes of the UK and US. These seven descriptors are used 11 times in total. The combination of all these negatively connoted words works to create an image in the reader's mind of an extremely violent attack that is also wholly unjustified in nature, committed by an actor that should not be allowed to exist in the first place.

5.1.3 Verbs in TT1

Positively or negatively connoted verbs in TT1 are more so used in connection to Palestinian actors than Israeli actors. This is not surprising, since the articles discuss the October 7 attack and thus place the emphasis on the perpetrator as an agent. As a general note, and as discussed above, the NP “right to defend itself” given to Israel also contains the verb “defend”, which implies shielding oneself from an aggressor. Due to having discussed this NP earlier, I do not expand upon it here. Table 6 lists the positive and negative verbs referring to Israel, its citizens or the IDF in this dataset.

Table 6. Verbs referring to Israel, Israeli people or the IDF in TT1

Positive	Negative
Will win [the war]	[government politicians are] sleeping
Flee(ing)*, [people are] hiding*	
Operate	
Avenge	
[Israelis] have been murdered, paraded [through streets by Hamas]	

Regarding Israel and the IDF, Netanyahu is quoted three times to say that “Israel will win” the war (Stubbley et al. 2023), which creates a positive incentive for the actions they take in the wake of the October 7 attack. This idea is complemented by Netanyahu also emphasizing that Israel will “avenge” the attack and “operate” “everywhere and in full force” (Lazareva,

Agnew and Callaghan 2023). “Operate” can also serve the function of obscuring what the reality of Israel’s actions will be: instead of saying something like ‘attack’ or ‘wage war’, Netanyahu has pre-emptively diminished the violent impact of the IDF supposed future actions and thus ideologically framed it more positively.

In contrast, by describing Israeli people as “fleeing” and “hiding” from Hamas, Israelis are construed as victims and thus given a sympathetic ideological frame. “Fleeing” and its conjugations are used four times throughout TT1, with two of them referring to Israelis in the October 7 attacks and two to Palestinians in Gaza in Israel’s attack. This frame towards Israelis is also emphasized by the violent connotations in the verbs “murdered” and “paraded”, which in their respective contexts further victimize them. In contrast, the verb “sleeping” when Israelis refer to their own government creates a feeling of division between the leaders and the people and conveys a distrust towards the government. This division might imply that the articles included in this dataset generally intend to portray Israelis as more human than the Israeli state and government. Table 7 lists the positive and negative verbs used to refer to Palestine, Palestinians or Hamas in this dataset.

Table 7. Verbs referring to Palestine, Palestinians or Hamas in TT1

Positive	Negative
Support(s)	[Hamas] is hiding*
Fled*	Condemn [about Hamas’ attack]
	Infiltrate(d), stormed [through Israel’s defenses]
	Proscribe(d)
	Cleanse [Hamas actors from Israeli settlements]

As with adjectives and adverbs, it seems that rapport is established more often with Israeli entities than with Palestinian entities. “Supports” as a verb is used in TT1 once, by Iranian leadership regarding Hamas’ attack. This may not have any direct bearing on Palestine, Palestinians, or Hamas as entities, but, again, gives validation to Hamas’ reasoning for the attack. As mentioned regarding Table 6, “fleeing” is equally attributed to Israelis and Palestinians, to both with similar connotations.

“Condemn” and “proscribe(d)” fill somewhat similar linguistic purposes in that both imply that firstly the October 7 attack and by extension Hamas are deplorable and should be rejected and forbidden. The former and its conjugations are found in TT1 five times, and the latter twice. This theme is further emphasized by using the verb “cleanse”: through this verbiage,

Hamas is understood as metaphorically dirty and thus further ostracized. In addition, “infiltrated” and “stormed” both imply an aggressive and subversive attack, both of which can be understood to go against the ethics of ‘proper’ warfare.

Interestingly, “hiding” is found used to separately describe both Israeli civilians and Hamas. As mentioned above, in the case of Israeli people it is construed more positively, but when Hamas is described to be hiding, it is accompanied by Netanyahu’s comments about Israel’s “mighty vengeance” and “destroy[ing] Hamas’s capabilities” (Lazareva, Agnew and Callaghan 2023; Stubbley et al. 2023). These collocated elements imply that hiding is a positive quality when Israelis do it but a negative quality when Hamas does it.

In general, the lexical choices in TT1 seem to have some evident through lines in deciphering their ideological biases. First, regarding nouns and NPs, positive and negative connotations seem to be quite balanced between ones that refer to Israeli entities and ones that refer to Palestinian entities. However, one big discrepancy between them is that Israeli people are more often attributed positive lexical choices, such as “friends” and “victims”, and on the other hand the representation hinges heavily on referring to Hamas’ status as a terrorist organization, and the Palestinian people are not considered as much. Second, in the cases of verbs, adjectives and adverbs there seems to be a noticeable slant in representing Israeli entities overall more positively than Palestinian entities. This may be due to the focus on Palestinian entities being on Hamas as the perpetrator of the October 7 attack, but it may also exhibit negative ideological bias towards Palestinians in general.

5.2 Lexical choices in TT2

In what follows I go over the relevant lexical choices found in the dataset TT2. I also pay attention to any differences in general themes following analysis of TT1.

5.2.1 Nouns and noun phrases in TT2

Considering nouns and NPs in TT2, as presented in Table 8, there are some clear differences in comparison to TT1. Firstly, the number of nouns/NPs used to negatively represent Israeli entities increases. In addition, some of these include lexical choices that involve harsher judgements than in TT1. Secondly, positive representations of Palestinian entities seem to increase in tandem as well, but this increase is not as noticeable, nor is it completely overriding the negative representations.

Table 8. Nouns and noun phrases referring to Israel, Israeli people or the IDF in TT2

Positive	Negative
Vengeance	Mistake
Sorrow	Criminals, crime [in Gaza]
Right to defend itself, right to self-defence, right [to block water and power to Gaza]	Aggression [toward Lebanon], raids [in Gaza]
	Occupation, apartheid [in Gaza, akin to South Africa], ethnic cleansing [of Palestinians], genocide
	Failure [to address Palestinian issue]
	Brutality, bloodshed

Again, the nouns “vengeance” and “sorrow” serve a purpose of victimization. Both appear once, and both are reported speech of Netanyahu. They establish Israel and Israeli people as the victim of a “terror attack by Hamas” (Dawber and Spencer 2023) by first defining that whatever Israel does next is in retaliation to said attack and then by emphasizing the emotional angle of the Israeli prime minister. Thus, victimization here is conducted to generate a positive ideological frame.

Similarly to TT1, in TT2 the Israeli “right to defend itself” is verbalized. In TT2 it is also accompanied by other descriptors of the noun “right”, such as “right to self-defence” and “right to cut off power and water to Gaza” (Scott 2023a). These similar NPs appear 16 times in total, with all of them being reported speech and 14 of them having been said by current UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer. Two of these instances are in a negative form. For example, he is quoted as having said: “I was not saying that Israel had the right to cut off water, food, fuel or medicines” (Scott 2023c). The remaining two uses are by Prime Minister of France Emmanuel Macron and Queen Rania of Jordan. This NP, again, is a justification for Israeli actions and violence in the wake of the October 7 attack: even when Starmer negates some “rights” Israel is supposed to have, he still holds on to their “right to self-defence”. The increase in usage combined with the harsher criticisms of Israel’s actions in TT2 seems to imply that this justification is needed more now than it was needed during the initial October 7 attack.

As already mentioned, Israel’s actions following October 7th are criticized more in TT2 than in TT1. There are noticeably more separate instances of nouns and NPs with negative connotations in this second dataset than in the first dataset. For example, there are several nouns and NPs that refer to the violent acts of the Israeli state, notably “criminals” and

“crime”, “aggression”, and “brutality”, among others. The common denominator in these lexical choices is often the connoted idea that this violence is unjust, hence, for example, “bloodshed” instead of, say, ‘military operation.’ In total, nouns and NPs that are used to refer to Israel’s violence appear 10 times, most of them being in reported speech from actors such as Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khomeini and UK government shadow minister Imran Hussein. This may reflect changing notions on how Israeli entities are viewed in world politics through a journalistic viewpoint.

At this point, as the situation has evolved since October 7th, 2023, so has the rhetoric. In contrast to TT1, in TT2, there are several explicit recognitions of unacceptable levels of violence: the state of Israel is accused of committing “genocide”, “ethnic cleansing”, and “apartheid”. In total, these largely interchangeable nouns and NPs are used eight times. The first two are only used in reported speech, whereas the last one is used twice by the journalist to report on public sentiments. “Genocide” and “ethnic cleansing” are reported to be used by Queen Rania, the large Muslim community in London, and Labour shadow minister Sarah Owen referring to the UN’s position. By reporting on these sentiments, the articles in TT2 are facilitating a framework that portrays Israel in an ideologically very negative light.

“Apartheid” is in reference to the policies of segregation enacted specifically in South Africa and it is by analogy used to describe Israel’s measures towards Palestine, though this specific analogy is recognized as controversial (Wittmann 2016, 13). By still making this analogy, the journalist is explicitly placing the Israeli state into a very negative ideological framework via comparing their current actions to those of a historical state that has been mostly condemned in the public eye.

