JENNI RÄIKKÖNEN

Pronouns Separating the UK from the EU

We and *us* in British newspaper articles
and parliamentary debates in 1973–2015

JENNI RÄIKKÖNEN

Pronouns Separating the UK from the EU

We and *us* in British newspaper articles
and parliamentary debates in 1973–2015

ACADEMIC DISSERTATION
To be presented, with the permission of
the Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences
of Tampere University,
for public discussion in the auditorium K103
of the Linna building, Kalevantie 5, Tampere,
on 19 April 2024, at 12 o'clock.

ACADEMIC DISSERTATION
Tampere University, the Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences
Finland

Responsible supervisor and Custos	Professor Päivi Pahta Tampere University Finland	
Supervisors	Professor Minna Nevala The University of Helsinki Finland	Professor Jukka Tyrkkö Linnaeus University Sweden
Pre-examiners	Professor Anita Fetzer The University of Augsburg Germany	Dr Costas Gabrielatos Edge Hill University United Kingdom
Opponent	Professor Gerlinde Mautner Vienna University of Economics and Business Austria	

Cover design: Roihu Inc.

HIILINEUTRAALI PAINOTUOTE
ClimateCalc CC-000025/FI
PunaMusta Printing

Carbon dioxide emissions from printing Tampere University dissertations have been compensated.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Starting one's academic journey is never easy. The academic career is so different from other types of careers that a young researcher is easily lost. Everything is new and there are lots of "firsts" for which it is difficult to prepare oneself. Luckily, I have not been alone, as I have had wonderful people around me who have provided me help and support. I am sincerely grateful to everyone who has put time and effort in instructing and supporting me during this project. However, there are some people that I especially want to thank.

I want to thank Professor Gerlinde Mautner for agreeing to be the opponent in the public defence of my dissertation. Professor Mautner's pioneering work on CADS has been an inspiration to me, and I am truly honoured that she has a key role in the final phases of this project. I am also grateful to the pre-examiners of the dissertation, Professor Anita Fetzer and Dr Costas Gabrielatos, for their detailed and encouraging comments.

The completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without the financial support I received from the following foundations and institutions: The Emil Aaltonen Foundation, the Finnish Cultural Foundation, the City of Tampere, the European Society for the Study of English, and Tampere University Foundation. I am extremely grateful for all the opportunities made possible by the funding I received.

Next, I want to thank my three supervisors for their constant support and encouragement. You were always there for me when I needed advice. Thank you, Professor Päivi Pahta, for believing in me and for helping me from the very start when I was just dreaming about pursuing a PhD. Thank you, Professor Minna Nevala, for always staying positive. It was always easy to talk to you about issues not related to research, as well. And finally, thank you, Professor Jukka Tyrkkö, for always reading my drafts carefully and for always helping me forward, no matter how busy you were.

I would also like to thank the DEMLANG research groups at Tampere University (Päivi Pahta, Minna Nevala, Arja Nurmi and Jukka Tyrkkö) and the University of Helsinki (Minna Palander-Collin, Turo Hiltunen and Turo Vartiainen) for welcoming me to work with you. Thank you for treating me – a starting PhD

candidate – as one of your colleagues and for helping me with planning my PhD project. I am also grateful for having the privilege of learning from you, as I was invited to work with you on individual research projects and on editing a special issue. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Dr Hanna Limatius who offered me peer-support when I was writing my first research article and when I applied for research grants.

I am also grateful to Professor Johannes Riquet and all the fellow doctoral researchers in the Languages Unit at Tampere University. Thank you for all the great discussions and the peer-support you provided me during these years.

I would also like to thank my friends and family. A special thanks goes to my dear friends, Anne-Liina – who always welcomed me to her home whenever I was in Tampere – and the Pirkka-gang, Minna, Johanna, Veera and Pirita. Thank you for always being interested in what I was doing and, more importantly, for all the conversations that had nothing to do with research or academia whatsoever. You always cheer me up and make me laugh. Thank you for all your support. I am always eagerly waiting for the next time we can just talk for hours. I am also grateful to my parents and my four wonderful sisters – whom I always look up to – for teaching me the value of hard work and for letting me follow my own path.

Then, the person that I am the most grateful to: my husband, Tuomas. Without you, this dissertation would have never been written. I would have never pursued an academic career had you not encouraged me to apply. You always manage to find the right words that make me feel that I can do it, that I am good enough. Thank you for always believing in me and for providing me constant support. You are my rock. I love you.

While I really love doing research, the most important job I could ever have is to be a mother of two wonderful boys. Elmeri and Otso, thank you for bringing so much love and joy into my life. You are the dearest of all.

In Alavus, 13 February 2024

Jenni Räikkönen

ABSTRACT

This doctoral dissertation examines the use of *we* and *us* in British newspapers and parliamentary debates. The focus is on the pronouns that were used in relation to the European Union and referred either to the nation (the United Kingdom) or the EU. The time period studied spans from 1973 to 2015, which allows for a diachronic analysis of how often and in which contexts *we* and *us* were used to refer to the UK or the EU. Two primary datasets are used: 1) the *Hansard* transcripts of the debates of the House of Commons, and 2) 940 EU-related articles from four British newspapers (the *Guardian*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Mail*). To get a comprehensive picture of how the pronouns were used in relation to the EU, the study employs methods of corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS), combining quantitative and qualitative approaches such as manual concordance analysis, collocation analysis, word frequencies and word lists.

In the EU referendum of 2016, a majority of the British people voted for leaving the EU. The UK's membership of the EU ended in January 2020. Although the result of the referendum was a surprise for many, the mainstream politics in the UK already had a long history of Euroscepticism. The EU was commonly seen as hurting the UK's parliamentary sovereignty and taking power away from the nation Furthermore, the image of the UK as an island nation, separated and different from the mainland Europe, did not fit well with the image of the EU that was constantly integrating and bringing European countries closer together.

By focusing on the use of the first-person plural pronouns *we* and *us*, the dissertation aims at finding out how often and in relation to which issues "we" (the EU) were represented as working together, and which issues were seen as national issues, where "we" (the UK) worked separately from the rest of the EU, reacting to what happened in the EU. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) and theories related to the first-person plural pronoun as well as national identity construction are particularly relevant in analysing the instances of these pronouns.

In the case of the parliamentary debates, the findings show that the proportion of the pronouns *we* and *us* referring to the UK increased between 2002 and 2010, while that of the pronouns referring to the EU decreased. This suggests that EU-related issues were increasingly discussed from the national perspective in the

parliament, focusing on the UK's reactions to the EU's actions. In the right-wing newspapers (the *Daily Telegraph* and *Daily Mail*), EU-related articles were rarely written from the EU's perspective during the membership years, while the left-wing papers (the *Guardian* and *Daily Mirror*) more evenly reported EU-issues from the national and EU's perspectives.

The results also reveal that when *we* and *us* referred to the UK in the debates, the discussion often focused on the UK's membership of the EU and how much the UK contributed to the EU. Similarly, the UK's membership was a common topic in newspaper articles written from the national perspective. When the pronouns referred to the EU the focus was on the processes of and negotiations within the EU. In addition, newspaper articles related to migration and economy were reported from both the EU's and national perspective, while climate-related topics were merely seen as a common European issue and reported from the EU's perspective.

When *we* or *us* was used referring to the UK, the UK was commonly represented as leading the EU or being above or ahead the other EU members. In these representations the UK was described as different and separated from the rest of the EU. The UK was also represented as insecure of its role in the EU. This insecurity stemmed from the mismatch between wanting to be at the forefront, leading others but at the same time not wanting to integrate more, which caused that the UK's role in the EU remained unclear.

Using *we* or *us* referring to the EU was rare in both datasets. However, when included in the ingroup, the EU was commonly criticised, which was surprising given that the ingroup ("we") is usually connected with positive attributes.

The dissertation adds to our knowledge of the possible reasons behind Brexit, as well as contributes to the field of CDA by increasing our knowledge of the significance of first-person plural pronouns in political discourse, particularly in relation to national identity construction. Furthermore, the dissertation contributes to the field of corpus-assisted discourse studies by offering an example of how two different datasets can be combined and analysed by combining quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämä väitöskirja tarkastelee *me*-pronominin (engl. *we* ja *us*) käyttöä brittiläisissä sanomalehdissä ja parlamenttiväittelyissä. Tutkimuksen keskiössä ovat pronominit, joita käytettiin Euroopan Unioniin liittyen ja joilla viitattiin joko valtioon (Yhdistyneeseen Kuningaskuntaan; jatkossa: Britannia) tai Euroopan Unioniin. Diakronisen analyysin kohteena olivat vuodet 1973–2015. Tutkimus keskittyy erityisesti siihen, kuinka usein ja millaisissa tilanteissa *me*-pronominia käytettiin viittaamaan joko Britanniaan tai Euroopan Unioniin. Tutkimuksessa käytetään kahta aineistoa: 1) *Hansardin* transkriptioita Britannian parlamentin alahuoneen väittelyistä, sekä 2) 940 Euroopan Unioniin liittyvää sanomalehtiartikkelia neljästä brittiläisestä sanomalehdestä (*Guardian*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Mirror* ja *Daily Mail*). Saadaksemme kattavan kuvan siitä, miten *me*-pronominia käytettiin Euroopan Unioniin liittyen, tutkimuksessa hyödynnetään korpusavusteisen diskurssianalyysin metodeja, yhdistellen määrällisiä ja laadullisia lähestymistapoja kuten laadullista konkordanssianalyysia, kollokaatioanalyysia, sanojen frekvenssejä ja sanalistoja.

Vuoden 2016 kansanäänestyksessä enemmistö brittiläisistä äänesti EU:sta eroamisen puolesta. Britannian EU-jäsenyys päättyi tammikuussa 2020. Vaikka äänestyksen tulos oli monelle yllätys, euroskeptisyydellä oli todellisuudessa ollut jo pitkä historia Britannian valtavirtapolitiikassa. EU:n nähtiin loukkaavan Britannian parlamentaarista itsemääräämisoikeutta ja riistävän valtiolta sille kuuluvaa valtaa. Lisäksi mielikuva Britanniasta saarena, joka on erillään ja erilainen manner-Euroopasta, ei näyttäytynyt sopivana osana EU:ta, joka pyrki jatkuvasti integroitumaan ja tuomaan Euroopan valtioita lähemmäs toisiaan.

Tarkastelemalla monikon ensimmäisen persoonan monikon pronominin käyttöä, väitöskirja pyrkii selvittämään miten usein ja mihin aiheisiin liittyen "meidät" (EU) esitettiin työskentelevän yhdessä ja mitkä aiheet taas nähtiin enemmän kansallisina, jolloin "me" (Britannia) toimimme erillään muusta EU:sta, reagoiden siihen mitä EU:ssa tapahtuu. Oleellisimmat teoreettiset viitekehykset pronominien käyttöä analysoitaessa ovat kriittinen diskurssianalyysi sekä teoriat liittyen monikon ensimmäisen persoonan monikon pronominiin ja kansallisidentiteetin rakentamiseen.

Parlamenttiväittelyistä saadut tulokset osoittivat, että vuosien 2002 ja 2010 välillä *me*-pronominin käyttö Britanniaan viitaten lisääntyi suhteessa EU:hun viittaaviin pronomineihin. Tämä viittaa siihen, että EU:hun liittyvät keskustelut käytiin yhä enemmän kansallisesta näkökulmasta, keskittyen Britannia reaktioihin EU:n toimintaa kohtaan. Poliittista oikeistoa kannattavissa lehdissä (*Daily Telegraph* ja *Daily Mail*) EU-aiheiset artikkelit kirjoitettiin harvoin EU:n näkökulmasta koko tutkitulla ajanjaksolla, kun taas vasemmistoa kannattavat lehdet (*Guardian* ja *Daily Mirror*) uutisoivat EU-aiheita tasapuolisemmin sekä kansallisesta että EU:n näkökulmasta.

Tulokset osoittivat myös, että väittelyissä, joissa otettiin kansallinen näkökulma, keskustelu kääntyi usein Britannian jäsenyyteen ja siihen, mitä jäsenyys maksaa Britannialle. Britannian jäsenyys oli tyypillinen aihe myös niissä sanomalehtiartikkeleissa, jotka oli kirjoitettu Britannian näkökulmasta. EU:n prosessit ja sisäiset neuvottelut olivat keskiössä silloin, kun keskustelua käytiin EU:n näkökulmasta. Muuttoliikkeeseen ja talouteen liittyviä aiheita uutisoitiin sekä EU:n että Britannian näkökulmasta, kun taas ilmasto nähtiin pääasiassa eurooppalaisena aiheena ja siitä uutisoitiin tavallisesti EU:n näkökulmasta.

Kun *me*-pronominia käytettiin viittaamaan Britanniaan, Britannia esitettiin johtamassa EU:ta, muiden yläpuolella tai muita edellä olevana valtiona. Näin Britannia esitettiin erilaisena tai erillään muusta EU:sta. Toisaalta Britannia esitettiin myös epävarmana omasta roolistaan EU:ssa, mikä johtui siitä, että Britannia tahtoi olla etulinjassa, johtamassa muita, mutta samalla jättäytyä pois EU:n yhtenäisyyttä lisäävistä toimista. Tämä ristiriita johti siihen, että Britannian rooli EU:ssa oli epäselvä.

Me-pronominilla viitattiin vain harvoin Euroopan Unioniin kummassakaan aineistossa. Kun EU nähtiin osana sisäryhmää *me*-pronominin käytön kautta, EU:ta kuitenkin usein kritisoitiin, mikä oli yllättävää, sillä sisäryhmään (eli "meihin") liitetään yleensä positiivisia mielikuvia.

Tämä väitöskirja antaa lisää tietoa Brexitiin mahdollisesti johtaneista syistä, minkä lisäksi se vahvistaa kriittisen diskurssianalyysin alalla tuotettua tietoa monikon ensimmäisen persoonan pronominien merkityksestä poliittisessa diskurssissa erityisesti kansallisidentiteetin rakentamiseen liittyen. Lisäksi väitöskirja toimii esimerkkinä tuleville korpusavusteisen diskurssianalyysin metodeja käyttäville tutkimuksille, joissa halutaan yhdistää kaksi erilaista aineistoa ja analysoida niitä määrällisiä ja laadullisia menetelmiä yhdistellen.

CONTENTS

List of Figures

List of Tables

ABBREVIATIONS

1PP	First-person plural pronouns *we* and *us*
1PP/EU	*We* or *us* referring to the European Union
1PP/UK	*We* or *us* referring to the United Kingdom
CADS	Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
EC	European Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
MP	Member of Parliament
OCR	Optical Character Recognition
PM	Prime Minister
RQ	Research Question
UK	United Kingdom
UKIP	United Kingdom Independence Party

LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

Article 1: Räikkönen, J. (2023). Leaving the EU out of the ingroup: A diachronic analysis of the use of *we* and *us* in British parliamentary debates (1973–2015). In Korhonen, M., Kotze, H., & Tyrkkö, J. (Eds.), *Exploring Language and Society with Big Data: Parliamentary discourse across time and space* (pp. 142–165). John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Article 2: Riihimäki, J. (2019). At the heart and in the margins: Discursive construction of British national identity in relation to the EU in British parliamentary debates from 1973 to 2015. *Discourse & Society, 30* (4), 412–431.

Article 3: Räikkönen, J. (2022). Are 'we' European? *We* and *us* in British EU-related newspaper articles in 1975–2015. *Journal of Corpora and Discourse Studies, 5* (1), 1–25.

Article 4: Räikkönen, J. (In press). The European Union as an ingroup in British press and parliamentary debates. In Nevala, M., & Palander-Collin, M. (Eds.), *Self- and Other Reference in Social Contexts: From Global to Local Discourses* (pp. 62–88). John Benjamins Publishing Company.

1   INTRODUCTION

The United Kingdom (the UK) joined the European Community (the EC; the predecessor of the European Union) in 1973. Two years later, in 1975, the Labour Party arranged the UK's first referendum on the continued membership in which a majority of the British people voted to stay in the EC. However, the referendum did not stop the debate over membership. For many, it was unacceptable that there was a rule from the European continent, as the image of the UK standing alone has been an important part of the British national identity (Wallace, 2017). The ever-rising Euroscepticism in the UK finally caused that, in 2016, the Conservative government arranged the second referendum on the membership in which a majority of the British people voted for leaving the European Union (the EU).

British political discourse had a crucial role in influencing people's attitudes towards the EU in the UK. Social structures are reflected in language and particular ways of using language influence and even shape social structures (Fairclough, Mulderring & Wodak, 2011). In particular, political discourse, involving political speeches and debates as well as newspaper articles about political topics, influences public opinion on which actions are preferred for the nation. Therefore, studying how the EU and the British national identity were constructed in British political discourse can shed light on why the people did not see EU membership as being in their interests (see Reicher & Hopkins, 2001).

This doctoral dissertation examines how the EU is represented in the language of British politicians and press. The time period studied spans from the start of the UK's membership in the EC in 1973 up to 2015, when the Conservative government decided to hold a referendum on EU membership. In particular, the study focuses on the use of the first-person plural pronouns *we* and *us*. First-person plural pronouns can be strategically used in the discursive construction of ingroups. The "ingroup" is typically the familiar and positively evaluated group, while the "outgroup" is discursively constructed as different and more often assigned with negative characteristics (Wodak, 2011). Thus, first-person plural pronouns are significant in texts having a political message. By analysing the use of *we* and *us* in EU related political discourse, the dissertation aims at finding out if the EU was increasingly

often excluded from the ingroup in the UK and, consequently, less often portrayed positively. Furthermore, the dissertation analyses in which contexts and in relation to which topics the EU was included in or excluded from the ingroup.

The dissertation consists of four empirical studies, the introductory chapters and a summary of the findings. The study belongs to the field of critical discourse analysis and employs methods of corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) (Baker, 2006; Partington, Duguid & Taylor, 2013). The primary data consist of the transcripts of all the debates of the British House of Commons held between January 1973 and May 2015 (circa 450 million words) and 940 EU-related newspaper articles on the EU from four major British newspapers (the *Guardian*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Mail*; circa 475,000 words) published between 1975 and 2015. These data allow for a comparative analysis of the use of the pronouns *we* and *us* in the parliamentary debates and newspaper articles discussing the EU.

The thesis contributes to previous as well as future studies on political discourse focusing on the use of personal pronouns in relation to national identity construction. Systematically investigating the use of first-person plural pronouns and their contexts can reveal which groupings a country is associated with, on the one hand, and when it is seen as more useful – and as more fitting to the national identity of the country – to be separated from specific international groups, on the other. Furthermore, analysis of diachronic changes in the use of personal pronouns such as *we* and *us* can signify attitude changes or that the discursive representation of specific groups is purposefully altered in speech and writing to change attitudes.

1.1   Objective

Already before Brexit, scholars in many fields had examined possible reasons behind Euroscepticism in the UK (e.g. Copeland & Copsey, 2017; Daddow, 2012; Forster, 2002; Harmsen & Spiering, 2004). Many of these studies emphasise the importance of media in how the EU was seen by the British people. I became interested in the issue after Brexit. I wanted to study the ways in which the EU was represented in British public discourses. In particular, I wanted to examine if some specific linguistic features in British public discourses showed diachronic variation that would indicate Euroscepticism becoming more and more mainstream in the UK over time. While Euroscepticism and the UK being represented as separate from the EU have been studied from a linguistic perspective before, previous studies have typically focused

on selected years or on a particular historical event (e.g. Hawkins, 2012; Marchi & Taylor, 2009; Wenzl, 2019; Wodak, 2016).

By identifying who are included in "us" in British EU-related political discussion in the parliament and press, the analysis can reveal which EU-related topics trigger the national perspective, on the one hand, or the EU's perspective, on the other. While the national perspective can cause that the EU is seen as acting somewhere else, separately from the UK, taking the EU's perspective emphasises the co-operative side of the story, where the EU countries are seen as acting together.

The analysis of the referents of first-person plural pronouns is not always straightforward, and neither is the connection between the pronoun use and the construction of the UK's national identity. However, diachronic analysis on the use of personal pronouns in British political and media discourses in relation to the EU can offer new information on the ways in which the UK's separation from the EU was linguistically constructed. Furthermore, comparing the use of *we* and *us* in the language of newspapers and parliamentary debates is needed, as the media and political parties have been shown to have direct effects on attitudes towards the EU in the UK, especially if they share the same message on the issue (Carey & Burton, 2004, p. 638).

1.2   Research questions and outline of the study

The main research questions that I address in the dissertation are:

RQ 1. What diachronic changes happened in the frequencies of *we* and *us* referring to the EU or the UK in British parliamentary debates and EU-related newspaper articles in 1973–2015?

RQ 2. In relation to which topics were the pronouns *we* and *us* used to refer to the UK or the EU?

RQ 3. What types of representations of the UK and the EU were constructed using *we* and *us*?

The dissertation contains four empirical studies (Articles 1–4). Articles 1 and 2 analyse parliamentary debates, and Article 3 focuses on the newspaper articles. In Article 4, both newspaper articles and parliamentary debates are examined. Article 1, primarily addressing the RQ 1, is the most quantitative of the empirical studies in this dissertation, focusing on the diachronic changes in the frequencies of the first-person plural pronouns *we* and *us* referring either to the UK or the EU in the

parliamentary debates. That article was the starting point for the whole dissertation and defined how I would continue the research.

When analysing the referents of the pronouns in the parliamentary debates for Article 1, I noticed that certain ways of describing the UK as a member of the EU were repeated, which sparked my interest in analysing more qualitatively the ways in which the UK was portrayed when referred to by *we* or *us*. Consequently, Article 2 addresses the RQ 3 and focuses on the discursive construction of the UK's role and national identity as a member of the EU.

Article 3 examines EU-related newspaper articles, focusing on diachronic changes in the frequencies of the pronouns referring to the UK and the EU (RQ1) as well as on the topics in relation to which these pronouns were used (RQ2). The article examines which types of news were typically told from the national perspective, on the one hand, and the EU's perspective, on the other.

Article 4 analyses both the newspaper articles and parliamentary debates, focusing on the discursive representation of the EU as an ingroup. The article examines the use of *we* and *us* referring to the EU and addresses the RQ 3.

The introductory chapters and the summary of the findings discuss the topic from a wider perspective than could be done in the articles. Chapter 2 offers a socio-cultural background to the study. Chapter 3 discusses the theoretical framework, and the methodology is introduced in chapter 4. The summary of findings in chapter 5 offers answers to the research questions based on the findings of the empirical studies. It also discusses the contribution of the thesis to current research as well as points out some limitations of the study. Finally, concluding remarks are presented in chapter 6.

2 SOCIO-CULTURAL FRAMEWORK

Language is fundamentally a social activity, intertwined with the social and cultural contexts in which it is used. Consequently, language is shaped by the context, and understanding the socio-cultural context is essential for interpreting meaning accurately.

This chapter discusses the socio-cultural framework within which the study is situated. The chapter presents a brief history of the UK's membership in the EU by discussing how the UK became a member of the EU (section 2.1) and how the sceptic attitudes towards the EU in the UK evolved (section 2.2). These are followed by a description of the British press (section 2.3) and parliamentary debates (section 2.4), including a discussion on the issues that should be considered when analysing the language used in them.

2.1 Brief history of the UK in the EU

In 1948, Prime Minister (PM) Winston Churchill presented his view of the UK's place in the world through the metaphor of three circles. The first (and the central) circle for the UK was the British Commonwealth and Empire, "with all that that comprises"; the second circle was the English-speaking world; and "finally", in the third circle, "there is United Europe" (Churchill, 1948). Two years earlier, in his speech at the University of Zurich (Churchill, 1946), Churchill had called for a United States of Europe, where France and Germany would take the lead. However, the UK, together with the Commonwealth countries, the "mighty America" and the Soviet Russia would only be "the friends and sponsors of the new Europe". Thus, for the UK, European co-operation and taking part in it were not in its core interests, but it was still willing to provide a leadership role in Western Europe (Forster, 2002, p. 11).

In 1957, the European Economic Community (the EEC) and European Atomic Energy Community were created by the Treaty of Rome which was signed by six countries: Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany. Before 1961, the UK's policy of rejecting anything to do with "supranational

Europe" was agreed across party lines. Consequently, the UK only participated in some intergovernmental co-operation with other European countries. PM Harold Macmillan offered a somewhat unexpected break to this policy in 1961, when he and his Conservative government decided that the UK would apply for full membership of the EEC, which also implied that the UK would join the supranational structure and the customs union (Steinnes, 1998, p. 61). This first application was, however, vetoed by the French President Charles de Gaulle. Even though the Labour Party opposed the first application, Labour PM Harold Wilson also started to pursue a more Europe-oriented policy after the Labour Party won the election in 1964. The UK made the second application to join the EEC in 1966. However, the country's economic situation and the international context were then even more unfavourable than they had been in 1961. Consequently, the French President again blocked the UK's route to membership (McCourt, 2014, p. 109).

Finally, in 1970, the Conservative PM Edward Heath and his government made a successful application for the UK to join the EC. Together with Denmark and Ireland, the UK became a member in 1973. This meant that the UK accepted all previous EEC regulations, the Treaty of Rome and the terms of entry.

The Leader of the Labour Party Harold Wilson became the Prime Minister again in 1974. By then, a referendum on the membership of the EC had become the core focus of the "anti-Marketeers" in the Labour Party (Forster, 2002, p. 49). Consequently, the Labour government was committed to a consultative referendum on the membership. The referendum on the membership was held in June 1975. The electorate voted by seventeen million to eight million in favour of the membership.

Margaret Thatcher became the Prime Minister in 1979. Her policies were first very pro-European and took the UK more deeply into the "ever closer union" (Forster, 2002, p. 63). She signed the Single European Act in 1986, which was the first major revision to the Treaty of Rome and set an objective to the EC to establish a single market by December 1992. After this, however, Thatcher started pursuing a more Eurosceptic vision of the EC. In particular, her Bruges Speech on 20 September 1988 has been seen as a critical moment in the UK's shift to a more Eurosceptic position (e.g. Roe-Crines & Heppell, 2020).

