

ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

CHALLENGES AND RISKS OF (IN)ADEQUATE LINGUISTIC STRUCTURES IN REPORTING ON SUFFERING IN ISRAEL, PALESTINE, AND UKRAINE – THE CASE OF BILD.DE

Belma Polić¹ , Nihada Topovčić² , Emina Horić³ 

^{1,2,3} University of Zenica, Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Belma Polić, University of Zenica, Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina. E-mail: belma.polic@unze.ba

ABSTRACT

This paper is the result of monitoring articles from online media in the German language on current topics. Given that the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is currently the central topic of the world media, a linguistic analysis of the texts on the mentioned topic was carried out, from 07. 10. 2023, when the horrific murders of Israel citizens took place, until 22. 12. 2023. The focus is on the analysis and comparison of linguistic means used to describe suffering of civilians, treating in more detail their morphological, semantic, and stylistic features. The results of the research show whether adequate language expressions and structures are used in reporting on the war casualties of civilians in Israel, Gaza, and Ukraine, where the focus is on civilians in Israel and Gaza. All examples were taken from the German portal bild.de, considering that it is the most read portal in Germany.

Keywords: linguistic analysis, online media, (in)adequate linguistic structures, reports on the war, Israel, Palestine



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Introduction

This paper is a result of analyzing on-line-media articles in German on current topics. Given that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is presently the central topic of all the world's media, we decided to conduct a linguistic analysis of texts on the above-mentioned topic, from 07. 10. 2023, when the terrible murders of Israeli citizens took place, to 22. 12. 2023. The focus of the paper will be on the analysis and comparison of the linguistic means used to describe the suffering of civilians, as well as on their morphological, semantic, and stylistic features. Based on the results obtained, it will be established whether adequate language expressions and structures are used in reporting on the war sufferings of civilians in Israel, Gaza, and Ukraine, with the focus on civilians in Israel and Gaza.

All examples were taken from the German website Bild.de, which is the most read website in Germany¹. Texts analyzed fall into the category of journalistic-publicist style used by journalist and publicists, and in addition to the written media is also used in the spoken media such as radio and television (cf. Hudaček & Mihaljević, 2009; Silić, 2006). The previously mentioned style is led by the idea that „journalism as neutral, as a transmitter of facts“ (cf. Steensen, 2017, p. 26) is obliged to adhere, primarily, to objectivity. Genres that imply objectivity and neutral language have an informative function. This group includes the news, commentary, chronicle, review, interview, poll, and reporting. The aim of this research is to point out possible risks and challenges based on a detailed linguistic analysis of the ways of describing civilian war suffering, with a focus on their (in)adequacy, and in order to achieve journalistic objectivity with the help of adequate vocabulary. For the purpose of writing this paper, all articles describing the suffering of the Israeli and Palestinian civilians from 07. 10. 2023. until 22. 12. 2023, as well as, if necessary, articles describing civilian war sufferings in Ukraine, were observed and analyzed. Pairs of words which appear in the articles and which are related by their semantic features were singled out. Those pairs are: „töten“/„sterben“/„massakrieren/Massaker“; „Kinder“/„Minderjährige“; „Opfer“/„Zivilisten“.

Theoretical background

The language of the media nowadays directs the way of thinking and reasoning of the media users. It also influences lifestyles and forms lin-

guistic habits of its recipients. The journalistic style, used in the media, is achieved through several genres, depending of the content and purpose of the text. Therefore, it is a demanding task to assess the (in)adequacy of the language used by the media to address its users.

Addressing the primary task of journalism and the language of the media, Kovač and Rozenstil argue that “journalism has the key task of providing people with the information they need to be free and participate in self-governance” (2006, p. 17). Scientific research (Martinić, 1994 & Chomsky, 2002; Jurčić, 2017 et al) on the influence of media is diverse. Some hold that media has positive impact on the user while others argue it has a negative impact. However, the fact is that the media in today's society has an impact on the actions and development of the modern man, primarily in terms of obtaining information about events in the society, information relevant to a person's existence and proper functioning.

Speaking of possible inadequate reporting of the media, postmodernist Jean Baudrillard (1998) points out that people are nowadays influenced by the media and that they do not have their space of reality because the media places them in the universe of “simulacrum”. Baudrillard further claims that media is responsible for creating the spectacle, due to simultaneity, and the spectacle in the media leads to a lack of empathy and consideration. Chomsky goes a step further and claims that the media today plays an important role in controlling and monitoring the masses, adding that such an “indoctrinating” role of the media has crept into educational apparatuses with the aim of misinforming.

The influence of the language of the media on forming its recipient's thinking was, precisely, the reason to investigate the language of the most read online media in Germany (Bild.de) from a linguistic point of view. The focus is on Bild.de's reports on the current topic in Israel and Gaza. Given that the topic is recent, there are few studies that thematise the above-mentioned topic. However, there is certain linguistic research that contributed to the creation of ideas and concepts for this research, such as *The Construction of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in German Print Media* (Schmidbaur, 2016/2017), *Why do news values matter? Towards a new methodological framework for analysing news discourse in Critical Discourse Analysis and beyond* (Bednarek

¹ <https://www.similarweb.com/de/top-websites/germany/news-and-media/> (Accessed 23rd December 2023)

& Caple, 2014), and particularly *Online news media framing of the 2021 Israeli–Palestinian conflict by Al Jazeera, BBC and CNN* (Rizova & Panayotova, 2021).

Linguistics in this case has the task of approaching the targeted texts analytically and critically, and the task of exposing the (in)adequacy of reporting on the previously mentioned topic by relying on a scientific methodology. The aim of the paper is also to provide impulses for examining the background of such reports and to give answers on why certain potentially inadequate strategies are present in language and what their implication are. The book *Sprachkritik* (2018) was consulted on the matter of critical discourse analysis.

Research methodology

This research is the result of analyzing the excerpted materials from the most read German online web page Bild.de. All texts describing the suffering of civilians in the conflicts in Israel and Gaza were collected, in the period from October 7th to December 22nd 2023. A total of 50 examples were excerpted, which were then translated into English. Translations can be found in the footnotes of this paper. All texts were analyzed at semantic, morphological, syntactic, etymological, and stylistic levels. The examples are divided into groups/pairs based on semantically close words, which describe the suffering of civilians. The first group contains examples in which the words kill/die/massacre appear, with this group also including the noun “massacre” from which the verb massacre was created by conversion. The first group, therefore, refers to the words that describe the loss of human life. The following pair is children/minors, where the mentioned words were excerpted, described, analyzed and compared. The last pair refers to the suffering of civilians, where sometimes the word civilian is used, and sometimes the word victim. This prompted us to analyze examples in which the suffering of innocent citizens is described using these words. Renowned lexicographic sources were used for etymology and accurate semantics, as well as for the analysis at the morphological-syntactic and stylistic level. In this part of the paper, the following universal dictionaries were used: Duden (2006), German-Croatian universal dictionary (2005) (hereinafter referred to as NJHUR), Anić’s dictionary of the Croatian language (2004), and the Dictionary of the Bosnian language of the Language Institute (2007) (hereinafter referred to as RIZ). Examples describing the suffering of civilians in Ukraine are taken as an illustration and for comparison in terms of describing the same suffering in Israel and Gaza.