Table 9. Nouns and noun phrases referring to Palestine, Palestinians or Hamas in TT2

Positive	Negative
Liberation group	Terrorist(s), terrorism, acts of terror / terror attacks
Win	Murderer(s), perpetrators of atrocities
Resistance	Massacre [on October 7], onslaught
Humanitarian emergency	Antisemitism
	Cleaning, destroying [of Hamas]

In comparison to TT1, TT2 exhibits more instances of positively connoted nouns and NPs, as illustrated by Tables 2, 3, 8 and 9. Most notably, Hamas is twice referred to as a “liberation group” by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. This framing does the opposite of

referring to Hamas as “terrorists”, and instead portrays their actions as being opposition to Israel’s hostile actions that are also referred to as “apartheid”. In addition, “humanitarian emergency”, which is used twice by Starmer, implies that Palestinians are experiencing condemnable levels of aggressor violence, and not just, say, a ‘war’ or a ‘conflict’. When we solely focus on Tables 3 and 9, there is also a noticeable uptick in how agency is allotted to Palestinian entities. For example, compared to “divine backing” in TT1, “resistance” and “win” imply that it is, in fact, “the Palestinian resistance” (Dawber and Spencer 2023) that is responsible for the victories that the Palestinian entities have experienced at that point, and not a higher power. Both nouns are used once regarding Palestinian entities.

As already discussed, evoking terms such as “terrorist” and “terror attacks” is rooted in a common ideological framework that portrays the entity under scrutiny in a very negative light. In TT2, this terminology is used in 16 separate instances all referring to Palestinian entities, out of which three are used in negation, i.e. “Erdogan [sic] had said that Hamas was not a terrorist organisation” (Dawber and Spencer 2023). All 16 instances can be seen as reported speech, with most of them being explicit and two instances slightly unclear. The negative connotation of “terrorism” is balanced out in this dataset by Hamas also being referred to as a “liberation group” and as practicing “resistance”. In addition, Hamas is also referred to as “murderers” and “perpetrators of atrocities” once each by Netanyahu and as having committed a “massacre” and “onslaught” three times in total, one of them by Netanyahu and two by the journalist.

Uniquely to TT2, the noun “antisemitism” is used five times in total, with three not directly related to any entity under examination here, but two of them possibly referring to Hamas or its collaborators and supporters. This angle, firstly, evokes a framework of age-old historical systemic hatred and oppression towards Jewish people (Wittmann 2016, 175), and secondly applies it to Hamas’ activity. This ideological framing thus presents them as bigoted and acting out of a desire to oppress Jewish people, which places their actions in the same framework as, for example, the Nazi regime.

5.2.2 Adjectives and adverbs in TT2

Ideologically charged adjectives and adverbs are used sparingly in TT2, which is a noticeable difference from TT1. The amount of positive and negative connotations between Israeli and Palestinian entities also seems more balanced in that there is no immediately noticeable ideological slant towards one representation or the other, as presented in Tables 10 and 11.

Table 10. Adjectives and adverbs referring to Israel, Israeli people or the IDF in TT2

Positive	Negative
Brutally [killed Israelis], traumatic [process of handling the bodies]	Zionist [regime]
	Suffocating [occupation of Palestinians]
	Insufficient [aid let into Gaza]

Positive connotations evoked in TT2 via adjectives and adverbs propagate the theme of victimization. By describing the killings of the Israeli people during the October 7 attack as having happened “brutally” and evoking the “traumatic” nature of being a forensic expert in a conflict zone, the Israeli people are being humanized as having suffered excessively at the hands of Hamas. These connoted adjectives and adverbs both appear once: “brutally” is a lexical choice made by the journalist in Grylls’ article (2023), whereas “traumatic” is quoted from IDF deputy commander Nata Katz.

On the negative side, Israel’s colonial history is once again called into attention. “Zionism” as used here is indicative of a rejection of the ideology of European Jewish nationalism and what said ideology has caused in the Levant. It appears once, quoted to have been used by Iran’s Khomeini. “Suffocating”, when used in conjunction with “occupation”, makes the negative value judgement of the noun more explicit: this adjective is reported speech of UN secretary-general António Guterres. “Insufficient” refers to the lack of aid that had reached Gazans, and when used by Starmer, could be seen as him criticizing Israel’s blockade. These three lexical choices appear once each, and it is possible that since world leaders are quoted in this vein, they in fact believe that Israel’s actions are not justifiable.

Table 11. Adjectives and adverbs referring to Palestine, Palestinians or Hamas in TT2

Positive	Negative
Innocent [blood spilled in Gaza]	Hamas-controlled [health ministry in Gaza]
	Cold-blooded [murder]

Mirroring the positive connotations embodied by the adjectives and adverbs in Table 10, the focus here in Table 11 is on victimizing and humanizing Palestinians, similarly to how Israelis are victimized and humanized. “Innocent” emphasizes the blamelessness of Palestinians and calls into question the justifications for the violence they face. It is used twice by shadow minister Hussein.

The negatively connoted lexical choices in Table 11 seem to emphasize Hamas out of the relevant Palestinian entities, specifically the violence Hamas has committed. “Hamasc-controlled” as a descriptor intends to link Gaza’s health ministry to an organization that is widely recognized as terroristic, and thus somewhat invalidate any statements this ministry makes. This is a lexical choice made by the journalist. “Cold-blooded” also emphasizes the degree of violence in the murder in question and somewhat further dehumanizes the assailants. This adjective appears in a quote by Starmer.

5.2.3 Verbs in TT2

In the ideologically connoted verb choices in TT2 there is a slight shift towards more positive representation of Palestinian entities, whereas representation of Israeli entities stays quite balanced.

Table 12. Verbs referring to Israel, Israeli people or the IDF in TT2

Positive	Negative
[right to] defend	Abuse [Turkey’s good intentions]
Cowering, flee*	Undermine [peace and stability]
[Israeli babies were] murdered, [Thai workers were] executed	Punishing [Nuseirat refugee camp residents]

As already discussed regarding nouns, NPs and verbs in TT1 and TT2, ‘defending’ in, for example, “right to defend herself” (Scott and Maguire 2023) implies that Israel is acting solely in response to Hamas’ attack, which then consequently justifies all the actions Israel takes. “Cowering”, “murdered” and “executed” are all lexical choices that, again, emphasize the victimhood of those Israeli civilians: “cowering” and “flee” exhibit that they have been forced to hide and make themselves small, “murdered” and “executed” once again mark the brutal nature of killings against Israeli civilians and specifically note that these were no ordinary casualties of war. Here ‘Thai workers’ is equated with the Israeli population, as this group of people is discussed alongside Israeli victims of the October 7 attack in Grylls (2023). These three verbs all appear once in Grylls (2023), used by the journalist to describe events after the October 7 attack in the context of forensics.

On the negative side, the state of Israel is portrayed in ways that emphasize its violations towards other states and perhaps good conduct in general. By having ‘abused’ Turkey’s intentions, Israel appears as an entity that has disregarded goodwill and gone against the

international community. This turn of phrase appears once within TT2, used by Erdoğan. “Undermine” and “punishing” are both verbs that allude to Israel dismissing the goals of peace and stability by, for example, unfairly attacking refugee camps. These verbs are quotes from UK Shadow minister David Lammy and Al-Jazeera reporter Wael al-Dahdouh, respectively, with both being used once.

Table 13. Verbs referring to Palestine, Palestinians or Hamas in TT2

Positive	Negative
Protect [Hamas’ territories, Palestinian land]	Waging [a battle]
Flee*	
Slaughtered [Palestinians]	

The lexical choice in the verb “protect” in Table 13 implies, again, shielding oneself from an aggressor, and not necessarily that one is an equal participant in war. It is reported to be used twice by Erdoğan. “Flee” and “slaughtered” are, again, placing emphasis on the victimhood of Palestinian civilians and bringing attention to the unfair treatment they receive in being pushed away from their homes. The former appears once used by the journalist, and the latter appears once used by UK’s Hussein. These lexical choices create an image of victimized Palestinian entities fighting against unjust aggression.

On the other hand, “waging” is used twice in conjunction with Erdoğan’s comments on protection. With this choice it is explicit that Hamas is in fact actively participating in and evidently also starting battles to do the protecting. This means that both Palestinian entities and Israeli entities are painted as the aggressor simultaneously, with lexical choices that only directly refer to Palestinian entities.

In this dataset there is also an interesting acknowledgment. Quoted in Cheeseman (2023a) as reported speech of Queen Rania of Jordan, she states that “[w]hen Israel attacks, Palestinians ‘die,’ but when Israelis die, they are ‘killed,’ [...]”. This quotation brings attention to linguistic substitution in lexical choices: by choosing one verb over another, the implications of who kills who change. In addition, grammatical aspects such as verb transitivity or agency are important aspects in such a question, but due to space constraints I do not expand upon them in this thesis.

In general, the ideologically connoted verbs that are found in TT2 are also quite sparse. The representations of Israeli entities as listed in Table 12 seem quite balanced in positive and

negative connotations, whereas Palestinian entities get slightly more positive coverage than negative. Once again, portraying both sides in a victimizing manner is the dominant ideological frame. To conclude section 5.2, there are some minor differences in representations in TT2 when compared to TT1. The emphasis on the October 7 attack and consequently negative ideological bias towards Hamas seems to have shifted slightly more towards favoring Palestinian civilians and representing them in a positive light. The findings of these datasets are further discussed in section 6.

