



The Israel-Gaza Conflict in the British Press: A Corpus-based Critical Stylistic Analysis

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Abstract

This research investigates how corpus techniques incorporated into critical stylistics can contribute to representing the Israel-Gaza conflict in British broadsheet newspapers. The study indicates that the escalation of the Israel-Gaza conflict can be reflected differently and effectively in the language of news reporting. Examining collocations via the Sketch Engine tool provides a clear image of the representation of *Israel*, *Gaza*, and *Hamas* in the corpus under study. Collocational patterns contribute to representing the conflict and to discovering the positive and negative depictions exposed in the choice of language. These collocational patterns are further examined using the critical stylistic tool of naming and describing to demonstrate how *Israel*, *Gaza*, and *Hamas* are labelled and defined, portraying the ways the newspapers used to report the conflict during the selected period.

The aim is to examine how topics related to the Israel-Gaza conflict are covered. The analysis was based on data from the British broadsheet newspapers *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Independent*. The research is swivelling around one primary question: What linguistic structures are employed to represent the Israel-Gaza conflict, and what thematic categories are identified via collocates? The results have revealed that the *Israel*, *Gaza*, and *Hamas* are portrayed differently. The occurrence of nominal choices shows that the three participants are labelled and described negatively. The basic categories observed are conflict, region, authority, and victimhood representing *Israel*, *Gaza*, and *Hamas* differently describing the real events as shown in the use of collocates from a wider textual-conceptual perspective exposed in the modifying and qualifying phrases.

Keywords: critical stylistics, conflict, corpus, collocation



الصراع بين إسرائيل وغزة في الصحافة البريطانية: تحليل أسلوبيّ نقديّ قائم على لغويات المتون

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المستخلص

يتناول هذا البحث كيفية مساهمة لغويات المتون المدمجة في الأسلوبية النقدية في توضيح تمثيل الصراع بين إسرائيل وغزة في الصحف البريطانية؛ حيث تشير الدراسة إلى أنّ تصعيد الصراع بينهما يمكن أن ينعكس بشكل مختلف وفَعَال في لغة التقارير الإخبارية. إنّ دراسة المتلازمات من خلال (أداة تحليل المتون) Sketch Engine تعطي صورة واضحة لتمثيل إسرائيل وغزة وحماس في النصوص المختارة. وتساهم أنماط المتلازمات في تمثيل الصراع واكتشاف التصويرات الإيجابية والسلبية التي تظهر من خلال اللغة المختارة. إنّ دراسة أنماط المتلازمات هذه تتمُّ بشكل أكبر عبر استخدام أدوات الأسلوب النقدي: التسمية والوصف، لإظهار كيفية تسمية وتعريف إسرائيل وغزة وحماس، وبيان الوسائل التي استخدمتها الصحف البريطانية لتغطية الصراع ضمن الفترة المحددة. كما يهدف البحث الى دراسة كيفية تغطية الموضوعات المتعلقة بالصراع بين إسرائيل وغزة، مستنداً إلى تحليل بيانات من الصحف البريطانية التايمز والكارديان والإنديبننت والديلي تليغراف.

لقد سعى مشروع البحث للإجابة عن السؤال الرئيسي: ما البنى اللغوية المستخدمة لتمثيل الصراع بين إسرائيل وغزة؟ وما التصنيفات الموضوعية التي تحدّدت من خلال المتلازمات؟ وكشفت النتائج أن الكلمات الرئيسية: إسرائيل وغزة وحماس قد عُرضت بشكل مختلف. كما بينت الاختيارات الاسمية أن هذه الكلمات الثلاثة صُنِّفت وُوصفت بشكل سلبي. أمّا التصنيفات الأساسية التي لوحظت فهي الصراع والمنطقة والسلطة والضحية التي تمثل إسرائيل وغزة وحماس بشكل مُباين لوصف الأحداث الحقيقية كما هو موضح في استخدام المتلازمات من منظور المفاهيم النصّية بشكل واسع النطاق كشفت عنه العبارات الوصفية المستعملة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأسلوبية النقدية، المتون، المتلازمات، صراع

Introduction

Investigating the representation of the Israel-Gaza conflict has occupied considerable attention in media in general, and newspapers in particular. This event has had a significant impact on social and political issues and consequently on the portrayal of Israel and Gaza in the mainstream media and academic discourses. The press contributes publically to distributing the contents in terms of news, comment and analysis (Reah, 2002), and plays 'an important role in framing how people understand and respond to' contextual happenings (Brookes and Baker, 2021, p. 1; Baker et al. 2013). Newspapers are well recognised by structures and genres that support their reputation. Bell (1991) divides the genres of the press into four categories, including hard news, soft news, special topic news and headings (pp. 14-15). These types overlap with Van Dijk's (1988) categories: the summary news, the main events and background news. Such criteria contribute to news reporting and maintaining its value. Accordingly, the data chosen for this research was the British newspapers as news 'is the end-product of a complex process which begins with a systematic sorting and selecting of events and topics according to a socially constructed set of categories' (Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, & Roberts, 1978, p. 424). Choosing British newspapers to investigate this media discourse can uncover its influence on the readers' perceptions and reactions through which they shape world events.

The upsurge of the conflict is still the longest in history that has covered a wide range of previous scholarly studies. Kandil (2009) examined the discursive representation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the news websites of Al-Jazeera, CNN, and the BBC. He carried out the analysis based on methods from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Corpus Linguistics. The analysis found different strategies adopted by these news websites to find the positive and negative representations of the participants involved in the war. Al-Azami (2016) considered discourse analysis of media representations of the Arab-Israeli conflict associated with the three Abrahamic religions, i.e. Judaism, Christianity and Islam, based on the theoretical framework of CDA. Based on focus group meetings, the study revealed that the Jewish participants perceived the role of media in the Arab-Israeli conflict as anti-Israel, while Muslim and Christian participants believed that the media was unfair towards the Palestinians and favour Israel. Elarkoubi (2018) also examined the Israeli-Palestinian conflict between the years 2015 and 2017 in 18 news reports selected from the Aljazeera English website and the Hamodia English newspaper. The data were examined using CDA to explore how these two websites constructed the events to uncover their ideologies reflected in different perspectives regarding the conflict. A recent approach that has emerged to analyse different texts from a textual perspective aiming at a more rigorous and replicable analysis is adapted to examine the Israel-Gaza conflict in the British broadsheets. No previous studies have considered this longstanding conflict from a critical stylistic perspective.



The current study has considered the way *Israel*, *Gaza*, and *Hamas* are represented, i.e. how they are named and described, depicting a vivid picture of the ways the newspapers used to report the conflict during the selected months, by uniting corpus techniques and critical stylistics. Examining the collocational behaviour of the selected words is a significant step in this study because collocations can show how words or phrases are interrelated. Quantitative analysis, focusing on lexical collocation, is used initially to assess the frequency of key ideational frames in the newspaper reporting of the Israel-Gaza conflict. Semantic prosody and semantic preference, two notions relevant to collocation, are also considered to show the relationship between a word and the surrounding items.

Corpus linguistic techniques

The word corpus can be defined as ‘collections of texts (or parts of text) that are stored and accessed electronically’ (Hunston, 2002, p. 2). The texts are selected to be representative of language variety. Therefore, corpus linguistics (CL) contributes to language study with computer software packages (McEnery & Wilson, 2001, p. 2).