The UK and 11 other members of the EC signed the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992, which, among other changes, established the European Union, created EU citizenship and paved the way for the single currency. The articles in the Maastricht Treaty that committed the member countries to a series of steps to create a single currency by January 1999 were among the most significant developments in the history of the EU (Forster, 2002, p. 106). The steps included the removal of

exchange controls and creation of an Economic and Monetary Institute. Furthermore, the EU members were required to become members of the European Exchange Rate Mechanism and the national banks were to be made independent of political control. The UK was forced to withdraw sterling from the Exchange Rate Mechanism in September 1992, as it failed in keeping sterling's value above the required lower limit. This caused that the UK was kept out of the Eurozone. Eleven EU countries introduced the Euro in 1999, Greece joining later in 2001, and with the UK, Denmark and Sweden retaining their national currencies.

PM John Major had opted out of the section in the Maastricht Treaty dealing with social policy. However, when Labour leader Tony Blair became the Prime Minister in 1997, one of the first things that he did was to sign the Social Chapter of the Maastricht Treaty. The Labour Party had a pro-Europe manifesto, and under both Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, the party achieved a more favourable image of the UK as a member of the EU than the UK had had before (Perisic, 2010, p. 8). However, PM Blair was also determined to maintain the "special relationship" with the USA, which was shown by his readiness to support the USA after the terrorist attacks in September 2001 and to send British troops to Afghanistan and Iraq, while most Europeans did not accept the idea of a "war on terrorism" (Crowson, 2011, p. 139; Delpech, 2002, p. 31).

In 2001, the Labour government supported the Laeken Declaration that committed the EU to the creation of a European Convention and to the drafting of a European Constitution. However, in the run up to the European elections in 2004, Blair announced that the government would support a referendum over the Constitution, as required by the Conservative party (Gifford, 2020, p. 145). But, as the French and Dutch voters rejected the Constitution in their respective referendums, the Constitution did not go forward. The EU continued the process under the name "Lisbon Treaty", which was based on the Constitutional Treaty that had already been ratified by 18 countries. The British government wanted to see a minimalist treaty. Consequently, when British opt-outs from the treaty were secured, PM Blair announced that British demands were met and, therefore, that no referendum was needed (Gifford, 2020, p. 147). However, the final Treaty of Lisbon, signed in December 2007, included some of the key aspects of the original Constitutional Treaty, as it established the post of a President of the European Council and increased the power of the European Parliament, which made it difficult for the Brown government to defend their position that no referendum was needed (ibid.).

By the beginning of 2008, after some initial signs that the global economy was in a crisis, the period of uninterrupted growth of the British economy was coming to an end. The UK at first seemed to suffer from the crisis more than some Eurozone countries. Therefore, some British economists recommended that the UK join Eurozone and adopt Euro, as it would provide the country protection because of the Euro's role as a reserve currency (Gifford, 2020, p. 150). However, in November 2009 it was revealed that the Greek government had debts of 300 billion Euros, which was twice the Eurozone limit. This started a chain of events that eventually led to the Eurozone crisis, during which several governments were bailed out by the EU.

In 2010, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democratic Party together formed a coalition government in the UK. Even though the Liberal Democratic Party was not as Eurosceptic as the Conservative Party, they were also committed to an in/out referendum if any further powers were transferred to the EU. This was part of the Conservative Party's EU policy, and was put in the European Union Bill, which proposed that any future EU treaties transferring national powers to the EU were to be subject to a referendum (Gifford, 2020, p. 156). This was also known as the "referendum lock".

The UK Independence Party (UKIP), a rival right-wing party to the Conservatives, had slowly but surely been increasing their support since the start of the 2000s. In the 2004 European election, the UKIP won 12 seats. By the European Parliament elections of 2014, it had become part of the mainstream politics, as it won the greatest number of votes of any British party. The UKIP claimed to offer a purer Eurosceptic alternative to the Conservative Party. It positioned itself to the right of the Conservative leadership on issues such as same sex marriage and immigration. The rise of the UKIP was seen as threat to the Conservatives who could not afford to lose any more voters if they wanted a majority in the 2015 general election. Consequently, in his speech at Bloomberg in January 2013, PM Cameron set out his plan to renegotiate the UK's relationship with the EU and present the new settlement to the British public in a referendum by 2017. That referendum was held in June 2016. In that referendum, 51.9 per cent of the votes were in favour of the UK leaving the EU. The UK left the EU in 2020.

2.2 Euroscepticism in the UK

Hawkins (2022, p. 20) argues that while Euroscepticism is not uniquely a British phenomenon, the British version of Euroscepticism has been more "radical" than elsewhere in Europe: British sceptics were not only opposed to further integration of the EU or how the EU worked, but they were sceptical about whether the UK was European at all (see also Maccaferri, 2019, pp. 391–392). Furthermore, Euroscepticism in the UK became part of the mainstream politics, which is not the case in other members states, at least not yet (Hawkins, 2022, p. 21). It is argued that in the late 1980s and early 1990s – during the negotiations of the Maastricht Treaty – Euroscepticism started to dominate the political debate over the EU in the UK (Copeland & Copsey, 2017, p. 712; Forster, 2002, p. 103; Hardt-Mautner, 1995a, p. 180).

There were several different, but interconnected, arguments behind the Eurosceptic agenda in the UK. Perhaps the most important and persistent argument against the EU was the loss of national and parliamentary sovereignty. It was considered unacceptable that the EU law was above the national law. Already before the UK joined the EC, the Community was seen as being on a road towards a federation, where the UK would only be a state in the United States of Europe. In this scenario, the UK would seize to be an independent nation (e.g. Gaitskell, 1962). Furthermore, when the European Monetary Union and single currency were under debate in relation to the Maastricht Treaty, Conservative politicians argued that control over monetary instruments was key in maintaining the sovereign identity of an independent state (Forster, 2002, p. 116). Monetary Union was seen as eventually leading to a Political Union (ibid.).

Already when the UK considered joining the EEC in the 1960s, it was argued that becoming a member would not be economically beneficial for the UK (Forster, 2002, p. 21). This argument persisted after the entry as well, as some Eurosceptic arguments were based on the idea that the EU had not brought the faster economic growth that had been hoped for (Forster, 2002, p. 114; Wallace, 2017, p. 198). Furthermore, especially the Labour Prime Minister Gordon Brown framed the European continent as less stable and not as rational economically as the UK. He argued that the UK could offer a model for economic governance from which other European states could learn (Gifford, 2020, p. 136; see also Hawkins, 2022, p. 73).

In the 2000s and 2010s, immigration became one of the core reasons behind the British Euroscepticism. Anti-immigration was also one of the core messages of the UKIP, whose main objective was to have the UK leave the EU (Evans & Mellon,

2019). While migration and the EU were not always connected in political debates, these issues became intertwined in the media and in people's minds in the 2000s (Balch & Balabanova, 2017). Evans and Mellon (2019, p. 78) argue that one of the key catalysts leading to this type of fusion was the Labour government's decision in 2004 to implement immediate open borders to the citizens of the ten states that were about to join the EU in its largest expansion to date, while most of the other EU members imposed a transition period. Many of the accession countries were from the other side of the Iron Curtain (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), and the immigration levels from these countries to the UK were substantial, displacing the Commonwealth countries as the largest source of foreign immigration (ibid.). According to Goodwin and Milazzo (2017, p. 451), by 2016, immigration was ranked by UK citizens as the most important political issue in the country and central in explaining the 2016 vote to leave the EU (ibid., p. 462).

Finally, arguments saying that the UK does not fit in the EU were prominent. The UK was seen as different and separate from the continent, which is why the EU could not serve the UK's political and economic interests (Forster, 2002, p. 22). In addition, the EU was seen as only benefitting the 'core' members – France and Germany –, who also had the power to govern the pace and direction of the integration process, while the UK and the newer members states were confined to the margins (Hawkins, 2012, p. 565). The UK itself identified more easily with the US than with the continent, especially during the Thatcher and Blair administrations (Ash, 2001, p. 9). Furthermore, British people themselves did not see themselves as Europeans, at least not as much as other European citizens (Eurobarometer, 2003: as cited in Hawkins, 2012).

Leaving the EU had already been seen as a possibility long before PM Cameron announced that the Conservative Party would hold a referendum on the membership. In December 1991, Conservative MP Toby Jessel said in the House of Commons debate on Maastricht that "I do not believe that Britain will still be a member of the Community in 30 or 40 years' time" (HC deb 18 December 1991). Three years later, at the 1994 Conservative Party conference, Norman Lamont suggested that the UK should seriously start considering leaving the EU (Spiering, 2004, p. 129), and by the time the Treaty of Lisbon was debated, withdrawal from the EU was openly discussed in Eurosceptic circles (Hawkins, 2022, p. 72).

2.3   British parliamentary debates

British parliament comprises the House of Lords (upper house), the House of Commons (lower house) and the sovereign (Crown-in-Parliament). The main functions of the parliament are to:

- Check and challenge the work of the Government (scrutiny)

- Make and change laws (legislation)

- Debate the important issues of the day (debating)

- Check and approve Government spending (budget/taxes)

Both chambers, the House of Commons and the House of Lords, hold debates in which the members discuss government policy, new laws that have been proposed and other topical issues of the day. The House of Commons currently consists of 650 Members of Parliament (MPs) elected by the UK public, while the members of the House of Lords are appointed by the Crown on the advice of the Prime Minister. There are still some hereditary peers in the House of Lords, but the right to inherit seats from parents was ended by the House of Lords Act of 1999.

The dissertation focuses on the debates of the House of Commons, which are formal and often lively discussions involving exchanges of opinions. Their purpose is to help the MPs to make informed decisions on the subjects at hand. The debates in the House of Commons are public and nowadays also recorded and can be followed online. Furthermore, the official transcripts of the debates are published in the *Hansard* (or Official Report). (More about the *Hansard* in section 4.2.1.)

The MPs primarily speak to and try to convince the people sitting in the chamber, but they also want to influence the actions and beliefs of a more diverse audience that are following the debate outside the chamber, usually through media. According to Ilie (2015), the goal of parliamentary dialogue is to affect the ways in which the audience acts with regard to real-life issues. Kranert and Horan (2018) describe parliamentary debates as representing a "frontstage", audience-facing side of political discourse, where politicians "do politics" by using certain type of language to influence how issues are perceived in society. Hence, language is a central factor in politics and political processes.

In the field of critical discourse analysis (see chapter 3), politicians are seen as part of the elite that have better access to and control over public discourses. They have more power on how political topics are talked about and perceived in society than

other citizens (van Dijk, 2015; 1996). Furthermore, ministers and front-bench MPs have easy access to the mass media, which further spread their language to the public.

It has been argued that politics has become mediatised, meaning that the media have become increasingly influential and have the power to shape the public discourse. Newspapers, television talk shows and other media outlets decide which issues are important, while direct interaction between citizens and their representatives are no longer seen as the basis for decision making (Holly, 2008, p. 318). Consequently, it has been argued that parliamentary debates, which have formerly been central to political processes, have lost some of their persuasive force (ibid.). It has been further argued that mediatisation has caused a simplification of political discourse, where us-vs-them dichotomies and "sound-bite solutions" have become increasingly important as they grant politicians access to the media (Moffitt & Tormey, 2014, p. 387). The us-vs-them dichotomy is particularly important in relation to the dissertation and is further discussed in connection to the first-person plural pronouns (section 3.2) and national identity construction (section 3.3).

The MPs' use of language is influenced by other factors, as well. First, contributions that are given in the parliament are sometimes planned beforehand, in which case the speech is well structured and word choices are carefully made,[1] but there are also more spontaneous contributions, usually responses or interventions to speeches given by other MPs. In these contributions, the speakers choose their words as they go, for which reason the speech might be more scattered. Speeches that are not planned beforehand usually have more "speech-like" characteristics which are not included in the Official Report of the debates (see more on the editorial practices of the *Hansard* in section 4.2.1). Second, when the MPs know that the topic under debate is exceptionally important (inter)nationally and of the type which media carefully follow, they have more incentive to speak in a way that help them to stand out and be noticed. At the same time, they also need to be wary of "wrong" word choices that could hurt their careers. While, to my knowledge, there are no studies on whether MPs change the way they speak depending on the topic (e.g. alter their rhythm, make stylistic shifts from formal to more informal), the influence of general elections on how first-person plural pronouns are used in relation to the EU is briefly discussed in Article 1 of the dissertation. Third, there are rules on the language that is allowed in the parliament, which are written in Erskine May (Hutton et al., 2019), "the Bible of parliamentary procedure". The rules say that while there is no list of unparliamentary words, no abusive or insulting

---

[1] The MPs are not allowed to read their speech from paper, but they can use notes (Hutton et al., 2019, part 3, chapter 21).

language is allowed. The rules also state that the MPs should address the House through the Chair, which means, for instance, that Members should not use the pronoun "you" to refer to the other MPs.

While British parliamentary debates have been shown to provide a fruitful object of study for discourse analytic research on issues such as immigration and racism (e.g. Jones, 2019; van Dijk, 2000), research on the representation of the EU in parliamentary debates has been scarce. Even though Brexit sparked an interest in research on how UK-EU relationship has been represented in political discourse, many studies have instead focused on other data sources than parliamentary debates, such as individual speeches (e.g. Wodak, 2016) and newspaper articles (see section 2.4). However, there are some recent studies on how the EU, or the UK in relation to the EU, has been represented in British parliamentary debates, in addition to the studies included in this dissertation.

Gibbins (2014) studied British identity construction in relation to the EU in a selection of parliamentary debates and other materials in connection to three major events in the history of the UK's membership of the EU. He concluded that British exceptionalism and leadership were frequently brought up in discussions related to the EU. Furthermore, Ludlow (2015) studied the debate of the British House of Commons on EC membership in 1971 and noted that those opposing the membership represented EEC membership as endangering three great British traditions, namely Cobdenite liberalism, British internationalism and sovereignty, while supporters of the membership viewed joining the EEC as fitting well with the UK being a central and powerful country that mattered. In addition, Wenzl (2019) studied how Conservative MPs constructed national identities for the UK in parliamentary debates about EU membership in 2015 and 2016. The analysis showed that Conservative MPs on both sides of the debate constructed images of "Britishness" when arguing for or against membership. Similarly to Gibbins (2014), Wenzl noted that the Conservatives arguing for the membership represented the UK as being exceptional and having power in the world stage and within the EU. Those supporting leaving the EU also represented the UK as being powerful globally, but at the same time powerless against the EU. However, according to Wenzl (2019), the Remain side in the Conservative party failed in highlighting the advantages of membership, as they focused on such aspects of the British identity that are incompatible with EU membership, such as exceptionalism. Finally, Räikkönen (2020) focused on the use of metaphors in relation to the EU by six British MPs. The conclusion was that the EU was, through the use of metaphors by both supporters and opponents of EU membership, represented as an entity that is

moving too fast, without a clearly defined goal and as an entity that prevents the UK from reaching its full potential.

The dissertation contributes to scholarly discussion and to previous as well as forthcoming studies on the representation of the EU in British parliamentary debates. The picture of the EU and the UK's relationship with the EU is not only drawn in the debates that get the most attention but also in the more "everyday" debates that do not necessarily focus on the EU, but in which the EU is at least a party that should be considered. Therefore, the primary data of the dissertation include all the parliamentary debates in the period 1973–2015 (see section 4.3). While these everyday debates might not always attract public attention, they nevertheless contribute to shaping the parliamentary discourse around EU-related topics.

2.4   British press

As noted in section 2.3, politics and media are strongly intertwined. Politics has for a long time been a mediated discourse. Consequently, the mass media has become essential for modern politics (Kranert & Horan, 2018, p. 10). For ordinary citizens, the media are the primary source of information of the workings of their representatives, as well as of national and international organisations, such as the EU (Gavin, 2018, p. 832; Just, 2009, p. 244). Therefore, the way the media portrays the EU is significant and has a major role in influencing how people see the EU. According to Carey and Burton (2004, p. 624), the impact that newspapers alone have on people's opinions is relatively small, but if people receive the same message from the newspaper that they read and from the political party they support, the effect of the message on people's opinions is strong.

British press can be roughly divided between tabloid and broadsheet newspapers.[2] Tabloids are usually smaller in size and have more stories focusing on soft content, such as entertainment, celebrities and sports, and on personalities rather than issues, while broadsheets tend to focus more on politics and international issues (Zappettini, 2021, p. 282). Furthermore, tabloids typically have shorter articles than broadsheets, and the style of writing is more informal. Tabloids are sometimes seen as promoting populist worldviews, as they place themselves as speaking as one of the people, in opposition to the "elite", such as politicians (ibid.).

The UK has traditionally had large newspaper circulation levels. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2010, p. 17),

---

[2] See Brookes (1999, p. 250) and Article 3 for discussion on the concept of the "British press".

the UK had the fourth largest newspaper publishing market in the world in 2009. In 2011, Audit Bureau of Circulations (as cited in Baranowska, 2014, p. 501) reported that over 12 million people in the UK buy a daily newspaper. Furthermore, most of the tabloids and some broadsheets offer free online content, which increases the readership even more. Three out of the four newspapers analysed in this dissertation offer their online content free of subscription fees, as the *Daily Telegraph* is the only one behind a paywall (in 2023).

Articles from four different newspapers are analysed in the dissertation, namely the *Guardian*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Mail*. Of these papers, the *Guardian* and *Daily Telegraph* represent broadsheets while the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Mirror* belong to the tabloid press. In 2018, the *Guardian* relaunched in the tabloid format, but it is still generally seen as belonging to the broadsheet press. Also, the *Daily Mail* could be seen as being somewhere between the broadsheet and tabloid press, as it focuses on political news and has a more formal writing style than other tabloids. However, the worldview promoted in the *Daily Mail* – associated with populism (Baker, Gabrielatos & McEnery, 2013, pp. 6–7) – is closer to that of other tabloids than broadsheets, for which reason *Daily Mail* is here categorised as belonging to the tabloid press (see also Zappettini, 2021, p. 281).

The British press is known for being openly partisan. During general election campaigns, they usually announce which political party they support (e.g. Wring & Deacon, 2010). Also, in relation to the Brexit referendum in 2016, newspapers made their views known to the readers on whether they endorsed Remain or Leave campaigns. However, newspapers are still widely trusted, as British people generally believe that what they are reading in newspapers is a true reflection of reality (Baranowska, 2014, p. 501). Furthermore, as pointed out in Zappettini (2021, p. 283), readers are shifting from print to the online versions of the newspapers, which means that tabloid titles – which usually share their online content free – have been able to increase their reach when compared to the broadsheet press, which are more often available only through paid subscriptions.

While newspapers can also explicitly state which political parties or actions they support, their actual influential power in society comes from their ability to frame issues the way they want and to decide which issues are seen as worthy of attention. This way, they can naturalise specific world views and contribute to forming cognitive models through which the public understand political and social phenomena (Zappettini, 2021, p. 281). Even when reporters try to be objective, they still need to make choices that affect the way a topic is seen, such as the headline, the choice of quotes, the angle, the pictures and the language. It matters who are

given a say in an article through quoting them and from whose perspective a story is told. For instance, newspapers can decide whether they report news relating to refugees from the point of view of how much "they" cost "us" or from the point of view of the refugees, sharing their experiences on how their lives have been disrupted. In relation to the EU, the British press can frame issues so that they either focus on the EU's processes and on what "we" together are doing, or on the UK's reactions to the EU's actions, where "we" (the UK) are looking at the EU as if from the outside (see Articles 3 and 4).

British press and how it reports EU-related issues have been in researchers' radar for some time already. In particular, Euroscepticism of the British press and how it has manifested in language has been a fruitful object of study. For instance, Alarcón's study (2010, p. 404) shows that there was more negative than positive content on the EU in his sample from the *Times* and the *Guardian* from the period 2005–2007. Furthermore, in comparison to equivalent French and Spanish titles, the British papers had the least space dedicated to EU issues. According to Alarcón (2010, p. 400), a greater visibility of European issues and pro-EU actors tends to increase support for EU membership. Daddow (2012), as well, points out that most British people consumed negative coverage on the EU. He argues that the news media had a key role in the rise of Euroscepticism in the UK. Daddow particularly emphasises the importance of the "Murdoch effect", i.e. the influence of the papers owned by Rupert Murdoch (in the UK: the *Sun* and the *Times*). He argues that these papers had an agenda-setting role in the way the EU was reported in the UK. However, Daddow found an antidote to the Eurosceptic press in the *Guardian*, *Independent* and *Financial Times*, but these could not compete with the top-selling papers in the UK (Daddow, 2012, p. 1226). Finally, Copeland and Copsey (2017) calculated the proportions of positive, negative, neutral and factual news articles on the EU in five British national newspapers, namely the *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Mail*, *Guardian*, *Times* and *Financial Times*. They concluded that the largest part of the reporting was factual (i.e. "just reporting"; Copeland & Copsey, 2017, p. 721), and no emphasis on either positive or negative aspects was found. However, when readership was considered (i.e. how many people consume negative/positive articles), they found that negative reporting on the EU increased from 24.2 per cent in 1974–1975 to 44.9 per cent in 2012–2013.

Many studies on the representation of the EU in British press have analysed news reporting of specific events, such as Brexit (e.g. Maccaferri, 2019; Zappettini, 2021), the eurozone recession (Baranowska, 2014) or the negotiations surrounding the Treaty of Lisbon and the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe (Hawkins, 2012; Just, 2009). Hawkins (2012) qualitatively analysed newspaper articles around

key events in the negotiation process of the Lisbon Treaty. He concluded that the UK was represented as separate from the EU in the leading British newspapers, while the EU was framed as a foreign power that posed a threat to the British national interest. Furthermore, repeated reference was made to the actions of "Europe" or "Brussels", and to the UK's relationship *with* Europe, which made the separation of the UK from the rest of Europe evident at the most basic linguistic level (Hawkins, 2012, p. 566). However, a counter-discourse challenging the Eurosceptic narrative was found in the *Guardian*, *Observer* and *Daily Mirror*, where the EU was given credit for the long period of stability and democracy experienced in Europe (Hawkins, 2012, p. 570).

Baranowska (2014) examined the portrayal of the EU in the British press during the eurozone recession in 2011–2012. She found six themes that were recurrent in each of the titles she analysed (the *Times*, *Guardian*, *Daily Mail* and *Sun*): 1) Greece will leave the eurozone, 2) the euro will collapse, 3) there is a recession in the UK and in the world because of the European economic problems, 4) the EU is not democratic, 5) the EU is limiting the British sovereignty, and 6) they do not like us in Europe, particularly in France (Baranowska, 2014, p. 504). In addition, Baranowska (2014, p. 514) points out that all the titles she analysed presented a strong "us" versus "them" approach, where the UK was separated from the rest of the EU.

A more quantitative linguistic approach to studying the representation of the EU in British newspapers can be found, for instance, in Hardt-Mautner (1995b) and Marchi and Taylor (2009). Hardt-Mautner (1995b) investigated the coverage on the EU in four daily newspapers from selected periods between 1971 and 1994, focusing, among other things, on the meaning of "Europe" and "European". She concluded that there were various types of "Europeanness", such as the "Europeanness" that was a matter of degree rather than a categorical concept (Hardt-Mautner, 1995b, p. 19). Consequently, one can be "more" or "less" European, depending on how committed one is to European culture and traditions (see also Hardt-Mautner, 1995a, pp. 183–184). Marchi and Taylor (2009) examined various aspects of the representation of the EU in British newspapers from 1993 and 2005 using methods of corpus-assisted discourse studies (see section 4.1). They noted that there was a decrease of 20 per cent from 1993 to 2005 in the number of articles where "Europe" was mentioned. They also pointed out that the *Guardian* was the only paper where the EU was talked about in news reports, whereas in the others the EU appeared only in the comment articles.

The results of the previous studies mentioned here are mostly in line with the results presented in the dissertation: that the UK was represented as separate from the EU in national newspapers. However, the *Guardian* has been in previous as well as in this study shown to offer a different perspective to EU matters, as it has more often focused on the EU's processes and reported EU issues from the EU's perspective (see esp. section 5.1.3.2). The dissertation contributes to the existing literature on how the EU was represented in the British press by looking at the issue in a long time-period.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter introduces the theoretical framework for the dissertation, namely critical discourse analysis (CDA), as well as theories on the first-person plural pronoun and national identity construction. Section 3.1 introduces the history and key concepts in CDA that are relevant to the dissertation. Section 3.2 focuses on how first-person plural pronouns have been treated and analysed in previous CDA studies. Section 3.3 discusses the discursive construction of national identity, which has also been an important area of study in CDA. The use of first-person plural pronouns and the discursive construction of national identity are connected, as the use of *we* in political discourse can reveal who are seen as being included in "our nation" and what separates "us" from others.

3.1 Critical discourse analysis (CDA)

There are different approaches to discourse analysis. While some of them focus on the content of texts, linguistic approaches usually focus on the structure of the language, i.e. how things are said in the discourse, and how this structure affects the meaning (Gee, 2011, p. 8).

Linguistic discourse analysis was developed to study language-in-use in the 1950s (Kranert & Horan, 2018, p. 3). Up until then, the sentence was seen as the most complex domain in linguistic studies. Discourse analysis tried to answer questions about the entire text; how sentences form coherent texts and what types of connections there are within a text. Later, the analyses became more focused on the context in which the text was produced, as it became evident that understanding the context is essential when making sense of the language (e.g. Halliday, 1977). Furthermore, language became seen as the basis of the social (Kranert & Horan, 2018, p. 3) and as a form of social practice, where language shapes and is shaped by relations of power. Discourse was hence seen as language in its relations with other elements in the social process (Fairclough, 2015, p. 8). Finally, the language as a form of social practice became the focus of CDA (Wodak, 2001).

According to Gee (2011, p. 8), the goal in discourse analysis (without "critical") is to describe how and why language works the way it does, while *critical* discourse analysis brings in social and political aspects. In some cases, this political aspect means that researchers want to intervene and apply their work in society to change social conditions (see esp. Fairclough, 2015).

