ARE 'WE' EUROPEAN? *WE* AND *US* IN BRITISH EU-RELATED NEWSPAPER ARTICLES IN 1975-2015

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ABSTRACT

This study contributes to current research on the representation of the European Union in British public discourses. Employing the methods of corpus-assisted discourse studies, the paper examines the use of the pronouns *we* and *us* in British EU-related newspaper articles and aims at finding out in which contexts the EU has been included in or excluded from 'us'. The data consist of 940 EU-related newspaper articles published in the *Guardian*, the *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Mail* in the years 1975, 1985, 1995, 2005 and 2015. The findings suggest that, in the left-wing papers, EU-related issues were more often reported from the European perspective than in the right-wing papers, especially in 2005 and 2015. In addition, when EU-related issues were reported from the national perspective, the tone was usually more evaluative and critical of the EU, whereas with the European perspective more focus was given to the EU's future and processes.

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Are 'we' European? *We* and *us* in British EU-related newspaper articles in 1975–2015

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1. Introduction

This discourse analytic study analyses British EU-related newspaper articles and explores the discursive representation of Britain as separate from the EU in them. Combining critical discourse analysis with corpus linguistic methods, the paper focuses on the use of *we* and *us* and aims at finding out how often and in which contexts the EU has been included in or excluded from 'us' in British newspaper discourse. This is studied by looking at what the pronouns refer to and in what types of textual and wider contexts the pronouns occur. The paper contributes to current research on the role of personal pronouns in reflecting national identities. Furthermore, the paper increases our understanding of how the EU has been represented in British news media and which types of linguistic choices in British public discourses were likely to affect the growth of Euroscepticism in Britain before EU membership referendum in 2016.

Discourse analytic studies focusing on the use of pronouns in relation to national identities have been conducted in linguistics before (Riihimäki, 2019; Cramer, 2010; Petersoo, 2007; Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl, & Liebhart, 2009). Previous studies have shown that first-person plural pronouns can sometimes be ambiguous or indeterminate (Mühlhäusler & Harré, 1990, pp. 168–169; see also Kleinke & Bös, 2018), for which reason they can be strategically used to exclude some groups from the ingroup, making them seem outsiders in society. However, the use of first-person plural pronouns in relation to the EU in British newspaper articles has not been studied extensively before, and this study aims at filling that gap. By looking at newspaper articles from a long time period (1975–2015) and from newspapers with different formats and political affiliations, I examine if there are shifts in the pronoun use and if the pronoun use is different depending on whether the EU membership is supported in the papers or not.

My research questions are the following:

- How frequently and in which types of contexts do *we* and *us* refer to Britain or the EU in British EU-related newspaper articles?
- What are the contexts in which the first-person plural pronouns tend to refer to Britain, on one hand, or the EU, on the other?
- Is the EU represented more positively in the contexts in which it is included in 'us'?

Newspapers — and media in general — have a significant role in shaping and reflecting public discourses (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, p. 3). In particular, for most Europeans, the media is the primary source of information on what the EU is all about and thus the role of the media in shaping public understanding of the EU is crucial (Just, 2009, p. 244). For instance, British newspapers can report on EU-related issues from the British perspective (for instance, how new regulations affect *our*, the British people's, daily lives) or from the perspective of the whole EU (for instance, why *we* need this new system or rule in the Union, how it helps *us*, the EU member countries), and this choice is likely to affect the way the readers perceive the topic. EU-related news that are written from the British perspective can represent the EU as separate from Britain, while with the EU-perspective more attention is granted to the processes of the EU, and the EU is represented as acting together (see Taylor, 2005). Examining the use of personal pronouns in news articles can help uncover whose perspective is given more prominence. Furthermore, the media tend to favour negative stories, especially in the case of outgroup members, because these stories generally get more attention (Oktar, 2002, p. 320; see also Bednarek & Cable, 2017), which is one reason why studying which actors are included in the ingroup is important.

The structure of the paper is as follows. In the next section, I discuss British national identity construction and what previous research has said about whether Britain is represented as 'European' in British public discourse. In the third section, I introduce the data and methods used in the study. That is followed by the findings of the analysis, and in the concluding section, I discuss and summarise the central findings presented in the paper.

2.   British national identity and Europe

2.1.   *National identity construction and the pronoun* we

According to *social identity theory*, which was originally developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979) and developed further for the purposes of linguistic research by Bucholtz and Hall (2005), identity is not fixed but constructed and reconstructed in social situations in relation to others: who am I compared to others? Which groups do I belong to and what is my role in the group? Individuals classify the social world into two social categories that separate the self from others, i.e., 'us' and 'them' (Oktar, 2002, p. 318; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). In this way, people use themselves as the frame of reference and define themselves in relation to others. National identity is also a type of social identity, and newspapers have traditionally had a significant role in constructing national identities. Anderson (1991) has argued that print media and the ritual of daily newspaper reading were important in creating the feeling among citizens that 'we' are a community. In addition, newspapers can assume identification with the nation as the 'naturalized form of collective identity' through textual organization (Brookes, 1999, p. 250). This can be done, for instance, with the first-person plural pronoun *we*, which in

national newspapers is often a 'national we', meaning that it refers to the nation and its citizens without explicitly naming them (see Billig, 2010).

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is concerned with how the world is discursively construed and represented (Fairclough, 2013) and typically the purpose is to reveal characteristics of a discourse that are hidden or implicit, the focus usually being on relations of power, dominance and inequality (van Dijk, 1995). In the field of CDA, the use *we* has been given a great deal of attention, because it is a flexible pronoun and what it refers to can change within a single sentence. Thus, relying only on anaphora — where the pronoun is a substitute for a preceding word or group of words — does not always tell the reader what is meant by it, and the interpretation of the pronoun is left to the audience. According to Duszak (2002), *we* can be used to 'construct, redistribute and change the social values of ingroupness and outgroupness', if used skillfully in discourse. Furthermore, the flexibility of *we* can also be used by politicians to make it unclear who is responsible for specific actions (see Hansson, 2015).

2.2. *Europe as an outgroup in British public discourse*

As stated by Ludlow (2002, p. 122), the concept of 'Europe' in British political discourse has been 'far from value-free'. *European* has traditionally meant 'continental' and thus has not included Britain (Ludlow, 2002, p. 101). According to Ash (2001, p. 11), even during the EU membership, Europe was talked about as 'somewhere else' in Britain, and perhaps even more so now that Britain is not part of the European Union. Furthermore, in some contexts, the English Channel has been 'much wider than the Atlantic' (Ash, 2001, p. 10), meaning that Britain has more easily identified with the US than with the continental Europe, partly because of the special relationship between Britain and the US. Britain has also been discursively separated from Europe and the EU in political speeches. In his *Bloomberg Speech* on the European Union, Prime Minister David Cameron said that Britain 'has the character of an island nation', contrasting Britain with the continent (Wodak, 2018). In British parliamentary debates, Britain has likewise been described as in the margins of the Union (Riihimäki, 2019). Furthermore, the pronoun *we* was decreasingly used to refer to the whole EU by the Members of Parliament between 2002 and 2015, which suggests that, before Brexit, EU-issues were increasingly discussed from the national perspective instead of from the European perspective (Räikkönen, in press). Thus, in British political discourse the EU or Europe has been talked about as being outside Britain, which has probably influenced the attitudes of the public towards the EU.