5.3 Lexical choices in IT1

I now turn my attention to The Irish Times as the other news outlet under scrutiny. Further comparison and possible differences the following two datasets may have with The Times datasets are discussed in section 6.

5.3.1 Nouns and noun phrases in IT1

In general, the nouns and NPs that are used to refer to the relevant entities are mostly value neutral and denote objective news reporting. The lexical choices that most often exhibit ideological weight, either positive or negative, are reported speech from political actors and not the words of the journalist. The positive and negative nouns and NPs in IT1 are listed in Table 14.

Table 14. Nouns and noun phrases referring to Israel, Israeli people, or the IDF in IT1

Positive	Negative
Right to defend itself/themselves*	[biggest intelligence] failure
Innocent people*	Settlers, occupation troops, the enemy
	Crimes, settler violence, onslaught*

The NP “right to defend itself/themselves” is most often used in connection to Israel: out of six separate uses in IT1, five are attributed to Israel by various political actors, such as Biden and Ireland’s Tánaiste at the time Micheál Martin, validating Israel’s response to the October 7 attack as justified. One is attributed to the Palestinian people by Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas, validating their resistance to the “terror of settlers and occupation troops” (Weiss and Wall 2023): this may be assumed to include Hamas as well. As mentioned in section 5.1.1, this NP serves a purpose of justifying all sorts of violence as retaliation and validating it as warranted and validates the colonial project of Israel. This NP is, again, never

used by the writers of the news articles and only appears in published statements from other speakers. “Innocent people” and “innocent civilians” are NPs that are both used once throughout IT1, and in both instances they refer to Israeli people and Palestinians simultaneously. This sort of distribution indicates equal consideration of any ‘innocents’, or victims of violence, that are caught in the middle of any violent attack. These NPs only appear in reported speech.

In the negative column in Table 14, Israel’s status as a settler colonial state is brought into attention. “Settlers” and “occupation troops” appear once each, both in reported speech. These choices place Israel and related entities into a framework in which they are illegally occupying the land they live on. In addition, “settler violence” appears once to emphasize the violent acts necessary for the existence of colonies. “Crimes” and “onslaught” are used three times in total to further highlight the violence enacted by Israel on Palestinians. The function of “(intelligence) failure” is discussed in section 5.1.1. Perhaps most notably in Table 14, “the enemy” is used to describe Israel: Deif uses it twice to justify the October 7 attack. Using such a lexical choice creates and maintains an us-them dichotomy that can be used to negatively impact an out-group. Table 15 provides a similar listing of nouns and NPs, but in reference to Palestine, Palestinians or Hamas in the same dataset.

Table 15. Nouns and noun phrases referring to Palestine, Palestinian people or Hamas in IT1

Positive	Negative
Right to defend [itself]*, divine backing	A grave mistake
Operation	Terrorist/terrorists/terrorist act
Innocent people*	Murder, savagery, onslaught*, atrocities
Prayers of mourning	

“Divine backing” is a justification of actions given to Hamas by Hezbollah, another militant group acting in the Middle East, formulated as an immaterial quality that Hamas has. Included in Table 15, this phrasing equates Hamas with Islam and thus justifies violent actions via religious assumptions. Hamas is also referred to as a “Palestinian group” by the publication itself (The Irish Times 2023a), which equates the militant organization that is also called terroristic by several governmental actors with the people of Palestine, militant or not.

“Prayers of mourning” also continues to refer to Islam, though this time in a more explicitly positive light: it implies that Palestinian civilians hold “killed [Hamas] militants” (Weiss and Wall 2023) to a high degree of respect.

As elaborated on in section 5.1.1, “terrorist” and related items immediately frame primarily Hamas but secondarily all Palestinian entities in a very negatively biased light. These lexical choices are used 10 times throughout IT1, all of them in reported speech of various politicians. The NP “a grave mistake” is also discussed regarding section 5.1.1: this singular instance in IT1 is in reference to the same quote by Gallant. “Murder”, “savagery”, “onslaught” and “atrocities” all function to highlight the unacceptability of the violence Hamas enacted on October 7th. These items are used five times to refer to Hamas, with the one instance of “onslaught” being a journalist choice and the others being reported speech.

One common denominator between all the articles in IT1 is that whenever Hamas is referred to, the term used varies depending on whether it is used by the journalist writing the article or someone that has been interviewed or whose comments are being reported in the article. The Irish Times’ journalists refer to Hamas with relatively value neutral terminology, using the terms “militants”, “gunmen”, and “fighters” interchangeably. However, for example Biden and Trump refer to Hamas as “terrorists”, and Thomas Byrne, minister of the Irish government, refers to the October 7 attack as a “terrorist act”. In one instance by Biden, the word ‘terrorist’ is, in addition to Hamas, tied to their attack coming “from Gaza” (Wall 2023a), which connects the city to the attack and implies that the city is somehow also responsible. These factors imply that The Irish Times as a publication is, on one hand, committed to being neutral in their own reporting even when world leaders may not be, and on the other hand to being truthful about the words of others they report, i.e. following journalistic guidelines.

5.3.2 Adjectives and adverbs in IT1

In Tables 16 and 17, it is illustrated that generally in IT1, Israel and its aligned entities get slightly more positive publicity than Palestine and aligned entities. In general, positively connoted lexical choices most often emphasize victimhood of the relevant entity, whereas negatively connoted ones emphasize its violence.

Table 16. Adjectives and adverbs referring to Israel, Israeli people, or the IDF in IT1

Positive	Negative
Rock solid, unwavering [US support to Israel]	Israeli-occupied [West Bank]
Panicked [citizens], terrified [residents]	
Tragically [died]*, unjustified*, unnecessary [loss of life]*	

Firstly, US support for the state of Israel is emphasized by positive adjectives like “rock solid” and “unwavering”. Both imply that Israel’s cause is worth defending and thus paint it in a good light. Both lexical choices are used in the articles in reported speech of Biden, mostly appearing side by side in each sentence. They are used five times in total throughout IT1. Secondly, Israeli citizens and civilians are described with adjectives and adverbs that portray them as victims of injustice. The choices “panicked” and “terrified” describe the fear and helplessness that Israelis felt post-attack, and “tragically”, “unjustified” and “unnecessary” emphasize the needless nature of the civilian suffering that took place. The former two are both used once by the reporting journalist. The latter three are used five times in total, all being attributed to either Biden or Martin, and all of them simultaneously refer to Israeli civilians and Palestinian civilians. In conjunction, these positively connoted lexical choices paint a picture of needlessly suffering civilians who deserve to be protected with unwavering resolve.

Again, Israeli occupation of Palestinian areas is brought to attention with the use “Israeli-occupied” to describe the Palestinian area of West Bank. This choice illuminates the fact that Israel is an occupying power to Palestinians and thus is acting unethically. However, this adjective could also be read as ideologically neutral: it can be argued that describing the area as occupied by Israel is just the way things are in the West Bank and there is no way around it. This lexical choice appears once and is made by the journalist writing the article.

Table 17. Adjectives and adverbs referring to Palestine, Palestinians, or Hamas in IT1

Positive	Negative
Tragically [died]*, unjustified*, unnecessary [loss of life]*	Hamas-linked [activists], Hamas-held [territory]
	Violent [demonstrations], stone-throwing [protesters]
	Appalling [assault], outrageous, devastating, horrific [attack], brutal [atrocities]

In Table 17, mirroring Table 16, Palestinian civilians are allotted the same positively connoted adjectives and adverbs as Israeli civilians. These choices function in the same way, to victimize civilians that are caught up in this conflict, regardless of their home. All three of these lexical choices only appear in contexts where they simultaneously refer to both Palestinian and Israeli civilians, and in no other contexts are Palestinian civilians referred to

with positively connoted adjectives or adverbs. It could thus be assumed that Israeli civilians are given more attention and emphasis than Palestinian civilians.

Since this reporting happened immediately following the October 7 attack, it is accordingly given plenty of attention. The attack and the concurrent violence are referred to as “appalling”, “outrageous”, “devastating”, “horrific” and “brutal”. In total, these largely interchangeable adjectives are used 15 times throughout IT1, with all but one being in reported speech from various politicians. By evoking adjectives such as these ones to describe the October 7 attack, it is possible to elicit more negative emotions than, for example, just calling it ‘the attack’. In addition to the attack itself, attention is drawn to protesters and activists in the West Bank and Gaza who have been organizing demonstrations against Israel: these efforts are described as “violent” and the people as “stone-throwing”. In this sense, the Palestinians that have organized in this manner are considered aggressive. These same activists are also described as “ Hamas-linked”, which further emphasizes the connection that they are assumed to have to violence: by being associated with a group recognized as terroristic, these activists must also be doing something wrong. In the same vein, Gaza is described as “ Hamas-held”, which conflates the entire geographical area with the terrorist group. However, similarly to “Israeli-occupied” in Table 16, this choice could have simply been made because it is the fact of the matter that Gaza is controlled by Hamas. These four lexical choices appear once each and are all choices made by the journalist. These factors might suggest that Palestine and aligned entities are intentionally painted in a more negative light than Israel and aligned entities.