Corpus linguistics uses a number of software tools to show how a particular language is used in the text. A number of corpus techniques are also utilised to aid the analysis including concordance, collocation, and a frequency list. Concordance is a list of all of the occurrences of a particular search term in a corpus, presented within the context in which they occur – usually a few words to the left and right of the search term (Baker, Hardie & McEnery, 2006). Concordances and frequency lists exemplify respectively the two forms of analysis, namely qualitative and quantitative (McEnery and Hardie, 2012). Corpus tools have not only strengthened the position of descriptive linguistics but have also enhanced theoretically oriented linguistic research (McEnery & Gabrielatos, 2006).

Most linguists today agree that the only way to reliably identify the collocates of a given word or phrase is to study patterns of co-occurrence in a text corpus (McEnery & Hardie 2012). Collocation is defined in different ways and is best described as the phenomenon surrounding the fact that certain words are more likely to occur in combination with other words in certain contexts (Baker, et al., 2006). A collocate is therefore ‘a word which occurs within the neighbourhood of another word’ (pp. 36-7). Further, collocates can be useful to demonstrate the existence of bias or connotation in words. For example

In relation to collocation, three technical terms are proposed to identify collocates. These are ‘node’, ‘collocate’ and ‘span’ (Sinclair, 1991). The node is the word or phrase that is under study, while the words that occur either to the left or to the right of that node word are called collocates. The measurement that is used to count collocates is called the span. Concerning measurements, collocates can be calculated based on their statistical significance, including T-score; MI-score, mutual information (MI) and LogDice. The purpose is to provide the researchers with important ‘lexical patterns surrounding a subject, from which a number of discourses can be obtained’ (Baker





et al, 2006, p. 114). Collocation can then show which words are used significantly together in the corpus as will be shown in this research.

A frequency list is also considered in this paper on the basis that it helps researchers to measure the percentage of types and tokens of words and to compare different words in a given text or a corpus. Frequency is one of the most central concepts that underpin corpus analysis (Baker, 2006). Accordingly, corpus techniques can be applied in this study as it aids linguistic description to 'reduce subjectivity in stylistic analysis' and other applications (Baker, 2010, p. 101). Malhberg (2009) investigates clusters selected from texts by Charles Dickens to find meaningful patterns. She finds out patterns related to household items, such as *watering-pot*, *knife* and *leg of the table* used by the characters to express their feelings. Malhberg and McIntyre (2011) investigate keywords and semantic domains in Fleming's *Casino Royale* to identify fictional elements, such as characters and settings, based on two thematic categories: text-centred and reader-centred which provide specific clues for interpretation. Similarly, Malhberg (2013) proposes a corpus linguistic approach to analyse Dickens' fiction to explore linguistic patterns interrelated to literary interpretation in which concordance lines, for example, can help investigate linguistic features in the whole text.

Critical stylistics: a textually-grounded framework of CDA's theories

Critical stylistics (CS) is a well-established theoretical framework for conducting a textual analysis. It was first proposed by Jeffries (2007) when she explored the discourses around the female body in society. Jeffries's approach to CS (2010) provides a systematic set of tools to show what a text is doing, i.e. how language represents the world through linguistic features. The aim is to uncover the underlying ideologies of texts on the basis that all texts are ideological (p. 6), either explicitly or implicitly. The focus is primarily concerned with the linguistic contexts of the texts, in contrast to other critical frameworks of analysis which are concerned with the socio-political contexts where texts are produced that influence the ideological attitude of recipients. Following Halliday's division of language functions into three metafunctions: textual, ideational, and interpersonal, Jeffries' framework focuses primarily on presenting the tools of analysis as ideational, i.e. how the ideological effects are conveyed through the textual tools that can identify the representation of the two main sides/groups in the war in the newspapers. Based on this, Jeffries's critical stylistics is a developed version of CDA as the latter lacks a detailed set of tools to conduct a linguistic analysis. She states that 'there is a dearth of analytical advice available' in CDA studies (2010, p. 12). Furthermore, CDA lacks a rigorous and objective approach to analysing the data linguistically, rendering it non-neutral in text selection.

Fairclough (1989) distinguishes three stages of CDA, namely: description, interpretation and explanation, of which Jeffries adopted description, and interpretation stages as a way of presenting the world in the texts, claiming that the process of explanation is more concerned with the socio-political contexts, which is different from CS that is textually-oriented. The ten textual-conceptual functions (TCFs) are divided into core and peripheral functions according to their importance to the construction of the clause. They include naming and describing, representing actions/events/states,





equating and contrasting, exemplifying and enumerating prioritising, implying and assuming, negation, hypothesizing, presenting others' speech and thoughts, representing time, space and society. These tools can be used either individually or as a set to establish what a text is doing.

Naming and describing

This section is concerned with providing a brief account of the basic tool of critical stylistics adopted to carry out the qualitative analysis in this current paper. The textual-conceptual function of naming and describing is primarily selected on the basis that it is regarded as one of the core functions as each clause can have at least one noun phrase as texts label and characterize things differently. This indicates the importance of this tool to be considered as the basic unit of analysis of this current study. The reason behind choosing this tool is because of the linguistic features it provides to explore how the texts 'name' the world (Jeffries, 2010, p. 17). Further, noun choices and noun modifiers used by the newspapers expose different representations of the main parts involved in the Israel-Gaza conflict because the selection of lexical items is crucial to present ideologies in news discourse (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 259).

Naming is a linguistic process by which entities are labelled and characterized, including adjectives, as an aspect of ideologies (Jeffries, 2010). This function involves three naming practices in which text producers view certain entities which are necessary to convey evaluative attitudes. These practices highlight three tools: noun choices, the construction of a noun phrase or a noun group with modifiers and nominalisation (p. 20). All these strategies have the potential to uncover ideologies in the texts and to influence the ideological attitude of the readers.

Furthermore, choices made to the noun phrase are a way of expanding it with modifications that contribute to 'package up' more details or ideas about nominal entities which can involve complex assumptions about ideology (p.19). Such nominal clauses of English structure are 'less susceptible to debate or questioning' (p. 22) than the verbal clauses, as they are taken for granted by being true knowledge. This makes Jeffries' framework distinct from other approaches to discourse studies. In addition, the noun choices made towards a certain entity in the English texts, therefore, the concept of connotation will also be considered to achieve the precise use of lexical items.

The textual-conceptual function of naming and describing applies to the textual analysis in cooperation with the corpus techniques mentioned before. It is based on the language drawn in the texts that name and describe different entities. Utilising different naming choices can get the reader to draw a direct impression of the way someone or something is represented.

Data and methods

This section provides a thorough account of the data selected to carry out the analysis as well as the methods adopted for this purpose. The data selected for the analysis of this study is the British newspapers *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Independent* due to their focus on international and political news and contain more text with a more formal writing style (Baker,





Gabrielatos & McEnery, 2013). These newspapers were collected from the online database *ProQuest Newsstand*, from which the news articles covering the Israel-Gaza conflict were uploaded directly. This database provides a multi-disciplinary resource for scholarly journals, newspapers, reports, publications, and magazines.

The selected items are *Gaza, Israel, war (s), conflict (s), Palestinian (s), Zionist (s), Hamas, and Israeli–Palestinian* published in the first three months of the conflict: October, November and December 2023. Uploading the selected newspaper articles, a number of exclusion criteria are drawn to remove any unrelated and duplicated articles as some newspapers print second and Scot editions of the same issue. Having excluded irrelevant and duplicated articles, the research retained 1814 articles in total. The resulting data consists of **1,434,825** words and **1,662,740** tokens.

The articles were directly saved as plain text files, and uploaded then onto the software system Sketch Engine (SkE) to carry out a corpus analysis. This corpus tool was developed by Kilgarriff et al. (2004) which allows corpora of different languages to be uploaded. The tool provides statistics on the grammatical relations among collocates, which are sorted into nouns, adjectives and verbs. Therefore, Sketch Engine is chosen as it 'provides a more sophisticated picture of collocational patterns than merely considering pairs of words together' (Baker, Gabrielatos & McEnery, 2012, p. 260).