CDA analyses dialectical relations between discourse and other objects (Fairclough, 2010, p. 4). The framework has been greatly influenced by the theories of Michael Foucault, according to which discourses are "practices which systematically form the objects of which we speak" (Foucault, 1972, p. 49). Discourses are socially shaped as well as socially constructive, and they help to sustain and reproduce the *status quo* and contribute to transforming it (Fairclough, Mulderring & Wodak, 2011). Thus, through textual analysis, society and its ideological structures can be observed (Stubbs, 1996, p. 15). In addition, critical analysis is interested in what linguistic elements exist in a text (or texts), and why and under which circumstances specific linguistic choices among several other options were made (Baker et al., 2008, p. 281).

The basis for CDA (recently also Critical Discourse Studies) comes from Critical Linguistics, which was developed by Roger Fowler, Bob Hodge, Gunther Kress and Tony Trew at the University of East Anglia. In their book *Language and Control* (1979), which focuses on the relationships between language and power, they called for a critical (mostly left-wing) agenda for linguistics. They argued that language is part of a social process where discourse "articulates social meanings" (Fowler et al., 1979, pp. 1–2). This articulation in context "affects the situations and relationships which formed these meanings in the first place" (ibid.). Fowler and Kress (1979, p. 190) criticised Chomskyan linguistics for ignoring the effects of context and the social, while sociolinguistics was criticised for giving too much weight on the social structure in predetermining how people use language. Critical linguists thought that more attention should be given to the social hierarchy and power. Critical linguistics (and later also CDA) commonly employed M. A. K. Halliday's systemic-functional grammar, as Halliday also saw linguistic structures as being based in social structure (Fowler et al., 1979, p. 3).

CDA emerged in the late 1980s. It is grounded in a European tradition of scholarship, as its development has been mainly led by the Lancaster school of linguistics, in particular by Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak and Teun van Dijk. Fairclough's *Language and Power* (1989) was the first book-length treatment of this version of CDA and commonly considered to be the landmark publication of CDA (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000, p. 454). A number of other related approaches to

CDA have also been important in developing its theories, such as systemic-functional grammar, conversation analysis, conceptual metaphor theory, discursive social psychology and political discourse analysis (see Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000, p. 454). Furthermore, CDA developed together with and was inspired by other movements, such as the feminist movement and the critical study of gender, language and discourse (van Dijk, 2008, p. 8).

The key concepts in CDA that are particularly relevant for the dissertation are *context*, *power*, *ideology* and *representation*. CDA focuses on the relationship between language and context, and on discovering the hidden meanings that reflect social, cultural and political ideologies. CDA does not have its own theory of context (van Dijk, 2008, p. 8), for which the CDA has also been criticised (e.g. Blommaert, 1997), but it sees discursive event and its wider and immediate contexts as being strongly interrelated (see Fairclough, Mulderring & Wodak, 2011).

Context is a frame that surrounds the event that is being analysed (Duranti & Goodwin, 1992, p. 3). In CDA, context usually involves such issues as the place, time, institution, political knowledge and history, as well as participant identities and roles (van Dijk, 2008, p. 3). It is argued that the focal event (language, discourse) cannot be properly understood without looking beyond the event itself, to the other phenomena within which the event is embedded (Duranti & Goodwin, 1992, p. 3). Duranti and Goodwin (1992, p. 4) further argue that the perspective of the participants whose behaviour is being analysed should be taken as a point of departure for the analysis of context. In the dissertation, the main context considered includes such issues as the co-text (the text surrounding *we* or *us*), historical context (time and the events related to the text, see sections 2.1 and 2.2) and participant roles (such as the newspaper title, the political party of the MP, and whether the MP is a minister or not). (More on context in relation to personal pronouns in section 3.2.)

CDA is inherently interested in the discursive reproduction of power: social power, power relations and the power of language (Fairclough, 1989; Wodak, 1989, p. xiv). CDA argues that, through language use and through the ways in which things and people are represented, unequal power relations can be produced and reproduced, e.g. between different social classes, genders and ethnic groups (Fairclough, Mulderring & Wodak, 2011). Fairclough (2015, p. 26) separates between two types of power – power *to* and power *over* – and points out that neither of these is inherently bad, as both are needed in a functioning society (e.g. teachers and police have power *over* other people, but that is meant for their own good). However, power is problematic or dangerous if it is not legitimate and if it has bad effects. The parliament is the supreme legal authority in the UK, which means that it has power

over people. Furthermore, MPs as well as newspapers are part of the elite that in CDA are seen as having significant power *to* influence people's attitudes and world views (van Dijk, 1995). Furthermore, elite discourses are in a powerful position when it comes to defining who "we" are, which is discussed more in relation to the discursive construction of national identity in section 3.3.

While knowledge implies that there are facts that are known and communicated with propositions that are straightforwardly and transparently related to them, ideology involves that the world is represented from a particular point of view (Fairclough, 2010, p. 46). In ideological representations, the connection between the proposition and fact is not transparent. Sometimes an ideological representation of some reality may become so dominant that it appears as "common sense", a true reflection of reality (Fairclough, 2010, p. 79). As an effect, an ideology creates "reality" (Hall, 1982). This dissertation analyses the ideological representation of the EU in British public discourses where the EU was seen as being somewhere else, outside the UK. In this representation, the UK was a passive target of the EU's actions, even though British representatives were involved in the decision-making in the EU. However, as argued in the dissertation, this representation did not become the dominant one, as there were competing representations, where the EU was also represented as belonging to "us", the ingroup (section 5.1.3.2).

Finally, representation of social actors has been one of the central points of focus in CDA, particularly from the point of view of agency. CDA wants to make more visible differences between different social groups in how they are represented and who are given an active role in discourse: which social actors have been represented as "agents" (as active) and which as "patients" (as passive), which actors are excluded and which included (van Leeuwen, 1996). This is also related to the separation between the ingroup and the outgroup in discourse, where the outgroup, or "They", are represented as outsiders, different from or even threatening to "Us" (see section 3.2; Wodak, 2011).

The dissertation focuses on the representation of the UK and the EU. I argue that, by using *we* and *us*, the UK was represented as separate from the EU. Furthermore, I argue that the evaluation of the EU varied depending on whether it was included in or excluded from "us" in British parliamentary debates and newspaper articles.

Because of the critical aspect in CDA research, the field has remained controversial (see Blommaert, 2005, pp. 31–37; Kranert & Horan, 2018, p. 6). As CDA focuses on social problems, there is a risk that the results are predetermined. Furthermore, CDA has been criticised for cherry-picking data (Mautner, 2009, p.

34), because only a selection of texts is typically analysed, which can cause that the analysis gives a biased view of how people or things are represented. CDA is also said to offer only one interpretation of texts. It can be argued that an analyst does not necessarily understand the texts in the same way as an average consumer does (e.g. Stubbs, 1997). The analysis is thus an interpretation of the interpretation that people do in specific contexts (Gee, 2011, p. 122). In the dissertation, I have tried to mitigate the effects of this by analysing a large amount of data by using the methods of corpus-assisted discourse analysis (see section 4.1) and by giving a great number of examples in the empirical studies to increase the transparency of the analysis.

3.2   First-person plural pronoun

Critical discourse analysts have always recognised the importance of personal pronouns and studying them has been shown to be relevant (Fowler & Kress, 1979, p. 201; Hardt-Mautner, 1995b, p. 14; van Dijk, 1997, p. 34). In particular, the first-person plural pronouns have been considered relevant when investigating political and media discourses (Bull & Fetzer, 2006, p. 15).

Personal pronouns are highly context dependent. At the most basic level, interpreting what is meant by personal pronouns requires knowledge of who are present and who the speaker is. In addition, knowledge of the wider context is necessary, such as the purpose of the utterance, the groups to which the speaker could potentially belong and the possible "outsiders" in the context. Bazzanella (2002, p. 241) separates between two different types of contexts that are relevant for interpreting personal pronouns. The first is the context that is given, *a priori*, including things that are known and can be listed, such as the participants, setting, type of the interaction, channel, language and preceding and following co-text. The second type is the activated context, which is continuously created during the course of interaction, as the participants search for relevance and for a particular context from a range of possible contexts (see Sperber & Wilson, 1995, p. 141). Understanding the activated as well as the *a priori* context is essential for understanding what the speakers intended to mean, sometimes despite what they actually said (Bazzanella, 2002, p. 242; see also Wales, 1996, p. 51).

While some personal pronouns are more easily interpreted (such as the first-person singular *I*), others can be used so that the actual referent cannot be identified. In English, the first-person plural pronoun *we* is an example of such pronouns, which is why CDA researchers have been interested in analysing its use, particularly in

political discourse. In the most typical situation, personal pronouns are used to refer to specific individuals or things that can be identified in the speech situation or based on the context (Biber et al., 2021, p. 328). *We* typically refers to the speaker/writer, the addressee and potentially some other person(s) (inclusive use), or to the speaker/writer and some other person(s), but not the addressee (exclusive use) (ibid.). In addition to these two uses, first-person plural pronouns can be used "rhetorically", in which case the pronoun is not used to refer to any specific group of people, but to a group whose boundaries are not clear (Quirk et al., 1985, pp. 350–351).

Other types of rhetorical uses, according to Bazzanella (2002, p. 244), are the *pluralis modestiae* and *maiastatis. Pluralis modestiae* is commonly used in scientific writing where the writer uses *we* instead of *I* to either reflect modesty when referring to their own actions or to gesture toward an audience (Mühlhaüsler & Harré, 1990, p. 175), as in Example (1):

(1) As *we* saw earlier in Table 2…

Pluralis maiastatis (or "royal *we*") refers to the use of the pronoun in which an individual expresses their own opinions from an authoritative position (see Bazzanella, 2002, p. 245). This type of use is not common.

Furthermore, there are uses of *we* in which the speaker is excluded, examples of which are what Bazzanella (2002, p. 245) calls an "inverted" and a "totally exclusive" use of *we*. In the inverted use, the speaker uses *we* instead of *you* to downgrade the illocutionary force of a negative evaluation of the addressee. This type of use could occur in a student-teacher interaction such as in Example (2), where the teacher says:

(2) *We* didn't have time to finish the homework, did *we*?

In the totally exclusive use, neither the speaker nor the addressee is referred to when *we* is used. An example of this would be someone speaking about the humankind or the actions of humans so long ago that no-one alive today was present (ibid.), as in Example (3):

(3) When *we* lived in caves…

While the use of first-person plural pronouns can be categorised in the aforementioned groups in an analysis that is purely based on the linguistic context (Fetzer, 2014, p. 334), the actual interpretation of the pronouns in interaction can be difficult, as the referent is sometimes ambiguous and can vary even in a single

sentence (see Tyrkkö et al., in press). In contemporary political discourse, for instance, interpreting deictic words can be complex, as the analysis requires a discursive perspective, where social, socio-cultural and cognitive contexts are considered (Fetzer, 2014, p. 334). In a context where a member of the British government uses *we* in a political speech, the reference can vary somewhere between "we the people in this room", "we the British people" and "we the people in the Western world" or even "we the people in general" (van Dijk, 1997, p. 34). In addition, a political speech can be heard on-site, read in a newspaper the following day, or streamed on the Internet, which can further complicate the interpretation of the personal pronouns. The exact meaning of *we* is not usually explained by the speaker or the writer, but the interpretation is left to the addressee (Biber et al., 2021, p. 329).

According to Pennycook (1994, p. 175), personal pronouns cannot be extracted from "the political process of naming a self, selves and others". Even though a separation is usually made between the inclusive and exclusive uses of *we*, it can be argued that this pronoun is always both inclusive and exclusive, as it always has its boundaries. Furthermore, while it defines who "we" are, it also defines who "you" or "they" are (ibid.). Thus, analysis of the use of *we* can reveal who are represented as belonging to the ingroup ("Us", our group, the familiar group), and who are consequently placed in the outgroup ("Them", the others, the outsiders).

The ingroup is usually represented with more positive attributes than the outgroup (Wodak, 2011, p. 62), which is of special relevance to the present study. On the one hand, the dissertation focuses on the construction of the British national identity and "intra-national sameness" (Wodak et al., 2009, p. 37) constructed using *we* and *us*. On the other hand, the focus is on the representation of the EU, either as included in or excluded from "us".

In parliamentary debates and news articles in national newspapers, the use of national *we* (i.e. *we* referring to the nation) is common. Those that use the national *we* represent a collective (the nation) and speak for that nation (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 604). While the use of national *we* is not restricted to the "elite" (such as politicians and newspapers; van Dijk, 1995, p. 20) – as ordinary citizens can also use it when talking about "our" nation – the elite have a bigger audience and more power to influence the public discourse, for which reason they can more easily affect the way the people see and imagine their nation. By using the national *we*, speakers can participate in constructing "our" identity: what "we" are like as a nation, how "we" differ from others, and in particular, who "we" are and who are not "us".

There are some previous studies that have focused on the use of national *we* in political speeches and newspapers. Buxrud and Frangen (2017), for instance, studied Norwegian national day speeches, and Petersoo (2017) analysed the different uses of national *we* in Scottish broadsheets. Furthermore, Rosie et al. (2004, p. 455) argue in their comparative analysis of Scottish and English newspapers that the use of national *we* and other deictic words is attractive to newspapers because these words are flexible: in the case of British press, they can be understood as referring to the whole UK or communities that are more local. In addition, Rosie et al.'s (ibid.) analysis shows that newspapers usually employ national *we* and other deictic words when reporting the speech of others, while the direct use is less common. The use of national *we* in and outside quotations was analysed in Article 3 of this dissertation as well. The results show that direct use of national *we* was as common or even more common than the indirect use, thus contradicting with the results of Rosie et al. (2004).

3.3   National identity construction

As pointed out by Hardt-Mautner (1995a, p. 179), the EU created problems for British national identity. If topics such as the Maastricht Treaty had been framed so that they were only about trading agreements between European countries, it is unlikely that public attention as intense would have been sparked (ibid.). However, European integration reached instruments that are typically controlled by the nation state and which are typically seen as the defining characteristics of a nation, such as national borders, currency and the powers of national parliaments. In the UK, where identification with the EU was already difficult because of not being one of the original members of the European Economic Community and because of being geographically separate from the mainland (Wodak, 2016), the EU integration process became an issue of national identity. Carl, Jennison and Evans (2019) argue that a weak sense of European identity was one of the core reasons why the UK left the EU.

The early uses of the term "nation" denoted things such as the communities of foreigners in universities or "uncivilised" peoples, and a bit later, ruling classes in opposition to the Volk (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001, p. 11). It was only in the late seventeenth century that the term started to be used to denote the population living in a country (James, 1996). According to Anderson (1991), nations are imagined communities, mental constructs whose boundaries and defining elements are

imagined in people's minds. Therefore, the image of a nation is real to the extent that one is convinced of it and identifies with it. Furthermore, discourses constructing this imaginary community are important (Tajfel, 1981, p. 229; Wodak et al., 2009, p. 22). In his essay of 1882 "What is a nation?" Reinan (1882/1990, p. 19) highlighted the importance of a common (and imagined) history. He wrote that a unified nation is constituted by the collective memory of the sacrifices that have been made in the past and the people of a nation imagining themselves as having something in common with their compatriots (see Checkel & Katzenstein, 2009, p. 4). In relation to the present, as Anderson (1991) argues, the nation can be imagined through the news that are communicated to the whole nation and are considered relevant particularly for the members of that nation. While reading (or listening to/watching) the news, individuals are aware that many other members of the community are doing the same, which creates the feeling that "we" are a unified group.

Identifying with a group such as a nation and having a national identity are crucial when co-action of the members of the group is needed (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001, p. 49). Thus, those that have the power to define who "we" are and what "we" are like can shape the collective feeling of which actions are desirable and which future is the preferred one for "our" group. If a nation has different identities or different understandings of the same identity, there will not be a unified opinion of what is desirable for "us" and how "we" should pursue them. Consequently, to get people to act in a specific way, they need to be provided with a definition of the self that makes a specific action seem self-evidently in their interests (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001, p. 48). Therefore, the decision of the UK to either leave or stay in the EU was dependent, among other things, on whether the British national identity was compatible with EU membership or not.

To be able to imagine a nation, its members need constant, but banal, reminders that there is a "we" (Billig, 2010). The elite, such as politicians and newspapers, can remind the people of the "homeland" and the nation's identity through small words such as *the*, *we*, *our* and *here*. These banal words may be left unnoticed, but they give constant reminders of who "we" are, what "we" are like and that there is a "we" in the first place. These are verbal "flags" that take nations for granted and make them visible everywhere (Billig, 2010). They are also a core feature in political messages and national newspapers. Newspapers, in particular, assume "identification with the nation as the naturalised form of collective identity", as argued by Brookes (1999, p. 250). Through textual organisation as well as individual words (such as *we* and *here*),

national newspapers in the UK, for instance, assume that their readers are nationals of the UK and identify with that nation.

National identity construction is strongly connected with power and ideology, as different political ideologies compete over who controls the definition of "us" (see section 3.1). The "elite", such as newspapers and politicians, can reach a large a part of the nation. Consequently, they will try to influence people and their opinions regarding the desired future by invoking a certain type of self-definition. If the audience accept their definition of "us", the elite's proposals for future action will also seem more acceptable and sometimes even self-evident. If, for instance, European identity, or the EU, is seen as incompatible with the national identity, membership of the EU can be seen as not fitting to our desired future. Similarly, some political ideologies may argue that certain ethnic groups do not fit into our nation because they are different from "us" (see Wodak et al., 2009). As the underlying understanding of who "we" are can influence political attitudes, politicians and other political influencers need to compete over the hegemonic representation of our nation and its identity.

According to Colls (2012, p. 101) national identity is not something that governments (or any politicians) can invent according to what suits them and their endeavours. However, I argue that in parliamentary debates, the MPs try to enforce their definition of who "we" are, so that their opinions on how "we" should proceed on issues such as EU membership would receive more support. As suggested by Bucholtz and Hall (2005, p. 604), politicians use their power to speak on behalf of the nation and (at least try to) define who "we" are, what "we" are like as a nation and, hence, how "we" should act.

Wodak's (2016) analysis on David Cameron's Bloomberg Speech delivered in 2013 showed that Cameron employed many of the constructions of the British national identity that were later used in the Brexit referendum campaigns by both sides. While Cameron explicitly stated in the speech that he did not want the UK to exit the EU, he used British history and culture to mark the UK as different and distinct from the rest of the EU. Thus, Cameron contributed to the image of the UK that did not fit in the EU, as did many other politicians later while campaigning for the Remain side (Wenzl, 2019).

4 METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduces the methodology employed in the dissertation, focusing especially on the aspects that are not covered in depth in the articles. I start with the basics of corpus-assisted discourse studies and how corpus linguistic methods can be utilised in discourse analytic studies (section 4.1). That is followed by the description of the data (section 4.2), namely the parliamentary debates (section 4.2.1) and the EU-related newspaper articles (section 4.2.2). Finally, section 4.3 presents the process of the analysis.

4.1 Corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS)

The dissertation employs methods of corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS),[3] focusing on specific features in a discourse using techniques and tools developed within corpus linguistics (Partington, 2010, p. 88). CADS combines a quantitative approach (statistical overviews of large amounts of the discourse under study) with a more qualitative analysis typical of discourse analysis, where stretches of discourse are analysed closely and in detail (Partington, 2010, p. 89).

The term CADS was first coined in Partington (2004), but similar type of research had already been conducted before this. The method has been gaining in popularity in recent years, which can be observed in the bibliography created and updated by Gabrielatos (2021). The bibliography lists 47 studies published in 2010, 61 in 2015 and 200 in 2020. According to Mautner (2022, p. 251) and Gabrielatos (2021), the first paper in which corpus techniques and critical discourse studies were combined was Leech and Fallon (1992). Since then, especially the work of Hardt-Mautner (1995b) and Stubbs (1995, 2001) were important in arguing for the value of corpus linguistics in discourse analytic research. Later, Baker et al. (2008) showed how a

---

[3] As noted by Taylor and Marchi (2018, p. 5), CADS is only one of the many names used for approaches that combine discourse analysis and corpus linguistics. CADS is used here, because, in my view, that label gives the main position to the discourse analysis which is aided by corpus linguistic methods.

large, 140-million-word corpus of British news can be employed for the purposes of critical discourse analysis focusing on the representation of migrants.

Corpus linguistics is a study of language that is based on examples from real-life language use and employs quantitative approaches to research (Baker, 2006, p. 1; McEnery & Wilson, 1996, p. 1). It is an empirical approach to the description of language use, where the starting point is actual authentic data, as opposed to approaches where the analysis is based on examples artificially made up by the researcher (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001, p. 2). Before corpus linguistic methods became common in discourse analytic studies, corpus linguistics had mainly been applied in two areas: lexicography and general linguistic research (Hardt-Mautner, 1995b, p. 2).

According to Tognini-Bonelli (2001, p. 52), corpus linguistics proper emerged around the late 1950s and 1960s, when Randolph Quirk started his work on a Survey of English Usage of written and spoken English, soon followed by Nelson Francis, Henry Kucera and others' work on the Brown Corpus. *Corpus* is nowadays usually defined as a relatively large collection of authentic, naturally occurring texts that are stored in a machine-readable form (Deignan, 2005, p. 76; Tognini-Bonelli, 2001, p. 2). Corpus linguistic methods can be roughly divided between corpus-driven and corpus-based approaches: while corpus-driven approach aims to uncover new fields by the inspection of corpus evidence, corpus-based approaches are used to test pre-existing theories (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001, pp. 65, 84).

One of the most common criticisms stated against critical discourse analysis is that the data are cherry-picked to suit the researcher's own agenda. This can be counteracted with the help of corpora and corpus linguistics (Baker et al., 2008, p. 283; Mautner, 2009, p. 34). One of the strengths of corpus linguistics is its principle of "total accountability" (Leech, 1992, p. 112), which means that all available data must be accounted for. Thus, there should not be prior selection of data that would exclude material that is considered irrelevant to the study or theory. Furthermore, using corpus linguistic methods in discourse analysis increases the distance between the observer and the data, making it easier for the researcher to analyse a far greater amount of data than would be possible without corpus linguistic tools and techniques (Partington, 2006, p. 268). With corpus tools, widespread patterns as well as rare but telling examples can be identified, both of which could easily be overlooked by a small-scale analysis (Baker & McEnery, 2005, p. 198). Furthermore, using corpus linguistic methods in discourse analytic studies enables the researcher to see patterns in language-in-use through which certain representations of the world are repeatedly put forward. This is relevant, as the power of media and political discourse, for instance, depends on systematic tendencies (Fairclough, 1989, p. 54):

a single text is not necessarily significant, but if causality and agency are repeatedly represented in particular ways, the readers start to see the world working that way. Tracing these patterns enables us to see how language is used in the construction of discourses and, through that, in the construction of reality (Baker, 2006, p. 1).

The most common corpus linguistic tools used in discourse analytic research are frequency lists of individual words and word clusters (list of the most frequent items in a corpus), keyword lists (list of the items that occur more or less frequently in one corpus than another), collocation lists (list of the words that co-occur with an item) and lists of concordances (words in their surrounding co-text) (Mautner, 2022, p. 253). While frequencies of words and clusters as well as keyword and collocation lists take the researcher quite far from the original texts, concordances are in the "qualitative end of the methodological spectrum" (Mautner, 2022, p. 258). The dissertation mainly employs concordances and frequencies of specific words, but word lists and collocation lists are also utilised (see section 4.3).

As noted by Tognini-Bonelli (2001, pp. 2–3), there are differences between a text and corpus evidence: while a text is unified language that exists in a unique communicative context, a corpus brings together many different texts. Traditionally, discourse analysis has investigated complete texts, whereas using corpus linguistic methods makes a discourse analyst deviate from this tradition. Corpus evidence, such as that offered by concordance lists, does not show the text in its entirety but only fragments of it, and those fragments may be misleading. For instance, an interesting negative representation of the EU may occur in a quotation that is mentioned by an MP in a parliamentary debate. This representation may then be criticised by the MP. The researcher, without looking at the wider context, may think that the negative representation reflects the opinions of the MP that is speaking (see Baker, 2018, p. 283). Thus, it is important for the researchers to familiarise themselves with the corpus they are studying so that they know its principles and what can possibly occur in the texts included in the corpus.

In the dissertation, the quantitative approach typically worked as the initial step in the analysis, which then led me to examine specific ways of talking about the EU in the data more closely. However, the process of analysis was often more complicated than that. It is typical of CADS research that the analysis involves going back and forth between quantitative and qualitative analyses, as more interesting things come up throughout the analysis that require looking at the data from afar, or something interesting is found in the quantitative results that again require a more detailed analysis. As Marchi and Taylor (2009, p. 206) put it, "quantitative and

qualitative approaches interact and add to each other throughout the analysis" and the process is recursive.

The empirical studies in the dissertation commonly started by first extracting concordance lines where relevant word strings occurred and then going through the concordance lines in detail. At times, that also required looking at the expanded context, that is, text beyond the concordance line. Furthermore, other tools and techniques were employed when something interesting came up in the data that required a different type of analysis. For instance, when analysing the use of the pronouns *we* and *us* in the newspaper articles for Article 3, I noticed that there might be a connection between the topic of the news article and what the pronouns in the article refer to. As a result, I extracted lists of the most frequent words in the headlines of the articles written from the UK's perspective, on the one hand, and from the EU's perspective, on the other, to see if that was true. Looking at the headlines from this perspective was not part of the original plan, but the analysis increased my understanding of the corpus and how *we* and *us* were used in the articles.

Usually, in CADS research, the corpora are tailor-made for the purpose. The corpora are usually not as large as many general corpora that are readily available, such as the *British National Corpus* (100 million words) or the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (1.0 billion words). Furthermore, as discourse analysts typically want to familiarise themselves with their data, CADS researchers want to engage with their corpora and know how things are done linguistically in the discourse type under study (Partington, 2010, p. 90). This might involve reading or listening parts of the dataset and looking for information outside the corpus (Marchi & Taylor, 2009, p. 205; Mautner, 2009, p. 34). In the case of this study, this involved looking for relevant information on the MPs, or how things are done in the *Hansard* and how reliable the transcripts are in describing how the MPs speak (see section 4.2.1). When analysing the newspaper articles, I also looked for more information on the events and topics that were reported on.