While pronoun use in EU-related news articles has not been extensively examined before, there are diachronic and synchronic studies on EU-related news reporting in Britain which have shown that the British public has rarely been exposed to positive reporting on the EU (see for instance Baranowska, 2014). Copeland and Copsey (2017, p. 720) found that the British public were increasingly exposed to negative reporting and decreasingly exposed to positive reporting about the EU between 1974 and 2013. Further-

more, Marchi and Taylor (2009) noted that there was a 'marked decrease in the newsworthiness' of Europe and the EU between 1993 and 2005. Islentyeva and Abdel Kafi (2021) studied the construction of British national identity within the context of the EU in newspaper articles focusing on migration. They found that the newspapers supporting the political right systematically created a binary opposition between Britain and Europe, and portrayed Britain as 'a victim of Brussels', while the newspapers on the political left lacked their own discursive frameworks and instead focused on and reproduced the patterns employed by the right-wing press. However, the findings of the present study, in which the data is not restricted to any specific topic, suggest that while the negative portrayal of the EU is more common, the EU has also been portrayed neutrally or even positively, especially when the EU has been included in 'us' and the focus has been on the processes of the EU.

3. Methodology

3.1. Corpora

The data consist of 940 EU-related newspaper articles from four British newspapers: *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Mail* and *Daily Mirror*.[1] I analyse articles written in 1975, 1985, 1995, 2005 and 2015, so there are data from each decade in which Britain was a member of the EU. Only articles in the print editions are included. The studied newspapers have all had substantial, although declining, circulation figures and they represent different formats and political affiliations, which are listed in Table 1. The studied papers are seen as representing newspapers that reach a broad audience in Britain with a wide range of political attitudes. According to Levy, Billur and Bironzo (2016), the *Guardian* and *Mirror* included more pro-Remain than pro-Leave articles prior to the EU referendum, while *Telegraph* and *Mail* included more pro-Leave articles.

I collected the articles using various sources and databases: *Nexis Uni*, *Newsbank Access World News*, *Gale*, *ProQuest* and microfilms available at the *British Library.* The articles in microfilms were converted to text using Optical Character Recognition (OCR) or, if the quality was not good enough for OCR, by typing the text manually. All text types, also letters to the editor and sports news, were included, except for advertisements, because I consider all sections contributing to the construction of national and social identities of the British people. I searched for relevant articles using the following search words that had to appear in the title of the article: *EU*, *European Union*, *European Communit**, *EEC*, *EC*, *common market*, *euro** and *Brussels*. However, if the title search returned only a small num-

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1   The idea of the 'British press' is a bit problematic, as stated by Brookes (1999, p. 250). For instance, Scotland has national newspapers of its own which are more widely read in Scotland than the London-based newspapers. However, the predominantly London-based papers are considered as speaking for the whole of Britain, for which reason I consider them a good option for studying how international issues are reported in Britain

ber of articles, I also included articles in which at least one of the search words appeared in the body text. I extracted 50 articles from each volume and paper by putting all the articles found by the search in a chronological order and taking 50 articles evenly spread throughout the volume, i.e., if there were 250 articles, every fifth article was extracted. If fewer than 50 articles were found (*Daily Mirror* 1985 and 2005: 12 and 37 articles, respectively; *Daily Mail* 2005: 41 articles), all the articles were included in the corpus. Overall, the corpus has 940 articles and 474,551 words.

Paper	Format	Political stance	(Main) Endorsement
Guardian	before 2005: broadsheet, since 2005: mid-sized	mid-liberal/left	Labour/LibDem
Daily Telegraph	broadsheet	centre-right	Conservative
Daily Mirror	tabloid	centre-left	Labour
Daily Mail	tabloid (positions itself between tabloid and broadsheet formats)	centre-right	Conservative

Table 1: *Format and political affiliation of the newspapers studied. Source: Historic Newspapers (https://www.historic-newspapers.co.uk)*

3.2. Process of analysis

The study employs a mixed-methods approach, using methods of corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) (Baker, 2006; Partington, Duguid, & Taylor, 2013). In discourse analytic studies, language use in a certain context is studied as a source of information of the ways in which people try to coordinate their beliefs and behaviours (Lischinsky, 2018, p. 62). Discourse analysis has traditionally been conducted using close reading of a small number of texts, but quantitative corpus analytic methods have made it possible for researchers to analyse larger datasets and to see patterns of language use that would not be noticed by just reading through the data. In this study, quantitative corpus-analytic methods and tools were used as a first step that then led to qualitative reading of the relevant excerpts to gain broad and in-depth understanding of how the pronouns *we* and *us* were used in EU-related newspaper articles.

As a first step, I tagged each instance of *we* and *us* in the articles with a two-part tag including the word class and the group or actor the pronoun refers to (for instance, 'British government' or 'EU'). To speed up the process, the tagging was done with the help of a tagging tool that highlighted the pronouns.[2] Next, I extracted all the pronouns and counted the instances of different referents. I categorised the referents into nine

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2   The tagging tool was written by Prof. Jukka Tyrkkö (Linnaeus University) and is available by request.

groups which are presented in Table 2. In this study, however, I only concentrate on the use of the pronouns referring to Britain or the EU, and thus the rest of the referent groups are not discussed further in this paper.