The current paper illuminates the importance of integrating corpus linguistics and critical stylistics to carry out a discourse analysis of the selected newspapers. This combination demonstrates the value of both approaches to the discursive construction of the Israel-Gaza conflict in a rigorous and replicable way. Corpus methods are valuable to identify categories of words collocating with the target words to find out collocational patterns to be representative of the large volume of texts. Based on examining collocates, the collocational patterns are grouped into a set of 'thematic categories' (Baker et al., 2013) by carrying out a text-based examination by inspecting concordance lines to obtain more information about the collocate in the context. This is necessary to interpret the ideological effect.

The analysis began by identifying frequent patterns of representation to examine the most common nouns. This is necessary because '[r]epeated patterns show that evaluative meanings are not merely personal and idiosyncratic, but widely shared in a discourse community Stubbs (2001, p. 215). As shown in Table 1 below, the most recurrent words are *Israel, Gaza* and *Hamas* indicating the focal point of reporting the Israel-Gaza conflict. As a result, I generated word sketches for these three frequent words to examine linguistic patterns which are relevant to the representation of the Israel-Gaza conflict in the press.

Table 1: Total frequency of the lexical items

Word form	Frequency
Israel	11.574





Gaza	9.752
Hamas	5.265
War	3.437
Palestinian	2.545
Conflict	1.444
Palestine	834
Zionist	24

As shown, *Israel* made up the highest in terms of frequency, then comes *Gaza* and *Hamas*. Another pivotal point is the great difference between *war* and *conflict* in terms of frequency; 3.437 and 1.444 respectively. According to the Oxford Learner's Dictionaries (OLD Online, 2024), the word *conflict* is 'a situation in which people, groups or countries disagree strongly or are involved in a serious argument', whereas *war* is 'a situation in which two or more countries or groups of people fight against each other over a period of time'. In the Cambridge Dictionary, *war* is defined as 'armed fighting between two or more countries or groups', indicating that people must be armed. With such definitions, it is apparent that the word *war* is more applicable to the situations in Gaza and Israel than *conflict*. That's why it is dominant in the selected articles rather than *conflict* requiring armed people to fight their enemies.

Word sketch: a big picture of the selected items

This section draws a comprehensive picture of the selected items based on generating word sketches for them. Based on the number of frequency in Table 1, the word sketch of *Israel* revealed it tends to occur as a noun (11.574), collocating most predominantly with adjectives. The word *Israel* is modified by 753 adjectives (types) in 452.87 per million (tokens). This first frame contains collocates referring to locations, e.g. *southern*, *central* and *northern* which are the highest in terms of frequency and saliency. Another frame highlighted by the word sketch is the use of *Israel* as a modifier. The most prominent collocates of *Israel* as a modifier is *force* in its plural and singular forms, with a frequency of 264, and a saliency of 12.5 referring to *Israel Defence Force* (IDF), the national military of Israel. The word *Israel* tends to occur as an object of verbs such as *urge*, *accuse*, *attack*, *support*, *blame*, *press*, *condemn*, and others, carrying negative semantic prosody. Word sketch also shows that *Israel* tends to occur as the subject of verbs of relational process, with the prevailing verbs to *have* (875, 10.9) and *be* (673, 9.7). This type of verb tends to show a stable relationship exists between entities, for instance,

Regarding the pattern *Israel* and/or noun, it is found to be paired frequently with *Hamas*, *Gaza* and *Palestine* with a saliency 11.8, 11.2 and 10.7 respectively. This illustrates the disastrous situations these parts are involved in as shown in the following concordance lines for the collocations of the three items. The concordances demonstrate a strong connection to conflict and war (i.e. war relations), suggesting a negative semantic prosody.

Figure 1: A sample from the concordance lines for the collocation *Israel + Hamas*



Regarding the second dominant word *Gaza* as a noun (9. 752), it is highly modified by adjectives relating to locations *northern* (203, 12.5) and *southern* (134, 11.7) in terms of both salience and frequency. The word *Gaza* is itself used as a modifier which is ranked in order of saliency and frequency (782, 12.9) by the word *strip*, originating in the most common collocation *Gaza Strip*. This indicates a permanent location of Gaza where the war has taken place. Another dominant collocation is *Gaza City* (450, 12.3) which is also a reference to location, showing a strong connection to the place of residency.

The pattern labelled as objects suggests a frequent co-occurrence with verbs related to movement such as *enter, leave, reach, occupy, invade, rule, flee, bomb, control, govern, evacuate*, and others. All these verbs are indicative of shattering and attacks making Gaza the battlefield and the target to reach at the end. The word also tends to occur as a subject for verbs of relational process, with *be* being the recurrent one (544, 9.5) and *have* (251, 9.3), similar to the occurrence of the item *Israel* used as a subject. It is worth adding that the grammatical relations are not 100% accurate containing higher grammatical errors. Therefore, caution is required as some items are not tagged correctly. For example, in the frame of a subject, the phrase *Gaza has killed* is tagged wrongly as *Gaza* is identified as the subject of the verb *kill*, showing that Gaza is performing killing, while the opposite is true. The concordance lines for *Gaza + kill* display that Israel was attacking and killing Palestinians in Gaza, the battlefield; therefore are innocent and victims, which are evidenced with numeration, while the Israeli military as killers as shown in the screenshot below.

Figure 4: A sample from the concordance lines for the collocation *Gaza + kill*

g." </s> <s>On Thursday, the ministry said the Israeli bombing of **Gaza** had **killed** 7,028 Palestinians, including 2,913 children, in the near
 imatised Israel. </s> <s>Since the attack, Israeli military strikes on **Gaza** have **killed** thousands of Palestinian civilians, including many chil
 when a reporter speculated that an "Israeli strike" on a hospital in **Gaza** had **killed** hundreds. </s> <s>Even before the BBC reported the cl
 impact on Israelis after terrorist attacks launched by Hamas from **Gaza** **killed** 1,400 people than trying to offer lessons in other, less emp
 Tuesday when an explosion at the al-Ahli Arabi Baptist hospital in **Gaza** **killed** hundreds of Palestinians sheltering from Israel's bombing c
 Tuesday when an explosion at the al-Ahli Arabi Baptist hospital in **Gaza** **killed** hundreds of Palestinians sheltering from Israel's bombing c
 than 2700 wounded. </s> <s>Israeli reprisal strikes on blockaded **Gaza** have **killed** 1200 people and wounded 5600. </s> <s>The IDF also
 air campaign by Israel. </s> <s>Hamas says the bombardment of **Gaza** has **killed** 20,057 people, 8,000 of them children. </s> <s>Antonic
 killed 1,200, mostly civilians. </s> <s>Israel's ensuing offensive in **Gaza** has **killed** more than 18,700 people, mostly women and children,
 following day, the French president said Israel's bombardment of **Gaza** was **killing** civilians – "these babies, these ladies, these old people
 lew the following day, the president said Israel's bombardment of **Gaza** was **killing** civilians – "these babies, these ladies, these old people
 re durable pause in the violence. </s> <s>The Israeli offensive on **Gaza** has **killed** more than 14,000 people, thousands of them children, </s>

Regarding the frame *Gaza* and/or a noun, the phrases *Gaza* and *West Bank* are highly ranked in the current corpus; 176, 11.2 and 62, 10.9 respectively in terms of salience and frequency. This is also indicative of the war relations among the main parts of the war. Moving to the last word *Hamas* rating 5.265 with a normalised frequency of 0.32% per million. As a noun, the word *Hamas* is modified by adjectives significantly opened by *group* (9.9). Reading the concordance lines for the pattern of this collocation *group Hamas* provides textual evidence as being a military and terrorist

group, suggesting a semantic preference for nouns referring to terrorism, as a result indicating a negative semantic prosody.