It should be kept in mind that even though corpus-based research can increase the objectivity of discourse analytic research and give more evidence that certain ways of speaking are common and naturalised, the combination of discourse analysis and corpus linguistics is not without its problems. As Baker and McEnery have pointed out (2005, p. 223), taking a wider view may cause that subtleties of language are left unnoticed. Furthermore, corpus-based data and statistical results are not self-explanatory, which means that the researchers' input and interpretative skills are still required in the analysis (ibid.). Fairclough (2015) has also expressed some criticism

towards the "methodological synergy" of CDA and corpus linguistics. He has argued that corpus linguistics can offer tools for CDA, but that is as far as corpus linguistics can go, as the work of CDA analyst only starts after extracting keyword or collocation lists (Fairclough, 2015, pp. 20–22). Fairclough (2015, p. 36) has also criticised corpus-based discourse studies for not integrating ideology well enough in research, as the corpus takes too much space. He argues that the focus in corpus-based discourse studies is merely on "bias" (or unacceptable bias) rather than ideology (ibid., p. 36).

There has also been some criticism on the manual or qualitative concordance analysis, which is employed in the dissertation as well. In manual concordance analysis, the analyst examines the occurrences and behaviour of particular words through a close reading of their concordance lines. For instance, Kennedy (2022, p. 612) argues that such a method offers only ambiguous or undocumented claims. According to Kennedy (ibid.), the term "close reading" is too vague, as the qualitative method involved is typically not explained. Thus, researchers should be more specific in explaining the qualitative methods involved in close reading of concordances (Rheindorf, 2019, p. 33). Rheindorf (ibid.) suggests that to increase the transparency of manual concordance analysis, an identifiable and accountable method, procedure or categorisation should be used. In the dissertation, I have increased the transparency and accountability of the qualitative analyses by describing the procedures involved in the manual analyses and by giving a great number of examples. Furthermore, by categorising the instances I have added a quantitative aspect to the manual analyses, which is needed in tracing whether there are systematic patterns. Adding a quantitative aspect also helps in ensuring that rare examples are not emphasised in the analysis.

4.2   Data

The first subsection discusses the choices that were made regarding the parliamentary data and the limitations of using the *Hansard* as a source of data when analysing the language used in parliamentary debates (section 4.2.1). The second subsection introduces the newspaper corpus (section 4.2.2).

4.2.1 Parliamentary debates 1973–2015

The primary data for Articles 1 and 2 consist of all the debates of the British House of Commons from 1973–2015. Article 4, comparing newspaper articles and parliamentary debates, analyses five samples drawn from this period, namely the debates from 1974–1976, 1984–1986, 1994–1996, 2004–2006 and 2014-2015. All the transcripts of the debates come originally from the *Hansard*, the Official Report of the British parliamentary debates.

The *Hansard* is the official record of the parliamentary debates in the UK and many Commonwealth countries. The name "Hansard" comes from the Hansard family in whose hands the production of the official record was for generations. At first, the *Hansard* provided summaries of the debates, but gradually it became a "verbatim record", in which the debates are reported in direct speech (Slembrouck, 1992, p. 104). In its current form, the *Hansard* (of the House of Commons) has been in existence since 1909, when it became an official publication of the parliament (Hiltunen, Räikkönen & Tyrkkö, 2020; Kranert & Horan, 2018, p. 106).

The text in the *Hansard* has in some contexts been classified as spoken text and written text in others (Mollin, 2007, p. 189; Slembrouck, 1992, p. 104). Especially Slembrouck (1992), who studied the changes that were made in the *Hansard* to the original proceedings, emphasises the "writtenness" of the record. The transcripts in the *Hansard* are "substantially verbatim", but not "strictly verbatim", meaning that some characteristics of spoken language are edited out to facilitate understanding of what has been discussed in the parliament. The editing mainly concerns such characteristics that in written form could confuse the reader, such as inconsistencies in sentence structure, incomplete utterances, false starts and repetitions (more in Slembrouck, 1992). Furthermore, accents and regional varieties are absent in the record.[4] Some speeches are edited more than others, depending on how formal the original speech is (Shaw, 2018, p. 108). For instance, speeches that are prepared beforehand usually require less editing than spontaneous speeches.

Because of the editing process, it could be claimed that the *Hansard* transcripts are not actually suitable for those wanting to do linguistic research on the language used in the parliament. Whether this is the case or not depends which aspects of the language the research focuses on. For instance, if a researcher wanted to study

---

[4] Accents and regional varieties are filtered out in the official record of the Finnish Parliament's plenary sessions, as well. The rationale behind that is that accents would stand out more in written form than they do in speech and, consequently, take the reader's attention away from the content (Pauliina Peltokorpi, Finnish Parliament Records Office, personal communication).

interruptions or the use of the pronoun "you" (both of which are omitted in the record), the *Hansard* would not be a good source of data.

However, as is said in Erskine May, the Official Report is:

> [--] substantially the verbatim report, with repetitions and redundancies omitted and with obvious mistakes corrected, but which on the other hand leaves out nothing that adds to the meaning of the speech or illustrates the argument. (Hutton et al., 2019, paragraph 7.19)

Thus, the *Hansard* transcripts should be accurate enough for discourse analytic studies because any words that add to the meaning of the speech should not have been removed or added. In addition, according to Mollin (2007, p. 202), the first-person plural pronouns are not altered in the record. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, I consider the *Hansard* being accurate enough report in studying how the first-person plurals were used in relation to the EU in the debates. Nevertheless, the editing process should always be acknowledged when analysing the language used in the parliamentary debates as transcribed in the *Hansard*.

The debates from 1973–2004 were analysed using the *Hansard Corpus* (Alexander & Davies, 2015–). The *Hansard Corpus* was originally compiled by the JISC Parliamentary Discourse project in 2011 by Jean Anderson and Marc Alexander at the University of Glasgow and developed further by the SAMUELS project in 2014–2016. The corpus contains nearly every speech given in the British Parliament from 1803–2005 and 1.6 billion words in total. The corpus is freely available online. I used the full-text stand-alone version of the *Hansard Corpus*, with which it was easier to study the wider context of the search words if needed. For instance, in some cases, the referent of *we* or *us* could not be identified without reading the entire speech. With the stand-alone version, it was possible to read complete speeches, while with the online version that cannot be done. The search for relevant instances of the first-person plural pronouns in the parliamentary data yielded over 11,000 hits, and almost all of them were analysed in detail. With the local copy of the corpus, it was easier to analyse the concordances and check the wider context for each instance if needed, while the browser version would not have been ideal for the purpose.[5]

The debates from 2005–2015 were collected from the House of Commons Hansard archives where, as of April 2022, one can find the debates from November 1988 to March 2016.[6] The debates were collected by copying the transcript and

[6] https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/hansard/commons/

saving it in a plain text file. Each file contains the debates in one sitting. I did not delete any sections in the transcript, which means that in addition to the actual speeches, the plain text files also contain the speaker information, column numbers and voting results. Those sections increase the total word count and thus have an effect on the statistical comparisons between the debates that were collected from the archives and the debates from the *Hansard Corpus*. In the *Hansard Corpus*, speaker information (name and party) and the column numbers do not count towards the total number of words. However, the extra material does not affect the results of the manual analysis on the usage of the first-person plural pronoun.

The parliamentary data used in Articles 1 and 2 consist of all the debates of the House of Commons held between January 1973 and May 2015. The number of tokens per year in the parliamentary data is shown in Table 1.

Table 1.   The parliamentary data used in Articles 1 and 2

Year	Tokens	Year	Tokens
1973	11,828,574	1995	11,176,659
1974	9,033,592	1996	11,238,792
1975	12,722,636	1997	9,073,161
1976	13,151,594	1998	11,884,984
1977	11,198,470	1999	11,150,189
1978	11,833,851	2000	10,904,603
1979	9,454,123	2001	9,029,294
1980	11,828,574	2002	9,458,834
1981	11,492,226	2003	9,212,391
1982	11,237,881	2004	7,153,405
1983	9,988,765	2005	8,804,997
1984	11,847,794	2006	9,512,935
1985	11,969,089	2007	10,106,954
1986	11,833,119	2008	10,640,931
1987	10,179,849	2009	9,840,996
1988	12,395,165	2010	10,084,709
1989	12,463,309	2011	10,922,682
1990	11,991,313	2012	9,649,960
1991	11,296,146	2013	11,009,954
1992	9,004,238	2014	10,368,900
1993	11,038,600	2015	3,412,595
1994	10,258,174		
		Total	452,685,007

The 2015 UK general election was held in May, and the parliamentary session before that ended in March. The 2015 election was crucial for the UK-EU relations, as Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron had made a promise that the Conservative government would hold a referendum on EU membership, if Conservatives win the majority in the election, which they did. It is widely believed that he made that promise at least partly to please the Eurosceptic side of his party

and to respond to the rise of the UKIP (e.g. Mason, 2016, 24 Jun; see also section 2.1).

The EU membership referendum was held in June 2016. As this dissertation is clearly related to Brexit, it could be asked why the debates of the 2015–2016 parliamentary session were left out. If I had to make the decision now on which debates to include, the debates of the following session (2015–2016) would likely be included, as well. When I started this project, I wanted to study the language used in every-day debates in which the EU plays some type of a role, but not necessarily a crucial role. This was the reason for wanting to include all the debates and not only those that focused explicitly on the EU. This is also related to my reasoning behind not to include the debates after May 2015. I thought that the debates in relation to the EU after the election would no longer be "every-day", but highly influenced by the need to campaign either for or against the membership. Because I did not want these to "disturb" the data in which the UK's membership of the EU was just another issue among others (if it ever was, as I learned during this project), I decided to exclude the parliamentary session 2015–2016 from the data. However, as my understanding and knowledge on corpus linguistic methods as well as discourse analysis have increased, I now know that including the debates from the 2015–2016 parliamentary session would not have skewed the results in any way.

Luckily, however, the debates from the 2015–2016 parliamentary session have already been analysed in Wenzl (2019). Even though the focus of Wenzl's study is on the Conservative MPs' speeches only, the point of view is similar to this study. as Wenzl also focuses on the use of *we* and the construction of the British national identity in relation to the EU. The results of Wenzl (2019) are in line with the findings of this dissertation (see section 2.3).

In Article 4, where parliamentary debates and newspaper articles are compared, the parliamentary data consist of five samples drawn from the entire parliamentary corpus. Thus, the parliamentary data for Article 4 include the debates from 1974–1976, 1984–1986, 1994–1996, 2004–2006 and 2014–2015 (Table 2). It should be noted that, for the purposes of Article 4, I collected the debates of 2015 held after the general election, which were not analysed in Articles 1 and 2. As my newspaper data are smaller and include data from five separate years (1975, 1985, 1995, 2005 and 2015; see section 4.2.2), I decided to only include debates from roughly the same years from the parliamentary debates as well, so that the two datasets could more easily be compared.

Table 2. The parliamentary data in Article 4

Sessions	Tokens
1974–1976	34,907,822
1984–1986	35,650,002
1994–1996	32,673,625
2004–2006	25,471,337
2014–2015	19,915,079
Total	148,617,865

4.2.2   EU-related newspaper articles 1975–2015

For the purposes of this dissertation, I compiled a corpus of EU-related newspaper articles published in the *Daily Mail*, *Daily Mirror*, *Guardian* and *Daily Telegraph* in 1975, 1985, 1995, 2005 and 2015.

While the British parliamentary debates are ready for use for research purposes, as they are freely available online and partly compiled in a ready-made corpus (the *Hansard Corpus*), newspaper articles are copyrighted material and need to be collected from various sources. In addition, there are no ready-made corpora of British newspaper articles that would span from 1973 to 2015 and include various newspapers. Therefore, collecting the newspaper data for this project was more challenging compared to the parliamentary data.

My initial plan was to use the *SiBol corpus of English broadsheets,* which consists of articles collected from various English language newspapers from 1993–2021.[7] However, as the *SiBol corpus* does not contain articles from the whole time-period that I planned to examine (i.e. 1973–2015), I decided to compile a corpus specifically designed for this study. That way I could control which types of articles are included and the diachronic findings could be more easily compared with the parliamentary data.

I wanted the newspaper data to be as random as possible, so that I could examine the representation of the EU on a "regular Tuesday". The data had to be manageable

---

[7] When I started the project in 2017, the corpus contained articles up to the year 2013, but it has been updated after that. It now includes more volumes and new newspapers, also from outside the UK. The *SiBol corpus* is available at https://www.sketchengine.eu/sibol-corpus/.

and at least some type of diachronic comparison should be possible, both within the newspaper data and between the newspapers and parliamentary debates. Furthermore, as the older newspaper articles were not available in a digital form at my home university, collecting the data required a visit to another institution. Thus, the data collection plan had to be realistic about what amount of newspaper data could be collected in a relatively short time.

Consequently, the plan was to collect articles from four different newspapers and from five separate periods, one from each decade the UK was a member of the EU. A dataset from one period would cover one year and articles published throughout that year, not just focusing on specific months or days. Furthermore, as the final year of the parliamentary data is 2015, that was also to be the final period for the newspaper data. Thus, the newspaper data consist of articles published in 1975, 1985, 1995, 2005 and 2015.

I wanted to be able to compare tabloids and broadsheets as well as right-wing and left-wing papers. Furthermore, only newspapers that are widely read in the UK were included in the corpus. Therefore, the newspaper data include articles from the *Guardian*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Mail*. In Table 3, the newspapers are categorised based on what type of a paper they represent in the dissertation.

Table 3.   The newspapers included in the newspaper corpus, categorised by their type and political stance

	Left-wing	Right-wing
Broadsheet	Guardian	Daily Telegraph
Tabloid	Daily Mirror	Daily Mail

The chosen newspapers have had significant circulation figures in the UK, although they do not necessarily represent the most read British newspapers. For instance, papers such as the *Sun* and *Times*, which are both owned by the News Corp and widely read in the UK, were excluded. The *Sun* and *Times* are not available at *Nexis Uni* database, while the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Telegraph* are, which was the main reason for choosing the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Telegraph* to represent the right-wing papers. The search for the newspaper articles was not targeted at any of the online versions of the newspapers or the Sunday editions (or sister papers, i.e. the *Observer*, *Sunday Telegraph*, *Mail on Sunday*, *Sunday Mirror*), but in the case of the tabloids, the search from *Nexis Uni* also yielded results from the Sunday editions.

The initial aim was to include 50 articles per each studied paper and year, which would have amounted to 1,000 articles in total. I considered 1,000 articles to be enough for understanding how the personal pronouns *we* and *us* were used in relation to the EU in the newspapers. In addition, this was a small enough number of articles for me to manually read and analyse the referents of *we* and *us*. However, the final newspaper corpus consists of (only) 940 articles for reasons that will be explained later in this section.

Table 4 shows the sources and search words that were used when compiling the newspaper corpus. The search words varied for different sources, newspapers and volumes, because not all search words yielded enough results. The first query term in the case of each newspaper and volume was *european communit** (for volumes 1975 and 1985) and *european union* (for volumes 1995, 2005 and 2015). I expected that each article about the EU would spell out the name at least once in an article and that those query terms would be enough to find the relevant articles. *EU** was not used as a query term for papers where the first searches yielded enough results, because using *eu** as a query term would have returned many irrelevant articles, such as articles about football. However, if the query terms *european union* and *european communit** did not yield any or enough results, I used additional search terms (see Table 4). Some papers preferred using *EEC* instead of *the European Community*, while others used *Brussels* or *the (Common) Market* more than *the European Union*.

Table 4.   Summary of the search for relevant newspaper articles

Newspaper	Year	Database	Search word(s)	Hits	EU in title
Daily Mail	1975	Gale / microfilms (BL = British Library)	common market, european communit*, eec	690	95
Daily Mail	1985	Gale / microfilms (BL)	common market, european communit*, eec, brussels, euro*	1890	41
Daily Mail	1995	Nexis Uni	the european union	255	72
Daily Mail	2005	Nexis Uni	the european union	250	51
Daily Mail	2015	Nexis Uni	the european union	395	135
Daily Mirror	1975	microfilms (BL)	eec, common market, european community	195	69
Daily Mirror	1985	microfilms (BL)	eec, common market, european community	50	12*
Daily Mirror	1995	Newsbank Access World News	eu*, brussels (in headline)	402	402
Daily Mirror	2005	Nexis Uni	the european union	150	37
Daily Mirror	2015	Nexis Uni	the european union	147	57
Daily Telegraph	1975	Gale / microfilms (BL)	common market, european communit*, eec	2351	548
Daily Telegraph	1985	Gale / microfilms (BL)	common market, european communit*	1257	300
Daily Telegraph	1995	Gale / microfilms (BL)	the european union	664	143
Daily Telegraph	2005	Nexis Uni	the european union	594	208
Daily Telegraph	2015	Nexis Uni	the european union	1006	389
Guardian	1975	ProQuest Historical Newspapers	common market, european communit*, eec	2924	493
Guardian	1985	ProQuest Historical Newspapers	common market, european communit*, eec	1816	255
Guardian	1995	Nexis Uni	the european union	882	259
Guardian	2005	Nexis Uni	the european union	608	193
Guardian	2015	Nexis Uni	the european union	1574	671
*As only 50 articles were found from the Daily Mirror 1985, I manually read all of them and chose those that were somehow related to the EU. Thus, an EU-related word does not necessarily appear in the title of the articles of that volume.					

Table 4 shows that some of the volumes of the *Daily Telegraph* and *Daily Mail* were collected from two sources: *Gale* and microfilms available at the British Library. In

these cases, *Gale* was used for collecting the information of all the relevant articles (headline and date). That information was then used to choose the articles that would be collected from the microfilms. Furthermore, as was mentioned earlier, the *Nexis Uni* targeted the search also at the Sunday editions of the *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Mail*. Thus from 1995, 2005 and 2015, the corpus contains articles from the Sunday editions of those papers as well. The articles that were collected from the *Nexis Uni* were in text format and the others were facsimiles in PDF.

The number of articles each search yielded is shown in the fifth column in Table 4 ("Hits"), and the last column shows how many of those articles had a word referring to the EU in the title (such as *the EU*, *the European Union*, *Brussels*, *the European Community*, *Common Market*). The articles were chosen among those that had an EU-related word in the title by first putting them in a chronological order and then taking 50 articles evenly spread throughout the volume. In the case of the *Daily Mail* 1985 and *Daily Mirror* 2005 volumes, the data include all the articles in which an EU-related word was mentioned in the title (41 and 37 articles, respectively), and in the case of the *Daily Mirror* 1985, all articles that were somehow EU-related (12; see footnote in Table 4).

Table 5 shows the total number of tokens in the newspaper corpus.

Table 5. The newspaper corpus used in Articles 3 and 4

Volume	Guardian	Telegraph	Mirror	Mail	Total
1975	23,553	18,780	15,332	18,103	75,768
1985	21,461	16,943	1,863	8,966	49,233
1995	34,204	20,667	20,478	33,100	108,449
2005	36,962	26,074	13,629	34,605	111,270
2015	50,718	30,263	16,757	32,103	129,831
Total	166,898	112,727	68,049	126,877	474,551

The articles that were not available in text format were converted into text using Optical Character Recognition (OCR) reader or, if the facsimile was of bad quality and the OCR reader could not read it correctly, the converting into text was done by manually typing. Some of the initially chosen articles were of such a bad quality that they had to be dropped, and if possible, replaced with another article. In some

articles, some individual words could not be read, and those words were marked as *[--]* in the text version of the article.

Finally, I added a simple XML TEI marking to the texts to separate between the metatext (name of the newspaper, date and byline), the title and body text. This was done in order for the corpus to be easy to use in future studies as well. Furthermore, while the analysis of the personal pronouns was targeted at both the title and the body text of the articles, the titles were also analysed separately in Article 3. The XML marking was needed for targeting corpus searches at the titles only.

4.3   Process of analysis

The analysis can be divided into two stages. First, the referents for the pronouns *we* and *us* (henceforth: 1PP) were identified, the results of which are reported in Articles 1 (parliamentary debates) and 3 (newspaper articles). Second, by employing manual concordance analysis, I examined more closely the co-texts in which those pronouns occurred and analysed the representation of the UK or the EU in them. Consequently, Article 2 focuses on how the UK's role and identity in relation to the EU were represented in the debates when the UK was the ingroup (i.e. the UK was the referent of 1PP). Article 3 includes a closer analysis of the contexts in which 1PP referring to the UK or the EU occurred in the newspaper articles. Finally, Article 4 analyses the representation of the EU as an ingroup in both datasets.

The initial plan was to analyse the use of all the forms of the first-person plural pronoun (i.e. *we*, *us*, *our* and *ourselves*), but after a preliminary analysis, I concluded that the forms *we* and *us* would be the most interesting ones. The contexts of *we* show how "we" act and what "we" do, while the contexts where *us* is used can reveal what is done to "us" or which type of actions "we" are an object to. However, analysing the use of the possessive pronoun *our* in this context would be interesting as well, as that could tell us more about which issues or characteristics are considered national, on the one hand, and which issues are seen as "EU issues", on the other.

The analysis of the referents of the pronouns formed the basis for each of the four empirical studies. Article 1 focuses on examining the frequencies and diachronic changes of 1PP referring to the UK or the EU in parliamentary debates. It also includes a collocation analysis of *we* referring to the UK or the EU, examining the actions connected to the ingroup. Because the parliamentary debates were not restricted to any specific topic but instead included all the debates of the House of Commons in the period 1973–2015, I first searched for relevant excerpts from the

data. This was done by searching for the instances of 1PP co-occurring with *the european union* or *the european community/-ies*. This way, I was able to focus on those instances of the 1PP which were related to discussions about the EU. I exported the results of the corpus search *we/us + the european union/communit** (L9–R9) to an Excel spreadsheet, where I identified referents for the pronouns. Each concordance line included one or more 1PP, and the referent for each 1PP was written on a separate column in the spreadsheet. For the lines in which the referent was either the UK or the EU, I also added information on the speaker (name and party).

In the case of the newspaper articles, which were all somehow related to the EU, a referent for all the instances of the 1PP was identified. The referent was added as a tag to each pronoun with the help of a tool that highlighted the relevant pronouns in each file.[8] The frequencies and diachronic changes of 1PP referring to the UK or the EU in the newspaper articles are reported in Article 3.

In most cases, the referents of the pronouns could be found in the surrounding text, but if not, extratextual knowledge on the context had to be used, such as who the speaker is, what types of groups they belong to, and what the possible referents for the pronoun are. Sometimes it was difficult to define whether the referent was the UK or the EU, if it could be either of them. If the case could not be resolved, I marked the referent as belonging to the category "generic" (see Articles 1 and 3).

The number of possible referents of 1PP is usually higher in the newspaper articles than in the parliamentary debates. In the parliamentary debates, 1PP usually refer to a group that includes the speaker (an MP), while in the newspaper articles, the referent can be almost anything. Separating between 1PP referring to groups such as football teams and their fans in the newspapers was not relevant for the analysis. Consequently, the referents of the 1PP in the newspaper articles that were not related to the discussions about the EU or the UK's role in the EU were put in the category called "group" (see Article 3). In the parliamentary debates, the number of possible referents was more manageable, for which reason the referent categories for the parliamentary debates were more detailed. However, when comparing the two datasets, only the 1PP referring to either the UK or the EU were relevant. The referent categories for the parliamentary debates are presented in Article 1, and for the newspapers, in Article 3.

It should be noted that Europe and the EU are treated as the same in the dissertation. That is because, in both datasets, they were often treated as one and the same thing, as shown by Examples (4) and (5). Both examples are from the *Daily Telegraph* and include a quotation from a politician:

---

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

(4) Iain Duncan Smith, Work and Pensions Secretary: "Control needs to be in the hands of individual nations if they remain in Europe." (Daily Telegraph, 2015/06/08)

(5) Mr Brown said: "I praise the European countries, all 25 of them, which deserve support from the rest of the world." (Daily Telegraph, 2005/05/25)

In Example (4), Ian Duncan Smith is quoted saying that individual countries should have the control if (or even though) "they remain in Europe", clearly meaning the EU. In Example (5), Mr Brown seems to claim that there are 25 European countries, while there actually are 44 European countries (according to the United Nations), but there were 25 countries belonging to the EU in 2005.

Article 2 analyses how the UK was represented in relation to the EU when 1PP referring to the UK were used in the parliamentary debates. After making myself well acquainted with the concordance lines where 1PP co-occurred with the EU, I noticed that there were certain recurring representations of the UK's role and identity as a member of the EU. Thus, it seemed that there could be something in there that could reveal why the UK did not see itself fit for the EU. Consequently, the concordance lines including 1PP referring to the UK were analysed more closely.

For that purpose, I manually read each of the 5,382 instances from the parliamentary debates in which the UK was the referent of 1PP. Employing manual concordance analysis, I carefully read each of those instances and identified the ones in which the UK's role or identity in the EU was described and/or evaluated. Those included instances containing descriptions of who "we" are, how "we" act and how the EU membership affects "us". As a result, 887 instances were included in a closer analysis. Those instances were read multiple times so that recurring patterns in how the UK was talked about as a member of the EU started to emerge. Finally, the instances were grouped into five identity categories (Article 2).

Article 3 analyses the contexts where 1PP referring to the UK or the EU were used in the newspaper articles. As the newspaper data are clearly smaller than the parliamentary data, it was possible to closely read through all the instances of 1PP referring to either the UK or the EU in the articles. First, each instance of 1PP in the articles was tagged with a referent category. Then the frequencies of 1PP referring to the EU and the UK were compared between the papers and volumes. Finally, with a manual concordance analysis, I examined the immediate textual context of the 1PP that referred either to the UK or the EU to find out what types of issues were discussed when the 1PP referred to the UK, on the one hand, and to the EU, on the other. Finally, word lists generated from the titles of the articles were examined to see which topics tended to be reported from the national point of view, on the one hand, and from the EU's point of view, on the other.