5.3.3 Verbs in IT1

The ideologically connoted verbs in IT1 are quite balanced, with a slightly more positive tilt toward Israeli entities and negative toward Palestinian entities. Again, being that the reporting happened immediately after the October 7 attack, this is expected. The victimhood of Israeli and Palestinian civilians is once again emphasized by the lexical choices made. Table 18 lists the positive and negative verbs used in relation to Israel, Israelis or the IDF.

Table 18. Verbs referring to Israel, Israeli people or the IDF in IT1

Positive	Negative
Begging, hid[ing]	Devastated [Gaza’s economy]
[right to] defend*, protect [Israel]	Condemn [violence on both sides]*
[Israelis] were abducted	

Positive	Negative
To suffer*	

The positive representations listed in Table 18 once again lean toward emphasizing the victimhood of Israelis. Where they have been “begging”, “hiding”, and “abducted”, they are portrayed as lacking agency regarding their surroundings, as helpless victims of their circumstances. “To suffer” is in reference to both “innocent civilians [...] in Israel and Gaza” (Malone and McGee 2023), shedding light on the indiscriminate nature of wartime conditions. In contrast, the verbs “defend” and “protect” evoke imagery of national defense in times of crisis: Israel is in fact fighting to protect its citizens and not to attack citizens of other nations. “Defend” appears seven times regarding Israel, most often reported speech within the NP “right to defend itself”, and “protect” appears once in the journalist’s words.

Negative qualities come into play with choices such as “devastated” when describing Gaza’s economy in Weiss and Wall (2023): this singular representation portrays how Israel’s actions regarding the blockade have caused suffering to Gazans. This choice is made by the journalist(s). “Condemn” and its conjugations appear eight times in total, with seven of them only referring to Hamas’ attack and one instance to “the violence on both sides” (McGee 2023). In this sense, whereas Israeli entities’ violence is evidently also frowned upon, more emphasis is placed on Palestinian entities’ violence. These findings are contrasted with how Palestine, Palestinians or Hamas are depicted in the same dataset, as listed in Table 19.

Table 19. Verbs referring to Palestine, Palestinians or Hamas in IT1

Positive	Negative
[right to] defend*	Infiltrating [Israel]
To suffer*	Seized [control of Gaza; Israeli hostages]
	Condemn [Hamas’ attack; violence on both sides]*

Whereas “defend” and its conjugations more often appear regarding Israel, in IT1, this verb is evoked regarding Palestine twice. Palestinians “right to defend themselves” (Weiss and Wall 2023) is a turn of phrase unique to IT1 in my analysis. This brings attention to the equal right that Israel and Palestine as sovereign nations have to protect their land and people. However, the emphasis on whose right is more important is still slanted towards Israel. In addition, “to suffer” victimizes both Palestinians and Israelis, as also presented in Table 18.

As already mentioned, “condemn” and its conjugations are used seven times to refer exclusively to Hamas’ attack and its subsequent actions. This facilitates a strong image of Hamas as an aggressor whose actions are unjustifiable, as they are publicly rejected by many world leaders, such as Martin and Biden. “Seized” and “infiltrating”, then, both suggest that Hamas’ attack was surprising and gave Israeli entities no time to prepare, thus making it appear more insidious in nature.

In general, the positive and negative ideological representations, as exhibited by lexical choices, in IT1 are quite balanced. There is some slant towards more positive representation of Israeli entities, but that sort of ideological bias is almost reasonable right in the wake of the October 7 attack. Regarding Palestinian entities, Hamas’ role in the life of Gaza is emphasized.

5.4 Lexical choices in IT2

In the final subsection of my analysis, I go over the ideologically connoted lexical choices in IT2. I examine some differences in this dataset when compared to previous datasets and expand upon this in the next section.

5.4.1 Nouns and noun phrases in IT2

In the nouns and NPs of IT2 Israeli entities are uplifted as protectors and defenders, and on the negative side reminded of their occupant status and unjust use of violence. Regarding Palestinian entities, victimhood is the most prominent theme of positive representations, whereas negative representations are keeping with the theme and dominated by rejection of Hamas and the October 7 attack. Table 20 lists the positive and negative nouns and NPs in this dataset in reference to Israel, Israelis or the IDF.

Table 20. Nouns and noun phrases referring to Israel, Israeli people or the IDF in IT2

Positive	Negative
Victims* [of evil]	Occupation
Right to defend itself / to self-defence, right(s)*	Dehumanisation, abuse [of Palestinian people]
Protection [of all civilians]*, defence	Revenge, vengeance
	Failure

The lexical choices that exhibit positively connoted ideologies toward Israeli entities in IT2 are “victims”, “right to defend itself” and similar formulations, “rights”, “protection” and

“defence”. The functions that these choices serve have all been detailed regarding previous tables and therefore I do not assess them in detail again in this context. Altogether these lexical choices presented in Table 20 function to justify Israeli military action against Hamas in particular and the Gaza Strip in general as self-defense and protection of innocents.

“Victims” is also used to refer to Palestinians who have died because of Israeli strikes after October 7th, and “protection” to refer to both Israeli and Palestinian civilians at once. Most notably, “right to defend itself” and “right to self-defence” appear seven times in total, with most being reported speech and two instances being slightly unclear in origin. The other choices mentioned here appear a combined number of seven times as well.

On the negative side, the nouns “occupation”, “revenge”, “vengeance” and “failure” are lexical choices the themes of which have come up in prior datasets as well. Their purpose is to bring attention to Israel’s status as a settler colonial state and to emphasize the state’s inept response to the October 7 attack. “Revenge” and “vengeance” also indicate that whereas the Israeli retaliation was not fully unprovoked, it is also fueled by a desire to, in a way, settle a score with Hamas. Uniquely, IT2 is the only dataset in this thesis in which “dehumanisation” of Palestinians by Israeli entities is explicitly named. This, combined with the noun “abuse”, are both used once by Palestinian Authority foreign minister Riyad al-Maliki and serve to highlight how badly Israel treats Palestinians without any interception from world governments (The Irish Times 2023c).

Table 21. Nouns and noun phrases referring to Palestine, Palestinians or Hamas in IT2

Positive	Negative
Right(s)*	Terrorist(s)
Protection [of all civilians]*	Massacre [against civilians], killing spree
Martyrs, victims*	Outrage, revulsion, rejection, condemnation [regarding October 7 attack]

Compared to the entries in Table 20, “the rights of Palestinians” (Leahy 2023b) are mentioned only once, as listed among the positive nouns and NPs in Table 21. This creates an ideological framing wherein Palestinian liberties are recognized, yet Israeli ones are still given more space. As mentioned previously, “protection” is used once to refer to both entities simultaneously. Alongside “victims”, “martyrs” is used to emphasize that the deaths of many Palestinians are unjust, within an added religious connotation. The only other dataset in this

thesis where martyrdom is brought up is TT1. Both two lexical choices are used once within IT2, “victims” by the journalist and “martyrs” in reported speech.

Again, Hamas’ recognized status as a terrorist organization is brought up, which continues to highlight the framework associated with acts that are deemed terroristic. The noun “terrorist” appears eight times in total, one of them a journalistic choice in Kingsley (2023) and seven in reported speech. Alternative, value neutral terms used to refer to Hamas include “militants”, “fighters” and “combatants”. The October 7 attack is negatively referred to as a “massacre” and a “killing spree”, the former once in reported speech and the latter once as a journalist choice. These choices underline that this was not just any attack, but a particularly heinous one. This ideological frame is further emphasized by the lexical items “outrage”, “revulsion”, “rejection” and “condemnation”, all of which appear once reported from Guterres: they imply that this attack and thus Hamas’ actions should be unequivocally condemned.

5.4.2 Adjectives and adverbs in IT2

The ideologically connoted adjectives and adverbs found in IT2 predominantly emphasize the horrors of war on both sides. However, comparing Tables 22 and 23, it becomes apparent that what is emphasized is Israel as perpetrator and Palestinians as victims. In contrast, then, the affiliations that Palestinian agencies, such as the health ministry of Gaza, have with Hamas, are increasingly brought to the forefront.

Table 22. Adjectives and adverbs referring to Israel, Israeli people or the IDF in IT2

Positive	Negative
Innocent [victims]	Suffocating [occupation], besieged, beleaguered [Palestinian area]
	Indiscriminate [attacks], vengeful, unfocused, relentless [bombing], collectively [punish]

In IT2, the explicitly positively connoted adjective found is “innocent”, used once to describe Israeli children during the October 7 attack. Whereas it may seem redundant to emphasize the innocence of children in a situation of war and conflict, it is still a powerful rhetorical device. This adjective appears in reported speech of Israeli foreign minister Eli Cohen, which once again works to emphasize the Israeli government’s stance that everything they do is to protect the most vulnerable part of humanity.