Analysis of examples of selected pairs of words

In this part of the paper examples are presented. They are classified into three groups, based on semantically similar words that describe the suffering of civilians, namely: *töten/sterben/Massaker, massakrieren, Kind/Minderjähriger, Opfer/Zivilist*. Each word from the excerpted material is semantically and etymologically explained, followed by a morphological-syntactic and stylistic analysis and comparison, with the aim of discovering whether these words were used in an adequate or inadequate linguistic manner.

“töten”/“sterben”/“Massaker, massakrieren”

The verb **töten** appears as early as in Old High German, as well as in Middle High German with the meaning “totmachen” (in English: to kill/to put to death), and Duden (2006, p. 1691) explains this meaning in the following way: a) den Tod von jmdm. etw. herbeiführen, verursachen, verschulden (in English: to cause someone’s death).

NJHUR (2005, p. 1708) gives the following translation of the verb “**töten**”: to kill, murder, put to death. Anić (2004, p. 1642) explains the meaning of the same verb in the following manner: to forcibly take someone’s life, to deprive of life, to kill, to murder. RIZJ (2007, p. 1158) interprets the verb in a similar way as Anić: to forcibly take someone’s life, to deprive of life, to kill, to murder.

The verb **sterben** (Duden, 2006, p. 1611) appears in Old High German as well as in Middle High German with the meaning “erstarren, steif werden” (in English: to harden, to shorten, to solidify, to petrify), while today its meanings can be classified into four categories:

- a) aufhören zu leben, sein Leben beschließen (in English: stop living, end a life);
- b) mit Akkusativ: einen bestimmten Tod erleiden (Heldentod, Hungertod) (in English in the accusative case: die);
- c) für etwas sein Leben lassen: für seinen Glauben, für das Vaterland (in English: die for faith, for the fatherland);
- d) durch den Tag genommen, z.B. Ihr ist der Mann gestorben (in English: to take someone away by death, e. g. Her husband died).

NJHUR (2005, p. 1626) translates the verb **sterben** as: dying, to die, while Anić (2004, p. 1668) translates the same verb in the following way: to come to a state without vital functions, stop living. RIZJ (2007, p. 1175) states that the verb **to die** semanticizes as: pass away, cease to be (...).

If we look at the similarities in the meaning of the verbs “töten” and “sterben”, it can be noticed that both verbs describe the end of life, but the verb “töten” refers to the violent taking of life, while the verb “sterben” refers to the cessation of life, without implying a violent deprivation of it.

Adequate verb is used for reporting in the examples that follow, considering these examples are about the violent taking of life rockets, killing by soldiers, the verb “töten”:

Example 1: Da ist Zion, ein Mann um die 60, dessen Sohn von den Terroristen **getötet wurde**.²

Example 2: (...)Und am 7. Oktober sind sie in unsere Siedlungen eingedrungen und haben nur Zivilisten abgeschlachtet und **getötet**.³

Example 3: Ephraim überlebt Massaker, „Sie **töteten**, um zu erniedrigen“ (...) ⁴

Example 4: Bei Musik-Festival-Massaker-Ex-Fußball-Profi von Hamas **getötet**.⁵

Example 5: Dass auch diese „selbst gebastelten Raketen“ Menschen töten sollen und dies auch tun (dank „Iron Dome“ in den vergangenen Jahren nur selten), wird dabei ausgeblendet.⁶

If we look at the following examples, we will notice that the verb “töten” is used with regards to the bombing or the violent suffering of children, which is correct, but the structures in which the said verb is positioned call its use into question:

Thus, for example, in the following example, with the interrogative sentence and the adjective “tatsächlich” (in English: really, in fact), a doubt is projected about the content, that is, about the adequate use of the verb „to kill/put to death“, even though its use in this case is completely legitimate: Example 6: *Doch **töten** die israelischen Luftangriffe tatsächlich jede Stunde zahlreiche Kinder, wie die Vereinten Nationen (UN) behaupten? Worauf stützen sich die Angaben der UN?*⁷

In the second example, next to the verb “**töten**”, which describes the violent suffering of children, the adjective “angeblich” is inserted, which is translated (NJHUR, 2005, p. 63) as „allegedly, supposedly” or as something that cannot be confirmed as true according to Duden (2006, p. 141), for example: Example 7: Hauptquelle der Statistiken **zu angeblich getöteten** Kindern im Gazastreifen ist das „Palästinensische Gesundheitsministerium“ mit Sitz in Gaza.⁸ The next example demonstrates a similar interpretation by combining the verb “töten” and the adjective “angeblich” with the meaning „allegedly”: Example 8: *Ein Mädchen musste mit einem mit roter Farbe bespritztem Laken posieren, dass offenbar für angeblich von Israel getötete Kinder stehen soll.*⁹

The following examples describe the violent killing of children/civilians by bombing, but

2 <https://www.bild.de/news/ausland/news-ausland/bild-report-aus-israels-millionen-metropole-tel-aviv-die-auferstehung-einer-stad-85901992.bild.html> (Accessed 21st December 2023), article published on 29. 10. 2023. Example 1: Translation: This is Zion, a sixty-year-old man whose son was killed by the terrorists.

3 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/israels-ex-geheimdienstchef-so-lange-dauert-der-krieg-gegen-die-hamas-noch-86018968.bild.html> (Accessed 20th December 2023), article published on 08. 11. 2023. Example 2: Translation: And on the 7th of October they broke into our neighborhoods and just slaughtered and killed the civilians.

4 <https://www.bild.de/video/clip/bild-tv/ephraim-ueberlebt-massaker-sie-toeteten-um-zu-erniedrigen-85702914.bild.html> (Accessed 21st December 2023.), article published on 11. 10. 2023. Example 3: Translation: Ephraim has survived the massacre. They killed to humiliate.

5 <https://www.bild.de/sport/fussball/fussball-international/bei-musik-festival-massaker-ex-fussball-profi-von-hamas-getoetet-85692722.bild.html> (Accessed 20th December 2023), article published on 10. 10. 2023. Example 4: Translation: Hamas killed a former professional football player at the music festival massacre.

6 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/von-apartheid-bis-spirale-der-gewalt-das-woerterbuch-der-hamas-versteher-85731156.bild.html> (Accessed 23rd December 2023), article published on 13. 10. 2023. Example 5: Translation: That these “handmade rockets” should kill people and do so (thanks to the “Iron Dome” in previous years only rarely) is covered up in that case.

7 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/zivile-opfer-in-gaza-verbreitet-die-un-ungeprueft-hamas-propaganda-85767658.bild.html> (Accessed 24th December 2023), article published on 17. 10. 2023. Example 6: Translation: But, are the Israeli bombings really killing children every hour, as claimed by the United Nations? What are the UN allegations based on?