Figure 5: A sample from the concordance lines for the collocation *Hamas + held*

have her back," he promised. Palestinian militant **group Hamas** has launched a large-scale surprise attack against Israel, which the Full text: The horrific and inhuman actions of the terrorist **group Hamas** is not just an attack on Israel – it is an attack on freedom, democr era television and the rest was propaganda by a terrorist **group Hamas** , that runs a police state. But Anthony Albanese must now ing them." However, it did not mention the terror **group Hamas** - or the massacres it carried out earlier this month. Last n rritory from Egypt in the 1967 Six-Day War. 2006 Terrorist **group Hamas** wins a Palestinian legislative election. 2007 Hamas seizes control c :ording to reports. Two members of the terrorist **groups Hamas** and Hizbollah told the Wall Street Journal Saturday's deadly attac ot ever fail to have her back." Palestinian militant **group Hamas** has launched a large-scale surprise attack against Israel, which the WAR BREAKS OUT IN ISRAEL Palestinian militant **group Hamas** has launched a large-scale surprise attack against Israel, which the he democratically elected government of Israel and terror **group Hamas** with the same "professional scepticism". ABC news direct er attacks in the West signal change of tactics from terror **group Hamas** 'trying to bring conflict to Europe' er attacks in the West signal change of tactics from terror **group Hamas** 'trying to bring conflict to Europe' [Scot Region] orces earlier this week. Israel alleged the militant **group Hamas** used al-Shifa as a command centre, identifying it as a key target i plex has been a focal point of Israel's 40-day war on terror **group Hamas** as it seeks to hunt down those behind the atrocities of October 7, ying out a "precise and targeted operation" against terror **group Hamas** in Gaza's Al-Shifa hospital. Reuters had included a quote ties, since the 7 October attack by the Palestinian militant **group Hamas** on Israel and Israel's subsequent month-long bombardment of th ties, since the 7 October attack by the Palestinian militant **group Hamas** on Israel and Israel's subsequent month-long bombardment of th

The data shows that it tends to occur as a modifier for nouns such as *fighters*, *terrorists*, *militants*, *attack*, *gunmen*, *leader*, etc. in which *fighters* and *terrorists* gain prominence (48,10.9) and (35,10.3) respectively in terms of saliency and frequency, suggesting negative semantic prosody. It also occurs as the object of verbs commonly associated with war as in *destroy*, *condemn*, *eliminate*, *eradicate*, *defeat*, *ensure*, *fight*, *accuse*, and *release*, carrying essentially negative connotations. Another typical pattern is the co-occurrence of the word *Hamas* as a subject of verbs requiring dominance and violence like *release*, *commit*, *kill*, *attack*, *run*, *seize*, *kidnap*, *operate*, *fire*, *threaten*, *abduct*, *control*, *murder*, *rule*. It is greatly opened by the verbs *held* (119, 10.4) and *use* (90, 10.0). Looking at the concordance of these verbs highlights notions of hostility and conflict, with patterns referencing power relations, as shown in figures 4 and 5 below:

Figure 6: A sample from the concordance lines for the collocation *Hamas + held*

e dear to us," Mr Gallant told relatives of some hostages **held** by **Hamas** .</s> <s>"They seek the collapse of Israeli society from within, an importance of finding a way to release the hostages **held** by **Hamas** .</s> <s>Both leaders said the long-stalled two-state solution, er id in". * A delegation of families of Israeli hostages being **held** by **Hamas** urged President Isaac Herzog to keep their plight at the top of th the importance of finding a way to release the hostages **held** by **Hamas** .</s> <s>Both leaders said the long-stalled two-state solution, er officials revised the number of hostages confirmed to be **held** by **Hamas** to 224, the World Health Organization called on the group to pro he military also announced that the number of hostages **held** by **Hamas** stood at 229, up five from Wednesday.</s> <s>The International stinian prisoners to secure a deal for the hostages being **held** by **Hamas** , the country's best-known negotiator has said.</s> <s>Gershon calling for US President Joe Biden to free Israeli hostages **held** by **Hamas** .</s> <s>(There was a hashtag, #NoHostageLeftBehind, because / Hamas and five are thought to be among the hostages **held** by **Hamas** , according to the British government.</s> <s>In the UK, nearly a stinian civilians" in Gaza while not also mentioning the hostages **held** by **Hamas** holds as shields.</s> <s>Quite something for the woman who re jamin Netanyahu to hold off on a ground invasion of Gaza while **Hamas** still holds more than 200 hostages, including dual nationals.</s> meeting representatives of the families of hostages being **held** by **Hamas** in Gaza, adding that they would be accompanied by a representa l into Gaza, as well as diplomatic efforts to free hostages **held** by **Hamas** – but the protection of US troops was of "paramount" importance eeting representatives of the families of hostages being **held** by **Hamas** in Gaza, adding that they would be accompanied by a representa l into Gaza, as well as diplomatic efforts to free hostages **held** by **Hamas** – but the protection of US troops was of "paramount" importance ns led by the Gulf state to secure the release of hostages **held** by **Hamas** in Gaza, although his government has warned that an Israel invas delay military action pending the release of the hostages **held** by **Hamas** .</s> <s>In Britain, Sir Keir Starmer is struggling to keep his party

Figure 7: A sample from the concordance lines for the collocation *Hamas + use*

ant of all the lessons that history has to teach us."</s> <s>Just as	Hamas is using roadblocks to prevent Palestinians from moving south an
been taken into the enclave, authorities said on Sunday.</s> <s>	Hamas has frequently used captive Israelis as bargaining chips to secure a
ories published by Hamas are part of their psychological games –	Hamas is cynically using those who are dear to us," Mr Gallant told relati
blished by Hamas are part of their psychological games.</s> <s>	Hamas is cynically using those who are dear to us," Mr Gallant told relati
of alleged evidence released by the IDF to support its claims that	Hamas uses the civilian population of Gaza as human shields or operates
of alleged evidence released by the IDF to support its claims that	Hamas uses the civilian population of Gaza as human shields or operates
massacre of 1,400 Israelis.</s> <s>They appeared to confirm that	Hamas was using hospitals in the Gaza Strip to protect themselves from I
blished by Hamas are part of their psychological games.</s> <s>	Hamas is cynically using those who are dear to us - they understand the
ny babies Hamas had beheaded.</s> <s>She even falsely denied	Hamas used its civilians as human shields, and falsely suggested it had re
re the announcement of expanded operations in Gaza.</s> <s>"	Hamas is cynically using hospitals as a shield for its underground terror c
re the announcement of expanded operations in Gaza.</s> <s>"	Hamas is cynically using hospitals as a shield for its underground terror c
id shipments to the territory.</s> <s>"Fuel will not enter Gaza as	Hamas uses it for its operational needs," said R Adm Daniel Hagari.</s> <
Daniel Hagari, was adamant.</s> <s>"Fuel will not enter Gaza as	Hamas uses it for its operational needs," Hagari said.</s> <s>"If necessar
id shipments to the territory.</s> <s>"Fuel will not enter Gaza as	Hamas uses it for its operational needs," said R Adm Daniel Hagari.</s> <
id shipments to the territory.</s> <s>"Fuel will not enter Gaza as	Hamas uses it for its operational needs," said R Adm Daniel Hagari.</s> <
Daniel Hagari, was adamant.</s> <s>"Fuel will not enter Gaza as	Hamas uses it for its operational needs," Hagari said.</s> <s>"If necessar
's> <s>Israel uses her forces in order to protect her citizens, while	Hamas uses its citizens to protect its forces.</s> <s>Words do matter.</s>
ct 7, as well as weapons captured on the battlefield, indicate that	Hamas used the F-7 rocket-propelled grenade, a shoulder-fired weapon t
nk through its state-run KCNA news agency dismissed claims that	Hamas used its weapons as "a groundless and false rumour" orchestrate