Finally, Article 4 analyses the discursive representation of the EU as an ingroup in both datasets. For that purpose, the parliamentary data were sampled so that it would be more similar to the newspaper data (see section 4.2.1). The process of analysis was similar to the analysis of the representation of the UK in Article 2. First, I read all the instances of 1PP referring to the EU (parliamentary corpus: 584 instances of 1PP in 490 concordance lines; newspaper corpus: 241 instances of 1PP in 235 concordance lines) and collected the concordance lines in which the EU or its actions were evaluatively described (171 and 107 lines in parliamentary and newspaper corpora, respectively). These instances were then analysed more closely and grouped into categories based on which aspects of the EU were highlighted in them. However, drawing any conclusions seemed at first very difficult, and the representation of the EU did not seem as coherent or as easily grasped as the representation of the UK (in the parliamentary debates). One reason for that could be the small number of instances. It could also be that there were no established ways of talking about the ingroup-EU and no clear patterns to find. Nevertheless, I was able to detect seven different types of representation for the EU that were repeatedly brought up and that way form a picture of how the EU specifically as an ingroup was portrayed in the newspapers and parliamentary debates.

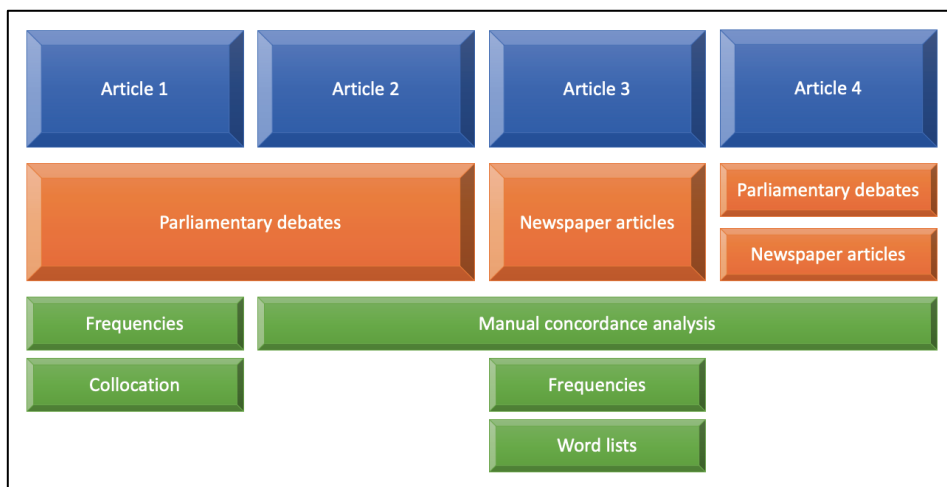To sum up, Figure 1 shows the data and methods that were utilised in each empirical study.

Figure 1. Summary of the data and methods used in the empirical studies

5   SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Section 5.1 introduces the key findings by addressing the main research questions of the dissertation. Section 5.2 discusses the contribution of the dissertation to current research and evaluates the methods that were used. Finally, section 5.3 brings up limitations of the study and discusses possible future studies.

5.1   Answers to the research questions

This section is divided into three subsections, each addressing one of the research questions of the dissertation. Section 5.1.1 introduces the more quantitative results, discussing the diachronic changes that were observed in the frequencies of 1PP referring either to the UK (henceforth: 1PP/UK) or the EU (henceforth: 1PP/EU) in the two datasets. Section 5.1.2 discusses the differences between the contexts in which 1PP/UK and 1PP/EU were used. Finally, section 5.1.3 focuses on the representation of the EU and the UK through the use of 1PP. The findings related to the contexts of 1PP lean more on the newspaper data, while the findings on how the two actors were represented rely more on the parliamentary data.

5.1.1   What types of diachronic changes happened in the frequencies of *we* and *us* referring to the UK and the EU?

According to the findings presented in Articles 1 and 3, most of the 1PP referred to the UK in parliamentary debates (Article 1) and newspaper articles (Article 3). This was not surprising as the text in both datasets is mainly produced for the nation and its citizens. In the parliamentary debates, 43 per cent of 1PP referred to the UK and 15 per cent to the EU. In the newspaper articles the percentages were 42 and 12, respectively. There is, however, diachronic variation in the proportions of 1PP/UK and 1PP/EU between 1973 and 2015 in the debates as well as in the newspaper articles.

In both datasets the relative frequency of 1PP/EU was relatively low before the 1990s. In the case of the parliamentary debates, it stayed almost level until 1995, after which the relative frequency of 1PP/EU started to increase, which might be due to the growing interest in EU matters caused by the Treaty of Maastricht and the pro-EU agenda of Blair administration (see section 2.1).

In the parliamentary data, the relative frequency of 1PP/EU increased up until 2002, after which it slowly started to decrease, while that of the 1PP/UK increased. Furthermore, in the 2010s, when the UK's membership of the EU was already widely discussed in the UK, the relative frequency of 1PP/EU was at its lowest since 1983. These findings suggest that debates on the EU started to increasingly focus on the UK's role and status as a member of the EU after 2002 and less on the processes of the EU. As discussed in section 2.1, between 2002 and 2010, the European Union went through changes that were not positively received in the UK. These changes included drafting of the European Constitution, signing of the Lisbon Treaty (which, among other changes, increased the power of the European Parliament) and the Eurozone crisis. Furthermore, during this period, the UKIP emerged as a mainstream political party, campaigning for the UK to leave the EU. These changes were perhaps reflected in the parliamentary language, where the EU was increasingly often excluded from the ingroup.

Furthermore, based on the changes in the frequencies of 1PP/UK and 1PP/EU, the party in the opposition seemed to adopt a more national perspective before general elections. According to the findings in Article 1, three years before the general elections of 1997 and 2005, the normalised frequency of 1PP/UK increased while that of 1PP/EU decreased in the contributions of the party campaigning in the opposition. This might be because the party campaigning in the opposition wanted to highlight the shortcomings in the EU policy of the governing party from the perspective of how they have harmed "us", the nation and the British people.

In the newspapers, the frequencies of 1PP/EU and 1PP/UK were relatively low in the 1975 and 1985 volumes. However, in 1995 and after that the EU started to gain more newsworthiness. Consequently, the frequency of both 1PP/EU and 1PP/UK increased.[9] Furthermore, the findings show that in the 2005 and 2015

---

[9] In Marchi and Taylor's (2009) CADS study on the representation of the EU in British press in 1993 and 2005, the EU was observed to be less "newsworthy" in 2005 than in 1993, which seems to contradict the findings of the dissertation. However, this observation in Marchi and Taylor's study might be due to the selection of the years that were examined: 1993 was significant in the history of the EU, as that was the year when the Maastricht Treaty entered into force. The year 2005 was also significant, but perhaps to a smaller degree (referendums on the Constitutional Treaty in France and the Netherlands).

datasets, the frequency of 1PP/EU was clearly higher in the left-wing papers (the *Guardian* and *Daily Mirror*) than in the right-wing papers (the *Daily Telegraph* and *Daily Mail*). This suggests that the right-wing papers maintained or even strengthened their mostly national perspective on EU matters in 2005 and 2015, while the left-wing papers (and the more pro-EU papers) increased their use of 1PP/EU and more often discussed EU-matters from the EU's perspective.

5.1.2 In relation to which topics were the pronouns *we* and *us* used to refer to the UK or the EU?

In general, the topics in relation to which 1PP referred to the UK, on the one hand, and the EU, on the other, were different, which suggests that EU-related topics were divided between those that were seen as affecting the nation, in particular, and those that were seen as being shared across the whole EU.

Based on the analysis of the verb collocates of *we* in the parliamentary debates, *we* referring to the UK (henceforth: *we*/UK) often occurred in contexts where the future of the UK's membership was discussed. The collocation analysis in Article 1 shows that collocates of *we*/UK such as *join*, *remain*, *enter*, *leave*, *withdraw* and *stay* were among the most frequent ones throughout the membership years. Similarly, word lists generated of the headlines of the newspaper articles in Article 3 show that membership was a recurring theme in the articles using 1PP/UK and in which there were no instances of 1PP/EU.

The findings presented in Article 1 also show that, in the parliamentary debates, *we*/UK occurred in contexts where the UK's contribution to the EU or the cost of the membership was mentioned, as suggested by the collocates of *we*/UK such as *contribute*, *pay*, *lose*, *receive* and *spend*. This is related to the discussion on whether the EU is beneficial for the UK economically or not (see section 2.2). Economy was a recurring theme in the newspaper data, as well. As seen in Article 3, 1PP/UK were used in articles reporting on the Greek government-debt crisis, single currency and trade. Especially the single currency was seen as a threat to the national sovereignty (see section 2.2). Using 1PP/UK in the articles reporting on the single currency seemed to represent the EU as imposing its rules on "us", the UK, and putting pressure on "us" to integrate more.

Newspaper articles reporting on migration and economy were written using 1PP/UK as well as 1PP/EU. These news articles were about "crises" or "problems" that were seen as affecting both the nation and the EU, such as the "migration crisis"

and the Greek-government debt. Migration and economy were also among the key issues in the arguments behind the Eurosceptic agenda (see section 2.2).

The processes of the EU and the EU's plans for the future were in focus when 1PP/EU were used (see Taylor, 2005: as cited in Marchi & Taylor, 2009, p. 211). These issues were typically discussed from the point of view of what had been agreed on between the EU members. As shown by the collocation analysis presented in Article 1, the most frequent collocates of *we* referring to the EU (*we*/EU) in the debates throughout the timeline were words such as *make*, *reform*, *achieve*, *pursue*, *work* and *move*, which suggests that developments of the EU and how it was going to "move forward" were discussed from the EU's perspective. Furthermore, *we*/EU occurred in contexts where discussions and negotiations within the EU were brought up in the parliamentary debates, as suggested by the collocates of *we*/EU such as *consider*, *agree*, *discuss* and *talk*. This is also reflected in the analysis of the representation of the ingroup-EU in Article 4, where one of the categories is the EU as an arena for negotiation (see section 5.3.2).

Analysis of the headlines of the newspaper articles in which 1PP/EU occurred suggested that articles discussing "problems" or "crises" common to the whole EU were reported from the EU's perspective. According to the findings presented in Article 3, these included topics such as the Greek government-debt (see section 2.1), climate and migration (see section 2.2). In relation to these topics, the articles focused on the actions that "we", the EU, were taking to find a solution. The Greek government-debt was reported from both the EU's and national perspective. When reported from the national perspective, the focus was on how the crisis affected the nation, while more attention was granted to what the EU was going to do about the situation when reported from the EU's perspective. Furthermore, climate was more clearly seen as a European issue, but not a national problem, as news on climate (change) were almost solely reported from the EU's perspective. Thus, it was not – at least in articles where the EU was a central actor – seen as affecting the nation as much as issues such as migration and economic crises, which were reported from the national as well as the EU's perspective.

5.1.3 What types of representations of the UK and the EU were constructed using *we* and *us*?

This section summarises the findings on the representations of the UK (section 5.1.3.1) and the EU (section 5.1.3.2) as constructed in the parliamentary debates (Article 2) and newspaper articles (Article 4) when 1PP were used.

5.1.3.1 Representation of the UK

In the parliamentary debates, the types of representation of the UK as a member of the EU were examined analysing the instances of 1PP/UK which included a description of the UK's actions or character in the EU (Article 2). The typical representations of the UK portrayed the UK as a leading or willing member of the EU, but also as insecure or even as an isolated or reluctant member. According to the findings presented in Article 2, the members of the party in government – especially the Conservative Party – commonly represented the UK as being the leader in the EU, and as having power and influence. In this representation, the UK was seen as a significant country that is at the forefront of developments in the EU and active in making the EU move forward. Furthermore, the UK was described as being above or ahead of the other EU countries, often because of its economic success (see section 2.2). Another common representation portrayed the UK as being a willing and positive member of the EU. In these representations, the UK was not the leader, but not dragged along either. Instead, it was represented as willing to contribute and co-operate with the other EU members. The representation of the UK as a willing member was particularly common after the first membership referendum in 1975, as some MPs stated that since the public has shown its support for the membership, the UK can now be a fully committed member.

When EU membership was not seen as giving the UK more power or influence, the focus was commonly on how the membership affected the UK's role in the world. For instance, there was a feeling that the UK was separate from the rest, which meant that the UK did not have a clear role in the EU. Furthermore, the desire to lead others connected with the resistance towards further integration in the EU caused that the UK was insecure of its role in the EU. At least some of the UK's power in the world was seen as stemming from the membership, but – at the same time – more involvement would have meant that the UK would have to give more powers to the EU. Because of this mismatch, the UK was represented in the parliamentary debates as having to balance between more and less involvement.

In the more "Eurocritical" representations of the UK in the parliamentary debates, the UK was seen as passive, and the EU as exerting power over the UK. Because the UK has traditionally been proud of its parliamentary system and sovereignty, EU integration and giving more powers to the EU caused a great deal of resistance. For that reason, the UK was also represented as being a reluctant member. Finally, the UK's resistance was also said to lead to the UK becoming isolated in the EU and not being seen as a valued member.

In the newspapers, the representation of the UK was not analysed in as much detail as in the parliamentary debates, but some common ways of talking about the UK stood out in the manual analysis of the instances where *we* or *us* referred to the UK. As discussed in Article 3, the ways in which the UK was represented as a member of the EU reflected the papers' stance on the membership. In the 1975 dataset, when most of the papers supported the membership, the UK was seen as being dependent on the EU. PM Margaret Thatcher, for instance, was quoted saying that leaving the EU would leave "us" isolated, as the UK would be left without an alternative trading base. In the 1985 and 1995 volumes, the image of the UK being an outsider started to gain ground. In the *Guardian*, it was pointed out that the UK's reluctance to integrate more could cause that the country becomes isolated in the EU, which could, according to the paper, mean that other members start evaluating "us" in a negative way. In 2005 and 2015, the UK was represented as passive and separate from the EU. This was also the case in the left-wing papers that supported the membership. The UK was represented as being different from the EU, for instance because the UK had not singed the Schengen agreement and because it had not adopted Euro. In the right-wing papers, the UK was also described as "easily steamrolled" and threatened by the EU.

5.1.3.2   Representation of the EU

The EU or its actions were evaluated more negatively when it was excluded from the ingroup than when it was included in the ingroup using 1PP/EU. According to the findings presented in Articles 2 and 3, the EU was represented as a threat to the UK and its sovereignty when excluded from the ingroup, because it was seen as taking power away from its members.

The instances where the EU was included in the ingroup were analysed in Article 4. According to the results, the representation of the ingroup-EU was mostly positive or at least neutral, but criticism towards the EU was also common. However, in

contrast to the instances where the EU was excluded from the ingroup, representing the EU as a threat was not common when the EU was included in the ingroup.

Even though the ingroup-EU was also criticised, the criticism was not targeted at what the EU was or represented, but the criticism was mainly targeted at what the EU did in relation to certain events or specific situations. Most of the criticism was about the EU being ineffective and slow, but it was also represented as undemocratic. The *Guardian* was the most active of the newspapers in pointing out the flaws in how the EU works, which was a little surprising, as the left-wing press – which the *Guardian* also represents – has traditionally been less Eurosceptic than the right-wing press. However, the *Guardian* was also the paper with the highest frequency of 1PP/EU in general, which also at least partly explains the highest number of instances where the EU was critically evaluated.

In the more positive categories, the EU was represented as a co-operation, where member states worked together towards the common good. The co-operation was seen as a more effective way to solve common problems than individual countries working on their own. In addition, the EU was represented as a project that was still unfinished but constantly developing and becoming better. The other categories for the ingroup-EU were the EU as praised (positively evaluated), a global player, an arena for negotiation and a guard.

By 2015, when the membership was a topical issue, the differences in the representations of the ingroup-EU in the right-wing and left-wing papers became more visible: in the left-wing papers, the EU was represented as flexible and strong, while the right-wing papers focused on the lack of initiative in the EU, especially in relation to migration. In general, however, the representation of the ingroup-EU was more scattered than that of the ingroup-UK. This is perhaps at least partly because including the EU in the ingroup in this way was rare (compared to the instances where the UK was the ingroup), and no established ways of talking about the ingroup-EU were formed that would have revealed differences, for instance, in the right-wing and left-wing discourses.

5.2 Discussion

The dissertation adds to our knowledge and understanding about the construction of ingroups and outgroups as well as on how the choice of personal pronouns can be connected to the evaluation of different actors in political discourses. Analysis of the first-person plural pronouns in relation to international topics can broaden our

understanding of how nations and international groupings are positioned in relation to others and how they see their role in the world. For instance, the representation of the EU varied depending on whether it was part of "us" or somewhere else, outside the UK, as can be seen in the findings. When included in the ingroup, the evaluation of the EU was more positive or at least neutral compared to the contexts in which it was excluded from the ingroup. When the pronoun *we* or *us* referred to the UK in EU-related discussions, the EU was more often seen as a threat or as different and separate from the UK.

The study contributes to the field of corpus-assisted discourse studies, particularly to the studies focusing on the use of personal pronouns in political discourse. This is a typical CADS study in the sense that quantitative and qualitative methods alternated or they were used side by side. Each of the four empirical studies employed both quantitative and qualitative methods. Typically, I started the analysis with a wide quantitative perspective, which then led me to look at the data more closely from a certain angle. Without the combination of quantitative corpus analytic methods and qualitative discourse analysis, the results would have been notably narrower. Data of this size could not have been analysed without the help of corpus linguistic methods, and, at the same time, frequencies alone would have left us without explanations to the changes that were observed in the quantitative analysis.

The dissertation examines the language use in two different contexts. Although the parliamentary and newspaper data were for the most part analysed separately, they were also compared. Thus, differences between parliamentary discourse and newspaper discourse need to be considered. First, parliamentary debates are spoken discourse (or written-to-be-spoken in some situations), while newspapers are written discourse.[10] Second, in the parliament, two sides debate over what would be the best course of action, meaning that both sides can express their opinions. In contrast, newspaper want to create a coherent (and entertaining) storyline, which may sometimes mean that conflicting views are left out. Furthermore, newspapers in the UK are openly partisan (Wring & Deacon, 2010). While they can claim that they take a wide perspective and treat all sides equally, one side of the story is highlighted. Third, newspapers are a commercial enterprise, while the MPs hold a public office. While publishers try to sell as many newspapers as possible, the MPs represent their constituencies and the public. Consequently, the newspapers may represent issues in

---

[10] It could be debated whether *Hansard* is spoken or written discourse, as they are *almost verbatim* records of what has been said in the parliament (see e.g. Slembrouck, 1992). However, the source for the transcripts is spoken, and thus it is argued here that they are closer to spoken discourse than written discourse.

a polarised way to grab people's attention, but the MPs are not as dependent on how many people notice them, even though being re-elected may require drawing attention, as well.

Despite these differences, there are also notable similarities between the two datasets, for which reason it can be fruitful to analyse them together. First, they are both politically affiliated and active in spreading their opinions. The MPs are more clearly politically affiliated, as they represent a political party, but the newspapers in the UK are also exceptionally open about their political views (Wring & Deacon, 2010). Second, they both contribute to the "elite discourse" (van Dijk, 1995) and have good access to the public discussion. The main audience to whom the MPs speak and newspapers write are the citizens and the nation. In practice, the MPs speak to each other (through the Speaker), but they know that the people are listening and that their words are carefully scrutinised, at least through the media. Similarly, the newspapers write their articles to the people. Thus, they both have access to and control over public discourses, and, consequently, have power to shape the people's opinions and world views (van Dijk, 1995). The MPs as well as the press want to create an image of the world in people's minds that can help them make their opinions more widely accepted. And for that purpose, they need to choose their words carefully in each context.

Analysing what each 1PP referred to was not similar for the two datasets. In the case of the parliamentary debates, the contextual information is more straightforward than in the newspaper articles. That is because, in the parliamentary debates, the referent of *we* or *us* usually includes the speaker. Newspapers, in contrast, can utilise multiple different perspectives (e.g. we the national football team, we the people living in Wales, we the British people). However, interpreting what was meant by each pronoun was easier in the case of the newspaper articles than in the parliamentary debates, despite there being more possible referents of 1PP in the newspapers than in the debates. In the parliament, the use of *we* is more often rhetorical. Therefore, defining the boundaries of *we* is sometimes difficult or even impossible. For instance, in the parliamentary debates, differentiating between *we*/government and *we*/nation is challenging. If a minister says, "*we* are totally committed to the European Union", defining whether *we* refers to the government or the country requires a close reading of the co-text and applying extratextual knowledge, after which the case may still remain unresolved. In newspapers, making this separation was easier: when a minister that was quoted in an article used 1PP, the referent was usually the government, but outside quotations (direct or undirect) it was uncommon for newspapers to use 1PP to refer to the government. In contrast,

national *we* was common in newspaper articles focusing on national or international politics (see Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 604).

In the case of the parliamentary data, the starting point for the analysis was co-occurrence of two lexical items (*european communit*/union + we/us*). Thus, instead of analysing only the debates that focused on the EU, I decided to collect all the instances of these pronouns that were used when the EU was mentioned. By looking for the co-occurrence of these items, I was able to find the relevant excerpts from the parliamentary data and analyse them more closely. If I had decided to look for and analyse all the pronouns that occurred only in EU-related debates, two things would have happened: 1) the analysis would have excluded all the instances where 1PP occurred in relation to the EU in those debates that were not about the EU but in which the EU was still discussed, and 2) there would have been a great number of irrelevant instances of the pronouns that were not used in relation to the EU. However, it should be noted that even with this method many relevant instances of the pronouns *we* and *us* were still excluded from the analysis. Nevertheless, the search did not yield many "irrelevant" uses of the pronouns, i.e. those that were not related to the EU in any way, which made the analysis more efficient.

The study employed manual (or qualitative) concordance analysis, which has been criticised for ambiguity and lack of transparency (Kennedy, 2022). However, if the procedure of analysing the concordances is explained and if enough examples are given, the reliability of the method can be improved. Furthermore, clear categories and statistical comparisons help researchers explain their reasoning behind the findings and show how common particular ways of using language are in their data. Here, the manual concordance analysis was only one way of looking at the data and it formed a part of the whole where quantitative and qualitative methods were intertwined.

5.3   Limitations and future outlook

The size of the data used in the dissertation is extensive for a discourse analytic study – the parliamentary data, in particular. The primary parliamentary data consisted of all the debates of the House of Commons from January 1973 to March 2015, and the analysis focused on all the instances of *we* and *us* that occurred in proximity to *the European Union* or *Community*. Despite the size of the data, two limitations of the study are related to the choice and collection of the data.

The first limit is the choice of the time span for the parliamentary debates (see section 4.2.1). The last debate that was collected and used as data for Articles 1 and 2 was from March 2015, and for Article 4 the last debate was from December 2015. There was a general election in 2015, but the Brexit referendum was not held until June 2016. As the dissertation is closely related to the Brexit referendum and Euroscepticism in the UK, it is reasonable to argue that also analysing the debates from the 2015–2016 parliamentary session would have added to the value of the dissertation. The rationale behind excluding these debates was discussed in section 2.3.

The second limit concerns the selection and sampling of the newspaper data. In comparison to the parliamentary debates, the newspaper dataset is small. While the parliamentary data span from 1973 to 2015, the newspaper data are in smaller segments, with ten years between each segment. The main reason for this is the availability of data, as newspaper articles cannot be as easily accessed and collected as parliamentary debates (see section 4.2.2). The data selection had an impact on the results, as newspaper discourse, as well as parliamentary discourse, is highly influenced by what happens in the world. Thus, the selection of which years to examine also defined which EU-related events were reported in the data and, consequently, how the EU was portrayed in the articles. Furthermore, because the newspaper data were clearly smaller than the parliamentary data, comparisons between the two datasets were challenging. For that reason, the data were mostly analysed separately, even though some comparisons were also made. However, in Article 4 the parliamentary dataset was sampled so that it was closer to the size of the newspaper dataset, which made comparing easier to some extent.

Finally, the third limit of the study is related to the method. While with the help of corpus linguistic methods one can get a comprehensive picture of how language is used and what the typical patterns are, smaller nuances are left out. The qualitative part of the study focused mostly on concordance lines, which are short excerpts of text without context. Although concordance lines take the researcher closer to the original text than other corpus linguistic methods, such as word lists and collocations (Mautner, 2022, p. 257), there is still a danger that too far-reaching generalisations are made based on those short segments alone. Thus, more detailed qualitative analyses are also needed to reveal the nuances in texts.

Nevertheless, the methods of corpus-assisted discourse studies offer comprehensive and multifaceted tools for researchers, with the help of which the data can be looked at from afar, focusing on the patterns in the text, and be zoomed in so that interesting patterns can be investigated in a more detailed manner. While

subjectivity – for which critical discourse analysis has been criticised – cannot be eliminated, using corpus linguistic methods and larger datasets puts discourse analysis on a "sounder empirical footing" (Mautner, 2022, p. 252).

Possible future studies could analyse the referents of *they* and *them* in parliamentary debates and newspaper articles, as that would increase our knowledge on the us/them dichotomy in EU related discussions in the UK. An analysis of the referents of *they* and *them* in the parliamentary debates is included in Article 1, but those instances were analysed only quantitatively and not in closer detail. In the case of the newspaper data, *they* and *them* were not analysed at all in this project. It would also be interesting to see if an analysis of the use of the possessive pronoun *our* showed different type of diachronic development than *we* and *us* in this context. Furthermore, an analysis on the use of the first-person plural pronouns in political discourse focusing, in particular, on speaker-intended ambiguities would increase our knowledge on how politicians use pronouns, for instance, to diffuse responsibility. Such an analysis could also offer a more detailed account of the complexities of the relationship between political discourse and the media.

In addition, discourse analysis on the discursive construction of British national identity after Brexit could reveal whether the UK is now (or still) represented as acting on its own, separate from and without other European countries, in the international arena. Is the UK's international role now clearer or is the country still represented as insecure of its role?

Furthermore, I would be interested in knowing about the situation in other EU countries: Have similar diachronic changes in the representation of the EU happened in other EU countries? Are there other countries that so clearly see themselves separate from the rest, on the one hand, or are there countries that are typically represented as strongly connected to the EU, on the other?