Referent group	Definition	Example	%
Britain	**country and British people**	**If *we* come out, and don't have to subsidise the EU or be bound by EU human rights, then good — but [--] (Mail, 22 May 2015)**	**42**
group	groups of people and political actors that do not fit into any of the other referent groups and are not relevant for the further analysis	'The Macedonian police told *us*, "Welcome to Macedonia; trains and buses are waiting for you",' said Abdullah Bilal, 41, from Aleppo in Syria. (Telegraph, 24 August 2015)	21
EU	**EU or Europe as one actor or the member countries together**	**For more than 40 years *we* have assured Turkey that it will belong to our European community. (Guardian, 6 October 2005)**	**12**
British politicians	Government, political parties or smaller political groupings	'I do not believe *we* would have been acting in the interests of the country to pass up that opportunity,' he said.(Guardian, 26 June 1985); '[--] showing people, including those who didn't vote for *us* last time, that we are on their side too.' (Mail, 3 October 2015)	8
generic	people in general or the referent cannot be defined in more detail	M. Rey writes as if the EEC were a political and an economic entity, when *we* all know that it is not. (Telegraph, 4 November 1975)	5
EU group	a group of EU members states	Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia said: '*We* will not support solutions which discriminate or limit free movement.' (Mirror, 18 December 2015)	4
EU leaders	heads of EU members states, ministers of EU members states, MEPs, European Commission	The commission is here for five years to do its job and *we* did it with vision, responsibility and commitment. Because what is driving *us* is not to be re-elected. (Mail, 29 September 2015)	3
non-EU	countries that are not members of the EU	'*We* [Switzerland] never joined the union, and *we* haven't yet decided anything completely irrevocable, ' he said. (Guardian, 11 November 2015)	2
paper	the newspaper in which the article is published	Yesterday *we* revealed how empty baked bean tins are recycled to help make Mini Coopers. (Mirror, 29 November 2005)	2

* Proportion of the pronouns *we* and *us* referring to this group

Table 2: *Referent groups of* we *and* us *in the newspaper data*

In addition to looking at the numbers of the pronouns referring to Britain and the EU in different papers and volumes, I also took a closer look at the immediate textual context of the pronouns by reading through the concordances of the pronouns, which list the occurrences of the search word (the pronouns) with the text surrounding it. I also examined word lists generated from the titles of the articles to see which EU-related topics tend to be reported from the national point of view —using *we* and *us* to refer to Britain — and which from the European point of view, in which case the pronouns refer to the EU or Europe. The concordances and word lists were extracted using AntConc (Version 3.5.8; Anthony, 2019).

The results of the analysis are reported in the next section.

4.   *We* and *us* in EU-related newspaper articles

In this section, I first give an overview of the quantitative analysis of the use of the pronouns, which is followed by a more detailed analysis of the contexts in which *we* or *us* referring to Britain or the EU occur.

4.1. *Overview*

The overall frequencies of *we* and *us* in the whole corpus are 0.38 and 0.07 instances per 100 words, respectively. An ANOVA test showed that the observed differences in the frequencies of the pronouns between the studied years were statistically significant (df=4, F=11.03, p=***).[3] The combined frequency of *we* and *us* (henceforth: 1PP) is at its highest in 2015 and at its lowest in 1985 (0.54 and 0.24 per 100 words, respectively) (Figure 1, p. 9). Furthermore, the observed differences in the frequency of 1PP between the papers were also statistically significant (df=3, F=15.97, p=***). *Mirror* has the highest frequency of 1PP, while in *Telegraph* the frequency is at its lowest (0.64 and 0.34 per 100 words, respectively) (Figure 2, p. 9). For the statistical significances and effect sizes of the post hoc analyses using Student's t-test and Bonferroni-corrected p-values, see Appendices A and B.

Overall, 505 of the 940 articles (54%) contain at least one instance of 1PP, and almost half of the articles (435) do not contain 1PP at all ('no pronouns' in Figure 3, p. 9), which means that the pronouns are not evenly distributed across the data. There are 215 articles in which there is at least one pronoun referring to Britain and none referring to the EU ('1PP/Britain') and 80 articles including at least one pronoun referring to the EU and none referring to Britain ('1PP/EU'). In 21 articles there are 1PP referring to both Britain and the EU ('mixed'), and in 189 articles, there are instances of 1PP, but they do not refer to either Britain or the EU ('other pronouns').

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3   ANOVA stands for Analysis of Variance, and it is a statistical technique for analysing the differences of means across the levels of a categorical predictor variable.
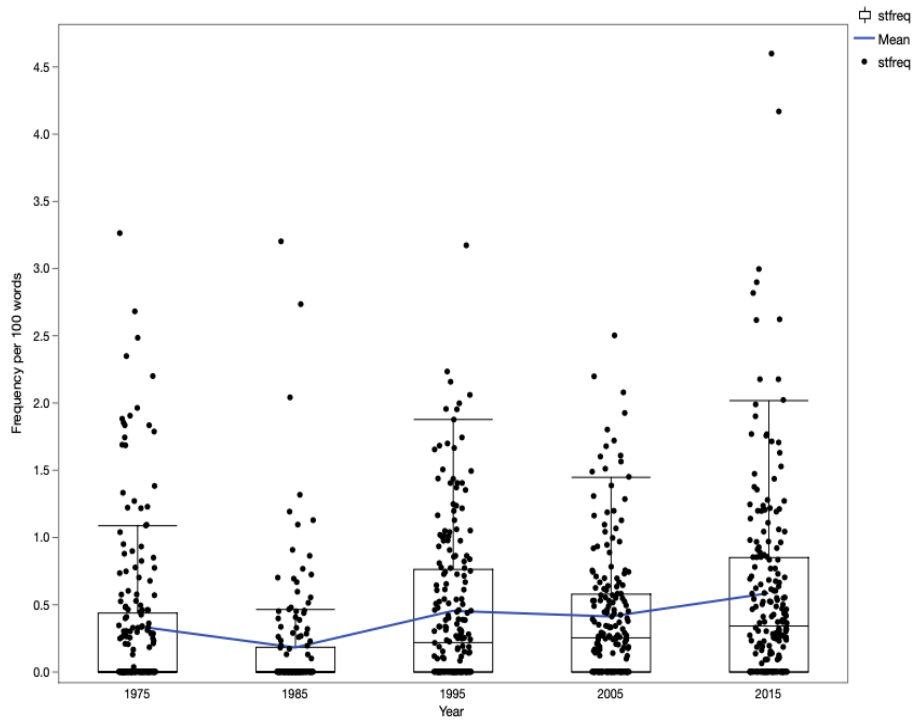
Figure 1: Box plot of the frequencies of 1PP in the studied volumes. The centre line in each box represents the median frequency of the pronouns and the line connecting the boxes represents the mean of each year. The black dots represent individual articles and the frequency of the pronouns in them
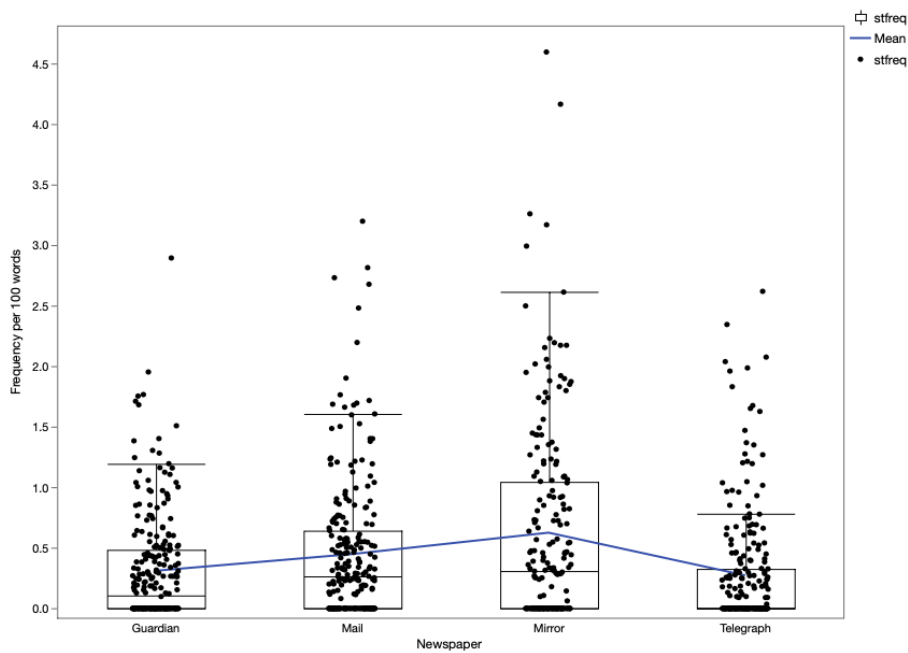