8 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/zivile-opfer-in-gaza-verbreitet-die-un-ungeprueft-hamas-propaganda-85767658.bild.html> (Accessed 24th December 2023), article published on 17. 10. 2023. Example 7: Translation: The main source of statistics for children allegedly killed in Gaza is the “Palestinian Ministry of Health” based in Gaza.

9 <https://www.bild.de/regional/berlin/berlin-aktuell/berlin-so-nutzen-juden-hasser-kinder-fuer-eine-demo-aus-85903908.bild.html> (Accessed 21st December 2023), article published on 29. 10. 2023. Example 8: Translation: One girl had to pose with a bed sheet splattered with red paint, apparently to represent the children allegedly killed by Israel.

the verb „sterben“ (in English: to die) is used, which does not adequately describe the said suffering, because „sterben“, as explained earlier, is used for dying in general: Example 9: *Dass Kinder bei den israelischen Luftangriffen auf den Gazastreifen sterben, ist unstrittig.*¹⁰ or Example 10: *Aber woher wissen wir überhaupt, was in Gaza – einer von radikalsten Islamisten regierten Diktatur – vor sich geht, wie viele Menschen dort sterben?*¹¹

The following example is very interesting. Without contextualizing and questioning the content of the claims from this example, we notice that in the first part the verb „sterben“ is used for the suffering of children, which does not imply the violent taking of life, as is the case with the verb „töten“. Further, the adequate verb „ermorden“ is used to refer to the suffering of other civilians, which is semantically equivalent to the verb „töten“ and has the same meaning „to kill/put to death“ violently.

Example 11: *Rachdan behauptet, dass in Gaza pro Tag mehr Kinder sterben würden als früher in Auschwitz. Besonders widerwärtig: Rachdan rechnet die Zahl der in Auschwitz ermordeten Kinder runter (von mehr als 230 000 auf 200 000).*¹²

In addition, the verb „sterben“ itself is questioned, because the combination „würde + infinitive“ is used, which in German is an alternative to the German Subjunctive II (Konjunktiv II)¹³ used to describe unrealistic actions and situations. The questionability of interpretations of the taking of life by violent means, such as rocket fire or bombing, with the verb „sterben“ gains additional importance if we analyze examples which interpret the killing of children in Ukraine in a linguistically correct manner.

Example 12: *Diesmal töteten Putins Raketen auch Kinder; Unter den Todesopfern des Angriffs auf den Stadtteil Denjansky sei ein Kind, erklärte die Militärverwaltung von Kiew am Donnerstag im Onlinedienst Telegram. Zehn Menschen wurden demnach in Denjansky verletzt, zwei weitere im Stadtteil Dniprowsky. Zunächst hatten offizielle Berichte zwei getötete Kinder vermeldet.*¹⁴

Also:

Example 13: *109 leere Kinderwagen für 109 getötete Kinder; Trauern um 109 getötete Kinder – eine Ukrainerin drückt ihre Kinder fest an sich.*¹⁵

Duden (2006, p. 1119) explains the verb **massakrieren** as follows: in grausamer, brutaler Weise umbringen, quälen (in English: to kill someone in a cruel or brutal way), while the noun **Massaker** is semantized as: das Hinmorden einer großen Anzahl unschuldiger, wehrloser Menschen, Blutbad (in English: killing a large number of innocent people, people who cannot defend themselves, bloodshed). NJUHR (2005, p. 1101) translates the same verb as: to massacre, to slaughter, to kill brutally, while AniĆ (2004, p. 731) explains what massacre means – to carry out a massacre, and what massacre means – the cruel killing of a large number of people, slaughter, bloodshed. In RIZJ (2007, p. 365), we find only the noun „massacre“ with the explanation that it means: slaughter, bloodshed, mass killing, butchery.

The next few examples testify to the correct use of the verb **massakrieren**, that is, the noun **Massaker**.

- 10 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/zivile-opfer-in-gaza-verbreitet-die-un-ungeprueft-hamas-propaganda-85767658.bild.html> (Accessed 22nd December 2023), article published on 17. 10. 2023. Example 9: Translation: It is not debatable that children are dying during Israeli bombings of Gaza.
- 11 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/das-sterben-der-anderen-warum-man-mitgefuehl-mit-gaza-haben-muss-85907662.bild.html> (Accessed 23rd December 2023), article published on 31. 10. 2023. Example 10: Translation: But how do we even now what is happening in Gaza, one of the dictatorships run by the most radical Islamists, how many people are dying there?
- 12 <https://www.bild.de/politik/inland/politik-inland/sie-verharmlost-sogar-den-holocaust-greta-thunbergs-radikalste-terror-freundin-86077500.bild.html> (Accessed 24th December 2023), article published on 13. 11. 2023. Example 11: Translation: Rachdan claims that more children die in Gaza every day than in Auschwitz. The following is particularly disgusting: Rachdan reduces the number of children killed in Auschwitz (from more than 230, 000 to 200,000).
- 13 <https://www.duden.de/sprachwissen/sprachratgeber/konjunktiv-1-oder-2#:~:text=Der%20Konjunktiv%20II%20kann%20folgen-derma%C3%9Fen,des%20nur%20Gedachten%20prinzipiell%20m%C3%B6glich.> (Accessed 24th December 2023)
- 14 <https://www.bild.de/politik/inland/politik-inland/ukraine-krieg-kiew-in-putins-raketenhagel-diesmal-toeteten-die-raketen-auch-kind-84140498.bild.html> (Accessed 24th December 2023), article published on 1.6. 2023. Example 12: Translation: Putin's missiles have now killed children; a child is among the dead victims of the attack on the city district Denyansky, as reported by Kiev's military administration on Thursday via the Telegram online service. According to them, ten people were injured in in Denyansky, two more in Dniprowsky district. Initially, the official report said two children were killed.
- 15 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/ukraine-krieg-lemburg-109-leere-kinderwagen-fuer-109-getoetete-kind-er-79499790.bild.html> (Accessed 23rd December 2023), article published on 18. 03. 2022. Example 13: Translation: 109 strollers for 109 murdered children; 100 murdered children are being mourned– A Ukrainian woman hugs her children tightly.