“Suffocating”, “besieged” and “beleaguered” all refer to Palestine in general or Gaza in particular, specifically its status as a blockaded area of land within the borders of a settler colonial state. Each lexical choice appears once in IT2, the former being reported speech from Guterres and the latter two being journalist choices. “Suffocating” when describing “occupation” (The Irish Times 2023c) turns attention to the actions of Israel that have led to this scenario, whereas “besieged” and “beleaguered” somewhat obscure Israel as the proponent of said actions. Once again it should be noted that “besieged” and “beleaguered” can also be interpreted as simply being neutral terms used to describe the state of Gaza and Palestine. However, in this particular case, I argue that these choices are used to make explicit reference to the unjustified conditions on the Gaza Strip and thus work to represent Israel negatively.

Another point of focus in the negative representations is the non-selective nature of Israeli attacks following the October 7 attack. Israel has been accused of killing civilians indiscriminately instead of only attempting to attack Hamas and other groups implicated in the October 7 attack (Kingsley 2023). These accusations are voiced via the adjectives “indiscriminate”, “vengeful”, “unfocused”, “relentless” and the adverb “collectively” when referring to collective punishment of Palestinians in Kingsley (2023). Each lexical choice appears once for a total of five instances. This ideological framing, in combination with emphasizing Israel’s history as an occupying force, highlights the injustice of how Israel has dealt with Palestine and the Palestinian people during their coexistence.

Table 23. Adjectives and adverbs referring to Palestine, Palestinians or Hamas in IT2

Positive	Negative
Grieving, bereaved [relatives, Gazans]	Appalling [attacks]
Catastrophic [crisis]	Hamas-controlled, Hamas-run [health ministry], Hamas-led [authorities]
	Booby-trapped [apartments]

The positive representations in Table 23 largely focus on Palestinians mourning their family and community members. “Grieving” is used three times and “bereaved” once, with all four instances being journalist choices to describe and highlight the victimhood and emotional suffering of Gazans amid Israeli strikes. All these instances appear in one article, which could imply that in Khaled and Saleh (2023) the journalists give more room to the Palestinian viewpoint than is generally agreed upon among The Irish Times journalists or editorial staff. As for the other entry in the positive column, “catastrophic” is used twice, both times

referring to the humanitarian crisis in the area. These instances are reported speech of UN and WHO. This lexical choice underlines the immediate nature of the suffering in the Gaza Strip, further emphasizing the victimhood of Palestinians there. It could also be argued that “catastrophic” simultaneously portrays Israel negatively due to their role in this humanitarian crisis, but as the proponent is here obscured, it cannot be decisively stated to do so.

On the negative side, Hamas’ influence in the Gaza Strip is heavily emphasized, as illustrated by Table 23. “ Hamas-controlled”, “ Hamas-run” and “ Hamas-led” are used seven times in total, mostly exclusively referring to The Gaza Health Ministry but also once to “authorities” (Kingsley 2023) in Gaza in general. None of these instances are reported speech, meaning that multiple journalists whose texts comprise IT2 have made the choice to emphasize Hamas’ positioning within the health ministry. This could be interpreted as an attempt to invalidate the data that the ministry is putting out by tying it to a militant organization. However, as mentioned regarding Tables 11 and 17, this could also simply be factual description. Out of the four datasets under scrutiny in this thesis, IT2 is the one in which like descriptors appear most.

In addition, “appalling” appears once in reported speech from Guterres, to emphasize the horror and violence of the October 7 attack. This is in line with the trend seen in the other datasets as well. “Booby-trapped” here is used to describe Hamas combat tactics, in particular the deceptive nature of trapping apartments: due to this connotation, it can be argued that this lexical choice intends to portray Hamas as sly and deceptive as well. It appears once as a journalist choice.

5.4.3 Verbs in IT2

In the verbs used in IT2, negative representations of both related entities are more common than positive ones. On the positive sides, Israeli entities are portrayed as victims who are heroically saved and Palestinian entities as victims who are grieving for their families and friends, as presented in Table 24.

Table 24. Verbs referring to Israel, Israeli people or the IDF in IT2

Positive	Negative
Defend	Avenging [against women and children], destroyed [about Palestinian homes]
Rescue [hostages]	Condemn* [violence against all civilians], deplore* [loss of civilian life]

Positive	Negative
	Torpedo [regarding ground offensive]
	Threatens

In the positive column in Table 24, the verb “defend” appears several times within the NP “right to defend itself” and its variants. Its ideological significance is detailed in previous sections. As for the second positively connoted entry, “rescue” enforces the frame that Israel is saving its civilian citizens from an aggressor and thus acting righteously for it. This verb choice appears once, within the context of the journalist reporting on public attitudes towards the oncoming ground assault (Weiss 2023a).

Israel’s violence towards Palestinian entities is highlighted by lexical choices such as “avenging”, “destroyed” and “threatens”, since all of them point out violent intent and thus describe Israel as violent. This ideological frame is emphasized by the choices “condemn” and “deplore”, wherein these actions are publicly and internationally denounced. In total, these lexical choices are used eight times. “Condemn” and its conjugations are used three times in total: once to refer to Israeli entities, once to Hamas and once to both entities simultaneously. In addition, “torpedo” is used when talking about the possibility of a ground offensive risking hostage lives (Weiss 2023a). This choice implies that the Israeli government is likely to make choices that directly risk their goals and paints them in an incompetent light.

Table 25. Verbs referring to Palestine, Palestinians or Hamas in IT2

Positive	Negative
Deprived [of burial rites], suffered, grieve, sobbing	Condemn* [October 7 attack], deplore* [loss of civilian life]
Flee	Seized [hostages], raided [Israel]
	Destroy, demolish, erode [about Hamas]

The positive ideological connotations in verbs regarding Palestinian entities, as listed in Table 25, rely heavily on their grief: “deprived”, “suffered”, “grieve” and “sobbing” all indicate huge amounts of loss and pain, which in turn enforces the image of Palestinians as victims in this conflict. These verbs are used five times in total, with the one instance of “deprived” being reported speech and the rest being journalist choices. This kind of imbalance might indicate that the journalist(s) here have made a conscious choice to highlight Palestinian suffering and make it visible in their writing. Alongside these choices, the verb “flee” appears

once, further implying that Palestinians are victims who are being forcibly displaced from their homes by Israel.

Hamas once again gets elevated to the most relevant entity in the negative representations in IT2. The October 7 attack is described with the verbs “condemn” and “deplore” three times in total. In addition, Hamas’ actions during the attack are described with the verbs “seized” and “raided”, and the intentions to “destroy”, “demolish” and “erode” Hamas are also vocalized. These choices function together to indicate that Hamas’ actions are to be denounced as violent, and thus getting rid of the organization entirely is warranted and justified.

In short, neither party significantly rises above the other in positive ideological representations in IT2. When compared to IT1, negative representations of Palestinian entities have decreased slightly. However, neither negative nor positive representations of Israeli entities have not increased in contrast. Therefore, the overall impression of all relevant entities is slightly more balanced.

6 Results and discussion

Following the analysis, here I expand upon the results detailed in section 5 and draw connections between them and their wider context. I summarize the results of my analysis and consider how and why the lexical choices might differ between The Times and The Irish Times. In addition, I address how the media studies concept of “manufacturing consent” (Herman and Chomsky 1988) presents through ideological language in the news.

6.1 Results

My hypothesis was that the Irish Times would be more sympathetic toward Palestinian entities than The Times. After conducting this research, I confirm that this hypothesis did not turn out to be completely true. Whereas changes happened between timeframes, both in TT1 and IT1, The Times and the Irish Times initially emphasized negative ideological representations of Palestinian entities, specifically Hamas, over negative representations of Israeli entities. However, in IT1 the division of positive and negative representations toward Israeli entities seemed quite even and thus neutral, which is different from the positive representations allotted to Israeli entities in TT1 and TT2. This then shifted to Palestinian entities getting more positive ideological representations in TT2, whereas in the Irish Times’ reporting in IT2 positivity towards Palestinian entities did not increase as much as negativity towards Israeli entities did. Thus, both news outlets started from a similar position in terms of ideological representations, but the representations over time and between datasets changed in different ways, and there was no clear theme of IT1 and IT2 representing Palestinians more positively than TT1 and TT2. In short, The Times’ representation shifted from mostly representing Palestinian entities quite negatively to being quite neutral about them, and Israeli entities from mostly positive representation to neutral or slightly negative. In the Irish Times, Israeli representation started slightly positive and moved to mostly negative, whereas Palestinian representation stayed quite similarly neutral or slightly negative throughout.

In general, I noted that lexical choices in reported speech tended to more often be value laden than journalist made lexical choices, aside from a few exceptions. One of the dominant ideological frameworks that can be found in all four datasets is the victimization frame: both Israeli entities and Palestinian entities are variably represented as the victims of horrible injustice from the other. This exhibits the implicit yet obvious idea that any conflict that poses dangers to civilians does not follow universal conventions of war and is therefore deplorable.