Other common patterns are the co-occurrence of *Hamas* with verbs such as *have* and *release* rating 410 (9.9) and 79 (9.9) respectively. Reading the concordances of the collocations *Hamas has* and *Hamas release* reveals an unpleasant situation; either being involved in malicious activities or receiving accusations, with a strong reference to numeration, although the verb *release* denotes a positive meaning as it provides freedom to someone at the war time. By way of examples:

- **Hamas had suffered** dozens of casualties...
- By contrast, **Hamas has limited equipment**.
- **Hamas has built** a global operation to funnel funds to support its activities.
- But **Hamas has gone further**, building a sophisticated, cement reinforced tunnel network underground...
- **Hamas has frequently used** captive Israelis as bargaining chips...
- Once **Hamas has been destroyed**...
- And so **Hamas has killed** its own cause and its own people.
- **Hamas has also discouraged** Palestinians from heeding Israel's call to evacuate.



- **Hamas releases 24 hostages** on first day of Gaza ceasefire.
- Twenty-four hostages were **released by Hamas** – 13 Israelis, 10 Thais and a Philippine national – [...].
- Yesterday, **Hamas released** a video of three female hostages...
- He also failed to demand **Hamas release** 249 Jewish hostages it took that day...

Finally, *Hamas* tends to co-occur with terms such as *Israel*, *Islamic Jihad*, *Hezbollah*, *Iran*, *Fatah*, *IDF*, and *Netanyahu* in the patterns *Israel and Hamas*, *Hamas and Islamic Jihad*, *Hamas and Hezbollah*, *Iran and Hamas*, *Hamas and Fatah*, etc., linked to other Islamic movements in Palestine or other Arabic countries. What can emerge from the grammatical relationships and collocational behaviours of *Hamas* is an indication linked to power, rules, or conflict. From the semantic point of view, it carries a neutral meaning; however, it attributes a negative evaluation as being discussed in negative contexts. Thus it is not adequate to prove that items are positive or negative literally without examining the texts accurately.

Data analysis: results and discussions

This section presents the analysis of the articles selected from the British broadsheets to examine the representation of the Israel-Gaza conflict. According to the full description obtained from word sketches for the three dominant words *Israel*, *Gaza* and *Hamas*, it seems there is a persistent portrayal of demonstrating these nouns negatively and weakly. The word sketch is utilised as a starting point to identify the collocational choices and examine them according to the textual-conceptual function of naming and describing. Its focus is to show how the selected items, *Israel*, *Gaza* and *Hamas* are named and characterised linguistically in the British newspapers. As mentioned before, this function involves three linguistic tools: noun choices, noun modifiers and nominalisation. These three linguistic vehicles, in particular noun choices and noun modifiers, are important in creating ideological potentiality in the texts. All collocates associated with the selected words used as nouns and modifiers are examined to explore differences and similarities among them. No examples of nominalisation are detected in the corpus under study.

Based on the results of the collocates identified in the word sketch, significant collocates are then grouped into thematic categories based on examining concordances of the words *Israel*, *Gaza* and *Hamas*. Following Baker et al. (2013), each set of collocates sharing semantic features is assigned into themes to identify frequent patterns surrounding the target words that reflect on the representation of the three parts. This is a feasible way as it allows showing different connotations depending on contextual information that some words might reveal. The thematic categories of the significant collocates are discussed next in detail separately.

Israel

Starting with the first word *Israel*, it is highly modified by words referencing locations such as *southern*, *northern*, and *central*. Other collocates are tagged incorrectly although they refer to

locations, such as *Gaza, Egypt and US* as in *On the ground in Gaza, Israel has broadened...*, *The opening of the crossing was negotiated between Egypt, Israel and Hamas, ... The grand bargain between the US, Israel and Saudi Arabia is already a dead letter.* Therefore, they are skipped from this study. Regarding the dominant one *southern*, it is remarkably used (219 occurrences) rating 131.71 per million tokens. Expanding the concordance of the collocation *southern Israel* displays various patterns. A dominant pattern is a set of prepositions *in, on, and across*, which are syntactically and semantically the relevant prepositions associated with places. The collocation *in southern Israel* is mostly found with 122 occurrences, *in southern Israel* (34 occurrences), *across southern Israel* (11 occurrences), *and through southern Israel* (9 occurrences). Reading the concordances of this collocation displays predominantly negative situations on the part of Hamas, the military movement and the opponent, where an attack took place. By way of examples,

- [...] the campaign to eradicate Hamas - which started the conflict on 7 October with a murderous onslaught in **southern Israel** that killed more than 1,400 people - could last months.
- [...] on 7 October when Hamas launched a deadly attack on **southern Israel**, murdering hundreds of people including children.
- The war in Gaza triggered by the Palestinian militant group Hamas's massacre across **southern Israel**, in which 1,400 people were killed and another 230 kidnapped.
- Since the Hamas attacks in **southern Israel** in October, ...
- [...], when a Hamas raid sowed terror in **southern Israel**, killing more than 1,400.
- [...], the militant group that killed 1,400 people on its rampage through **southern Israel**, [...].

The collocation of *southern Israel* is notably pre-modified by negative phrases underlined in the examples above: *murderous, onslaught, deadly attack, massacre, terror, rampage*, and others as evidenced in the concordance below, describing the devastating attack led by Hamas in southern Israel. These phrases constructed the situation in southern Israel as unsafe and Hamas as a dangerous group. Packaging up more information into this collocate *southern Israel* makes it less open to question, and the situation there is taken for granted as a given fact. Other examples of ideological representations are also found in the rest of the analysis.

Figure 8: A sample from the concordance lines for the collocation *southern Israel*

n 7 October when Hamas launched a deadly attack on **southern Israel** , murdering hundreds of people including children.</s> <s> Such
 against Hamas, a response to the group's onslaught in **southern Israel** from which civilians have been evacuated.</s> <s> Relatives of pe
 of Hamas militants captured after the group's attack in **southern Israel** .</s> <s> They were handcuffed, with one wearing a bloody T-shi
 against Hamas, a response to the group's onslaught in **southern Israel** on 7 October that killed more than 1,400 people and left more th
 of Hamas militants captured after the group's attack in **southern Israel** .</s> <s> They were handcuffed, with one wearing a bloody T-shi
 against Hamas, a response to the group's onslaught in **southern Israel** on 7 October that killed more than 1,400 people and left more th
 of Hamas militants captured after the group's attack in **southern Israel** .</s> <s> They were handcuffed, with one wearing a bloody T-shi
 kidnapped.</s> <s> Over a dozen towns and villages in **southern Israel** were overrun on Saturday by Hamas terrorists who were shooting
 halt in hostilities.</s> <s> As the situation in Gaza and **southern Israel** appeared to settle into a deadly holding pattern of aerial attacks,
 and mutual trust.</s> <s> As the situation in Gaza and **southern Israel** appeared to settle into a deadly holding pattern of aerial attacks,
 of killings and mutilations during Hamas's rampage in **southern Israel** on 7 October.</s> <s> The government showed the 43-minute cc
 and mutual trust.</s> <s> As the situation in Gaza and **southern Israel** appeared to settle into a deadly holding pattern of aerial attacks,
 people displaced.</s> <s> On 7 October, an attack on **southern Israel** by Hamas militants killed 1,400 people, mainly civilians, in massac
 red missing after Hamas attacked the Be'eri kibbutz in **southern Israel** and killed their mother.</s> <s> Yahel was identified last week.</s>
 uch of the world discovered the truth of the attacks in **southern Israel** while the BBC and others still talked euphemistically about "milita
 me.</s> <s> The rally followed the surprise attack on **southern Israel** by Hamas militants on 7 October that killed 1,400 people, mainly



Further, there is a great reference to the number 1,400 (45 occurrences) wherein Hamas militants killed 1,400 civilians, people or Israelis, displaying a pattern that focuses on representing Israelis as being victimized. It seems there is a great reference to modifying Hamas as a militant group, in which the word *militant* occurs 34 times, presenting Hamas as the main source for erupting the war in Gaza.