Example 14: Levy zeigt ein Video des Massakers: Die Terroristen brüllen „Allahu Akbar“, feuern mit Sturmgewehren, zerren halb tote Festivalgäste auf Pickup-Trucks. Ein Akt unfassbarer Barbarei!¹⁶; Example 15: Israelin Millet (27) überlebte das Festival-Massaker. Millet Ben Haim (27) überlebte das Massaker der Hamas-Terroristen bei einem Musikfestival nahe dem Gazastreifen. Sechs Stunden versteckte sie sich in einem Gebüsch. Sie wurde gerettet, aber heute fühlt sie sich „wie ein Geist“ Sie überlebte eines der tödlichsten Massaker an Juden seit dem Ende des Holocaust¹⁷.; Example 16: Nach dem Massaker in Israel am 7. Oktober wurden die Hamas-Terroristen in Gaza für ihre Taten gefeiert.¹⁸; Example 17: Die irrsten Lügen über das Hamas-Massaker. Mahmoud (50) schaltet sich ein. Man könne den Feind ja „nicht mit Blumen bekämpfen“, relativiert er das Massaker (...) ¹⁹; Example 18: Hagar überlebte Hamas-Massaker²⁰; Example 19: Nach

dem Hamas-Massaker. Berliner SPD-Chef schwieg neun Tage zum Judenhass²¹; Example 20: Das israelische Militär hat bei Bombenangriffen auf die Hamas im Gazastreifen nach eigenen Angaben einen der mutmaßlich Verantwortlichen des Massakers an israelischen Zivilisten getötet.²²; Example 21: Soldat berichtet von Kibbuz-Massaker, „Ich sah abgeschlachtete Familien“²³; Example 22: Reporterin berichtet über Massaker, „Babys mit abgeschnittenen Köpfen“²⁴; Example 23: Sie entkam dem Tod an diesem Morgen mehrere Male! Wie durch ein Wunder trotzte sie dem Schicksal und überlebte das Massaker, das Hamas-Terroristen am Samstagmorgen auf einem Festival in Israel anrichteten.²⁵; Example 24: Mit ihrer klugen Entscheidung verhinderte sie ein Massaker²⁵–Jährige rettet ihren Kibbuz vor Terroristen. Mit einer mutigen Entscheidung hat eine junge Frau ein Massaker verhindert(...) ²⁶; Example 25: Bei Musik-Festival-Massaker Ex-Fußball-

- 16 <https://www.bild.de/news/ausland/news-ausland/mama-getoetet-papa-entfuehrt-diesem-jungen-raubte-die-hamas-die-eltern-86412740.bild.html> (Accessed 21st December 2023), article published on 22. 12. 2023. Example 14: Translation: Levy shows a video of the massacre: terrorists shouting “Allahu Akbar”, firing assault rifles, dragging half-dead festival guests into trucks. An act of unthinkable barbarism!
- 17 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/israelin-millet-27-ueber-festival-massaker-ich-wusste-sie-wuerden-mich-vergewalt-86145388.bild.html> (Accessed 23rd December 2023), article published on 19. 11. 2023. Example 15: Translation: Millet (27), an Israeli woman, survived the massacre at the festival. Millet Ben Haim (27) survived the massacre by Hamas’s terrorists at a music festival near Gaza. For six hours, she hid in the bushes. She was saved, but today she feels “like a ghost”. She survived one of the deadliest massacres of Jews since the end of the Holocaust.
- 18 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/neue-umfrage-grossteil-der-palaestinsener-unterstuetzt-hamas-massaker-86126474.bild.html> (Accessed 22nd December 2023), article published on 17. 11. 2023. Example 16: Translation: After the massacre committed in Israel on October 7, Hamas terrorists were celebrated in Gaza for their deeds.
- 19 <https://www.bild.de/news/ausland/news-ausland/propaganda-in-ost-jerusalem-die-juden-muessen-dieses-land-verlassen-85974566.bild.html> (Accessed 21st December 2023), article published on 14. 11. 2023. Example 17: Translation: The craziest lies about the Hamas massacre. Mahmoud (50) gets involved in the discussion: You can’t “fight with flowers” against the enemy, he further relativizes the massacre: (...).
- 20 <https://www.bild.de/video/clip/news/hagar-ueberlebte-hamas-massaker-dann-helft-ihr-den-moerdern-85811086.bild.html> (Accessed 22nd December 2023), article published on 20. 10. 2023. Example 18: Translation: Hagar survived the Hamas massacre.
- 21 <https://www.bild.de/regional/berlin/berlin-aktuell/nach-hamas-massaker-berliner-spd-chef-schwieg-neun-tage-zum-judenhass-85754808.bild.html> (Accessed 20th December 2023), article published on 16. 10. 2023. Example 19: Translation: after the Hamas massacre, the Head of the Berlin SPD went silent for nine days.
- 22 <https://www.bild.de/politik/2023/politik/massaker-in-israel-israel-toetet-hamas-verantwortlichen-85742448.bild.html> (Accessed 21st December 2023), article published on 14. 10. 2023. Example 20: Translation: During the bombing of Hamas in Gaza, the Israeli army reported that it killed one of the potential perpetrators of the massacre of Israeli civilians.
- 23 <https://www.bild.de/video/clip/politik/soldat-berichtet-von-kibbuz-massaker-ich-sah-abgeschlachtete-familien-85715492.bild.html> (Accessed 25th December 2023), article published on 12. 10. 2023. Example 21: Translation: A soldier reports on the massacre in the Kibbutz: “I saw slaughtered families”.
- 24 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/israel-reporterin-ueber-massaker-babys-mit-abgeschnittenen-koepfen-85702662.bild.html> (accessed 19th December 2023), article published on 11. 10. 2023. Example 22: Translation: The reporter reports on the massacre: “Babies with severed heads”.
- 25 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/israel-hamas-massaker-bei-festival-sie-vergewaltigten-frauen-neben-leichen-85699924.bild.html> (Accessed 19th December 2023), article published on 11. 10. 2023. Example 23: Translation: She escaped death that morning more than once! Miraculously, she defied fate and survived the massacre by Hamas terrorists on Saturday morning at a festival in Israel.
- 26 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/israel-25-jaehrige-verhindert-massaker-in-ihrem-kibbuz-85704694.bild.html> (Accessed 19th December 2023.), article published on 11. 10. 2023. Example 24: Translation: Her wise decision prevented a massacre. A 25-year-old woman saved her kibbutz from terrorists. A young woman made a brave decision to prevent a massacre.

*Profi von Hamas getötet*²⁷; Example 26: *Kommentar zum Massaker in Kfar Azza*..²⁸; Example 27: *Bunker-Massaker in Israel*²⁹; Example 28: *Terror-Massaker bei Musik-Festival in Israel. Das größte Massaker des Terror-Überfalls auf Israel beginnt kurz vor Sonnenaufgang, gegen 6.30 Uhr, am Samstagmorgen*.³⁰

It is interesting that the verb “massakrieren” is not found in the excerpted examples. Instead, the use of noun “Massaker” is preferred, very often as an integral part of compounds in which the noun “massacre” is the basic or second part of the noun compound, while the first constituent is a noun that determines or describe in more detail what kind of massacre it is, a determinant (e. g. *Festival-Massaker*, *Hamas-Massaker*, *Musik-Festival-Massaker*, *Kibbuz-Massaker*).

While we were analyzing the reports of Bild.de website, we did not find any example in which the mass killing of Palestinian civilians is referred to by the verb **massakrieren** or the noun **Massaker**.