In both TT1 and IT1, the victimization frame starts off by favoring Israeli entities, which is likely due to the immediate nature of the October 7 attack: Israeli suffering is emphasized. Israeli entities are also allotted the positive outlook of protecting their citizens and the state being portrayed as almost a stronghold of safety in the Middle East, particularly in TT1. Another obvious example of this is perhaps the noun “terrorist” and related NPs such as “terrorist activities” to describe Hamas. These items appeared numerous times throughout all four datasets, accompanied by more ideologically neutral terms such as “gunmen” or “militants”. It was used by the journalist in two of the four datasets, those being TT1 and IT2, appearing five times and once, respectively. This, in my opinion, is a clear indicator of ideological bias towards Hamas and consequently Palestinian entities, as detailed in section 5.1.1: in the case of TT1, journalists making the choice to explicitly tie the attack to the terrorism frame enforces the view that Hamas are terrorists and not, say, freedom fighters. As explained in section 3, replacing lexical choices with other words that have different connotations can illuminate the naturalized ideologies they propose. As for negative representations of Israeli entities, the illegal occupation of Palestine is often the dominant ideological frame. The specifics of how the lexical choices in the articles actually uphold these ideas and ideologies are detailed in section 5. In short, the dominant ideologies that come up in the datasets are, on the positive side, the victimization and heroism frames, and on the negative side, the terrorism and occupation frames. These can be conflated with ideologies: Palestinians are placed within the ideological frames of victimhood and terrorism, and Israelis in heroism and occupancy.

Some noticeable differences between datasets were in the way journalists made ideologically connoted lexical choices. For example, “antisemitism” only came up in TT2, posing a huge criticism to Palestinian entities and their intentions in fighting against Israeli entities. This frame has come up in the wider scale discussion since the October 7 attack elsewhere, but in my research with it being raised only by The Times, this might indicate that UK media is more prepared to raise such concerns than Irish media. One major difference between the initial datasets TT1 and IT1 was in the ideological connotations allotted to Palestinian entities: TT1 was predominantly negative towards them, whereas IT1 stayed quite neutral throughout. It can be assumed that both outlets have had the same sources for their initial information on the attack, and thus that the negatively connoted ideological content found in TT1 is due to The Times’ editorial policy or individual journalists’ biases.

In addition to differences, some similarities came up in the datasets. Firstly, as discussed above, all datasets at some point used the loaded language of either referring to Hamas as terrorists or Israel as occupiers or colonialists. This may indicate that these frames are generally agreed upon in mass media reporting, though no decisive claim can be made based on such a small sampling of data in the sphere of news media. What is at least inferable is that in the British Isles both seem a common notion. In addition, I noted that most of the ideologically charged language that was found in all datasets came from reported speech and not explicit journalistic choices, with only some instances of explicit journalist bias visible. This also held in every dataset. This may imply that, again, there is a common understanding that in news reporting, personal opinions should be kept at bay.

6.2 Discussion

Here I further elaborate on the results. I discuss some possible reasons that might have caused the results of my analysis. This includes current and historical sociopolitical factors as detailed in section 2. In addition, I consider whether the implications of media as thought leaders have a wider impact than what can be directly seen in the articles.

As detailed in section 6.1, there were some differences in the general presentation of Palestinian and Israeli entities between The Times and the Irish Times. Based on my hypothesis and the historical factors affecting geopolitical relations, I argue that Britain's deep entrenchment with Israel and Ireland's history as a colonized state have at least partially facilitated the results that came up in this research. For example, the Irish Times initially reported on Palestinian entities with more ideologically neutral terminology than The Times, which focused on negatively representing Hamas, and through association other Palestinian entities as well. This may be due to the discursal environment of the two states and thus the two news outlets. In other words, it may be more socially accepted in Ireland to be supportive of Palestine and Palestinian entities than it is in England or the UK.

Another possible reason for this difference in reporting is, of course, the journalistic guidelines and editorial policies that The Times and the Irish Times uphold and require their journalists to follow. This angle is, however, difficult to investigate in my research, since mostly these guidelines are not available to the general public. It can only be speculated that, for example, either The Times or the Irish Times had or have some restrictive editorial policies that coerce journalists to represent certain entities either positively or negatively in their news reporting. As discussed in section 2.1.1, editorial policies affect what gets

published in the first place, and in that sense function as ideological lenses that filter the initial newsworthy material and allow us to only see a fraction of it. These journalistic guidelines may, of course, be affected by the sociopolitical historical factors of these states in the first place. In addition, it is worth noting that there were ideologically connoted lexical choices used by the writing journalist in some articles. This may indicate that in addition to explicit journalist choices, the reported speech they have chosen to include in the articles also in some way reflects the journalist's choices. Reported speech also includes an evaluative component in that speakers can build representations of events based on their own critical assessment (Hodges 2008, 486–487). Thus, journalists may be able to reframe real life events through the reported speech they choose to use in their reporting, and in turn exhibit their own opinions in the words of other people.

To tie these angles into the analysis of power relations in CDA, I turn to van Dijk's (1998) conceptualization of the lexicon as an ideological vehicle and Althusser's ([1971] 2001) analysis of news media as an ideological apparatus for the state, as discussed in section 3.2.1. In conjunction these ideas suggest that by choosing certain words to represent issues in the real world, one can enforce state level power structures either inadvertently or intentionally. For example, it may be that pro-Palestinian sentiments hold more ground in Irish politics and thus editorial boardrooms as than pro-Israel ones. This has been retroactively proven by Ireland's recognition of the Palestinian state. These sentiments then end up replicated in news reporting through lexical choices, and in turn, again, reinforce the state's ideological sentiments.

Herman and Chomsky introduce what they call the *propaganda model of communication* and define it as a set of filters that affect what is reported on in mass media ([1988] 2002, 1–2). These filters have to do with, for example, the ownership of for-profit mass media companies, their advertising-based business model, and the reliance that the media has on government and business funded experts in reporting (Herman and Chomsky [1998] 2002, 2; see also Uscinski 2014, 3, 24–25). These assumptions work toward the same assumption as Althusser ([1971] 2001): the mass media machine is a “powerful ideological institution[...] that [carries] out a system-supportive propaganda function” based on market forces and self-censorship (Herman and Chomsky [1998] 2002, 306). With the assumptions made here and the basis laid in section 2.1.1, it can be assumed that capital has a major role in the choices made in the articles of my analysis as well. The exact relations stay obscured here, but I argue that one reason for the results of my research is that it is simply more profitable for an UK

based news outlet to be more sympathetic toward Israel than Palestine, and vice versa for an Irish based news outlet, based on historical baggage.

6.3 Limitations and further research

Due to the scope and qualitative nature of this thesis, no generalized claims can be made and applied to a wider scale from these results. The purpose of this research is to shed a light on the implicit news values that we as readers often take for granted, the naturalized ideologies in news reporting. This qualitative analysis has provided an in-depth understanding of the news reporting and the ideological qualities of the two news outlets at hand within a particular timeframe. As El-Nashar (2014) has done, a study like this can also be conducted via quantitative methods, or by combining qualitative and quantitative analysis. By using quantitative methods, it is possible to analyze a larger amount of data and thus form generalizable research results on a larger scale, for example of how reporting on a certain topic tends to slant within a given state.

In addition, a critique that can be levied against this thesis is its subjectivity. As with any CDA study, the analysis and the conclusions one draws from it will be affected by the ideological framework that the analyst operates within. Interpreting meanings out of source texts without access to the mind of the journalist writing the text or the politician quoted in it will always result in the derived meaning not being fully accurate. For this reason, I still cannot assume in my research that any given journalist or journalistic outlet has intentionally inserted any of the ideological functions that can be found in the material. As also mentioned regarding the analysis, judging the connotations a word choice has may also be tricky, since these are covert assumptions and not overt meanings.

Overall, the topic that I have discussed in this thesis is one that will always generate more data to study. Armed conflicts, wars, and crimes against humanity will, unfortunately, keep happening, and they will be reported on, be it with a goal of neutrality or for propaganda purposes. Specifically, at time of writing it seems that there is no end in sight to the conflict and the genocide in the Levant. Even with a qualitative analysis like this, it could be fruitful to do a similar analysis about past material or at some point in the future to see whether attitudes have changed as reflected in positively and negatively connoted lexical choices.

7 Conclusions

In this study I set out to answer some questions that would better help understand the underlying biases that news reporting upholds. The research questions were:

1. What kinds of ideologies can be found exhibited via lexical choices in the news articles of The Times and the Irish Times?
2. How are these ideologies presented in said lexical choices?
3. Are there any differences between the ideologies present in The Times' articles compared to the ideologies in The Irish Times' articles?

I started this research by briefly explaining the historical and sociopolitical factors that have caused and still affect the conflicts, wars, and genocide that Israel is perpetrating in Palestine. This included the role that the British Empire and subsequently United Kingdom had in the founding of Israel, and the political standpoints both the UK and Ireland have towards the Levant today. I followed this up by examining how ideology has been understood and researched in Critical Discourse Analysis studies and how ideology can be visible through the language used in news reporting. With this basis, I gathered my data from The Times and the Irish Times and inspected it in a qualitative study of lexical choices used in the news articles.

The results of my analysis show that whereas my initial hypothesis of Irish sympathy did not fully hold water, there were still some signs that it might be happening in the datasets. For example, in the initial reporting following the October 7 attack, The Times reported more negatively on Palestinian entities, whereas The Irish Times reported mostly neutrally, albeit not positively. There were also differences in how the ideological representations changed over time for the second datasets: The Times started emphasizing positive ideological representations of Palestinian entities, and The Irish Times negative representations of Israeli entities. With the assumption that these outlets get their reportable information from similar sources and the similar cultural background their states share, these differences are notable. There may be multiple reasons for these results, such as differing journalistic guidelines between The Times and The Irish Times, or the colonial history and subsequent sympathy that Ireland and Palestine share.