Regarding the other collocates *central* and *northern*; they are also depicted as two places in dangerous situations: *In Tuesday, Hamas fired a barrage of rockets into central Israel, triggering sirens and wounding two people with shrapnel, ... about 2,200 rockets fired towards southern and central Israel...*, *Heavy rocket fire from Gaza pounded south and central Israel, The push further into Gaza city has incited a fresh volley of rocket attacks on northern Israel from Hamas fighters in Lebanon, it had fired rockets and artillery into northern Israel.* As a result, *Israel* is represented in the context of war, being one of the two main sides involved in the war, demonstrated in the instances attributed to the context of victimhood. Such a situation is represented as an indisputable fact as it is packaged up inside these noun phrases; therefore, influences the reader's perception of the dangerous situation in Israel.

Concerning the pattern in which *Israel* is used as a modifier; word sketch shows that it is chiefly opened, in terms of frequency and saliency, by the word *Forces* 264 occurrences (12.5). It is associated with the national military of Israel. A prevalent pattern is the use of this collocation with the definite article *the* in 255 instances (85%), suggesting the existence of this Israeli military. Reading the concordances further reveals the use of *Israel Forces* in the context of war presented as the main proposition of verb clause as in *The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) continued to bomb the north of the Gaza Strip by air and land, ...*, in which debates are more accessible than the nominal clauses, i.e. the reader is encouraged to argue against the information given between the parts of the clause structure, i.e. one could state that IDF did not continue to bomb Gaza Strip because it is not taken for granted as true information. This confirms the existence of the ideology presented to the readers.

Another recurrent frame is the possessive structure *Israel's*. The most salient pattern is the occurrence of *Israel's* with phrases in the context of struggle such as *military, war, bombardment, ally, action, force, offensive, operation, campaign, siege, enemy, defence, army, attack, strike, destruction, bombing, assault, occupation, blockade, invasion*, and others. Reading the context carefully views a destructive situation discussed in a more negative circumstance. The collocates are further parcelled with modifiers underlined in the following instances:

- [...] condemning the attack and supporting **Israel's** right to self defence.
- ... **Israel's** actions for occupying Palestinian territories.
- **Israel's** retaliatory strikes for Hamas militants' attacks...
- **Israel's** devastating attack of Gaza...
- ... **Israel's** armed forces...
- [...] Palestinians sheltering from **Israel's** bombing campaign.



Semantically speaking, some collocates have neutral meanings that do not reveal any negativity like *campaign* and *force*, but they are used in the context of conflicts, making negative descriptions less questionable as they are taken for granted as common knowledge, portraying Israel as the source of danger for people in Gaza. It is obvious then the British newspapers are straight in recounting the actual situations, whether on the part of Israel or citizens in Palestine, showing a neutral representation of the conflict.

Gaza

Moving to the second recurrent word *Gaza*, sharing thematic categories of location and conflict are also detected. Word sketch shows a list of collocates that modify *Gaza* according to the location: *northern*, *southern*, *central*, *north*, and *south*, wherein the word *northern* makes up the highest one (203 occurrences, 12.5), and next *southern* (134 occurrences, 11.7). From the semantic point of view, these collocates denote neutral meanings but attribute a negative evaluation as being discussed in negative contexts. Inspecting the collocation *northern Gaza* reveals frequent patterns. The most prevalent one is the use of propositions *in* (110 instances), *of* (28 instances), *on* (7 instances). Expanding the concordances of *northern Gaza* further shows the embroilment of this city in conflict, shown below:

Figure 9: A sample from the concordance lines for the collocation *northern Gaza*

locks and killed dozens of people at a refugee camp in northern Gaza on the 25 th day of a conflict that the United Nations said has bec	
rom moving south and away from the Israeli attack on northern Gaza , so is it also preventing the Palestinians from moving on from the	
ops." </s> <s> Hamas itself reported "heavy fighting" in northern Gaza but said Israeli tanks had retreated from the southern outskirts of	
ffensive began in an attack on its network of tunnels in northern Gaza . </s> <s> The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) killed several militants at	
border on Saturday. </s> <s> The clashes with Hamas in northern Gaza are thought to be the first in which militants have emerged from	
s from which Hamas is believed to operate underneath northern Gaza – including, the state says, beneath Shifa Hospital, Gaza's largest	
tober. </s> <s> Israel said it was intensifying attacks on northern Gaza and warned that anyone who stayed risked being considered as "	
onfronting Israeli forces in the areas of Beit Hanoun in northern Gaza and Burej in the centre of the territory – both entry points that ha	
s > <s> That is why the Palestinian civilian population in northern Gaza , more than 1 million people, were ordered south of the Wadi Gaz	
s > <s> That is why the Palestinian civilian population in northern Gaza , more than 1 million people, were ordered south of the Wadi Gaz	
Israel issued sweeping evacuation orders for people in northern Gaza , the family have twice driven south to the Rafah border crossing	
with a land offensive against Hamas, launching a raid in northern Gaza to prepare the territory for a fullscale invasion. </s> <s> Footage fi	
after Israeli forces carried out a "shaping operation" in northern Gaza in what is widely believed to be a prelude to a much larger groun	
Full text: ISRAELI tanks raided northern Gaza in preparation for a land offensive against Hamas just hours after	
orth, where most of the hospitals are, because it wants northern Gaza evacuated before a planned ground offensive. </s> <s> Pope Fran	
:/s> <s> Al-Awda hospital, the main maternity centre in northern Gaza , said it would have to stop services completely on Wednesday ni	
orth, where most of the hospitals are, because it wants northern Gaza evacuated before a planned ground offensive. </s> <s> Pope Fran	
ie of the facilities waiting for WHO supplies and fuel in northern Gaza include al-Shifa hospital, where bed occupancy is already close to	
the UN, some Palestinians who had fled their homes in northern Gaza have returned because of a lack of food and shelter in the south.	

What emerged from that concordance is a sample of pre-modifiers that show strong aggressive meanings, such as *attack*, *heavy fighting*, *clashes with Hamas*, *raid*, *bombing campaign*, *intensifying attacks*, *airstrikes*, and so on. Besides, pre-modifiers and post-modifying relative clauses presented together in the following examples demonstrate dangerous situations in the Gaza strip, suggesting therefore a semantic preference for fear and conflict:

- [...] dozens of people at a refugee camp in **northern Gaza** on the 25th day of a conflict that the United Nations said has become a "graveyard" for children.
- The clashes with Hamas in **northern Gaza** are thought to be the first in which militants have emerged from tunnels [...].