Even in the case of killing at least 500 Palestinian civilians in a single missile strike, which by all semantic criteria requires the use of the verb **massacre** or the noun **Massaker**, the following two linguistic structures are used:

Example 29: *Am Dienstagabend meldete die Terror-Gruppe Hamas durch ihre sogenannte Gesundheitsbehörde, Israel habe durch einen Luftangriff auf ein Krankenhaus mindestens 500 Menschen getötet*.³¹

Example 30: *Doch, was als „das schlimmste Massaker der israelischen Armee“ dargestellt wurde, stellte sich im Laufe der Nacht mit sehr hoher Wahrscheinlichkeit als palästinensischer Terror gegen palästinensische Zivilisten heraus*.³²

The first example uses the verb “töten” in Subjunctive I (Konjunktiv I) mood which is used to report someone’s words, and by which the one who reports wants to distance himself/herself from the speaker.³³

However, in the second example, the term **Massaker** in the excerpted sentence is put under quotation marks, which are used for direct speech, emphasis, and particularly for ironizing the content.³⁴

From the example above, it is evident that the terms referring to violent or brutal taking of life, including adequate moods (German: Indikativ), are used in describing the suffering of Israeli civilians. It is also evident that the suffering of Palestinian civilians, in the examples provided, is interpreted either through the verbs of non-violent dying „sterben” or, if linguistically adequate terms are used, or through the use of terms that question this suffering in a certain way (“tatsächlich?” “angeblich”), such as quotation marks or linguistically unreal mood (Subjunctive II/Konjunktiv II).

“Kinder”/“Minderjährige”

The noun **Kind** (Duden, 2006: 950) has been recorded in German since the time of Old High German with the meaning “conceived, born”. In Dud-

27 <https://www.bild.de/sport/fussball/fussball-international/bei-musik-festival-massaker-ex-fussball-profi-von-hamas-getoetet-85692722.bild.html> (Accessed 20th December 2023.), article published on 10. 10. 2023. Example 25: Translation: A former professional football player killed at the music festival massacre.

28 <https://www.bild.de/politik/kolumnen/politik-ausland/kommentar-zum-massaker-in-kgar-azza-eine-neue-dimension-des-grauens-85704150.bild.html> (Accessed 19th December 2023), article published on 10. 10. 2023. Example 26: Translation: Commentary about Kfar Azza massacre.

29 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/bunker-massaker-in-israel-terroristen-warfen-handgranaten-in-den-schutzraum-85693952.bild.html> (Accessed 19th December 2023.), article published on 10. 10. 2023. Example 27: Translation: Massacre in a bunker in Israel.

30 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/israel-hamas-massaker-bei-festival-sie-vergewaltigten-frauen-neben-leichen-85683378.bild.html> (Accessed 19th December 2023.), article published on 09. 10. 2023. Example 28: Translation: Massacre with terrorist aspirations at a music festival in Israel. The greatest carnage as a result of the terrorist attack on Israel begins shortly before sunrise, around 6:30 a.m., on Saturday morning.

31 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-inland/krankenhaus-tote-in-gaza-so-fiel-die-welt-auf-die-hamas-luege-rein-85788064.bild.html> (Accessed 27th December 2023), article published on 19. 10. 2023. Example 29: Translation: On Tuesday night, the terrorist group Hamas announced through their so-called health authority that Israel had allegedly killed at least 500 people in airstrikes on the hospital.

32 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/krankenhaus-explosion-islamisten-rakete-explodierte-in-gaza-bei-weise-85785732.bild.html> (Accessed 27th December 2023), article published on 18. 10. 2023. Example 30: Translation: But it turned out overnight that what was portrayed as “the worst massacre by the Israeli army” was mostly like Palestinian terrorism against Palestinian civilians.

33 <https://www.studysmarter.de/schule/deutsch/grammatik/konjunktiv-i/> (Accessed 27th December 2023)

34 <https://www.duden.de/sprachwissen/rechtschreibregeln/anfuhrungszeichen> (Accessed 21st December 2023)

en we find two meanings:

1.
 - a) noch nicht geborenes, gerade oder vor noch nicht langer Zeit zur Welt gekommenes menschliches Lebewesen; Neugeborenes, Baby, Kleinkind (English: unborn, just or a short time ago born human being, who has just come into the world; newborn, baby, infant);
 - b) Mensch, der sich noch nicht im Lebensabschnitt der Kindheit befindet (etwa bis zum Eintritt der Geschlechtsreife), noch kein Jugendlicher ist, noch nicht erwachsener Mensch (English: man, who is not yet in the life stage of childhood, approximately until the beginning of puberty/sexual maturity, and is neither an adolescent nor an adult);
2. von jmdm.leiblich abstammende Person, unmittelbarer Nachkomme (English: a person biologically descended from another person, immediate descendant).

In NJHUR (2005, p. 924), the noun *Kind* translates as “child”, while Anić (2004, p. 215) offers the following meaning of the word “child”: child- 1. a person from birth to puberty; 2. son and daughter to parents regardless of age and age.

On the other hand, Duden (2006, p. 1146) offers the following semanticization for the word *Minderjährige* (nominalized adjective)/*minderjährig* (adjective): (von Jugendlichen) noch nicht volljährig, nicht mündig (English: of an adolescent/teenager, a person who is not of legal age). Duden for the noun “Jugendliche” (2006, p. 910) offers the meanings: a) junger Mensch, jmd., der sich im Lebensabschnitt zwischen Kindheit und Erwachsenen befindet (English: a young person, who is in the life

phase between childhood and the mature/adult age); b) jur. 14.18. Lebensjahr (legal. period from 14 to 18 years of age). NJHUR translates “minderjährig” as: juvenile, underage, while in Anić (2004, p. 731) the word “juvenile” is semanticized as follows: the one who is not of legal age to be legally liable (18–21 years). RIZJ (2078, p. 362) offers the following meanings for “minor”: the one who has insufficient age for maturity, underage, immature, antonym: of age.

Below we will list a significant number of examples of reporting on the plight of children in which the term **children** is used in correct linguistic and semantically aligned structures:

Example 31: *Über die Geiseln sagt die Politikberaterin: „Wir sprechen von über 200 Frauen, Kindern, Babys, Älteren, Holocaust-Überlebenden. Kleine Kinder, deren Eltern vor ihren Augen massakriert wurden und die völlig hilflos sind. Das muss sofort enden!“*³⁵ or Example 32: *Radikale gibt es in jedem Land der Welt. ABER: Frauen, Männer, Kinder, Babys und Greise hinrichten, lebendig verbrennen, enthaupten – das macht nur eine Seite. Die palästinensische Hamas.*³⁶

Example 33: *“Diese Ideologien stellen Israel als Kolonialmacht und Juden als weiße Unterdrückter dar. Hamas-Terroristen, die sogar israelische Kinder abschlachten, gelten nach dieser Lesart als Widerstandskämpfer.“*³⁷

Example 34: *Bei neun der freigelassenen Geiseln handelt es sich nach israelischen Angaben um Kinder. Unter ihnen: die kleine Abigail (4), deren Eltern von palästinensischen Terroristen am 7. Oktober brutal ermordet worden sind.*³⁸

Selected examples of linguistically and semantically correct use of the noun “*Kind(er)*” are

35 <https://www.bild.de/politik/talk-kritik/talk-kritik/entsetzen-bei-maybrit-illner-muetter-hoffen-dass-ihre-geisel-toechter-tot-sind-85807706.bild.html> (Accessed 19th December 2023), article published on 12.11.2023. Example 31: Translation: A political advisor says about the hostages: “We are talking about over 200 women, children, babies, elderly people, Holocaust survivors, young children, whose parents were massacred in front of their eyes, children who are completely helpless. This must end now!”.