In conclusion, in this thesis I have shown that news articles reporting on conflict and war situations, specifically the October 7 attack and its aftermath, can and do show ideological bias through the language used in them. As Israeli crimes against humanity in Gaza continue

and insecurity in geopolitics is on the rise globally, it is extremely important to stay informed of what happens around the world and critical of how it is presented to us. The purpose of this thesis has been to emphasize the importance of media literacy and criticism as we navigate a changing world order.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Finnish summary

Johdanto

Elämme maailmanajassa, jota on kutsuttu totuuden jälkeiseksi: länsimaisia demokratioita ja mediajärjestelmiä uhkaa tietoteoreettinen kriisi, ja entistä suurempi joukko ihmisiä ovat epäluuloisia sosiaalista mediaa sekä uutismediaa kohtaan (Cosentino 2020, 3–4; Reuters 2024, 9). Poliittisella polarisaatiolla saattaa olla osansa tässä kehityskulussa (Reuters 2024, 25). Perinteinen printtimedia sekä modernimmat uutislähteet ovat pitkään olleet tutkimuksen aiheena kielitieteissä ja diskurssitutkimuksessa. Vaikka uutistoimistot saatetaan nähdä puolueettomina tapahtumien raportoijina, on todennäköistä, että toimittajan omat arvot ja ideologia näkyvät jossain määrin myös uutisteksteissä, sillä diskurssi on aina tietyn näkökulman edustamista (Fowler 1991, 208).

Seitsemäs päivä lokakuuta vuonna 2023 Hamas hyökkäsi Gazan kaupungista useita israelilaiskaupunkeja kohtaan (Kingsley ja Kershner 2023). Vastauksena Israelin puolustusvoimat toteuttivat Gazaan useita ilmaiskuja ja maahyökkäyksen, joka kirjoittamishetkellä jatkuu yhä lyhyen aselevon jälkeen (Ferreira Santos 2024, Mohamed ja Jamal 2024). Tästä syystä palestiinalaisalueiden jatkuva miehitys on noussut merkittäväksi puheenaiheeksi viime vuosien aikana (Kokkonen 2023).

Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkastelen kahden englanninkielisen uutislähteen, The Timesin ja The Irish Timesin raportointia lokakuun 7. tapahtuneesta hyökkäyksestä ja sen jälkimainingeista. Tarkoitukseni on löytää tämän uutisoinnin sisältämät implisiittiset arvotulkinnat uutisissa käytettyjen sanavalintojen avulla. Tutkimuskysymykset, joihin vastaan, ovat:

1. Minkälaisia ideologioita löytyy sanavalinnoista The Timesin ja The Irish Timesin uutisartikkeleista?
2. Kuinka nämä ideologiat näkyvät kyseisissä sanavalinnoissa?
3. Onko The Timesin uutisartikkeleissa näkyvissä ideologioissa joitain eroja verrattuna The Irish Timesin uutisartikkeleihin?

Vastaan näihin tutkimuskysymyksiin tarkastelemalla uutisartikkelidataa neljässä eri tietoaaineistossa. Hypoteesini on, että irlantilaislehti on ymmärtäväisempi palestiinalaisia

kohtaan ja siksi edustaa palestiinalaisentiteettejä positiivisemmin, koska Irlannilla on myös historiaa kolonisoituna alueena.

Sosiopoliittinen tausta

Journalismi ja uutistekstien kirjoittaminen on lingvistinen tyyllilaji, jossa on omat tietyntyylliset tavat kirjoittamiseen (Cotter 2010, 15). Uutistekstien sosiologinen ja yhteisöllinen merkitys on tunnustettu, ja journalistinen kirjoittaminen ilmentää tietyn yhteisön tarpeita, arvoja, sekä ideologisia taustoja (Cotter 2010, 19; van Dijk 1988, 82). Useilla toimijoilla, kuten valtioilla tai mediataloilla, on olemassa omat eettiset periaatteet, joita toimittajat noudattavat kirjoittaessaan (esim. National Union of Journalists n.d.): näihin sisältyy usein esimerkiksi totuuden tavoittelu uutisoinnissa. Tällaiset säännöt yhdessä toimituksen antamien ohjeiden kanssa määrittävät sen, mitä sisältöä missäkin lehdessä julkaistaan. Yksittäinen journalisti, joka kirjoittaa uutisartikkelia, päätyy edustamaan jotakin näkökulmaa, oli tämä sitten tietoista tai tiedostamatonta (Fowler 1991, 208). Tämä näkökulma saattaa olla journalistin oma tai sitten toimituspolitiikasta johtuen lehden toimituksen tai omistajan.

Uutisarvojen ja kapitalistisen talousjärjestelmän yhteensopivuus on toisinaan nostettu tapetille. Uutistoimistoihin vaikuttavat voimakkaat taloudelliset kannustimet, ja taloustutkimukset ovat osoittaneet, että toimitukset voivat mahdollistaa suurempia tuottoja puoltamalla uutisoinnissaan jonkin pienemmän yleisönosan arvoja (Uscinski 2014, 3, 14–15). Tämä huomio vaikuttaisi osaltaan vaarantavan journalistiset arvot. Journalismi on institutionaalisen diskurssin muoto, ja sen asettamat rajoitteet muovaavat myös tyylin ideologiaa (Fowler 1991, 47). Historiallisesti poliittinen polarisaatio uutisissa ei ole uusi kehityskulku, vaan 1800-luvulla uutislähteet olivat monesti poliittisten toimijoiden, kuten puolueiden, rahoittamia (Munger 2020, 377). Tilanne muuttui vuosisadan vaihteessa, kun objektiivisuutta alettiin arvostaa ja päärahoitus uutislähteille alkoi tulla mainostajilta puolueiden sijaan (Baldasty 1992, 37). Mainostajien rooli median agendan asettamisessa muuttui siis merkittäväksi (Uscinski 2014, 49).

Israelin ja Palestiinan alueet sijaitsevat Levantin alueella Lähi-idässä, ja molemmat ovat julistaneet itsensä itsenäisiksi valtioiksi: Israelin tunnustaa 168 YK-jäsentä ja Palestiinan 143 (AJLabs 2024; Gelvin [2006] 2021, 1–2; World Population Review 2024). Valtiot ovat taistelleet maa-alueiden hallinnasta noin 70 vuotta, ja tämän konfliktin ytimessä nähdään olevan sekä sionismin että arabinationalismin kansallisprojektien edistäminen, että uskonnolliset sodat ja länsimainen kolonialismi (Best et al. [2004] 2008, 107; Gelvin [2006]

2021, 6). Israelin valtion sanotaan ylipäänsä olevan olemassa sionistisen liikkeen syntymisen vuoksi (Best et al. [2004] 2008, 108–109). Israelin perustamisen jälkeen vuonna 1948 se on käynyt useita sotia naapurimaidensa kanssa, ja palestiinalaisalueet ovat myös olleet sen haastamia ja miehittämiä siitä lähtien (Best et al. [2004] 2008, 429; Haddad ja Chughtai 2023; Meir-Glitzstein 2018, 114).

Lokakuun seitsemännen päivän hyökkäyksessä Hamas ja muut palestiinalaiset militanttiryhmittä raketti-iskujen sekä asemiesten hyökkäyksellä ottivat panttivankeja ja tappoivat jopa 700 israelilaista (Al-Jazeera, 2023b; Gold et al. 2023, Raleigh, Carboni ja Mehvar 2023). Israel vastahyökkäyksessään julisti sodan Hamasia vastaan ja toteutti ilmaiskuja sekä pysäytti muun muassa sähkön ja ruoan pääsyn Gazan kaistalle, ja lokakuun 27. päivänä 2023 jatkoi täydellä maainvaasiolla (Gold et al. 2023, Mackenzie ja Lubell 2023). Useat toimijat maailmanlaajuisesti pitävät Hamasia terroristisena järjestönä, mutta toiset pitävät sitä vapaustaistelijoiden toimintana (esim. US Department of State n.d., Youngs ja Glynn 2023). Hyökkäyksen jälkimainingeissa toukokuussa ja heinäkuussa 2024 Kansainvälinen tuomioistuin määräsi Israelin lopettamaan hyökkäyksen Rafahin kaupunginosaan Gazassa siviilien suojelun vuoksi ja totesi että Israel on ylläpitänyt rotuerottelua ja apartheidia miehityksessä Palestiinassa (International Court of Justice 2024a; International Court of Justice 2024b, 2).