Figure 2: Box plot of the frequencies of 1PP in each paper. The centre line in each box represents the median frequency of the pronouns and the line connecting the boxes represents the mean. The black dots represent individual articles and the frequency of the pronouns in them

Article categories

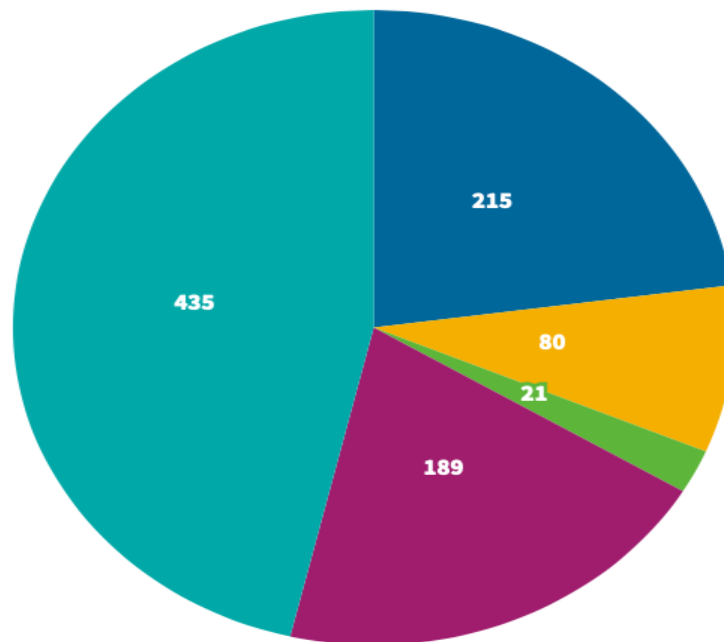■ 1PP/Britain　■ 1PP/EU　■ mixed　■ other pronouns　■ no pronouns

Figure 3: Articles categorised by what the 1PP occurring in them refer to

In my data, 1PP refer clearly more frequently to Britain (42%) than to the EU (12%, see Table 2), which is not surprising as the data consist of national newspapers. Figure 4 (p. 11) shows the frequencies of 1PP referring to either the EU (in blue) or Britain (in red) in each studied year and paper. *Mail* has the highest overall frequency of 1PP referring to Britain (henceforth: 1PP/Britain), whereas in the *Guardian* the overall frequency of 1PP/Britain is at its lowest. This suggests that the national perspective has been less used in EU-related articles published in the *Guardian* than in the other papers, while in *Mail* the national perspective seems to be more prominent than in the other papers. Finally, the frequency of 1PP referring to the EU (henceforth: 1PP/EU) is higher in the left-wing papers than in the right-wing papers in 2005 and 2015. This suggests that the division between the papers in support of the EU and those against it grew in the 2000s and 2010s.[4]

I also looked at the proportions of 1PP/EU and 1PP/Britain in quoted and non-quoted text in each paper. By quoted text, I mean instances where journalists have quoted someone else's speech or writing and put it inside quotation marks. Thus, reported speech is here considered as non-quoted text. Figure 5 (p. 12) shows the overall proportions of 1PP/EU and 1PP/Britain in quoted and non-quoted text in each paper. We can see that most of the instances of 1PP/EU occur in quotations — especially in *Telegraph*,

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4　In 1985, there seems to be a peak in the frequency of 1PP/EU in *Mirror*, but there are only 12 articles from *Mirror* from that year and only 3 instances of 1PP/EU, for which reason that peak should not be given too much weight.