36 <https://www.bild.de/politik/inland/politik-inland/sprecherin-von-fridays-for-future-klima-aktivistin-schockt-mit-vorwurf-gegen-jud-85762668.bild.html> (Accessed 19th December 2023), article published on 16.10.2023. Example 32: Translation: There are radicals in every country in the world. BUT: to execute, to burn alive, to behead women, men, children, babies, the elderly – only one side does that. Palestinian Hamas.

37 <https://www.bild.de/politik/inland/politik-inland/hass-gegen-juden-und-israel-in-deutschen-hoersaelen-werden-unsere-unis-zum-recht-86444728.bild.html> (Accessed 20th December 2023), Article published on 16.12.2023. Example 33: Translation: These ideologies present Israel as a colonial power and the Jews as white, oppressive people. Hamas terrorists, who even behead Israeli children, are considered resistance fighters.

38 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/geisel-deal-von-israel-und-hamas-eine-seite-umarmt-ihre-kinder-die-andere-den-te-86225224.bild.html> (Accessed 18th December 2023), article published on 26.11.2023). Example 34: Translation: Nine of the hostages released are, according to Israeli data, children. Among them is little Abigail, 4, whose parents were brutally killed by Palestinian terrorists on October 7.

followed by examples containing inadequate use of words, punctuation or verb forms.

Example 35: *Dass es palästinensische Hamas-Terroristen waren, die am 7. Oktober **gezielt israelische Kinder abschlachteten, Säuglinge ermordeten** und verschleppten, verschweigt Rachdan. Sie behauptet, dass in Gaza pro Tag mehr **Kinder sterben würden** als früher in Auschwitz.*³⁹

In the first such example, we detect the mention of the plight of children in two moods. In the first part, the suffering or dying of children is stated in an indicative⁴⁰, verbal form describing the facts and everything that corresponds to reality, while in the second part of the sentence, when describing the plight of children, a mood is used that does not reflect “reality”, but a “würde + infinitive” form, which is an alternative to the German mode of subjunctive II or a mood that describes the irrealis (cf. Duden, 2006, p. 38).

The following comparison refers to the protests against the suffering and plight of children in the war. The first example linguistically correctly describes the tribute paid to the afflicted children with “bloody toys”:

Example 36: *Die blutigen Teddys am Dizengoff-Brunnen stehen für **israelische Kinder**, die in der Gewalt der Hamas sind.*⁴¹

In the second example, when reporting on a rally honoring the murdered children, the word “angeblich” is added, which translates as “allegedly” (cf. Duden, 2006, p. 141), and therefore the complete context and its credibility are questioned:

Example 37: *Ein Mädchen musste mit einem mit roter Farbe bespritztem Laken posieren, dass offenbar für **angeblich von Israel getötete Kinder** stehen soll.*⁴²

For the elaboration and linguistic analysis of the following examples, in which the term “child” is used, it is necessary to focus on the stylistic figure of exaggeration, hyperbole. Hyperbole according to Begić (2012, p. 140) is mentioned by Socrates (4th century BC), Cicero calls it *supralatio*, Quintilian *superiectio*, and the English sixteenth-century thinker G. Puttenham presented hyperbole via metaphors known *liar* and *exaggerator*. Examples of hyperboles are: “I’ve told you a million times not to do it!”, “I died laughing!”⁴³

According to available scientific studies, a three-year-old child is not able to define the emotion of hatred or understand the complex challenge such as, for example, “dying as a martyr for ideals.” However, in the following example, this is argued to be possible through the “indicative” (reality) mood:

Example 38: *Dort lernen bereits Dreijährige, dass Juden zu hassen sind und es erstrebenswert sei, als Märtyrer zu sterben.*⁴⁴

We can conclude that from the linguistic point of view, such a description of children from the age of three can be seen as an exaggeration, that is, as the use of hyperbole.

The following example of reporting on the plight of children in war using an adversative⁴⁵ or opposite sentence contrasts the role and plight of innocent children, sets them aside and assigns them a role on the “opposing” sides, which is either

39 <https://www.bild.de/politik/inland/politik-inland/gruenen-chefin-ricarda-lang-rechnet-ab-greta-absolut-unanstae-dig-86083522.bild.html> (Accessed 25th December 2023), article published on 12.11.2023. Example 35: Translation: That these were Palestinian Hamas terrorists, who on October 7 intentionally slaughtered Israeli children, killed infants and kidnapped them, Rachdan does not say. She claims that more children die in Gaza daily than in Auschwitz earlier.

40 The indicative is a German mood and is used to describe “normal” situations or events. Indicative describes the content that corresponds to the factual situation and does not question it, e.g. Ein Tag hat 24 Stunden (Eng. A day has 24 hours.). <https://www.duden.de/sprachwissen/sprachratgeber/Die-drei-Modi-der-deutschen-Sprache#:~:text=Der%20Indikativ%20wird%20meistens%20als,die%20meisten%20G%C3%A4ste%20schon%20gegangen.> (downloaded 24th December 2023)

41 <https://www.bild.de/news/ausland/news-ausland/bild-report-aus-israels-millionen-metropole-tel-aviv-die-auferstehung-einer-stad-85901992.bild.html> (Accessed 29th December 2023), article published 29.10.2023). Example 36: Translation: Bloody teddy bears at Dizengoff-Brunnen symbolize Israeli children, held by Hamas.

42 <https://www.bild.de/regional/berlin/berlin-aktuell/berlin-so-nutzen-juden-hasser-kinder-fuer-eine-demo-aus-85903908.bild.html> (Accessed 20.12.2023), article published on 29.10.2023. Example 37: Translation: The protesters even instrumentalized one child for the purpose of sending hate messages! One girl had to pose with a sheet that was sprayed with red paint, which was supposed to symbolize the allegedly murdered children by Israel.

43 <https://www.lektire.hr/hiperbola/> (Accessed 24th December 2023).

44 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/das-sterben-der-anderen-warum-man-mitgefuehl-mit-gaza-haben-muss-85907662.bild.html> (Accessed 23.12.2023), Article 31.10.2023. Example 38: Translation: There, children already at three years of age learn that Jews must be hated and that it is desirable to die as a martyr.

45 <https://learnattack.de/schuelerlexikon/deutsch/adversativsatz> (Accessed 27.12.2023).

black or white, which can be considered an inadequate syntactic structure in this case. It is the case of the following example:

Example 39: *Während Israels Armee **Kinder schützt, nutzen die Terroristen der Hamas Kinder, um sich selbst zu schützen***⁴⁶

Therefore, in this example, children are under protection (“schützt”), which is the only correct form and role of children in suffering (that they should be protected). However, the example below states that children are used to protect terrorists. The verb “schützen” meaning “to protect, to protect” (NJHUR, 2005, p. 1521) in Duden (2006, p. 1504) is explained as follows: 1. jmdm., einer Sache Schutz gewähren, einen Schutz vreschaffen (English: to protect someone/something), and the following context is also stated in the example: sich schützend vor ein Kind stellen (English: to stand protectively in front of the child). The verb “nutzen” in all examples means “to use someone” to achieve a goal, some advantage, success (cf. Duden, 2006, p. 1222), which is a verb that applies to children in the second part of the sentence, who are “exploited” to protect (read: were a human shield) terrorists. If we also look at the semantics of verbs used within an inadequate syntactic adversarial structure, then in this case it is also an example of a stylistic figure of exaggeration, hyperbole, because a child cannot have the “power” to be a shield.