1100-luvulla alkanut Englannin kruunun kontrolli Irlannista johti Irlannin osittaiseen kolonisaatioon ja kulttuuriseen assimilaatioon, ja jälkiä tästä näkyy Irlannissa edelleen (Jackson 2004, 124; Stamp 2014). Esimerkiksi englannin kielen yleisyys Irlannissa sen omien kansalliskielten sijaan ylläpitää yhä kelttiläisten kulttuurien tuhoutumista sekä Englannin kulttuurista vaikutusta Irlantiin (Kenny 2004, 2). Myös esimerkiksi Pohjois-Irlannin asema Britteinsaarilla on jatkanut väkivaltaisen kolonialismin asemaa: Irlannin ja Englannin suhteita on kuvailtu monimutkaisiksi ja jopa paradoksaalisiksi (Kenny 2004, 3, 23–24). Irlanti tunnusti Palestiinan valtion virallisesti toukokuussa 2024 painottaen kahden valtion mallia, ja päätöstä kritisoitiin sen oletetusta palkinnosta 'terrorismille' (Department of the Taoiseach 2024; O'Connor 2024). Yhdistynyt kuningaskunta ei ole tunnustanut Palestiinaa, mutta hallinto vaikuttaa myös suosivan kahden valtion mallia (The House of Commons Library 2022, 2).

Teoreettinen tausta

Kriittinen diskurssitutkimus on kielitieteiden tutkimussuuntaus, jossa keskitytään siihen, miten diskurssilla saavutetaan sosiaalisia tavoitteita ja miten suhteet kielen, vallan ja

ideologian välillä vaikuttavat tähän (Bloor ja Bloor 2007, 2; Fairclough 1995, 23). Erityisesti instituutioiden tuottama valta on tarkastelun kohteena (Blommaert [2005] 2009, 24). Keskityn tässä tutkimuksessa nimenomaan valtasuhteiden tarkasteluun: uutismedia ei ole täysin neutraali entiteetti vaan osaltaan auttaa sosiaalisen todellisuuden rakentamista kielellisin keinoin (Fowler 1991, 2). Uutismedia siis päättää ensinnäkin millä sanoilla jostakin asiasta uutisoidaan, mutta myös sen, uutisoidaanko siitä ollenkaan (Fowler 1991, 19).

Ideologian käsite on tuttu diskurssitutkimuksen lisäksi sosiologiasta ja politiikan tutkimuksesta (Freeden 2005, 438; Roucek 1944, 479). Diskurssitutkimuksessa se on määritelty muun muassa tarkoittamaan kokoelmaa uskomuksia tai asenteita, jotka yhdistävät joko tietoisesti tai tiedostamatta jotain tiettyä sosiaalista ryhmää (Bloor ja Bloor 2007, 10, 174). Ideologioiden tutkimuksen nähdään diskurssitutkimuksessa olevan hyvin kietoutunut luokkasuhteisiin ja valtarakenteisiin, ja hegemonisina ideoina ideologioita tutkitaan myös monitieteellisesti (van Dijk 1998, 7–8, 23).

Ideologioiden ilmentyminen on ennen kaikkea sosiaalista, ja ryhmäsuhteet ovat tarkastelussa keskeinen kohde (van Dijk 1998, 135). Fokukseni on ideologioiden institutionaalisissa ja järjestöllisissä ulottuvuuksissa: joukkotiedotusvälineitä pidetään keskeisenä instituutiona ideologioiden tuottamisessa, ja uutisten tuottamisen konventiot ovat puolueellisia valtaapitävien ideologioiden suuntaan (van Dijk 1998, 187–188). Näitä ideologioita voidaan ylläpitää esimerkiksi kuvaamalla omaa sisäryhmää positiivisesti ja jotain ulkoryhmää negatiivisesti (van Dijk 2011, 396–397). Ideologiat voivat myös ryhmien kautta päätyä naturalisoitumaan, eli kyseinen ideologia saa niin ikään maalaisjärjen statuksen ja sitä ylläpitävä diskurssi lakataan näkemästä ideologisena (Fairclough 1995, 27, 42; Fowler 1991, 48–49). Naturalisoidut ideologiat voidaan nähdä marxilaisesta näkökulmasta kulttuurisena hegemoniana sekä valtiovallan mahdollisuutena käyttää esimerkiksi joukkotiedotusvälineitä propagandakoneena ja mahdollisuutena ylläpitää valtion kontrollia (Althusser [1971] 2001, 98–100, 102).

Sovellan näitä ajatuksia tutkimusmateriaalissani käyttämällä apuna El-Nasharin (2014) tutkimuksen muunneltua metodologiaa: analysoin datasta löytyviä sanavalintoja ja sitä, miten niiden positiiviset tai negatiiviset konnotaatiot vaikuttavat asiaintilojen ilmentämiseen uutisoinnissa. Sanojen ideologiset vaikutukset näkyvät usein siinä, kuvailevatko ne jotakin tiettyä ryhmää positiivisesti vai negatiivisesti (van Dijk 1998, 270). Kiinnitän erityistä huomiota substantiiveihin ja substantiivilausekkeisiin, adjektiiveihin ja adverbien sekä

verbeihin, sillä nämä sanaluokat useimmiten tapaavat selkeän merkityksensä lisäksi ylläpitää implisiittisiä konnotaatioita (Richardson 2007, 47).

Aineisto ja menetelmät

Tutkimusmateriaalina tässä tutkimuksessa on yhteensä 26 uutisartikkelia The Timesilta ja The Irish Timesilta, mitkä on jaettu neljään alaluokkaan julkaisuajan ja -paikan mukaan. Kaikkia artikkeleita yhdistää se, että niiden aiheena käsitellään Hamasin lokakuun 7. tapahtunutta hyökkäystä Israeliin ja sen jälkimaininkeja. Keräsin uutisartikkelit kummankin lähteen nettisivuilta, ja ne on julkaistu joko aikavälillä 7.9.2023 - 8.9.2023 tai 25.9.2023 - 26.9.2023. Tein alustavan artikkelihaun nettisivuilta asiasanoilla 'gaza', 'palestine' ja 'hamas', ja näistä artikkeleista valitsin manuaalisesti ne, jotka käsittelevät hyökkäystä tai sen vaikutuksia.

Tutkimusmetodina käytän lähilukua, eli tutkimukseni on kvalitatiivinen analyysi. Mikä tahansa arkinenkin teksti voi ilmentää ideologioita, ja tällaiset kytkökset on mahdollista selvittää kysymällä esimerkiksi mitä teksti pyytää yleisöä olettamaan (Brummet 2019, 70). Lähilukua sekä teoriaosiossa esiteltyä taustatietoa käyttäen tarkastelen uutisissa käytettyjä sanavalintoja substantiivien ja substantiivilausekkeiden, adjektiivien ja adverbien sekä verbien osalta.

Analyysi ja pohdinta

Analyysissä ilmeni jokaisen datan alaluokan osalta useita sanavalintoja, jotka jollakin tavalla ilmensivät positiivisia tai negatiivisia ideologisia konnotaatioita. Suurimpia esille nousseita teemoja, jotka toistuivat jokaisessa luokassa, olivat Israelin koloniaalisen statuksen esilletuominen sekä Hamasin ja sitä kautta osittain muidenkin palestiinalaisten entiteettien nimeäminen terroristisiksi. Suurin osa ideologisia konnotaatioita sisältävistä sanavalinnoista tulivat raportoidusta puheesta eivätkä suorista journalistin valinnoista. Ryhmien TT1 ja IT1 välillä ilmeni eroja alkutilanteen edustuksissa: TT1-artikkeleissa israelilaisentiteettejä kuvattiin positiivisemmin kuin melko neutraaleissa IT1-artikkeleissa, ja palestiinalaisentiteettejä kuvattiin merkittävän negatiivisesti verrattuna hieman negatiiviseen. TT2-artikkeleissa taas sekä israelilaisten että palestiinalaisten entiteettien kuvaukset olivat muuttuneet neutraalimmaksi positiivisista ja negatiivisista suunnistaan. IT2-artikkeleissa palestiinalaisentiteettien kuvaus ei juuri muuttunut verrattuna IT1-artikkeleihin, mutta israelilaisentiteettien kuvaus muuttui melko neutraalista hyvin negatiiviseen.

Nämä tulokset ja muutokset saattavat ilmentää eroja siinä mediaympäristössä, missä artikkelit on kirjoitettu ja julkaistu. On mahdollista, että Irlannin uutisyleisö tai The Irish Timesin julkaisuohjeet antavat enemmän mahdollisuuksia palestiinalaisentiteettien positiiviselle representaatiolle, tai että Englannin tai The Timesin käytännöt mahdollistavat paremmin israelilaisentiteettien positiivisen representaation. Sanavalinnat ja sanasto ovat välineitä, jotka mahdollistavat ideologisen ilmaisun ja tätä kautta marxilaisen perinteen mukaan myös valtiollisen kontrollin diskurssista: erilaiset valtasuhteet vaikuttavat merkittävästi siihen, mitä uutisissakin saa sanoa.

Näiden havaintojen pohjalta on siis mahdollista sanoa, että vaikka hypoteesini ei ollut täysin osuva, oli siinä myös jotain perää. Ideologioiden tutkiminen on kuitenkin aina hieman hankalaa, sillä kirjoittajan aikomuksia on mahdoton tietää ja myös itse ideologiset konnotaatiot saattavat olla paikoittain epäselviä. Sotarikosten jatkuessa Gazassa ja epävarmuuden kasvaessa maailmanpolitiikassa on tärkeää pysyä tiedon aallonharjalla. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoitus on ollut alleviivata kriittisen medianlukutaidon tärkeyttä tässä muuttuvassa maailmanjärjestyksessä.