6   CONCLUSION

The objective of the dissertation has been to examine how the use of first-person plural pronouns *we* and *us* in EU-related contexts changed during the UK's membership of the EU. Furthermore, the focus has been on what types of representations of the UK and the EU were constructed using those pronouns in British parliamentary debates and newspaper articles.

The findings of the dissertation add to our knowledge on how and when the negative aspects of the EU started to become highlighted in the public discussion in the UK. As pointed out in earlier research (Copeland & Copsey, 2017, p. 712; Forster 2002, p. 103; Hardt-Mautner, 1995a, p. 180; Mautner, 2022, p. 237), Eurosceptic views dominated the discussion in the UK already in the late 1980s and early 1990s (see section 2.2). According to the findings of this study, the EU started to be increasingly often excluded from the ingroup in the British parliamentary debates and right-wing newspapers in the 2000s. The findings show that using 1PP referring to the EU was rare in both datasets in the whole time-period studied, but increasingly so in the 2000s and 2010s. In the parliamentary debates, the use of 1PP/EU decreased in the 2000s and 2010s, while the use of 1PP/UK increased. Consequently, the focus in the debates was less on what the EU together was going to do next and more on how the UK should react to the EU's actions. This may have caused the feeling among the MPs and the public that the EU was not acting together as one group but somewhere outside the members, without "us".

Typically, the nation is in focus in national parliamentary debates as well as in national newspapers. National parliaments alone cannot decide on the EU's actions, but they can debate how their nation should react to them and whether they think their nation should support the EU or not. Similarly, in national newspapers, the focus is on national issues, while reporting about the decisions made at EU level from the EU's perspective is rare. However, the *Guardian* was the paper with the most frequent use of 1PP/EU, which strengthens the paper's image as being a pro-EU newspaper. International topics, such as climate change, where the EU's co-operation was needed, were typically reported from the EU's perspective in the newspaper data.

The choice of personal pronouns and the evaluation of an actor are closely connected, but not always in the way we would first think. According to Wodak (2011), the ingroup (or "we") is usually represented with more positive attributes than the outgroup ("they"). However, when *we* or *us* referred to the UK, and the UK was the ingroup in the parliamentary debates, the nation was not necessarily seen in a positive light but could also be represented as an insecure actor or even an outsider. Similarly, the EU was criticised even when it was included in the ingroup in the debates and newspaper articles. Thus, inclusion in the ingroup does not always mean that the actor is seen in a positive light or as better than the outgroup (see also Tyrkkö et al., in press).

However, it should be noted that when the ingroup-EU was criticised for being undemocratic or ineffective, the speaker or writer also expressed that something should be done about the issue. The use of 1PP/EU in that context shifted the focus to the processes of the EU: if there is something that "we" lack, "we" should also fix the situation. The analysis showed that the *Guardian* (generally a pro-EU paper) was the paper that most often brought up criticism targeted at the ingroup-EU. This is in line with Taylor's (2005) analysis, which showed that the focus on EU's processes was a feature of pro-EU texts (cited in Marchi & Taylor, 2009, p. 211).

The findings of the dissertation support what has been observed in previous studies: the UK was often represented as separate from the EU. In the debates, the UK was represented as being ahead or above, leading the other members, which constructed the UK as being different from the others (usually better than the rest). Furthermore, the UK was represented as isolated from the others or insecure of its role, where the UK was either in danger of being "left behind" or undecided whether it should be leading or stay in the margins. These types of representations of the UK's role in the EU represented the UK-EU relationship from a particular point of view, creating an ideological representation of the reality (Fairclough, 2010, p. 46). Repeating representations such as those where the UK was insecure of its role, in danger of being "left behind", contributed to creating an image of the situation where the UK did not benefit from the membership.

While there are various issues that influence people's world views and opinions, language is certainly among the most important ones. Language is the main tool politicians and newspapers use. Thus, they and their audience are (or at least should be) aware of its power. The dissertation makes more visible the impact of such seemingly small words as personal pronouns on how different actors are represented in discourse. Personal pronouns can be employed to foster a sense of identity and inclusion among a group of people. Consequently, using words such as *we* and *us* to

refer to a country can be used to create a shared sense of national identity and belonging, which is crucial if co-action of the people is needed (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001, p. 49). While they also create a sense of belonging, the same words can also be used to separate between different groups: those that are not "us" are outsiders, different from "us" (Wodak, 2011).

The combination of diachronic, bird-eye view on the data and a more detailed contextual perspective on how pronouns are used can give us a broad understanding of the construction of the relationship between different actors (the UK and the EU, in this case) that is not restricted only to statistical information, on the one hand, or individual case studies on small datasets, on the other hand. The dissertation is also an example of a study where pronouns are given a great deal of weight. The results show that personal pronouns are important in political discourse and can have an effect on how the world is discursively constructed and represented to the people in public discourses.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alarcón, A. V. M. (2010). Media Representation of the European Union: Comparing Newspaper Coverage in France, Spain, and the United Kingdom. *International Journal of Communication*, *4*, 398–415.

Alexander, M., & Davies, M. (2015–). Hansard Corpus 1803-2005. Available at https://www.english-corpora.org/hansard/

Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* London: Verso.

Ash, T. G. (2001). Is Britain European? *International Affairs, 77* (1), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.00174

Baker, P. (2006). *Using Corpora in Discourse Analysis.* London: Continuum.

Baker, P. (2018). Conclusion: reflecting on reflective research. In Taylor, C., & Marchi, A. (Eds.), *Corpus approaches to discourse: a critical review* (pp. 281–292). Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge.

Baker, P., Gabrielatos C., KhosraviNik, M., Krzyżanowski, M., McEnery, T., & Wodak, R. (2008). A Useful Methodological Synergy? Combining Critical Discourse Analysis and Corpus Linguistics to Examine Discourses of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the UK Press. *Discourse & Society* *19* (3), 273–306. https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926508088962

Baker, P., Gabrielatos, C., & McEnery, T. (2013). *Discourse Analysis and Media Attitudes: The Representation of Islam in the British Press.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Baker, P., & McEnery, T. (2005). A corpus-based approach to discourses of refugees and asylum seekers in UN and newspaper texts. *Journal of Language and Politics*, *4* (2), 197–226. https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.4.2.04bak

Balch, A., & Balabanova, E. (2017). A Deadly Cocktail? The Fusion of Europe and Immigration in the UK Press. *Critical Discourse Studies*, *14* (3), 236–255. https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2017.1284687

Baranowska, P. M. (2014). The Coverage of the Eurozone Economic Crisis in the British Press. *Perspectives on European Politics and Society, 15* (4), 500–517. https://doi.org/10.1080/15705854.2014.922352

Bazzanella, C. (2002). The Significance of Context in Comprehension: The `We Case'. *Foundations of Science*, *7* (3), 239–254. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1019657025835

Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G. N., Conrad, S., & Finegan, E. (2021). *Grammar of Spoken and Written English.* Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Billig, M. (2010). *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage.

Blommaert, J. (1997). Whose background? Comments on a discourse-analytic reconstruction of the Warsaw Uprising. *Pragmatics 7* (1), 69–81.

Blommaert, J. (2005). *Discourse: A critical introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Blommaert, J., & Bulcaen, C. (2000). Critical Discourse Analysis. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 29 (1), 447–466.

Brookes, R. (1999). Newspapers and National Identity: The BSE/CJD Crisis and the British Press. *Media, Culture & Society, 21* (2), 247–63. https://doi.org/10.1177/016344399021002007

Bucholtz, M., & Hall, K. (2005). Identity and Interaction: A Sociocultural Linguistic Approach. *Discourse Studies, 7* (4–5), 585–614. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445605054407

Bull, P., & Fetzer, A. (2006). Who Are We and Who Are You? The Strategic Use of Forms of Address in Political Interviews. *Text & Talk, 26* (1), 3–37. https://doi.org/10.1515/TEXT.2006.002

Buxrud, B., & Fangen, K. (2017). Norwegian national day oratory: Constructing and reconstructing a national we: Norwegian national day oratory. *Nations and Nationalism, 23* (4), 770–789. https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12346

Carey, S., & Burton, J. (2004). Research Note: The Influence of the Press in Shaping Public Opinion towards the European Union in Britain. *Political Studies, 52* (3), 623–640. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2004.00499.x

Carl, N., Dennison, J., & Evans, G. (2019). European but not European enough: An explanation for Brexit. *European Union Politics, 20* (2), 282–304. https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116518802361

Checkel, J., & Katzenstein, P. (2009). The politicization of European identities. In Checkel, Jeffrey, C., & Katzenstein, P. (Eds.), *European Identity* (pp. 1–29). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511806247

Churchill, W. (1946). Speech delivered at the University of Zurich, 19 September 1946. Available at https://rm.coe.int/16806981f3 (accessed October 25, 2023).

Churchill, W. (1948). Conservative Mass Meeting: a speech at Llandudno, 9 October 1948. Reprinted in Churchill, R. S. (Ed.), *Europe Unite: Speeches 1947 and 1948* (pp. 407–424). London: Cassell.

Colls, R. (2012). What Is British National Identity and How Do We Get It? *Soundings, 52*, 100–112. http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.tuni.fi/10.3898/136266212803853545

Copeland, P., & Copsey, N. (2017). Rethinking Britain and the European Union: Politicians, the Media and Public Opinion Reconsidered. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies, 55* (4), 709–26. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12527

Crowson, N. J. (2011). *Britain and Europe: A Political History since 1918*. London & New York: Routledge.

Daddow, O. (2012). The UK Media and Europe: From Permissive Consensus to Destructive Dissent. *International Affairs, 88* (6), 1219–1236.

Deignan, A. (2005). *Metaphor and corpus linguistics*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Delpech, T. (2002): International terrorism and Europe. *Chaillot Papers*, *56*. European Union, Paris: Institute for Security Studies. Available at: https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/chai56e.pdf

Duranti, A., & Goodwin, C. (1992). Rethinking context: an introduction. In Duranti, A., & Goodwin, C. (Eds.), *Rethinking Context: Language as an Interactive Phenomenon* (pp. 1–42). Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press.

Evans, G., & Mellon, J. (2019). Immigration, Euroscepticism, and the Rise and Fall of UKIP. *Party Politics. 25* (1), 76–87. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068818816969.

Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. London: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (2010). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London: Routledge.

Fairclough, N. (2015). *Language and Power* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.

Fairclough, N., Mulderring, J., & Wodak, R. (2011). Critical Discourse Analysis. In van Dijk, T. A. (Ed.), *Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction* (2nd ed., p. n.d.). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Fetzer, A. (2014). "Judge *us* on what *we* do": The strategic use of collective *we* in British political discourse. In Pavlidou, T.-S. (Ed.), Constructing Collectivity: "We" across languages and contexts (pp. 331–350). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company. https://doi.org/10.1075/pbns.239.21fet

Forster, A. (2002). *Euroscepticism in Contemporary British Politics: Opposition to Europe in the Conservative and Labour Parties since 1945*. New York: Routledge.

Foucault, M. (1972). *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. London: Routledge.

Fowler, R, Hodge, B., Kress, G., & Trew, T. (Eds.) (1979). *Language and Control*. London: Routledge

Fowler, R, Hodge, B., Kress, G., & Trew, T. (1979). Preface. In Fowler, R., Hodge, B., Kress, G., & Trew, T. (Eds), *Language and Control* (pp. 1–5). London: Routledge.

Fowler, R., & Kress, G. (1979). Critical linguistics. In Fowler, R., Hodge, B., Kress, G., & Trew, T. (Eds), *Language and Control* (pp. 185–213). London: Routledge.

Gabrielatos, C. (2021, November 26). Bibliography of Discourse-Oriented Corpus Studies (DOCS). Retrieved from https://research.edgehill.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/59374565/DOCS_Biblio.2021.11.26.pdf (Accessed September 13, 2023)

Gaitskell, H. (1962). Speech by Hugh Gaitskell against UK membership of the Common Market (3 October 1962). Reprinted in *Britain and the Common Market, Texts of speeches made at the 1962 Labour Party Conference by the Rt. Hon Hugh Gaitskell M.P. and the Rt.*

Hon. George Brown M.P. together with the policy statement accepted by Conference (pp. 3–23). London: Labour Party. Retrieved from: https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/1999/1/1/05f2996b-000b-4576-8b42-8069033a16f9/publishable_en.pdf (Accessed 25 September 2023)

Gavin, N. T. (2018). Media definitely *do* matter: Brexit, immigration, climate change and beyond. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, *20* (4), 827–845. https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148118799260

Gee, J. P. (2011). *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and method* (3rd ed). New York: Routledge.

Gibbins, J. (2014). *Britain, Europe and National Identity: Self and Other in International Relations.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gifford, C. (2020). *The Making of Eurosceptic Britain: Identity and Economy in a Post-Imperial State* (2nd ed). London: Routledge.

Goodwin, M., & Milazzo, C. (2017). Taking Back Control? Investigating the Role of Immigration in the 2016 Vote for Brexit. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations, 19* (3), 450–64. https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148117710799

Hall, S. (1982). The rediscovery of 'ideology': return of the repressed in media studies. In Gurevitch, M., Bennett, T., Curran, J., & Wollacott, J. (Eds.), *Culture, Society and the Media* (Ch. 3). London and New York: Routledge.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1977). Text as Semantic Choice in Social Contexts. In Van Dijk, T., & Petöfi, J. S. (Eds.), Grammars and Descriptions (pp. 176–225). Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110839609

Hardt-Mautner, G. (1995a). "How does one become a good European?": The British press and European integration. *Discourse & Society, 6* (2), 177–205.

Hardt-Mautner, G. (1995b). "Only Connect." Critical Discourse Analysis and Corpus Linguistics. *UCREL Technical Papers 6*. Retrieved from https://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/tech_papers.html

Harmsen, R., & Spiering, M. (2004). *Euroscepticism: Party Politics, National Identity and European Integration.* Amsterdam and New York, NY: Brill.

Hawkins, B. (2012). Nation, Separation and Threat: An Analysis of British Media Discourses on the European Union Treaty Reform Process*: Nation, separation and threat. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *50* (4), 561–577. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2012.02248.x

Hawkins, B. (2022). *Deconstructing Brexit discourses: embedded Euroscepticism, fantasy objects and the United Kingdom's vote to leave the European Union.* London: Routledge.

HC Deb (18 December 1991). vol. 201, col 384. Retrieved from https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1991-12-18/debates/22b6a7e8-2748-4950-a80b-4e042536f071/Maastricht#main-content (Accessed: 3 August 2022)

Hiltunen, T., Räikkönen, J., & Tyrkkö, J. (2020). Investigating colloquialization in the British parliamentary record in late 19th and early 20th century. *Language Sciences 79*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2020.101270

Holly, W. (2008). Tabloidisation of political communication in the public sphere. In Wodak, R., & Koller, V. (Eds.), *Handbook of Communication in the Public Sphere* (pp. 317–342). Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Hutton, M., Natzler, D., Hamlyn, M., Lee, C., Mawson, C., Poyser, C., Samson, E., & Lawrence, K. (2019). *Erskine May: Parliamentary Practice, 25th edition*. Available at https://erskinemay.parliament.uk

Ilie, C. (2015). Parliamentary Discourse. In Tracy, K., Sandel, T., & Ilie, C. (Eds.), *The International Encyclopedia of Language and Social Interaction*. John Wiley & Sons. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118611463.wbielsi201

James, P. (1996). *Nation Formation*. London: Sage.

Jones, M. (2019). *Immigration and Ideology in the UK Parliament 1961-2016* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Bath]. University of Bath's research portal. Retrieved from https://purehost.bath.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/188486626/Campaign_for_Control.pdf

Just, S. N. (2009). No place like home? The role of the media in the framing of EUrope. *Journal of Language & Politics*, *8* (2), 244–268. https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.8.2.04jus

Kennedy, C.-R. (2022). Worthiness, Unity, Numbers and Commitment: Strengthening Qualitative Corpus Methods in the Critical Discourse Analysis of Protest Press Coverage. *Discourse & Society, 33* (5), 611–630. https://doi.org/10.1177/09579265221093650

Kranert, M., and Horan, G. (2018). Introduction. In Kranert, M., & Horan, G. (Eds.), *Doing Politics: Discursivity, performativity and mediation in political discourse* (pp. 1–26). Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Leech, G. (1992). Corpora and theories of linguistic performance. In Svartvik, J. (Ed.), *Directions in corpus linguistics: Proceedings of the Nobel Symposium 82, Stockholm, 4–8 August 1991* (pp. 105–122). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Leech, G., & Fallon, R. (1992). Computer corpora – What do they tell us about culture? *ICAME Journal 16*, 29–50.

Ludlow, N. P. (2015). Safeguarding British Identity or Betraying It? The Role of British 'Tradition' in the Parliamentary Great Debate on EC Membership, October 1971. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies, 53* (1), 18–34. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12202

Maccaferri, M. (2019). Splendid Isolation Again? Brexit and the Role of the Press and Online Media in Re-Narrating the European Discourse. *Critical Discourse Studies, 16* (4), 389–402. https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2019.1592766

Marchi, A., & Taylor, C. (2009). Establishing the EU: The representation of Europe in the press in 1993 and 2005. In Juncker, A.H., Schreier, D., & Hundt, M. (Eds.), *Corpora:*

Pragmatics and discourse (pp. 203–226). Leiden, Netherlands: Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789042029101_012

Mason, R. (2016, June 24). How did UK end up voting to leave the European Union? *The Guardian* (online). Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/24/how-did-uk-end-up-voting-leave-european-union (Accessed 10 August 2022)

Mautner, G. (2009). Corpora and Critical Discourse Analysis. In Baker, P. (Ed.), *Contemporary Corpus Linguistics* (pp. 32–46). London and New York, NY: Continuum.

Mautner, G. (2022). What can a corpus tell us about discourse? In O'Keeffe, A., & McCarthy, M. (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Corpus Linguistics* (2nd ed, pp. 250–262). Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge.

McConnell-Ginet, S. (2020). *Words Matter: Meaning and Power.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McCourt, D. M. (2014). *Britain and World Power since 1945: Constructing a Nation's Role in International Politics.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

McEnery, T., & Wilson, A. (2001). *Corpus Linguistics: An Introduction.* Edinburgh University Press. https://doi.org/10.3366/j.ctvxcrjmp

Moffitt, B., & Tormey, S. (2014). Rethinking Populism: Politics, Mediatisation and Political Style. *Political Studies*, *62*, 381–397. https://doi.org/doi: 10.1111/1467-9248.12032

Mollin, S. (2007). The Hansard hazard: Gauging the accuracy of British parliamentary transcripts. *Corpora*, *2* (2), 187–210. https://doi.org/10.3366/cor.2007.2.2.187

Mühlhaüsler, P., & Harré, R. (1990). *Pronouns and people: the linguistic construction of social and personal identity.* Oxford: Blackwell.

OECD. (2010). *Working Party on the Information Economy: The Evolution of News and the Internet.* Paris: OECD. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/sti/ieconomy/45559596.pdf

Partington, A. (2004). Corpora and discourse: A most congruous beast. In Partington, A., Morley, J., & Haarman, L. (Eds.), *Corpora and Discourse* (pp. 11–20) Bern: Peter Lang.

Partington, A. (2006). Metaphors, motifs and similes across discourse types: Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) at work. In Stefanowitsch, A., & Gries, S. T. (Eds.), *Corpus-based Approaches to Metaphor and Metonymy* (pp. 267–304). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Partington, A. (2010). Modern Diachronic Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (MD-CADS) on UK newspapers: An overview of the project. *Corpora*, *5* (2), 83–108. https://doi.org/10.3366/cor.2010.0101

Partington, A., Duguid, A., & Taylor, C. (2013). *Patterns and Meanings in Discourse: Theory and Practice in Corpus-assisted Discourse Studies (CADS).* Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Pennycook, A. (1994). The politics of pronouns. *ELT Journal, 48* (2).

Perisic, B. (2010). *Britain and Europe: A History of Difficult Relations*. Institute of Cultural Diplomacy, Berlin. Retrieved from https://culturaldiplomacy.org/pdf/case-studies/cs-bojana-perisic.pdf

Petersoo, P. (2007). What does 'we' mean? National deixis in the media. *Journal of Language & Politics, 6* (3), 419–436. https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.6.3.08pet

Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., & Svartvik, J. (1985). *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language.* London: Longman.

Reicher, S., & Hopkins, N. (2001). *Self and Nation: Categorization, Contestation, and Mobilization.* London: Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE.

Reinan, E. (1990). 'What Is a Nation?' (Translated by Martin Thom). In Bhabha, H. K. (Ed.), *Nation and Narration* (pp. 8–22). London; New York: Routledge. (Original work published 1882)

Rheindorf, M. (2019). *Revisiting the toolbox of discourse studies: New trajectories in methodology, open data, and visualization.* Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Roe-Crines, A. & Heppell, T. (2020). Legitimising Euroscepticism? The Construction, Delivery and Significance of the Bruges Speech. *Contemporary British History, 34* (2), 204–227. https://doi.org/10.1080/13619462.2019.1669019

Rosie, M., MacInnes, J., Petersoo, P., Condor, S., & Kennedy, J. (2004). Nation Speaking unto Nation? Newspapers and National Identity in the Devolved UK. *The Sociological Review, 52* (4) 437–58. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2004.00490.x

Räikkönen, J. (2020). Separating the United Kingdom from the EU in British parliamentary debates from 2000 to 2016. In Breeze, R., & Llamas Saíz, C. (Eds.), *Metaphor in political conflict. Populism and discourse* (pp. 27–54). Pamplona: EUNSA.

Shaw, S. (2018). Off the record: The transcription of parliamentary debates for political discourse analysis. In Kranert, M., & Horan, G. (Eds.), *Doing Politics: Discursivity, performativity and mediation in political discourse* (pp. 105–126). Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Slembrouck, S. (1992). The Parliamentary Hansard "Verbatim" Report: The Written Construction of Spoken Discourse. *Language and Literature: International Journal of Stylistics, 1* (2), 101–119. https://doi.org/10.1177/096394709200100202

Sperber, D., & Wilson, D. (1995). *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* (2nd ed.) Oxford, UK; Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Spiering, M. (2004). British Euroscepticism. In Harmsen, R., & Spiering, M. (Eds.) *Euroscepticism: Party Politics, National Identity and European Integration* (pp. 127–149). Amsterdam; New York, NY: Rodopi.

Steinnes, K. (1998). The European Challenge: Britain's EEC Application in 1961. *Contemporary European History, 7* (1), 61–79.

Stubbs, M. (1996). *Text and Corpus Analysis: Computer-Assisted Studies of Language and Culture.* Oxford, OX, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell Publishers.

Stubbs, M. (1997). Whorf's Children: Critical comments on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). In Ryan, A., & Wray, A. (Eds.), *Evolving Models of Language: Papers from the Annual Meeting of the British Association for Applied Linguistics Held at the University of Wales, Swansea, September 1996* (pp. 100–116). Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

Stubbs, M. (2001). Texts, corpora, and problems of interpretation: A response to Widdowson. *Applied Linguistics, 22* (2), 149–172. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/22.2.149

Tajfel, H. (1981). *Human Groups and Social Categories*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, C. (2005). Electronic corpora in language study. *Dafwerkstatt, 6*, 71–84.

Tognini-Bonelli, E. (2001). *Corpus Linguistics at Work*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Tyrkkö, J., Raineri, S. Räikkönen, J., Budirská, A., Nabawy, M., & Silfver, A. (in press). Speaking for the downtrodden: The pragmatics of pronominal references in 200 years of activist speeches. *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*.

Van Dijk, T. A. (1995). Aims of Critical Discourse Analysis. *Japanese Discourse 1,* 17–27.

Van Dijk, T. A. (1996). Discourse, power and access. In Caldas-Coulthard, C. R., & Coulthard, M. (Eds.), *Texts and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 84–104). London: Routledge.

Van Dijk, T. A. (1997). What Is Political Discourse Analysis? *Belgian Journal of Linguistics 11*, 11–52. https://doi.org/10.1075/bjl.11.03dij

Van Dijk, T. A. (2000). Ideologies, Racism, Discourse: Debates on Immigration and Ethnic Issues. In: ter Wal, J., & Verkuyten, M. (Eds.) *Comparative Perspectives on Racism* (pp. 91–116). Aldershot: Ashgate. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315196374-5

Van Dijk, T. A. (2008). *Discourse and Context: A Sociocognitive Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Van Dijk, T. A. (2015). Critical Discourse Analysis. In Tannen, D., Hamilton, H. E., & Schiffin, D. (Eds.), *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (2nd ed, pp. 466–485). Chichester, England: Wiley Blackwell

Van Leeuwen, T. (1996). The representation of social actors. In Caldas-Coulthard, C. R., & Coulthard, M. (Eds.), *Texts and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 32–70). London: Routledge.

Wales, K. (1996). *Personal pronouns in present-day English*. Cambridge University Press.

Wallace, W. (2017). Losing the Narrative: The United Kingdom and the European Union as Imagined Communities. *International Relations 31* (2), 192–209. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117817707396

Wenzl, N. (2019). "This is about the kind of Britain we are". National identities as constructed in parliamentary debates about EU membership. In Koller, V., Kopf, S., & Miglbauer, M. (Eds.), *Discourses of Brexit* (pp. 32–47). London and New York: Routledge.