The following example is also abundant in inadequate linguistic and semantic content:

Example 40: *Unter den freigelassenen palästinensischen Häftlingen befinden sich auch **Minderjährige**. Viele arabische, aber auch einige westliche Medien **bezeichneten sie als „Kinder“**.*⁴⁷

If we compare the meaning of the noun “Kind” and “Minderjährige”, then we can conclude that the difference is that Minderjährige are still underage children, they are not yet adults. This example contains both nouns, where it is stated that

among the freed there are also teenagers (“Minderjährige”), and not children, as stated in numerous media. The teenager is also a slightly older child, but avoiding the noun “Kinder” in the indicative suggests the use of a stylistic figure of the litote⁴⁸, which is the opposite of hyperbole, and is used to weaken the first/right expression, to soften and diminish certain impressions and representations. In this case, there is an example of an inadequate use of the word “Minderjährige”, instead of the word “Kinder” as an understatement.

In the continuation of this example, the word “Kinder” (children) is mentioned in the quotation marks, which represents a continuation of the inadequate linguistic form. Here, attention should be paid to the use of quotation marks, which are used in German according to Duden grammar in the case of direct speech (e.g. Sie sagte: “Hier gefällt es mir.”; English: She said: “I like it here.”), when emphasizing parts of words, words, or parts of text, when quoting, but they are also used to emphasize something in an ironic way, e.g. Dieser “treue Freund” verriet ihn als Erster. (English: That “loyal friend” was the first to betray him.).⁴⁹ Whatever function of these quotation marks may have been used, the linguistic malfunction of that part of the assertion cannot be disputed. We have a similar situation in the following example:

Example 41: *„Die Regierung hat die Grundzüge der ersten Phase eines Abkommens gebilligt, das die Freilassung von mindestens 50 Entführten – **Frauen und Kinder** – an vier Tagen vorsieht, an denen die Kämpfe ruhen werden“, hieß in der offiziellen Erklärung, die das Büro des Ministerpräsidenten übermittelte.*

*Israelischen Medien zufolge soll es sich **um 30 Kinder, acht Mütter sowie zwölf ältere Frauen** handeln.*

*Im Gegenzug wird Israel etwa **150 palästinensische Frauen und Minderjährige** freilassen(...).*⁵⁰

46 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/hamas-kalkuel-terroristen-wuenschen-sich-tote-gaza-be-wohner-85753496.bild.html> (Accessed 23.12.2023), Article 16.10.2023). Example 39: Translation: While Israeli army protects children, Hamas terrorists use children to protect themselves.

47 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/geisel-deal-von-israel-und-hamas-eine-seite-umarmt-ihre-kinder-die-andere-den-te-86225224.bild.html> (Accessed 23.12.2023), Article 26.11.2023). Example 40: Translation: Juveniles are among the freed Palestinian prisoners. Many Arab, as well as some Western media sources, describe them as “children”.

48 <https://www.lektire.hr/ilitota/> (Accessed 27.12.2023)

49 <https://www.duden.de/sprachwissen/rechtschreibregeln/anfuhrungszeichen> (downloaded on 21. 12. 2023).

50 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/hamas-krieg-israels-regierung-stimmt-geisel-deal-zu-86175364.bild.html> (Accessed 20th December 2023), member since 22.11.2023. Example 41: Translation: “The government approved the drafts of the first phase of the agreement, which envisions the release of at least 50 kidnapped women and children over four days, when the fighting will stop,” was the official statement issued by the president’s office. According to Israeli media, these are 30

For the period of reporting on the plight of children in the Gaza Strip, we did not come across any “indicative” mood, that is, a mood that describes reality, in which the noun “Kind” or “Kinder” is used in the context of the suffering of Palestinian children. These terms are predominantly used in quotation marks (either to remotely convey a source or to challenge the authenticity of a source or event), using subjunctive II (with the aim of contextualizing the plight of Palestinian children in a form that does not fully reflect reality or that could only potentially be accurate) or with the addition of “angeblich” (allegedly, ostensibly).

“Opfer/Zivilisten”

Civilians in Duden (2006, p. 1983) are described under the noun “Zivilist” as “citizens who are not members of the army”, while the noun Opfer in Duden (2006, p. 1237) is semanticized as: jmd. der durch jmdn./etw. umkommt (English: someone who loses his life for someone/something), in NJHUR (2005, p. 1228) Opfer is translated as “victim”, and it is explained in RIZJ (2007, p. 1312) as “sufferer, unhappy one, one who suffers violence, killed, one who succumbed to violence committed against him”. Thus, it can be concluded that the killed civilians in the war should be described by the term “Opfer” (in English victim). For violently killed Israeli civilians, the semantically correct term “Opfer” is used in the following examples:

Example 42: „Deutschland soll uns nicht im Stich lassen“. Wütender Appell von **Hamas-Opfer**⁵¹;

Example 43: Terroristen verschicken SMS mit Handys ihrer **Opfer**⁵²;

Example 44: Tel Aviv: 1000 **Opfer** in Kühlcontainern – Jeder Tote erzählt vom Grauen des Terrors⁵³

Example 45: **Hamas-Opfer** berichtet bei „Maischberger“, „Es sah aus wie in Hiroshima“⁵⁴;

Example 46: BILD erinnert an die **Hamas-Opfer**. Bringt die Geiseln zurück!⁵⁵;

The following examples point to the description of the civilian population in Gaza suffering violent war casualties by bombing and violent actions of the Israeli military with the term “Zivilisten” (in English: civil), although, like the above examples, it would be more appropriate to call them victims. In addition to the fact that the plight of Palestinian civilians is not described by an adequate term (“Opfer”, English: victim), the claims about their plight are also questioned, because the first example deals with the arguments cited by pro-Palestinian profiles on social networks, namely “zehntausendfach” (English: ten thousand times), and because of the “source”, the credibility of the suffering is questioned, while in the second example, the bombing of civilians is also linked to the “worst lies in Gaza”, which are revealed by the Bild.

Example 47: „Israelische Terroristen ermorden **Zivilisten**“, kommentieren pro-palästinensische Accounts sinngemäß und zehntausendfach in den sozialen Medien.⁵⁶

Example 48: „Israel bombardiert gezielt **Zivilisten!**“ BILD entlarvt die schlimmsten Gaza-Lügen⁵⁷

children, eight mothers and twelve elderly women. On the other hand, Israel will release about 150 Palestinian women and minors(...)