where 92% of 1PP/EU occur in quotations. Thus, more commonly the papers or the journalists have not themselves took the European perspective but have quoted people who have spoken as representatives of the EU, such as British ministers or politicians in other European countries. Only in the *Guardian* most of the 1PP/Britain occur in quotations, while most of the 1PP/EU do not.
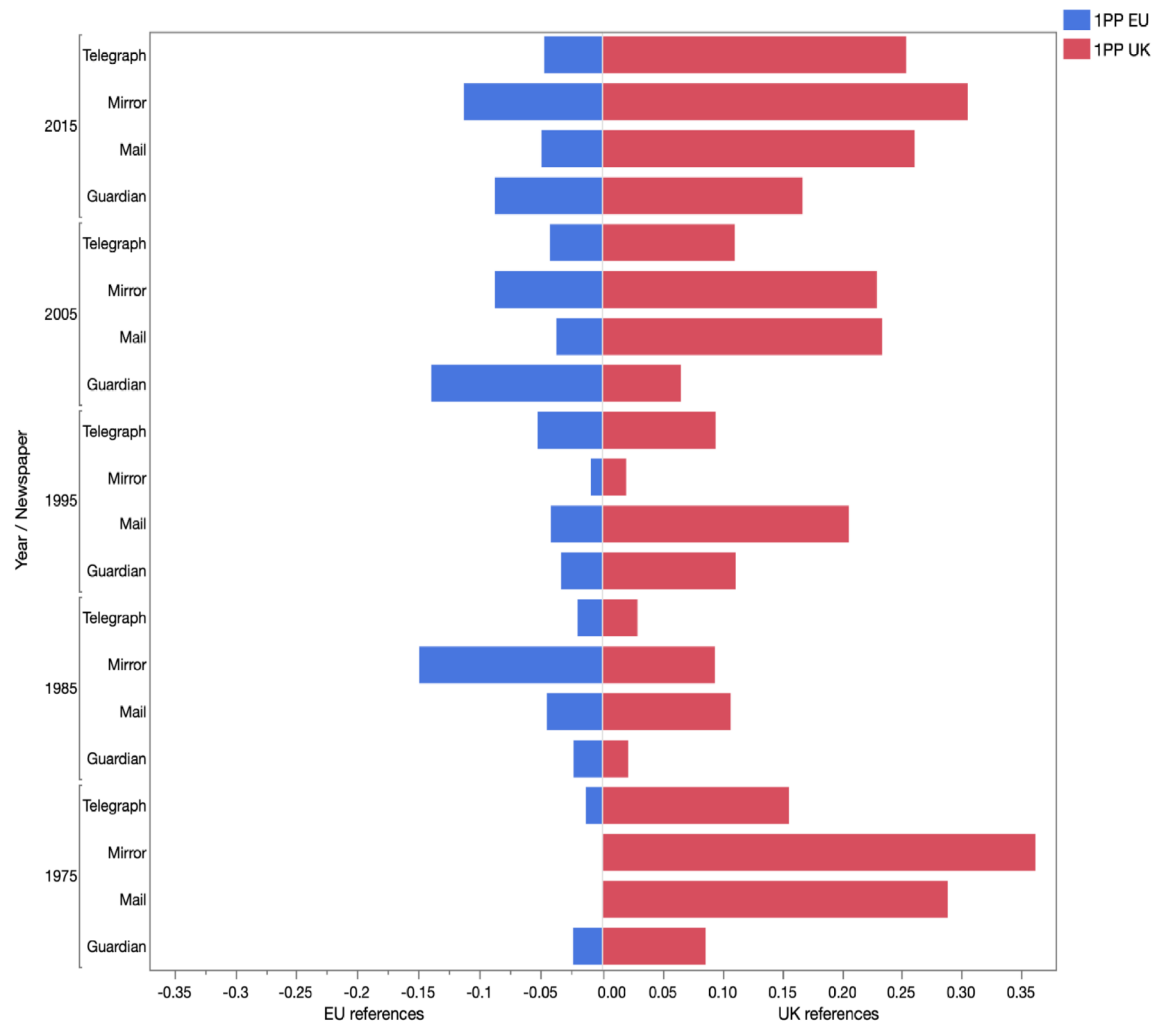

Figure 4: *Frequencies of 1PP referring to the EU and Britain*

In the next two sections, I discuss the use of 1PP/Britain and 1PP/EU in more detail, focusing on the topics of the articles as well as the immediate textual context in which the pronouns occur.

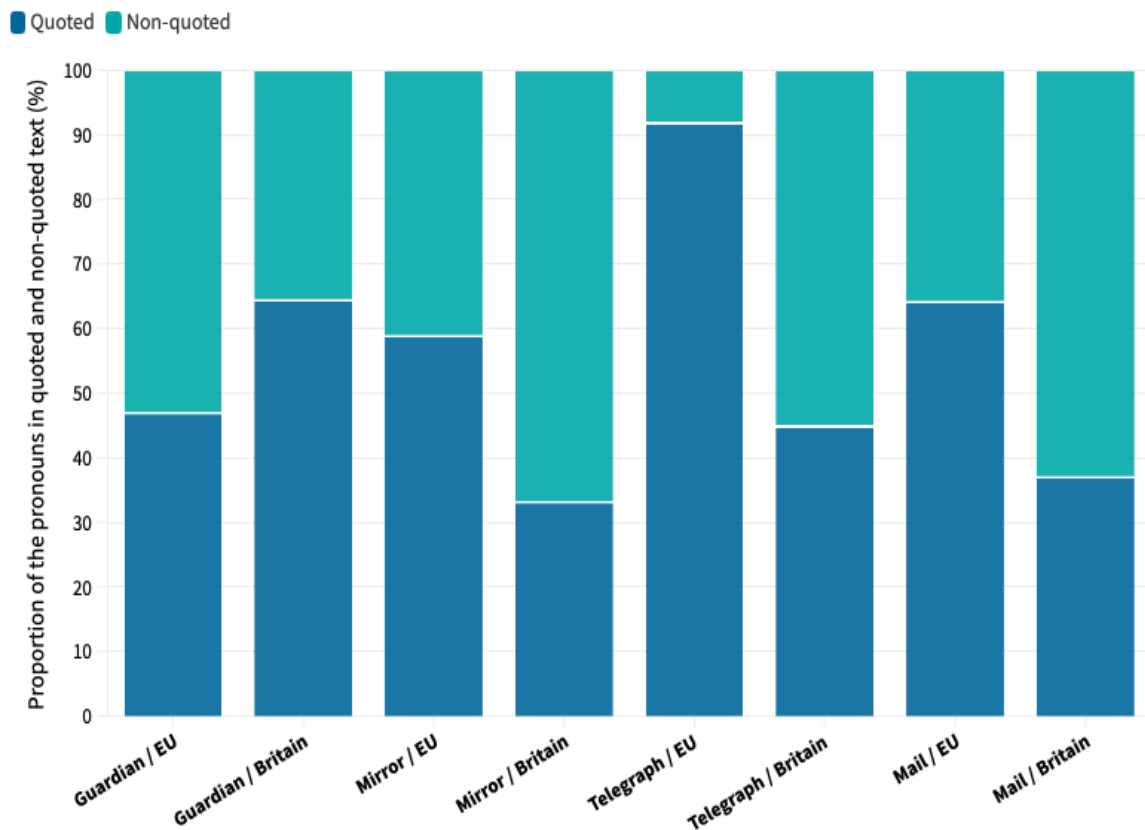## Proportions of the 1PP/EU and 1PP/Britain in quoted and non-quoted text

Figure 5: Proportions of the 1PP/EU and 1PP/Britain in quoted and non-quoted text in each newspaper

4.2. We *and* us *referring to Britain*

To get a general picture of which EU-related topics are typically reported from the national perspective, I examined the most frequent lexical words occurring in the titles of the articles in which 1PP/Britain are used (Table 3). The list suggests that many of the instances of *we* and *us* referring to Britain occur in articles discussing the membership of the European Community/Union and the referenda on the membership. The words *vote*, *referendum*, *campaign* and *stay* refer to the discussion on the membership. Even though referendum on the membership was a topical issue especially in 1975 and 2015, the pros and the cons of the membership are discussed in each of the studied volumes. Other recurring topics in these articles, based on the wordlist, are the Greek government-debt crisis, migration, Constitutional Treaty, single currency, and trade.