Wodak, R. (1989). Introduction. In Wodak, R. (Ed.), *Language, power and ideology: studies in political discourse* (pp. xiii–xx). Amsterdam, Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Wodak, R. (2001). What CDA Is About – A Summary of Its History, Important Concepts and Its Developments. In Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (Eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 1–13). https://doi.org/10.4135/9780857028020

Wodak, R. (2011). "Us" and "Them": Inclusion and Exclusion – Discrimination via Discourse. In Delanty, G., Wodak, R., & Jones, P. (Eds.), *Identity, Belonging and Migration* (pp. 54–77). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Wodak, R. (2016). "We Have the Character of an Island Nation". A Discourse-Historical Analysis of David Cameron's "Bloomberg Speech" on the European Union. *EUI Working Paper* RSCAS 2016/36. http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2870570

Wodak, R., de Cillia, R., Reisigl, M., & Liebhart, K. (2009). *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Wring, D., & Deacon, D. (2010). Patterns of press partisanship in the 2010 General Election. *British Politics, 5* (4), 436–454. https://doi.org/10.1057/bp.2010.18

Zappettini, F. (2021). The tabloidization of the Brexit campaign: Power to the (British) people? *Journal of Language and Politics*, *20* (2), 277–303. https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.19103.zap

PUBLICATIONS

ARTICLE
1

Leaving the EU Out of the Ingroup: A Diachronic Analysis of the Use of *We* and *Us* in British Parliamentary Debates (1973–2015)

Jenni Räikkönen

CHAPTER 5

Leaving the EU out of the ingroup

A diachronic analysis of the use of *we* and *us* in British parliamentary debates (1973–2015)

Jenni Räikkönen
Tampere University

In this chapter, I examine what types of diachronic changes the use of first-person plural pronouns signal in the way the EU has been discussed in the British House of Commons. By using methods of corpus-assisted discourse studies, I analyse the use of the pronouns in relation to the EU in parliamentary debates in the time period from 1973 to 2015. I am interested in when and in which contexts the EU is included in and when excluded from the ingroup in the debates. The chapter contributes to linguistic studies on Brexit and is part of a larger research project focusing on diachronic changes in the discursive representation of the EU in British parliamentary debates and press.

Keywords: Brexit, the EU, personal pronouns, corpus-assisted discourse studies, Hansard

1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on diachronic changes in the use of first-person plural pronouns in relation to the EU in the debates of the British House of Commons. The time period analysed stretches from 1973, the year the UK joined the European Economic Community, up to the general election of 2015, in which Brexit was one of the main themes. I am interested in how often and in which situations first-person plural pronouns are used to refer to the whole EU and when to the UK only, excluding the EU. When EU matters are talked about in British parliamentary debates, members of parliament (MPs) make a choice between talking from the national or the EU's perspective. In the former case, MPs focus on what the UK should do in relation to the EU, and in the latter, on what the EU will or should do together. My hypothesis is that in the former case, the EU is seen as an outgroup, while in the latter, the EU is seen as working together as one group.

The study is part of my PhD project focusing on changes in the discursive representation of the EU in British public discourses.[1] In this chapter I examine whether there was a change in the use of the first-person plural pronouns *we* and *us* in the parliamentary debates before the general election of 2015, and whether the pronouns were used increasingly less frequently to refer to the whole EU, increasing the perception in the UK that the EU is somewhere else, but is not 'us'. Pronoun use in the Euro-political context has been studied before, but many previous studies have focused only on a specific topic or one historical context, while diachronic changes over long time periods have not been given much attention. This study aims to fill that gap. The primary data of the study consist of all the debates of the British House of Commons from the time period 1973–2015, not just the debates on the EU, which makes the data more comprehensive than in previous studies.

The questions that I aim to answer are the following:

1. How have the first-person plural pronouns *we* and *us* been used in connection with the EU? What types of groups do they refer to and what kinds of diachronic changes in usage occur?
2. In what kinds of contexts does the pronoun *we* or *us* refer to the UK only and when to the whole EU?

The chapter is divided into five main sections. In the following section I discuss related literature on the use of pronouns in political discourse. In Section 3, I introduce the data and methods used in the study. The findings of the analysis are presented in Section 4, which is followed by concluding remarks.

2.   Personal pronouns and the discursive construction of national identities

Pronouns are one of the main rhetorical tools used by politicians and have been considered as deserving of special attention in the field of critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough 1989: 127–128; Íñigo-Mora 2004: 36). In CDA, discourse is seen as being socially conditioned and socially constructive (Blommaert & Bulcaen 2000: 448). Thus, the ways in which we use language participate in shaping and constituting society (see also Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999: 4). Consequently, discourse is connected to power as it can be strategically used for the

---

1. My PhD dissertation examines the discursive construction of the EU in parliamentary debates and British newspaper articles from 1973 up to 2015. The work is expected to be completed by spring 2024.

benefit of those who have the power to shape public discourses, such as politicians, media and academics (van Dijk 1993). The aim of CDA is to make more visible the choices that may seem 'neutral', but which are consciously made to shape discourses. (Critical) discourse analysis has traditionally utilised qualitative methods such as close reading of a small number of texts, but recently the use of corpus linguistic techniques has become increasingly popular in the field. In corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) (Baker et al. 2008; Partington, Duguid & Taylor 2013), qualitative and quantitative methods are combined so that larger datasets can be analysed and typical ways of using language can be detected.

The pronoun *we* has become a topic of interest in the field of CDA partly because of its flexibility. *We* is a complex personal pronoun in that relying only on anaphora does not always reveal what it means and refers to, and the pronoun can even combine a number of different meanings (Mühlhäusler & Harré 1990:168–169). Often, the pronoun refers to a group of people including the speaker, and that group can either include or exclude the addressee(s). Furthermore, pronouns can be used strategically to make a separation between ingroup and outgroup (Wodak 2011), and de Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak (1999:163) state that "the use of the pronoun 'we' [...] appears to be of utmost importance in the discourses about nations and national identities". *We* can be used to signify that there is a group of *others* who do not belong to or are different from *us*, because *we* implies that there is *they*, as much as *here* implies *there* (Billig 2010:99). Consequently, when first-person plural pronouns are used, the text offers definitions of who or what *we* are, what *we* do or what is done to *us*. In person deixis, similarly to other types of deixis such as temporal and spatial deixis, the Self (e.g. *I* and *we*) is the deictic centre, and people position others in their world in relation to themselves (Chilton 2005; Lenz 2003:viii). Typically, the 'distant' entities (namely, the outgroup) are more likely to be assigned negative attributes, and the Self and other 'close' entities (the ingroup) positive attributes (Cap 2018:383; Wodak, de Cillia & Reisigl 2009).

In previous studies on discourses in Euro-political contexts, researchers have been interested in whether there is a 'EUropean' (EU and/or Europe) identity and how, and to what degree, that identity has been put forward by the media and politicians in public discourses where it could enforce the feeling of a collective EUropean identity. Ludlow (2002) has observed that, in British political discourse, Europe, as a place or concept, may or may not include the UK, as *Europe* often refers to continental Europe only, excluding the UK (see also Hardt-Mautner 1995). The use of the pronoun *we* can signify whether speakers position themselves as being part of the European collective or as representing and identifying more with their own country. Krizsán (2011) compared pronoun use in British, Hungarian and Finnish politicians' speeches on the fifth enlargement of the EU, which

was completed in 2007, and concluded that, of these three groups, the British representatives had the most speeches about the position of the whole EU, while the Finnish and Hungarian speakers spoke more from the national point of view. Similarly, Cramer (2010) analysed pronouns in speeches by European leaders in a panel on "Europe's purpose" in 2008, where one of the topics was Turkey's accession to the EU. Cramer concluded that the Turkish member of the panel positioned himself in opposition to the European identity and emphasised his Turkish identity by consistently using *we* to refer to Turks only. (See also de Fina 1995; Dekavalla 2010; Íñigo-Mora 2004; Oddo 2011; Petersoo 2007; Proctor & Su 2011.)

3.   Data and methods

The primary data consist of all the debates of the British House of Commons from the start of the UK's membership of the European Community (EC) in January 1973 up to the general election in May 2015, in which leaving the EU was one of the main themes. For the data spanning 1973–2004, I used a full-text Extensible Markup Language (XML) version of the Hansard Corpus (Alexander & Davies 2015),[2] which enabled me to study longer excerpts of text, and even complete speeches if needed, which is not possible with the online version of the corpus. The debates for the period 2005–2015 I collected from the parliament's own website and compiled them into an unannotated corpus for this study. The size of the two corpora combined is circa 450 million words.

   As discussed, for instance, in Slembrouck (1992), Mollin (2007) and Hiltunen, Räikkönen and Tyrkkö (2020), using Hansard as data for studying the language spoken in the parliament has its restrictions, as the language in Hansard differs in many ways from the language that is actually used in the parliament (see Alexander, this volume, and Kotze et al., this volume). Reporters of Hansard make changes to the report so that it follows the etiquette of the parliament, for example by removing second-person pronouns if used to refer to another MP (Slembrouck 1992:114). The editing of Hansard also focuses on some characteristics of spoken language such as hesitations, false starts and inconsistencies. However, the editing should not add anything that was not said or change anything in a way that would change the meaning of the speech. Using first-person plural pronouns is a rhetorical tool and altering the pronouns might change the meaning of the speech, which is why those would typically not be changed in the editing process.

I used methods associated with CADS (Baker 2006; Partington, Duguid & Taylor 2013), focusing on concordance and collocation. I used CasualConc (version 2.0.7; Imao 2008–2018), a concordance program that can read text in XML, to search for excerpts in which the first-person plural pronoun *we* or *us* (henceforth: 1PP) co-occur with *the European Community/-ies* (1973–1993) or *the European Union* (1994–2015) in a span of nine words to the left and right.[3] Clause boundaries were ignored. The span is larger than what is usually used when studying collocation, for instance, but the search was merely the first step in retrieving the relevant contexts for further analysis and was defined so that the amount of data would be manageable for manual analysis.

The search retrieved 11,425 hits in total. Figure 5.1 shows the yearly frequencies. For reference, Figure 5.1 also includes the frequencies of *they* and *them* in a similar context (3,199 in total). The amount of data from the third-person plural pronouns was so small that I decided to focus only on 1PP in this chapter. Some remarks on the use of third-person plural pronouns will be included in Section 4.1.

I chose to use the proper names *the European Community* and *the European Union* as search terms instead of the acronyms *the EC* and *the EU*, because (1) the overall frequency over the entire timeline is higher for the proper names (49,681 for the proper names; 35,678 for acronyms) and (2) based on the list of collocates of the acronyms and the proper names, the usage of these terms is fairly similar. However, a more comprehensive analysis of the use of these terms would be needed to get a better understanding of the differences in their usage in the debates. Nevertheless, as the amount of data from the proper names was already fairly large for manual analysis, I decided to exclude the acronyms from this study.

To give a general impression of the data, Figure 5.2 shows the frequencies of the search terms *the european communit** and *the european union* (case-insensitive) individually in the time period analysed. Until 1981 the frequency of *the European Community/-ies* remains below 50 hits per million words, partly because in the 1970s and 1980s it was common to talk about the Community as "the Common Market" or "the EEC". In 1994, *the European Union* became more frequent than *the European Community/-ies*, at least in the official report of the debates.

---

3. The possessive pronoun *our* was excluded from the analysis, as I wanted to focus on action (where *we* – either the UK or the EU – do something, or something is affecting or done to *us*). However, analysis of the use of *our* in this context could offer further insight into which issues are seen as belonging to the UK only, on the one hand, or as shared issues in the EU, on the other.
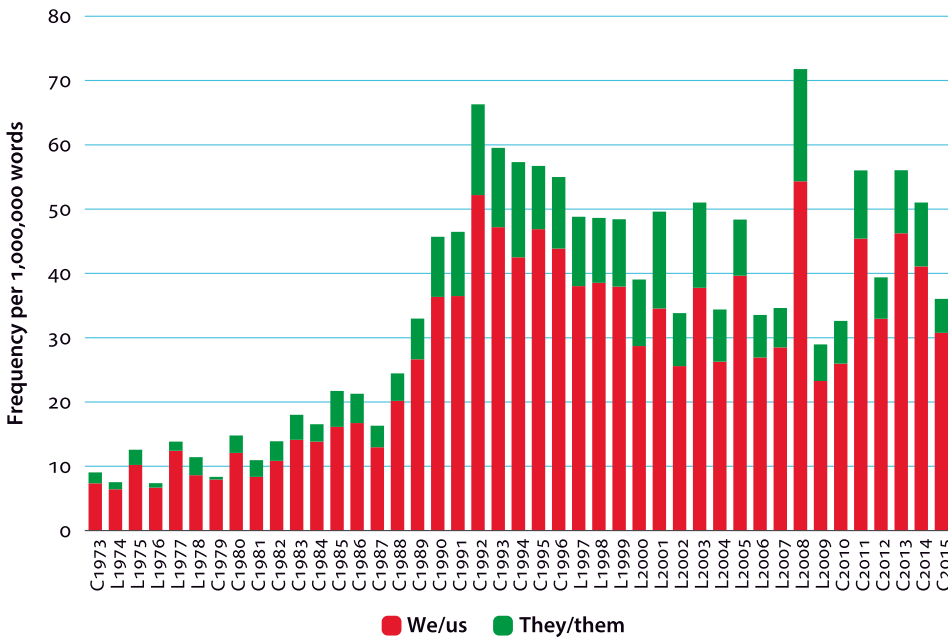
Figure 5.1 Normalised frequency of *the European Community/-ies* and *the European Union* co-occurring with *we/us* or *they/them*. The letters 'C' and 'L' on the x-axis reflect the governing party (Conservative or Labour)

Figure 5.3 shows the frequencies of 1PP in the entire timeline. The frequency of *us* remains between 10 and 13 hits per 10,000 words, while the frequency of *we* has been increasing since 1995.

Instances in which the pronoun occurred in a quote (141/11,425 instances) were excluded from further analysis, as they do not give information on the pronoun use of the speaker. Also, instances in which the search term (*the European Community/-ies* or *the European Union*) was immediately followed by a word such as *Act* or *Bill*, or it was part of some other term, such as *Treaty of the European Union*, were excluded (499 instances). In total, 5.6% of all the instances that were originally retrieved were excluded from the analysis.

After finding the relevant instances, I analysed each of them individually. I identified a referent for each pronoun by either finding a clearly identifiable anaphoric or cataphoric referent or, if there was none, on the basis of any extralinguistic information (exophora). If the referent could not be identified by looking at the concordance line alone, I examined the wider textual context. I used seven categories for the referents: "UK", "EU", "generic", "government", "group", "parliament" and "party". These categories are defined in Table 5.1.

The referent categories were defined heuristically. Some are broader than others (for instance, "group" includes regions, groups of people and groups of
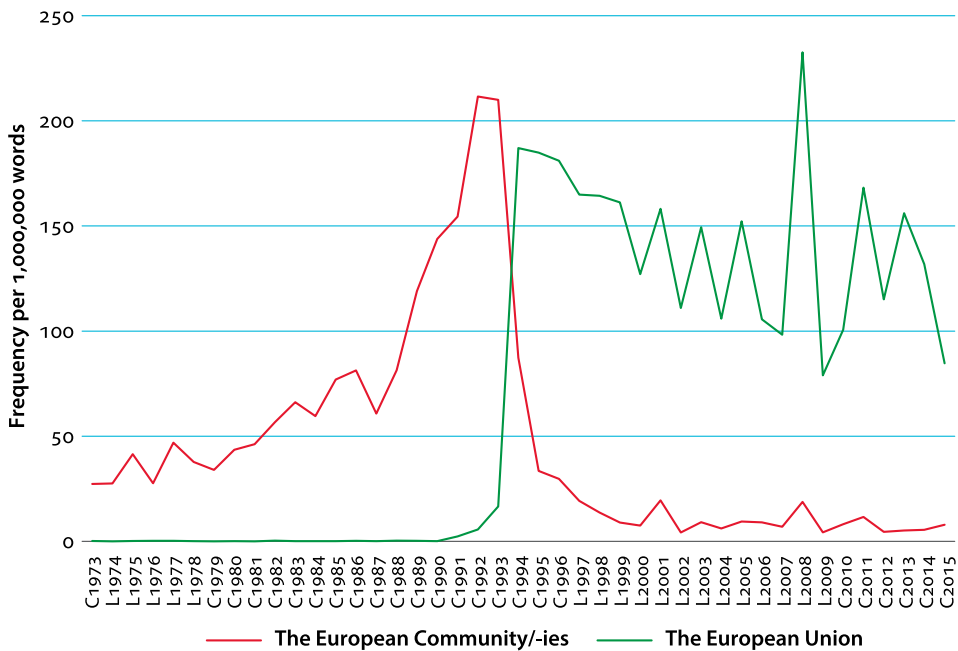
Figure 5.2 Normalised frequency of *the European Community/-ies* and *the European Union* in Hansard. The letters 'C' and 'L' on the x-axis reflect the governing party (Conservative or Labour)

countries), but I did not analyse the instances in these categories further. The categories "UK" and "EU" are the most relevant ones for this study, and the focus will be on those. After identifying the referents for the pronouns, I compared the proportions of each category and examined how they changed in the time period analysed.

I also examined the most common lexical verbs collocating with the pronoun *we* referring either to the UK or the EU. To do this, I compiled two concordance corpora, in which I included the concordance lines that were analysed as containing one or more instances of *we* referring either to the UK or the EU. The concordance lines (approximately 30 words per line) were collected into plain text files, one file containing the concordances from approximately five consecutive years. In those files, I searched for words occurring one, two or three words to the right of the pronoun *we*. In the list of collocates, I then focused on the most frequent lexical verbs (raw frequency), which gave me information on what types of actions were connected to *we* referring to the UK and the EU in each time period.
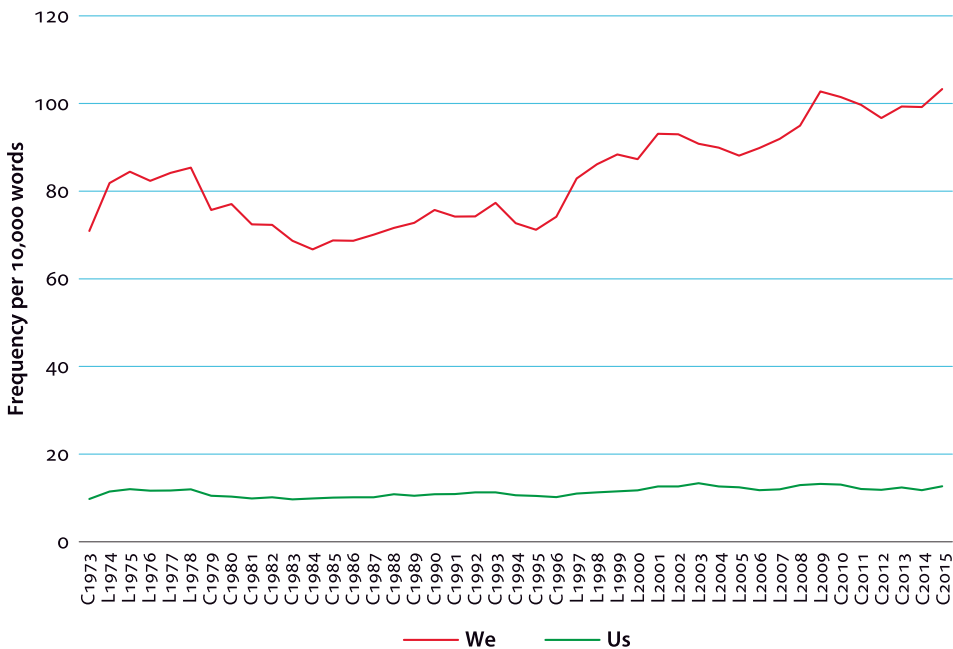
Figure 5.3 Normalised frequency of *we* and *us* in Hansard in the entire timeline. The letters 'C' and 'L' on the x-axis reflect the governing party (Conservative or Labour)

4.   *We* and *us* in relation to the EU in British parliament

In this section I present the findings of the analysis. I start with the referents of 1PP and the overall diachronic changes in their proportions. Then, I discuss some differences in the use of 1PP between the Labour and Conservative parties. This is followed by the analysis of the collocate lists of *we*, focusing on the types of lexical verbs that are connected either to the UK or the EU referred to by the pronoun.

4.1   Referents of 1PP in the context of the EU

Figure 5.4 shows the number of 1PP referring to each referent category in the context of *the European Community/-ies/Union* in the entire timeline (see Table 5.1 for descriptions of the categories). In this section, I focus on the categories "EU" and "UK". However, the second largest referent category is "parliament", whose share has stayed more or less level in the years studied. When the pronoun refers to the parliament, the contribution often includes meta-discourse, as in "*we* are talking not about European Communities but about the European Union" (William Cash, Conservative, 6 February 2008).

Table 5.1 Descriptions of the referent categories for 1PP

Category	Definition	Example
UK	British people, the UK as a nation	We import more cars than *we* export to member states of the European Union… (John Redwood, Conservative, 16 May 1990)
EU	The whole EU (member states and people), the UK included	There is no doubt that within the European Union *we* should extend the benefits of the competitive market to energy and the airline industry. (Ian Taylor, Conservative, 8 March 1995)
generic	People generally or referent could not be identified	In future, *we* will all recognise that one of the European Union's greatest successes is the fact that in all those countries there has been an aspiration for political freedom largely because of the EU's success. (Chirs Bryant, Labour, 20 December 2010)
government	Ministers, government departments	The policy of the Government is to play a strong and positive part in the development of the European Community. *We* shall again present to Parliament… (James Callaghan, Labour, 3 November 1977)
group	A certain group of people or states, or a specific region in the UK (e.g. Wales)	[…] but the fact that we were statistically linked with our colleagues and friends in Devon constituted a barrier preventing *us* from obtaining stand-alone regional status in the European Union and receiving the money. (Candy Atherton, Labour, 12 January 2005)
parliament	The people in the chamber	Will the Foreign Secretary tell *us* what successes the European Community has had in resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict? (Ernie Ross, Conservative, 21 January 1987)
party	The political party to which the speaker belongs	We fundamentally believe that British national interests are best served by playing an active and leading role in the European Union. *We* are also fundamentally a democratic party and one that believes in […] (Tim Farron, Liberal Democrat, 7 December 2010)

Figure 5.5 shows the diachronic changes in the proportions of the referent categories "UK" and "EU". 1PP clearly refer more often to the UK than to the whole EU, which is not surprising as the data come from the national parliament, where national affairs are often in focus. However, the diachronic changes in the proportions are interesting – especially the changes that have occurred since 1996. Up
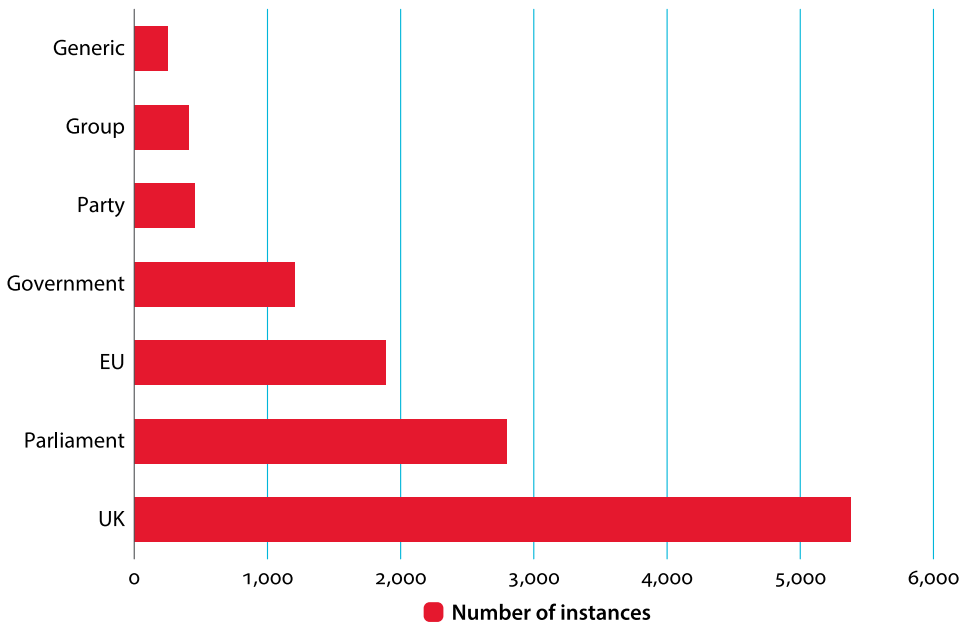
Figure 5.4 Number of 1PP referring to each referent category

until that year, the yearly fluctuations in the proportion of the pronouns referring to the EU are fairly small, if we do not take into account the first years of the membership from which there are not much data. After 1996, the proportion of 1PP with the EU as referent increases, while that with the UK as referent decreases, and in 2002 the two have almost the same proportion – approximately 30% of all 1PP analysed. However, after 2002, the proportion of UK referents increases little by little, while the proportion of EU referents decreases. Between 2011 and 2015 the proportion of the pronouns referring to the EU is at its lowest since 1983, at less than 10%. Thus, it seems that after 2002, the EU became more and more excluded from the ingroup in the British parliament.

Since 2002, there have been at least three major developments in the EU that have probably affected the attitudes towards the EU in the UK, and also the language used about the EU:

1. the introduction of the Euro, which came into existence in 1999 and into public use in 2002 in 12 EU countries, but not the UK;
2. the enlargement of the EU in 2004, which was criticised in the UK, as there was a fear that people from poorer countries would come to the UK in search of work and take advantage of the UK's benefit systems (see e.g. House of Commons debate "EU citizens (Freedom of Movement)", 2 March 2004; also Islentyeva 2018); and
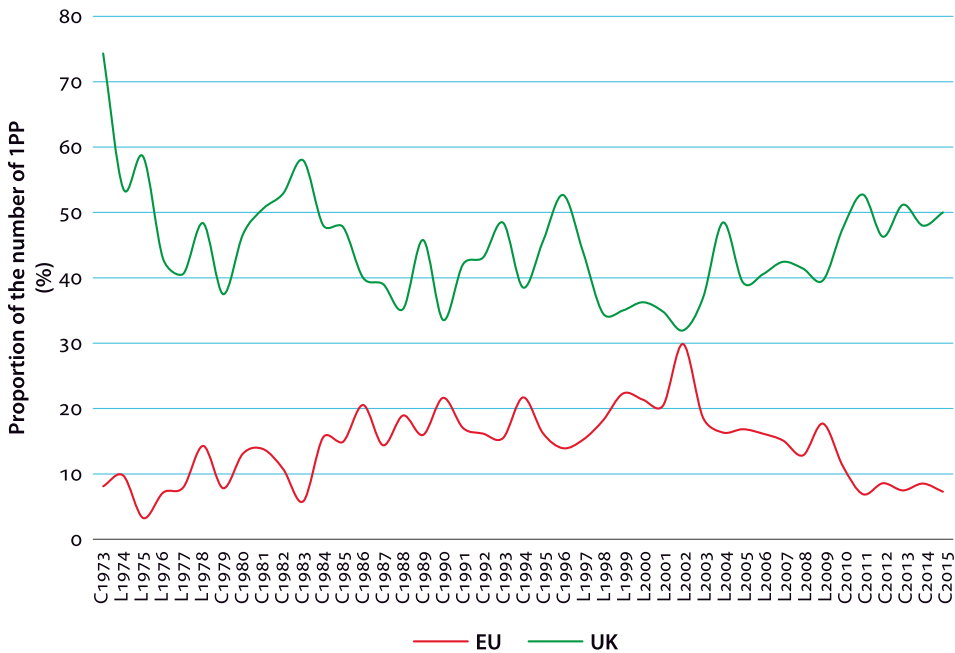
Figure 5.5 Proportions of the referent categories "UK" and "EU". The letters 'C' and 'L' on the x-axis reflect the governing party (Conservative or Labour)

3. the Treaty of Lisbon, which was signed in December 2007 and which increased the power of the European parliament, extending its legislative power to 40 new fields, including agriculture and immigration.