- Israel has said it is on northern Gaza [...].
- Since Israel issued sweeping evacuation orders for people in northern Gaza, [...].
- IDF infantry and their Merkava 4 tanks are now scouring the rubble in decimated northern Gaza with heat-sensing cameras looking for any sign of movement.
- Troops seized control of the bunker, known as outpost 17, in **northern Gaza** after battling with Hamas and Islamic Jihad gunmen [...].
- The military assault on northern Gaza had resulted in only one hostage being rescued alive.
- Israel's military has since ordered more than one million Palestinians living in northern Gaza to evacuate in 24 hours [...].

There is a good reference to quantification in the last sentence *one million Palestinians*, implying that many Palestinian people are in absolute danger. Ideologically speaking, such modifying and qualifying phrases are part of the main nominal phrase and are regarded as given information making such danger difficult to argue that people in Gaza are not experiencing hard situations. Regarding the second recurrent collocation *southern Gaza*, similar to *northern Gaza*, the most common pattern is the use of prepositions. It is prefixed by *in* (66 occurrences), *to* (37 occurrences), *into* (12 occurrences), *over* (10 occurrences) *on* (7 instances), *of* (4 occurrences). This is almost the same as the third frequent collocates *central*, which is preceded by the preposition *in* (31 instances out of 47 occurrences).

Reading the concordances of *southern Gaza* further displays a set of modifying phrases and relative clauses embedded in the NPs. Examples of pre-modifiers include *bombings*, *airstrikes*, *continuing offensive*, *increasing bombardment*, *new strikes*, *ground assault*, *military flights*, and *makeshift shelters*, presenting the extensive danger that portrays people in Gaza as being victimized because of the Israeli attacks. This danger again is clearly represented as background information since it is packaged up inside the NPs. From the linguistic point of view, packaging up a set of modifiers inside NPs makes these modifiers incontrovertible and rather taken for granted by the reader (Jeffries, 2010, p. 22). Moreover, the collocations *southern Gaza* (12 instances) and *central Gaza* (10 instances) are also post-modified by relative clauses, underlined in the following examples:

- [...] Israeli plans to proceed into **southern Gaza**, where huge numbers of Palestinians have sought refuge since the start of the war.
- Israeli officials are reportedly finalising plans for "targeted" raids into **southern Gaza**, where hundreds of thousands of civilians have fled.
- [...] in **central Gaza**, where families displaced from the north had sought refuge.
- [...] in southern and **central Gaza**, where they can be safe and out of the line of fire.

These underlined post-modifications are associated with a destructive portrayal wherein inhabitants were displaced for their safety, in addition to the vague use of quantifications such as *huge*





numbers, hundreds of thousands, which show how the situation escalated in Gaza. This is a much-observed pattern of civilians being involved in the war. One more salient pattern of the collocation *central Gaza* is the construction of a *refugee camp* (9 instances), such as *Hamas's Gaza chief Yahya Sinwar and more than 30 people were killed in an Israeli attack on a refugee camp in central Gaza*, which is an indication that Israel committed the crime in this area. What is distinct about this collocation is the names of places (27 cases) like *Khan Younis, Nuseirat, Samar Al-Daya, hospitals, camp, Deir al-Balah, 20 areas, towns, schools, roads, Maghazi*, different from the former collocations *northern Gaza* and *southern Gaza* that are modified by phrases with negative meanings, confirming the severe situation people are experiencing. Accordingly, such a naming strategy can assume certain ideologies and the relationship suggested in the noun phrases is taken for granted without offering any debates by the readers to deny the real situation in Gaza.

As a modifier, *Gaza* tended to be collocated saliently with 16 nouns referencing places, 10 nouns to war, and 8 nouns to people. Nouns referring to places are the predominant ones, which are opened in terms of frequency and saliency by the noun *Strip* in 782 instances (12.9), and *city* comes next in 450 instances (12.3), in addition to *border, hospital, river, metro, front, side, town, and area*. Examples of nouns denoting war are *crisis, conflict, war, invasion, ceasefire, and truce*, while those referring to people include *resident, civilian, official, authority, doctor, population, and hostage*. All these nouns are typical of news reporting the conflict in Gaza, which is the main context of the data under study.

Regarding the recurrent collocation *Gaza Strip*, the most salient pattern is the use of the definite article *the* shown in almost all the instances, presupposing the existence of this Palestinian territory, which is further pre-modified by negatively evaluated words that confirm the constant crisis in this area such as *blockaded, besieged, constant bombing of the sealed-off, intense bombardment, Israel's bombing, ground invasion, ongoing siege, violent takeover*. Reading the concordance lines further shows a set of phrases that demonstrate a semantic preference for conflicts, creating a destructive representation of Gaza. The use of these modifiers confirms the existence of attack because they are presented as facts that are not open for negotiation, but rather taken for granted (Jeffries, 2010, p. 23). These repetitive patterns establish the ongoing struggles that Gaza has experienced since the outbreak of the war as documented in the following examples:

- Airstrikes in the **Gaza Strip** have killed at least 100 people over the last 24 hours, [...].
- In addition to the other calls worldwide demanding immediate ceasefire in **Gaza Strip** [...].
- The Israeli military expanded its ground offensive in the **Gaza Strip** to the densely populated [...].
- Israel's retaliatory war on the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip has already become one of the most destructive conflicts of the 21st century [...].

The examples confirm the Israeli side in launching the war, making a negative portrayal of Israel. Another distinct pattern is the use of the collocations *Gaza war* and *Gaza conflict* being preceded





by the definite article *the* in 35 instances out of 39 and 25 instances out of 26 respectively. This noticeably shows forms of aggression that establish the presence of *Gaza* in the context of conflict. This nominal structure is taken for granted as a fact and not vulnerable to questioning. Such a portrayal is not detected in the representation of *Israel* as shown previously, denoting that Israel is less seen in the construction of conflict. This structure indicates that the word sketch of the similar frame, i.e. *Israel* and *Gaza* as modifiers, is recorded differently with the two main sides of the war; different perceptions can be implied based on reading the context carefully. Israel is more represented as being in power as in the case of *The Israel Defense Forces (IDF)*.

Apropos the frame *Gaza's*, this possessive structure shows almost similar instances referring to places as in the case of the modifier. Examples are *hospital, border, north, city, south, camp, and neighborhood*, in addition to nouns denoting people, such as *population, civilian, people, resident, and authority*. The collocation *Gaza's hospital* made up the highest in terms of frequency and saliency (71 instances, 12.0). This is definitely a clear reference to the severe circumstances that citizens in Gaza have experienced. Therefore, they are portrayed as victims of war in real suffering.

Hamis

The word sketch of the last selected item *Hamis* illustrates its usage as a noun pre-modified by other nouns, regardless of the examples that are incorrectly tagged, such as *group, militant, terror, terrorist* in examples *militant group Hamis, terror group Hamis* and *terrorist organisation Hamis*. This predicts *Hamis* as a rebellious organised group, demonstrating therefore a negative portrayal of *Hamis* in the press. These noun phrases are further expanded with more information (i.e. modifiers) that are not definitely open to debate by the recipient as underlined in the following example:

- The horrific and inhuman actions of the **terrorist group Hamis** is not just an attack on Israel [...].

The second frame involves nouns modified by *Hamis*, and it is opened in terms of frequency and saliency by *fighter* (48, 10.9) and *terrorist* (35, 10.3). Other nouns include *attack, gunmen, incursion, massacre, war, and force*, as in *We condemn the **savage Hamis attacks** on Israeli civilians on October 7*. These patterns hold negative semantic prosody of extremism, showing at the same time a semantic preference for violence and expressing negative meanings. Such continuing depictions reveal certain potentials for ideological purposes. This frequent occurrence of *Hamis* in the conflict discourse might be due to the current situation that has attracted media attention in general and the newspapers, in particular, to predominantly focus on reporting controversial events. In other words, it might simply be 'a general trend in newspaper reporting' on a certain group (Baker et al. 2013, p. 63).