Frequency	Word	Frequency	Word
88	eu	8	warns
60	europe	7	**campaign**
37	britain	7	comment
22	eec	7	**stay**
22	euro	6	**crisis**
22	**vote**	6	**greece**
17	says	6	**migrants**
16	market	6	mirror
14	pm	6	new
13	brussels	6	voice
13	european	5	battle
12	**referendum**	5	cam
10	labour	5	common
9	cameron	**5**	**constitution**
9	minister	**5**	**currency**
8	blair	5	david
8	british	5	prime
8	ministers	5	right
8	tory	5	tories
8	uk	**5**	**trade**
8	union		

Table 3: *The most frequent lexical words in the titles of the articles including 1PP/Britain*

In 1975, the 1PP/Britain mainly occur in contexts where the membership is discussed from the perspective of how leaving would affect Britain's role in the world. The Labour party arranged a referendum on the membership of the European Economic Community in June 1975, in which the people voted to stay in the Community. The referendum and the pros and the cons of the membership are the main topics in each of the newspapers studied. In general, British media supported staying in the Community (Daddow, 2012, p. 1222) and this can also be seen in my data. In *Mail*, the focus seems to be on the risks of leaving and the Community is represented as giving Britain a significant international role. In Excerpt 1, Margaret Thatcher is quoted saying that the Community is an essential trading base for Britain and that leaving would put the country's economic strength at risk.

(1) 'What alternative trading base would there be for *us* if *we* pulled out? How would *we* ever
      regain our economic strength?' (Mail, 1975-03-08; emphases in the examples are mine)

The year 1985 in my data is the one with the lowest frequency of 1PP/Britain in each of
the newspapers studied. In that volume, there are no major EC-related news that would
be covered in each paper, but instead the articles cover a variety of different topics, such
as surplus food in the EC and whether some of it could be sent to Africa, wages of civil
servants in the Community, food prices, new controls or regulations in the EC and un-
employment. Overall, there are 35 instances of 1PP/Britain and they occur in 10 articles
alone. Perhaps the fact that there are no major EC-related debates in the articles is the
reason for a such a low number of 1PP compared to the other studied years.

By 1995, the EU has gained more newsworthiness. The articles where 1PP/Britain
occur deal with some EU-wide topics such as enlargement, the single currency, Maas-
tricht Treaty and fishing, and the articles seem to focus more on Britain's future in the
EU than earlier. Fishing has been a significant EU-related issue in Britain, because after
Britain joined the EEC, it could no longer control its territorial waters or set its own fish-
ing quotas. In *Telegraph*, over half of the 1PP/Britain in 1995 occur in two articles alone,
both dealing with fishing. The first, written by Boris Johnson, deals with the Common
Fisheries Policy in the EU and the Spanish fishermen coming to the British waters 'in
search of a tasty British catch' (1995-01-23). The second article is a letter to the editor dis-
cussing the Turbot War between Spain and Canada, in which Britain remained neutral,
while other EU countries supported Spain. In both these articles, Britain is contrasted
with the rest of the EU and even seen as being in opposition to them. In the letter to the
editor, the writer praises Britain for acting the way it did but expresses concern over how
Britain's actions are seen in the EU (Excerpt 2).

(2) Yet, given the Government's inability to decide — or at least communicate — exactly
      where *we* stand on Europe, and the questions hanging over our readiness to participate in
      the future, it can hardly be surprising that many of those partners see our dithering as yet
      another demonstration of Albion's perfidy.[5] (Telegraph, 1995-04-18)

In *Mail* in 1995, many of the 1PP/Britain occur in contexts where the paper points out
that Britain could decide to leave the EU or at least opt out of some of the agreements, if
more power or money is given to the EU. In Excerpt 3, the reporter, using 'Europe' when
talking about the EU, criticises the view that Britain could not survive outside the EU and
that it would be powerless without the membership.

(3) Outside Europe, *we* are brusquely reminded, *we* have no chance unless *we* act in
      conformity with an integrated community. (Mail, 1995-03-01)

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5   *Perfidious Albion* refers to England or Britain considered as treacherous in international affairs, in a
      rendering of the French phrase *la perfide Albion* (The Oxford Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, 2nd ed).

In the *Guardian* in 1995, the pronouns occur in articles bringing out how Britain is seen by other EU members. In these contexts, Britain is described as a reluctant member that does not want to contribute to the EU. However, politicians are quoted saying that they would want Britain to at least appear to be more involved in the EU. In Excerpt 4, Robin Cook, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, is quoted saying that there is a danger that Britain seems reluctant to be a member of the EU.

(4) There is no real danger that *we* are going to come out. The real danger is that *we* are going to stay in while sounding as if *we* wish *we* were out. (Guardian, 1995-03-30)

In 2005, there are articles dealing with large EU-wide topics, such as the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe (aka Constitutional Treaty) and Turkey's potential accession to the EU, and topics especially important for Britain, such as Britain's rebate from the EU (which some EU countries demanded should be abolished) and the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, which Britain held from July till December.

Almost one-third of the 1PP/Britain in 2005 in *Mirror* (11 out of 37) occur in an article discussing the Constitutional Treaty in which myths regarding the consequences of signing the treaty are debunked. However, if we only look at the first lines of the article, the message seems to be that the treaty would be fatal for Britain (Excerpt 5):

(5) IF the UK signs up to the new EU treaty, it will be the end of this country as *we* know it. Gone will be the Queen.
Instead *we* will be citizens of a United States of Europe, ruled over by a President whose face will be unrecognisable.
Our taxes will be set by unelected bureaucrats in Brussels who would also control our oil.
Our military forces will become part of a Euro army and *we* will lose control of our borders, letting other countries run our immigration policy. (Mirror, 2005-01-27)

A few lines later, it is stated that 'The trouble is that every one of those "facts" is untrue'. Yet, the use of national *we* makes the possibility of losing control seem more personal, as it creates a feeling that 'we', the British, should guard against this power grab by the EU.

In most of the instances of 1PP/Britain in *Mail* in 2005, the EU or Europe is criticised, or Britain is said to have lost power to the EU. In these excerpts, Britain is given a passive role and described as 'easily steamrolled' to surrender more power to the EU (Excerpt 6) and 'chained' to the bedside of sick Europe (Excerpt 7). In Excerpt 7, Britain is said to be a 'European power' by geography, but still Europe is represented as being separate from Britain; Britain is 'chained to the bedside' and is thus standing by when Europe, Britain excluded, struggles.