51 <https://www.bild.de/video/clip/politik/hamas-entfuehrt-familie-deutschland-soll-uns-nicht-im-stich-lassen-85721066.bild.html> (Accessed 20th December 2023), article published on 11.10.2023). Example 42: Translation: “Germany must not leave us in the lurch”. An appeal of anger from the victim of Hamas.

52 <https://www.bild.de/news/ausland/news-ausland/terroristen-verschicken-sms-mit-handys-ihrer-opfer-85740968.bild.html> (Accessed 21st December 2023), article published on 13.10.2023). Example 43: Translation: Terrorists use their victims’ mobile phones to send text messages.

53 <https://www.bild.de/news/ausland/news-ausland/tel-aviv-1000-opfer-in-kuehlcontainern-jeder-tote-erzaehlt-vom-grauen-des-terror-85752172.bild.html> (Accessed 20th December 2023), article published on 16.10.2023). Example 44: Translation: Tel Aviv: 1000 victims in refrigerated containers – every dead person testifies to the horrors of terror.

54 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/hamas-opfer-berichtet-bei-maischberger-es-sah-aus-wie-in-hiroshima-85782600.bild.html> (Accessed 21st December 2023), article published on 2023). Example 45: Translation: Hamas victim reports on “Maischberger”. “It looked like Hiroshima.”

55 <https://www.bild.de/video/clip/politik/bild-erinnert-an-die-hamas-opfer-bringt-die-geiseln-zurueck-86099408.bild.html> (Accessed 21st December 2023), article published on 13.11.2023). Example 46: Translation: The Bild reminds of the victims of Hamas. Return the hostages!

56 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/das-sterben-der-anderen-warum-man-mitgefuehl-mit-gaza-haben-muss-85907662.bild.html> (Accessed 25th December 2023), article published on 31.10.2023). Example 47: Translation: “Israeli terrorists kill civilians”, comment on pro-Palestinian profiles analogously and 10,000 times on social networks.

57 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/israel-bombardiert-gezielt-zivilisten-bild-entlarvt-die-schlimmsten-ga->

The following example, in the first part, instead of the victims, lists only the geographical territory in which the victims lived, while the rest adequately describes the human casualties suffered by Israel:

Example 49: *Eklat bei Klimakonferenz. Schweigeminute für Gaza, KEIN Wort zu Israels Opfern*.⁵⁸

In the following example, with the linguistically correct collocation “civilian casualty”, the legitimacy of published news from other sources (in this case the United Nations) is challenged:

Example 50: *Zivile Opfer in Gaza. Verbreitet die UN ungeprüft Hamas-Propaganda?*⁵⁹

Conclusion

The article aimed at describing the war casualties of civilians in Gaza, Israel, and partially in Ukraine, using the example of the most widely read online portal in Germany, bild.de, in the period from 07.10.2023 to 22.12.2023. Semantically similar word pairs were used to describe the plight of civilians, and those are as follows:

sterben/töten/massakrieren/Massaker, Kinder/Minderjährige and Zivilisten/Opfer.

When it comes to the comparison of the first set of words (sterben, töten, massakrieren/Massaker), we have defined that **sterben** describes dying without violent killing, **töten** describes dying, but by violent means, while **massakrieren/Massaker** describes dying by violent means of a larger number of people

Analyzing the articles of the Bild.de, the most read news site in Germany, in the period from 07.10. – 22.12.2023, we noticed that the terms “töten” and massakrieren/Massaker in the “indicative” mood (mood describing reality) are consistently used to describe the plight of Israeli civilians. For Palestinian civilians, however, the verb “sterben,” that is, a verb that mainly describes non-violent/natural dying, is used, and the remaining two verbs/forms, if

already used, are expressed either in subjunctive II or in questionable forms, which greatly contributes to the risk that the recipients of such reporting may get a wrong or inadequate picture of the plight of a large number of Palestinian civilians in the bombings that have lasted since October 7, 2023, or from the day when a terrible crime was committed against Israeli civilians.

In another pair of words, Kinder /Minderjährige, used to report the plight of children, it is evident that the term children is also consistently used to indicate the plight of a large number of Israeli children on 7 October 2023, as well as a large number of those children who were taken and held hostage that day. It is indicative, however, that the suffering of Palestinian children (i.e. the use of the term Kind/Kinder) is not treated at all in the mood of “indicative” (i.e., real unambiguous mode), and the terms “Kind/Kinder” are either used through quotation marks (i.e., with distance, i.e. quotations of others with discrediting sources) or in subjunctive II or with additions “angeblich” and the like.

Finally, with the third pair of words, the use of which we analyzed in the period from October 7 to December 22, 2023 on the Bild.de news site, within the articles on reporting on the plight of civilians in Israel and Gaza, it is evident that the term “Opfer” was adequately used in the case of describing the plight of Israeli civilians. However, the term “Opfer” was practically not used in the indicative mood to describe the suffering of Palestinian civilians.

Bild.de also appropriately reported on the casualties of civilians and children in Ukraine, when they were victims of rocket fire or bombing using the terms “töten, Kinder, Opfer”, which we cited as an additional comparative example.

However, we note that scientific observations and analyses have resulted in the realization that the reporting of the bild.de on the war suffering and plight of civilians in Gaza resorts to exaggeration (hyperbole) or mitigation (litote), or that for the same events, as the suffering of civilians in Israel and Ukraine during the war, adequate or

za-luegen-85742234.bild.html (Accessed 23rd December 2023), article published on 24.11.2023). Example 48: Translation: “Israel is bombing civilians on purpose!”, BILD exposes Gaza’s worst lies.

58 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/schweigeminute-ignoriert-israels-opfer-gaza-eklat-bei-der-klimakonferenz-86279102.bild.html> (Accessed 24th December 2023), article published on 30.11.2023). Example 49: Translation: Scandal at a climate change conference. A minute of silence for Gaza, NOT A word about the Israeli victims.

59 <https://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/zivile-opfer-in-gaza-verbreitet-die-un-ungeprueft-hamas-propaganda-85767658.bild.html> (Accessed 20th December 2023), article published on 17.10.2023). Example 50: Translation: Civilian casualties in Gaza. Is the UN spreading Hamas propaganda without verification?

the same terminology is not used, which may affect the judgment of the recipients. It is necessary to use adequate linguistic terms and structures to describe the war suffering and plight of the civilian population in Gaza as well, in order to avoid the risk of erroneous reasoning and judgement when reporting, as apparently happens in the case of the bild.de with respect to the plight of Palestinian civilians in Gaza.

Given that language and language structures contain potential that can lead to both correct and incorrect reasoning and informing, it is of particular importance that reporters of significant, and especially globally important events, use adequate terms and structures with the aim of objectively reporting on the scale and consequences of those events.

In this particular case, we were convinced that the suffering, dying and plight of Israeli civilians were adequately, linguistically and stylistically appropriately described, but that adequate reporting on the horrific consequences of killing thousands of Palestinian civilians, including thousands of children, was lacking, which, due to the application of inadequate linguistic structures, inadequate verb forms or moods, poses a great risk and challenge for objectivity in reporting.

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