The frame of the possessive structure displays *Hamis's* as a murderous group with nouns like *attack, assault, incursion, massacre, terrorism, atrocity, war, rampage, invasion, brutality, terror,*



slaughter, onslaught, fighter, raid, and crime. The most dominant collocation is *Hamas' attack* (188 instances, 12.3), which packaged up other phrases that denote negative evaluation as in *Hamas's murderous attack, Hamas's vicious attack, Hamas's monstrous attack, Hamas's deadly attack, Hamas's shocking attack, Hamas's devastating attack, Hamas's horrific terrorist attack, Hamas's bloody surprise attack, Hamas's shocking terror attack, Hamas's appalling attacks, Hamas's deadliest-ever attack.* Amongst the above-mentioned examples is the recurrent *Hamas's terrorist/s attack* (16 instances). Some other samples of this collocation are shown in the following concordance.

Figure 10: A sample from the concordance lines for the collocation *Hamas's attack*

rip have been killed, according to the Gaza health ministry, since **Hamas's brutal attacks** in Israel on 7 October. Hamas militants r
ave been killed, with the death toll likely to keep rising. **Hamas's attack** is now the deadliest in the country's history; there are alre
otlight. Beijing has refrained from explicitly condemning **Hamas' attacks**. And fears are growing of a strengthening pact
ow face as they target a ground invasion of Gaza in the wake of **Hamas's attacks**. In his interview, Mr Tugendhat talked about the
as bombed by the Israel Defence Forces during its retaliation for **Hamas's 7 October attack**. Speaking to Victoria Derbyshire on th
day, which was the first aid convoy to arrive in the territory since **Hamas's terrorist attacks** on Israel on 7 October. Israel said it was
any other world leader, has been keen to draw parallels between **Hamas's attack** and Moscow. "We have data very clearly proving
er government's disappointment with China for not condemning **Hamas's attacks** on civilians. "This is actually something that is ve
j its crisis centre to monitor the situation in Israel and Gaza since **Hamas's attack** on Oct 7, which killed more than 1,300. Security c
Full text: In the aftermath of **Hamas's horric attacks** on Israel, as nations nervously gauge Israel's respc
ihilism and depravity. The hate-fest on our streets since **Hamas's genocidal attacks** on Israel, the cowardly appeasement of those
</s> We are clear that there is and can be no justification for **Hamas's barbaric terrorist attack**, which was driven by hatred and ideoloç
to him, "The United States and Australia unequivocally condem **Hamas's abhorrent attack** on Israel and reaffirm Israel's right to defend its
y-general over "shocking" comments in which he suggested that **Hamas's attack** on Oct 7 was provoked by the "suocating occupation" of t
jht in Gaza when its borders were closed on October 7 following **Hamas' bloody attack** that claimed the lives of more than 1400 Israelis. <

The same is true with the other collocations: *Hamas's barbaric assault, Hamas's murderous assault, Hamas's deadly assault, Hamas's murderous assault, Hamas's brutal border assault, Hamas's deadly incursion, Hamas's horrific terrorism, Hamas' barbaric terrorism, Hamas's heinous terrorism, Hamas's murderous rampage, Hamas's subsequent hostage brutality, Hamas's brutal invasion, Hamas's depraved slaughter, Hamas's bloody slaughter, Hamas's murderous onslaught. Such given details are parts of the embedded nominal phrase which contribute to depicting Hamas as accused of terrorism that cannot be debated by the reader, but rather taken for granted that Hamas performed violent acts. Moreover, other collocates such as *wing, infrastructure, act, rule, capability* and *operation* denote neutral meanings, but they are further discussed in negative contexts as in the following examples: *Hamas's military wing, Hamas's armed wing, Hamas's terrorist infrastructure, Hamas's terrorist act, Hamas's horric act, Hamas's military rule, Hamas's terror capability, Hamas's terror operation, Hamas's military operation.* This repetitive negative portrayal of Hamas suggests therefore a semantic preference for violence.*

Examining the contexts further views a common pattern showing a reference to quantification that evokes a tremendous situation as demonstrated below:

- Senior IDF officials confirmed 5000 Hamas fighters had so far been killed [...].
- An estimated 3,000 Hamas fighters took part in the cross-border attack [...].



- The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said on Monday they had struck "approximately 200 Hamas terror targets".
- The Jerusalem Post analysis, [...], asked how 2,000 Hamas fighters had evaporated.

These instances clearly show that this organised group is involved in aggressive acts, suggesting again a semantic preference for conflict, affecting the readers' perception of the criminality of this group.

Conclusion

The language of newspapers is influential discourses that shape the public view of particular events and current issues. This study has shown that the representation of the Israel-Gaza conflict is reflected in the language used in news reporting which is voiced differently. The examination of the significant collocates has found evidence of a neutral representation contributed to shaping certain textual meanings aided by the use of critical stylistics tool naming and describing. The three main parts *Israel*, *Gaza* and *Hamas* are portrayed differently. *Israel* has been depicted as being vastly victimised, *Gaza* as the field battle, whereas *Hamas* is represented predominantly as an organised rebellious movement which has to do with politics and authority.

As the aim of the study is to investigate the representation of the Israel-Gaza conflict in the British newspapers, this is oriented to explore the topics that covered the conflict. The linguistic structures employed include the corpus technique of collocates and naming and describing, which has shown various noun modifiers. The use of the pre-modifiers such as *murderous*, *onslaught*, *massacre*, *deadly attack*, *rocket attacks*, *a barrage of rockets* and others occurring with *Israel* presents the dangerous situation suggesting; therefore, a negative representation of Israel. Examples of collocates of *Gaza* are *heavy fighting*, *raid*, *bombing campaign*, *intensifying attacks*, *besieged*, *intense bombardment*, *violent takeover*, *bombings*, *airstrikes*, *continuing offensive*, and *makeshift shelters*. With *Hamas*, modifiers include *group*, *militant*, *terror*, *terrorist*, and as a modifier, it collocates with nouns such as *attack*, *war*, *incursion*, *gunmen*, and *massacre*. As these modifiers are embedded further inside the NPs, they are taken for granted as common knowledge, affecting the reader's perception towards the real situation of the war.

The main thematic categories identified in the corpus under the study are conflict, region, authority, and victimhood which have demonstrated the conflict-related contexts because of the focus of the data on the Israel-Gaza conflict. The outcomes have shown that the British broadsheets are neutral in their representation. This has affected the way the three parts of the conflict are described and how they shaped the language in news coverage in different directions. The

The application of corpus linguistic techniques integrated with the textual-conceptual function of naming and describing helped to exhibit evaluative meanings in representing the three groups in the selected broadsheet newspapers. This is evidenced in the real sufferings that people in Gaza





and Israel have experienced. Examples are revealed in *ground offensive in the Gaza Strip, airstrikes in the Gaza Strip, a refugee camp in central Gaza, continuing offensive and increasing bombardment* due to the Israeli outbreaks, in addition to the accusations against Hamas, such as *savage Hamas attacks, Hamas's brutal invasion, terrorist group Hamas, and Hamas fighter*.

For future suggestions, other corpus techniques, i.e. keywords, and critical stylistic tools, i.e. transitivity, can be applied to investigate further lexical items which are essential to establish any textual evidence with negative or positive portrayals that can emerge, contributing therefore to stereotypical representation.

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