(6) In other words, even if Britain disagrees with a policy, *we* are easily steamrolled by the leviathan Euro-juggernaut. (Mail, 2005-01-26)

(7) Britain is a European power by virtue of geography.
     When Europe is sick, *we* suffer. In terms of international economic competitiveness,
     Europe is sick and *we* are chained to the bedside. (Mail, 2005-05-15)

In 2015, the main topic is the referendum, and most of the articles where 1PP/Britain occur focus on how the membership affects the daily lives of the British people and whether the membership 'weakens' or 'strengthens' Britain's borders. The *Guardian* and *Mail*, in particular, use a great deal of 1PP in articles supporting either staying in or leaving the EU. In *Mail*, 23 of the 97 instances of 1PP/Britain occur in two articles alone, both making the case for leaving the EU. In contrast, in the *Guardian*, 29 of the 85 instances of 1PP/Britain occur in an article arguing against the claims that leaving the EU would strengthen Britain's borders. Interestingly, the article in the *Guardian* represents Britain as different and separate from the rest in the EU, while expressing support for the membership. In Excerpt 8 from that article, it is emphasized that Britain still has 'control of [its] borders', which those that have signed the Schengen agreement do not.

(8) For a start, *we* never gave up control of our borders in the first place. *We* didn't sign the
     Schengen agreement, which removed border controls between 22 EU countries and four
     other non-EU countries. (Guardian, 2015-09-23)

Telegraph, as well, represents Britain as 'different' in the EU, and as better than those that belong to the eurozone. In Excerpt 9, the writer reformulates the common metaphor in which Britain is described as shackled to the bedside of 'sick eurozone' (see also Excerpt 7) by describing eurozone as the 'patient' and Britain as its 'neighbour'. Thus, Britain cannot just leave eurozone be — because Britain is geographically so close to it — but Britain should try to help it.

(9) The eurozone is sick but not dead. And *we*'re not shackled to the patient; *we*'re its
     neighbour. *We* can't weigh anchor and float off into the mid-Atlantic. (Telegraph, 2015-
     02-17)

The analysis of the use of 1PP/Britain suggests that *we* and *us* tend to refer to Britain in contexts where the membership or Britain's role in the Union is somehow evaluated. These instances are rarely neutral, but express opinions either for or against the membership.

4.3.   We *and* us *referring to the EU*

Many of the articles in which 1PP/EU occur seem to focus on issues that have been seen as problems in British newspapers. In the wordlist of the titles presented in Table 4, there are words such as *crisis, Greece + debt* (Greece government-debt crisis), *climate* and *migrants.* These issues have been seen as common European issues, which means that 'we' — the EU — should have a common response to them. Many of the articles also deal with negotiations at EU-level (*deal, debate, demands* and *summit*), and in these articles politi-

cians involved in the negotiations usually report back to the public about what 'we' (the EU members together) discussed and decided to do next.

Frequency	Word	Frequency	Word
47	eu	**5**	**debate**
33	europe	5	euro
11	eec	5	pm
11	says	4	britain
10	european	4	brussels
8	blair	**4**	**climate**
8	new	**4**	**debt**
6	**crisis**	4	demands
6	**greece**	4	migrants
5	chief	**4**	**summit**
5	comment	4	way
5	**deal**	4	world

Table 4: *The most frequent lexical words in the titles of the articles including 1PP/EU*

In 1975 there are no instances of 1PP/EU in the tabloids, and only seven instances in the broadsheets — five in the *Guardian* and two in *Telegraph*. In 1975 Britain had only been a member of the EEC for two years, and perhaps the use of 1PP to refer to the Community was either not needed, as the common issues of the EEC were not topical or considered interesting to the public, or perhaps it was easier and more natural to discuss EEC-related issues from the national perspective.

In 1985, there are only 26 instances of 1PP/EU. Of those 26 instances, 20 occur in quoted text, which suggests that the journalists did not themselves choose to use 1PP to refer to the EU. Furthermore, ten instances occur in an article from *Telegraph* quoting Margaret Thatcher's speech to the US Congress about 'Europe's new dawn' (1985-02-21).

In 1995, the raw frequency of 1PP/EU is 36, which is higher than in the earlier years. The pronouns occur in articles about various topics, but the articles about Bosnian war and the single currency stand out. In relation to the Bosnian war, which ended in December 1995, the role of the European co-operation in achieving the peace agreement was discussed in *Telegraph*, as there had been suggestions that it was the US that had done the work while European efforts had been ineffectual. Excerpt 10 shows Klaus Kinkel, the German Foreign Minister, being quoted, speaking for the importance of the European co-operation in securing the peace agreement and emphasizing Europe's active role in the process:

(10) 'Suggestions that Europe was overshadowed in the peace process are totally unacceptable. Not only did *we* do an immense amount in working up to this point, but British, French and other European servicemen working with the UN lost their lives in this conflict.' (Telegraph, 1995-11-23)

The *Guardian* also wrote about the war from the point of view of whether Europe still needs the transatlantic alliance now that it has found the 'capacity to act for [itself]' (Excerpt 11).

(11) '*We* have finally found the capacity to act for ourselves — with British, Dutch and French troops and German backing. Mr Clinton has achieved a bizarre thing: an Anglo-French rapprochement.' (Guardian, 1995-06-09)

The overall frequency of 1PP/EU is at its highest in 2005, especially in the *Guardian* (see Figure 4, p. 11). The articles in which 1PP/EU occur deal with Turkey's potential membership of the EU, and with how the EU could compete with the USA and the growing economies in Asia. Also, Britain held the presidency of the Council of the European Union from July till December. In Excerpt 12 from *Telegraph*, Prime Minister Tony Blair is quoted using *we* in reference to the whole Union, as he is now talking as a representative of the EU and has more power over what is on the Council's agenda. Even though the EU's actions are seen as ineffective, the speaker expresses hope that the EU can compete if it is prepared to make some changes.

(12) 'But it is no use *us* to compete in the tough, changing world unless *we* are prepared to make the changes necessary, including not abandoning our social model but updating it and modernising it.' (Telegraph, 2005-07-02)

Even if the EU is included in the ingroup, the evaluation of it can be negative. In Excerpt 13 from the *Guardian*, the writer first says that the EU can be 'modestly' proud of the high ranking of the EU member states in the UN's Human Development Index, but after that describes the European Commission as lacking initiative.

(13) [--] the UN's Human Development Index ranks all 25 of the EU's current member states in the world's top 50, and 12 of them in the top 20. Here's something of which *we* can be modestly proud.
The question is: can *we* sustain it? Unsurprisingly, the commission's paper is much more sharp and specific in analysing the problem than it is in proposing solutions. (Guardian, 2005-10-27).

In 2015, the EU is mostly discussed from the point of view of the referendum. However, many of the articles in which 1PP/EU occur tend to focus on the EU being in 'crisis' due to the Greek government-debt crisis and migrants coming to Europe. In relation to these topics, the focus is on the process of the EU trying to solve the issues, and the EU is seen as acting together or at least it is urged to act together, because these issues require co-op-

eration. In Excerpt 14, the writer expresses hope in relation to the Greek debt crisis and says that the EU has survived even from more severe crises and can survive from this as well. Here, the EU is seen as united and capable of acting together.

(14) From the burning embers of two world wars, *we* have created a single market with free movement of people, goods, services and capital. *We* have preserved peace within the union for over 50 years. (Guardian, 2015-07-03)

In the right-wing papers, half of the instances of 1PP/EU (15 of 29) in 2015 occur in articles discussing migration. While the EU is in these articles also seen as acting together, its ability to act and solve problems is criticized. In Excerpt 15, Theresa May seems to criticize the EU for being slow in making decisions when trying to 'deal with the migrant crisis'. Furthermore, in Excerpt 16, Jean-Claude Juncker represents the EU as lacking initiative and ability to act.

(15) '*We* need to resolve this issue today so that *we* can actually get on with the job of dealing with the wider measures that Europe needs to take to deal with the migrant crisis,' Mrs May said. (Telegraph, 2015-09-23)

(16) What *we* need, and what *we* are sadly still lacking, is the collective courage to follow through on our commitments — even when they are not easy; even when they are not popular. (Mail, 2015-08-25)

To sum up, the analysis of 1PP/EU suggests that the contexts where 1PP/EU occur tend not to be as evaluative of the EU as is the case when 1PP/Britain are used. Even though the actions of and plans for the EU might be evaluated, the focus is often on the future of the EU and not so much on whether the EU is useful at all. In a few instances, however, the EU is represented as lacking ability to act, which shows that the EU can also be criticized even if it is included in the ingroup and even if Britain is seen as part of the EU.

5.   Discussion and conclusions

The focus of this study has been on the use of the pronouns *we* and *us* in British EU-related newspaper articles, and on how the use of the pronouns has affected the overall representation of the EU in the articles. The results have shown that the contexts in which *we* and *us* tend to refer to Britain are different from those in which the pronouns refer to the EU, which suggests that EU-related issues are divided between topics that are particularly seen as affecting the British people and those that are seen as common for the whole EU.

Generally, *we* and *us* tended to refer to the EU in articles dealing with different types of crises that the EU was facing, or common European or even global issues to which the EU was trying to find a response. In these articles, the focus was often on the processes and the plans of the EU. While there also was some criticism on what the EU was doing, the focus was usually on how the EU could be developed into an organization that works

better for its member countries and their citizens. Thus, when the EU was included in 'us', the usefulness of the EU for Britain was usually not questioned, as the focus was on what the EU was doing in response to common problems and issues, and the overall evaluation of the EU seemed to be more positive or at least neutral.

In contrast, when EU-related issues were discussed from the national perspective and the pronouns referred to Britain, the articles seemed to be more critical of the EU and represented the EU as affecting the lives of the British people in some way. The focus of these articles was often on the membership itself, but also on issues that were seen as EU-related problems in Britain. Furthermore, when the articles dealt with new treaties and developments in the EU that were not warmly welcomed in Britain — such as the Constitutional Treaty and single currency — the national perspective was preferred.

The findings also suggest that EU-related issues were reported more frequently from the EU's perspective in papers that supported the EU, while a more frequent use of national *we* in this context was a feature of newspapers that were against the EU membership; In the *Guardian* and *Mirror*, the EU was included in 'us' more frequently than in *Telegraph* and *Mail*, especially in 2005 and 2015. In the right-wing papers, the frequency of 1PP/Britain increased between 1985 and 2015, while the frequency of 1PP/EU stayed more or less the same. Furthermore, a clear majority of 1PP/EU in *Telegraph* was not chosen by the journalists themselves, but by the people they quoted.[6] Thus, it seems that the right-wing papers more often focused on how the EU affects 'us' in Britain instead of taking the EU's point of view and reporting what the EU should or is going to do together next.

The results support the claim that the group that is seen as an 'outsider' is seen in a more negative light than the ingroup. Furthermore, the findings suggest that in the right-wing papers, EU-related issues have been more often discussed from the national perspective than in the left-wing papers. Using corpus linguistic methods enabled me to see the quantitative differences between the papers and the topics in which *we* and *us* tended to refer either to Britain or the EU, which would not have been possible using qualitative methods alone.

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6   The accuracy of the quotations is not known, so it could also be that that in some cases the journalists have chosen the pronouns. However, I think it is right to assume that the journalists at least try to be as accurate as possible when quoting others.

Competing interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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Appendix A

Table of the statistical significances and effect sizes of the post hoc analysis comparing each year against the others using Student's t-test and Bonferroni-corrected p-values.

Level	-Level	Difference	Std Err Dif	Lower CL	Upper CL	p-Value	t-Ratio	Cohen's d
2015	1985	0.403790	0.063600	0.278976	0.52861	<.0001	6.3490	0.68191
1995	1985	0.272575	0.063600	0.147761	0.39739	<.0001	4.2858	0.46032
2015	1975	0.244927	0.059214	0.128819	0.36114	<.0001	4.1363	0.41363
2005	1985	0.230866	0.064551	0.104185	0.35755	0.0004	3.5765	0.38988
2015	2005	0.172925	0.060235	0.054714	0.29114	0.0042	2.8709	0.29203
1975	1985	0.158863	0.063600	0.034049	0.28368	0.0127	2.4979	0.26828
2015	1995	0.131215	0.059214	0.015007	0.24742	0.0269	2.2159	0.22159
1995	1975	0.113712	0.059214	-0.002496	0.22992	0.0551	1.9203	0.19203
2005	1975	0.072003	0.060235	-0.046208	0.19021	0.2322	1.1954	0.12160
1995	2005	0.041709	0.060235	-0.076501	0.15992	0.4888	0.6925	0.07044

Appendix B

Table of the statistical significances and effect sizes of the post hoc analysis comparing each newspaper against the others using Student's t-test and Bonferroni-corrected p-values.

Level	-Level	Difference	Std Err Dif	Lower CL	Upper CL	p-Value	t-Ratio	Cohen's d
Mirror	Telegraph	0.352680	0.056117	0.242551	0.46281	<.0001	6.2848	0.59706
Mirror	Guardian	0.314831	0.056117	0.204703	0.42496	<.0001	5.6103	0.53298
Mirror	Mail	0.176804	0.056579	0.065767	0.28784	0.0018	3.1249	0.29931
Mail	Telegraph	0.175877	0.053324	0.071227	0.28053	0.0010	3.2982	0.29774
Mail	Guardian	0.138028	0.053324	0.033379	0.24268	0.0098	2.5885	0.23367
Guardian	Telegraph	0.037849	0.052834	-0.065837	0.14153	0.4739	0.7164	0.06407