Perhaps these three developments, together with other issues, affected the language use so that the debates became more concerned with how *we* in the UK should act in relation to the EU and how the EU affects *us*, instead of what the EU countries are planning for the future together.[4] Furthermore, the way in which the EU is less often talked about as belonging to *us* has probably affected the public attitude towards the EU.

For reference, Figure 5.6 shows the frequencies of selected, EU-related referents of *they* and *them*. These pronouns rarely refer to the EC or EU, and the largest of the selected referent categories is "non-EU", which represents countries that are not members of the EU. Often these are countries that were about to join the EU. The high frequency of referents of this category, especially before 1995 and 2004, suggests that enlargements of the EU were an important topic in the national parliament. Additionally, the proportion of the referent category for British people

4. See also McEnery, Brezina and Baker (2019) on diachronic changes in the usage of *the European Union* in *The Times*.

("people B" in Figure 5.6) is fairly large in 2008 and after that, which suggests that the opinions of the people were increasingly raised when the EU was discussed in the debates.
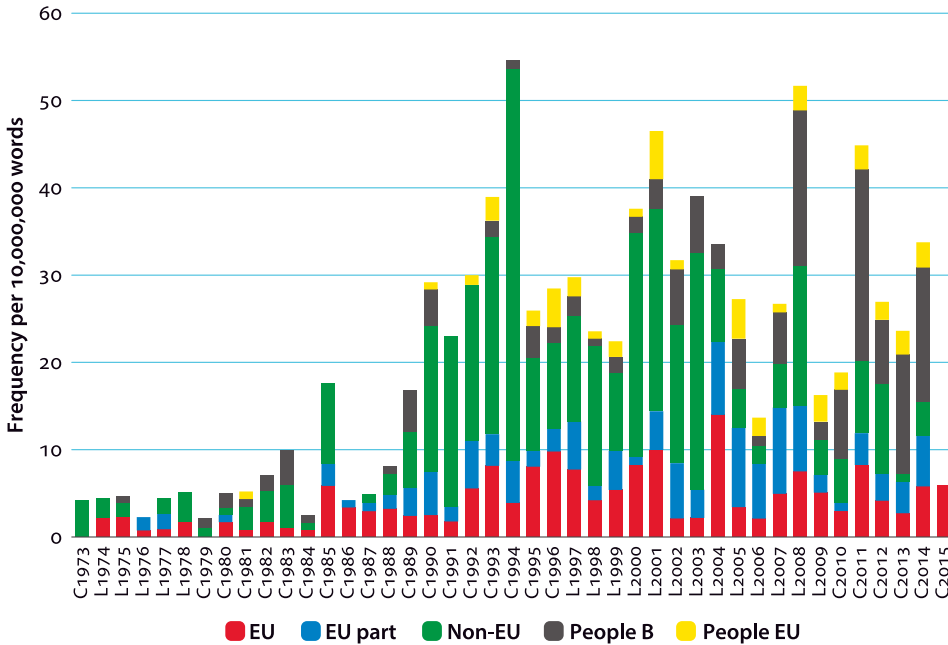

Figure 5.6 Normalised frequency of EU-related referents of *they* and *them* in the context of the EU in Hansard. The letters 'C' and 'L' on the x-axis reflect the governing party (Conservative or Labour)

Next, I consider the differences between the two major parties, Conservative and Labour, in how they have used 1PP in relation to the EU.[5]

4.2   Party differences

In the UK, opinions on the EU have never been split neatly along party-political lines, and there have been both sceptics and supporters of the EU in both of the two major parties. Furthermore, parties as well as individual politicians have changed their stance on the EU over time. For instance, in the 1970s and early 1980s, many members of the Labour party portrayed the EC as an elitist capitalist

---

5. Speeches from Liberal Democratic party were not included in this further analysis because their contributions were infrequent compared to the Conservatives and Labour in debates concerning EU matters.

club, but the development of stronger social policies in the EC in the 1980s and later Blair's pro-EU stance strengthened Labour's support for the EU. Also, Margaret Thatcher is known to have changed her attitude towards the EC during her term as Prime Minister (see e.g. Fontana & Parsons 2015). It should be noted that the findings presented here show the overall differences between the political parties, but do not take into account differences between individual MPs.

Figures 5.7 and 5.8 show the comparison between the proportions of 1PP referring to the UK and the EU in the entire timeline in the speeches of Conservative (Figure 5.7) and Labour (Figure 5.8) parties. As Figure 5.5 already showed, MPs most often speak from the national point of view, and 1PP refer more often to the UK than to the EU. This can also be seen in Figures 5.7 and 5.8. However, it seems that, overall, the Conservatives speak more from the national point of view and include the EU to the ingroup less often than Labour speakers, at least when in government. Between 1990 and 1996, when the Conservatives were in government, the proportion of 1PP referring to the UK in the Conservative contributions is close to or more than 70% (see Figure 5.7). In comparison, when the Labour party were in government between 1997 and 2010, the proportion of UK referents stays below 70% until 2006 (see Figure 5.8). Thus, in Labour MPs' speeches, EU referents' share of the pronouns is proportionally higher than in Conservative contributions. However, after 2006, EU referents' share of the pronouns drops below 30% in Labour's speeches, which suggests that the Labour party also adopted a more national point of view when talking about the EU. After 2010, the proportions of these two referents are quite similar in the speeches of both parties, suggesting that the national perspective became more common in the debates, which can also be seen in Figure 5.5.

General elections seem to have affected the way in which the EU has been talked about, in particular in the speeches of the party that campaigned in the opposition. For instance, there was a general election in 1997, and the Labour party campaigned in the opposition. Consequently, we can see that in Labour's speeches the frequency of 1PP referring to the UK increases in 1995, 1996 and 1997 (frequencies per year: 3.04, 5.52 and 8.93 per million words) while the frequency of 1PP referring to the EU stays almost the same in these three years (1.61, 1.70, 2.09). When the next general election was held in 2001, the figures do not show any notable changes in the contributions of either party. However, before the general election of 2005, when the Conservative party campaigned in the opposition, we can see an increase in the frequency of 1PP referring to the UK in 2003, 2004 and 2005 (3.47, 5.87, 6.36 per million words) and a decrease in those referring to the EU (1.74, 0.98, 0.80) in Conservative contributions. By the general election of 2010, 1PP in Conservative speeches already referred quite rarely to the whole EU, so it is difficult to say how much the elections influenced the pronoun use.
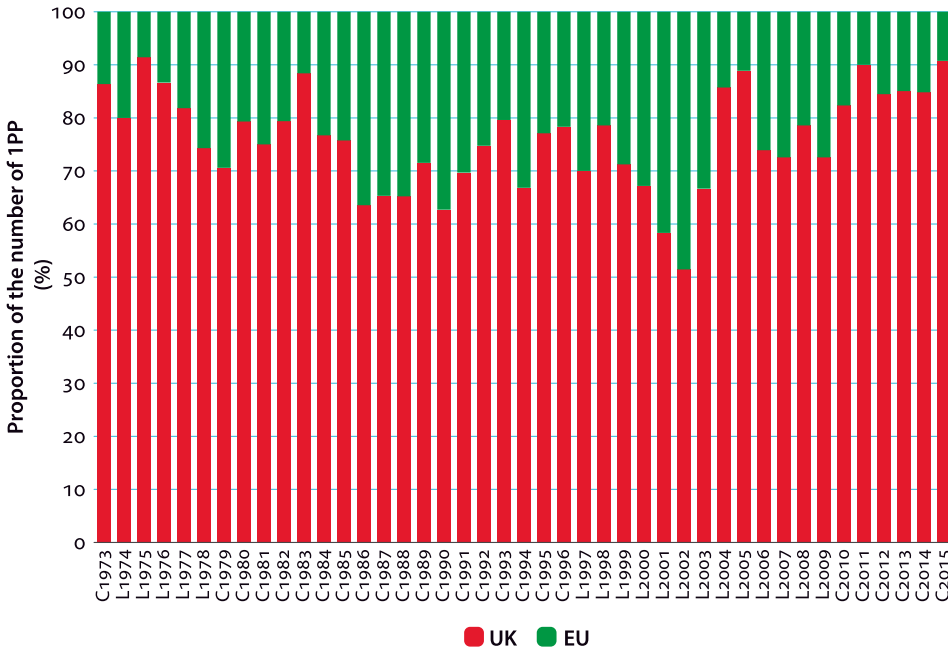
Figure 5.7 Comparison between the proportions of 1PP referring to the UK and the EU in Conservative MPs' speeches. The letters 'C' and 'L' on the x-axis reflect the governing party (Conservative or Labour)

However, these findings seem to suggest that one of the campaigning strategies for the party in the opposition has been that speeches become more nationally centered and focus on what the UK should do in relation to the EU.

4.3   Actions connected to the ingroup

In this section, I examine what types of actions are connected to the UK and the EU when *we* is used to refer to one of them. I am interested in whether the UK and the EU are described as doing similar types of actions, and also, what the verbs associated with *we* in this context tell us about the topics that are common when the EU is included in the ingroup, on the one hand, and when it is excluded from it, on the other. To do this, I analysed collocate lists of the pronoun *we*. In CDA, collocate lists are often examined in order to gain an understanding of whether a word (e.g. *refugee*) is more often surrounded by 'positive' or 'negative' words, because the context in which a word often occurs can affect the way in which the word is understood and, consequently, how people think about the entity referred to by the word (see e.g. Baker et al. 2008). However, in this case, I am not interested in the collocation or the semantic prosody (see e.g. Hunston

Figure 5.8 Comparison between the proportions of 1PP referring to the UK and the EU in Labour MPs' speeches. The letters 'C' and 'L' on the x-axis reflect the governing party (Conservative or Labour)

2007; Partington 2004; Sinclair 1991, 2004) of the pronoun *we*, but in the differences between the verbs that often occur with the pronoun when referring to the UK or the EU.

I compiled two concordance corpora to use as data in this part of the study: (1) a corpus of the concordances where *we*, co-occurring with *the European Community/-ies/Union*, refers to the UK; and (2) a corpus of the concordances where *we* refers to the EU. I focused on lexical verbs that occurred one, two or three words to the right of the pronoun, so that the verb would reflect what *we*, the UK in the context of the EU or the whole EU, are doing. I only considered raw frequencies, as the corpus was not compiled of complete speeches, but of concordance lines of approximately 30 words including the search term *the European Community/-ies* or *the European Union* and one or more instance of *we*. In the UK corpus, there were 3,901 concordance lines and 4,786 pronouns referring to the UK, and in the EU corpus, 1,490 concordance lines and 1,754 pronouns referring to the EU.[6] The window for collocates (R1–R3) was fairly small, which yields

---

6. The number of concordance lines is smaller than the number of pronouns, because in some cases there was more than one pronoun collocating with the search term.

fewer lexical verbs than there are pronouns. However, I wanted to keep the window small so that the list would not include lexical verbs that did not have the pronoun *we* as their subject.

Table 5.2 shows the list of the most frequent lexical verbs co-occurring with *we* referring to the UK in the said context. The column headings in the table show the timeline, each column representing a period of approximately ten years. The list includes approximately the 20 most frequent lexical verbs in each time period. If there were multiple collocates with the same raw frequency as the 20th in the list, I included those in the table as well. I have grouped the collocates according to the context in which they most often appear and what type of an action they signify. The names of the groups are shown at the top of each group. The raw frequency of the collocates is shown in brackets after each collocate. In the case of semi-modals (such as *need* and *want*), I excluded the instances in which they were used as modal verbs.[7]

I identified three large groups of lexical verbs in the list of collocates. The verbs in the group called "Active UK" signify that the UK is being active and getting things done in the EU. This group of verbs is the most common group in the last three periods. In Examples (1), (2) and (3), the UK is represented as active in the EU and presented as benefitting the whole EU and developing its systems.

(1)   I understand the point about the extension of the sanctions, but if we are to be effective, we must also ensure, as the right hon. Member for Devizes said, that *we get other members of the European Union on board*.

(Jack Straw, Labour, 25 June 2002)

(2)   The whole tenor of the remarks made by the hon. Member for Stone, who is no longer in his seat, was that it was "they" who were doing this to us, not that we were part of the European Union. We are part of it, and *we must make a big impact within it*.   (Mike Gapes, Lab/Co-op, 26 February 2008)

(3)   Much of labelling is now in the European Community domain, of course, and *we take a lead* in the Community in ensuring that the public have clear labelling of what is in the products that they buy.

(John Gummer, Conservative, 21 March 1991)

In each of the three examples, the UK is not only described as being an active and effective member, but also as having a significant role in the EU (see Riihimäki 2019). From the point of view of pronoun use, Example (2) is especially interesting: Mr. Gapes points out that the hon. Member for Stone (William Cash,

---

7. I decided not to focus on the use of modal verbs in this chapter, because those alone could not reveal anything about the actual actions of these entities, and thus would constitute a different type of analysis.

Table 5.2 Lexical verbs collocating with *we* referring to the UK

Rank	1973–1984	1985–1994	1995–2004	2005–2015
1	Membership (63)	Active UK (113)	Active UK (147)	Active UK (149)
	join (25)	make (30)	get (31)	get (34)
	enter (14)	take (25)	take (29)	make (24)
	withdraw (9)	play (15)	make (15)	take (18)
	leave (5)	get (15)	play (14)	work (18)
	come (4)	go (13)	work (13)	go (14)
	become (3)	lead (8)	ensure (10)	engage (11)
	remain (3)	ensure (7)	go (10)	play (11)
			use (9)	seek (10)
			seek (8)	trade (9)
			engage (8)	
2	Active UK (41)	Membership (81)	Membership (85)	Membership (103)
	get (11)	join (45)	join (41)	leave (37)
	go (10)	remain (14)	withdraw (16)	remain (27)
	work (4)	enter (10)	remain (14)	join (23)
	seek (4)	come (6)	leave (14)	stay (16)
	develop (3)	leave (6)		
	take (3)			
	trade (3)			
	use (3)			
3	Contribution (11)	Contribution (40)	Contribution (45)	Contribution (68)
	give (7)	contribute (17)	lose (14)	give (24)
	put (4)	pay (12)	give (14)	pay (22)
		give (11)	receive (9)	put (11)
			pay (8)	spend (11)
	Others (16)	Others (64)	Others (48)	Others (93)
	look (6)	need (20)	need (18)	need (42)
	tell (4)	want (11)	want (12)	want (21)
	believe (3)	say (10)	see (10)	say (12)
	need (3)	find (9)	support (8)	find (10)
	face (3)	accept (8)		like (9)
		like (6)		
Total 1 [*]	134	298	325	413
Total 2 [**]	194	547	594	825
% [†]	69	55	55	50

[*] Total raw frequency of the lexical verbs in the list.

[**] Total raw frequency of all the lexical verbs collocating with *we* in this context.

[†] The frequency of the collocates in the list counted against the frequency of all the lexical verbs in this context.

Conservative) had, in his speech, implied that the EU is 'they' who were doing something to 'us'. Mr. Gapes then corrects Mr. Cash and says that "we are part of it", thus putting the EU and the UK in the same group.

The verbs in the group "Membership" were used in contexts where the UK's membership of the EU was being discussed. Of these verbs, *join* is the most or second most frequent one until the last period. Of the 135 cases of *join*, 60 instances are in the context of "since we joined" or "when we joined", where MPs speak about what has changed since the UK joined the EU, or what the situation was before joining the EU compared to what it is now. In Example (4), David Miliband argues that the EU has changed for the better, and in Example (5), Christopher Gill brings up problems in the common fisheries policy that have existed ever since the UK joined the EC.

(4)   Labour Members know that our shared planet faces shared problems and needs shared solutions – in the UN, the Commonwealth and the European Union. *When we joined* the EU in the 1970s, there were six members. Now there are 27. Europe has changed for the better.

(David Miliband, Labour, 12 November 2007)

(5)   In truth, the problems have not arisen simply in the past 18 years: they have existed ever *since we joined* the European Community.

(Christopher Gill, Conservative, 9 June 1998)

Most of the verbs in this group are either about staying in the EU (*remain*, *stay*) or leaving it (*leave*, *come (out of)*, *withdraw*). These verbs are found in the list of top collocates in each of the time periods examined, but in the last period and especially in 2010–2015, these verbs gain more prominence. In 2010–2015, *leave* is the most frequent lexical verb collocating with *we* in this context (29 instances), and *remain* and *stay* are also among the top ten most frequent ones. In this period, 18 of the 29 cases of *leave* occur in *if*-clauses, as in "if we were to leave" and "if we chose to leave". Thus, the consequences of leaving, either good or bad, are contemplated.

In the group called "Contribution" are verbs that are used in contexts where the UK's contribution to the EU and the benefits that the UK receives from the EU are mentioned. This is connected to the common argument against EU membership in the UK, which is that the UK is a 'net contributor' to the EU, paying more than it receives. In Example (6), David Nicholson mentions this argument in his list of matters where the UK loses in the EU.

(6)   [...] the facts that the UK has for years run a sizeable deficit on trade with Europe in food and drink, and on wider trade; that *we pay more into the European Union than we get out of it*; and that the UK pays more in than any other country except Germany.   (David Nicholson, Conservative, 22 May 1996)

Next, I move on to consider the most frequent lexical verbs that co-occur with *we* referring to the EU. Table 5.3 lists approximately the top 20 collocates, grouped in a similar way as in Table 5.2, by the context in which they most often appear.

Again, I identified three groups in the list of collocates. The group that is the most frequent one in each period is called "Active EU", and it consists of verbs signifying that the EU is developing and 'moving forward',[8] and that the EU works together to achieve its goals. Furthermore, the EU is represented as a global player that can also have influence over countries outside its borders. In Example (7), in a debate about the situation in Ukraine in 2014, William Hague is talking about the actions that the EU is taking against Russia. He stresses that the EU must work together on the issue for the actions to be effective.

(7)   […] but I stressed before that when we take such measures it is important for there to be unity on them, as well as for them to be well judged and well targeted. That means *we must work on them together* in the European Union, and that is what we are doing now.   (William Hague, Conservative, 4 March 2014)

The second most frequent group in each time period is called "Negotiation" and it includes verbs related to negotiations in the EU. These verbs are used when reporting what has been agreed or discussed in meetings at EU level or what is being considered together with other members. Instead of highlighting the disagreements between the member states, these verbs represent the EU as a group that aims for consensus and as a place where everyone has a say. In Example (8), the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Geoffrey Howe, talks about what the EU is thinking about doing in relation to VAT and other tax increases.

(8)   The argument that *we are considering in the European Community* is not, in fact, whether that tax should be increased, but whether the tax revenue to be handed over as own resources should be calculated by reference to a notional increase in the tax.   (Geoffrey Howe, Conservative, 20 July 1983)

In Example (9), Prime Minister John Major is reporting about discussions at the European Council, where many issues that the UK had supported were accepted and agreed on.

(9)   Yet again the policies that we have been following in this country were widely accepted to be right across the European Union. *We agreed* that Europe must be more competitive. *We agreed* on the need for more flexible working arrangements for the reduction of labour costs and for better education and training.   (John Major, Conservative, 12 December 1994)

---

8. See Räikkönen (2020) on the use of metaphors in EU debates in British parliament.

Table 5.3 Lexical verbs collocating with *we* referring to the EU

Rank	1973–1984	1985–1994	1995–2004	2005–2015
1	**Active EU (9)**	**Active EU (64)**	**Active EU (96)**	**Active EU (56)**
	make (4)	make (13)	make (32)	make (13)
	go (3)	achieve (9)	take (13)	take (12)
	travel (1)	get (8)	achieve (8)	reform (8)
	work (1)	move (8)	create (8)	set (6)
		build (6)	get (7)	work (6)
		pursue (6)	reform (7)	get (5)
		work (5)	move (6)	deal (3)
		take (5)	put (6)	move (3)
		approach (4)	go (5)	
			enlarge (5)	
2	**Negotiation (9)**	**Negotiation (22)**	**Negotiation (36)**	**Negotiation (22)**
	consider (3)	agree (8)	agree (10)	ensure (9)
	accept (2)	ensure (6)	say (8)	agree (7)
	agree (2)	talk (4)	consider (8)	discuss (6)
	discuss (2)	look (4)	ask (5)	
			ensure (5)	
3	**Mental (4)**	**Mental (19)**	**Mental (25)**	**Mental (11)**
	miss (3)	face (9)	want (11)	face (6)
	hope (1)	want (6)	know (9)	want (5)
		know (4)	believe (5)	
	Others (1)	**Others (42)**	**Others (23)**	**Others (39)**
	fail (1)	need (16)	need (13)	need (28)
		see (13)	extend (5)	see (4)
		find (5)	welcome (5)	end (4)
		allow (4)		show (3)
		give (4)		
Total 1[*]	23	147	180	128
Total 2[**]	23	233	303	169
%[†]	100	63	59	76

* Total raw frequency of the lexical verbs in the list.

** Total raw frequency of all the lexical verbs collocating with *we* in this context.

† The frequency of the collocates in the list counted against the frequency of all the lexical verbs in this context.

As was shown earlier (Section 4.2), the party in government generally speaks more from the EU's perspective than the party in the opposition. One reason for this is that ministers report back to parliament about meetings at EU level which they participated in, as in Examples (8) and (9).

In summary, when *we* refers to the whole EU and the EU is talked about as one group acting together, the topic is often what the EU is planning on doing in the future, and how it should or is going to change how it works. In these passages, the speakers seem optimistic that the EU can be and is being developed, which, at least for the most part, gives a positive image of the EU. When *we* refers to the UK only, the most common topic is what the UK is doing in the EU. However, the other two common topics are the UK's membership of the EU, and how it has affected life in the UK, and the UK's contribution to the EU. Thus, the ingroup, namely the entity to which *we* refers, is usually represented in a positive way both in the case of *we* referring to the whole EU and to the UK only. However, when *we* is used exclusively to refer to the UK, the image of the EU is more negative: the EU is said to cost too much and leaving it is seen as an option for the UK. Thus, the ingroup/outgroup dichotomy does manifest itself in parliamentary debates in relation to the EU. Furthermore, as *we* has decreasingly referred to the whole EU since 2002, the number of positive attributes being ascribed to the EU has probably decreased as well, simply because the EU's common actions have not been raised as often.

5.   Conclusion

The findings presented in this chapter have shown that in British parliamentary debates there has, since 2002, been a decrease in the first-person plural pronouns *we* and *us* referring to the whole EU, and an increase in those referring to the UK only. Furthermore, upcoming general elections seemed to cause a change in the language use in that the national perspective became more dominant before the election in the speeches by the party campaigning in opposition. Consequently, as the EU was less often included in the ingroup and referred to by the pronoun *we*, the activities of the EU, in which the UK also participated, came up less often, while the UK's contribution to the EU and the effects of EU membership were more often mentioned. This may have caused a feeling among MPs and the public that the EU is not acting together as one group, but as separate from the UK and, also, that the EU is somewhere outside the UK and is not 'us'. The findings support the claims made by Cap (2018) and Wodak (2011) that personal pronouns can be used as a rhetorical tool to make a separation between ingroup and outgroup, and that the ingroup is often seen in a more positive light than the outgroup. The UK's

membership of the EU has been fairly frequently debated in the British parliament, and perhaps the insecurity about the country's future in the EU has affected language use. In a similar way, Cramer (2010) concluded that the Turkish representative separated Turkey from or positioned himself in opposition to the European identity by consistently using *we* to refer to Turkey instead of Europe in a panel where Turkey's possible future membership of the EU was being discussed.

The primary dataset used in this study is exceptional in the sense that it includes all the debates of the House of Commons in the time period between January 1973 and May 2015. Thus, the findings not only describe the pronoun use in relation to a specific topic, but instead show the overall development in a fairly long time period. As already pointed out, it is not surprising that, in the national parliament, the EU has been talked about as if from outside, as MPs tend to focus on national issues, while politicians at the EU level, such as members of the European parliament, focus on the shared concerns of the whole of the EU. However, the finding that the EU has been increasingly excluded from 'us' in the debates is notable. More research is needed to gain an understanding of how common it is for the EU to be referred to as if 'outside' in the national parliaments of EU member states, and whether British politicians became more nationally centered than politicians in other parts of the EU in the period leading up to the Brexit referendum. This could be done, for instance, by using the parliamentary corpora in different languages in the CLARIN infrastructure <https://www.clarin.eu/resource-families/parliamentary-corpora>.

Funding

Acknowledgements

References

Alexander, Marc & Davies, Mark. 2015. The Hansard Corpus 1803–2005. <https://www.english-corpora.org/hansard/> (13 February 2020).

Baker, Paul. 2006. *Using Corpora in Discourse Analysis*. London: Continuum.

doi Baker, Paul, Gabrielatos, Costas, Khosravinik, Majid, Krzyżanowski, Michał, McEnery, Tony & Wodak, Ruth. 2008. A useful methodological synergy? Combining critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics to examine discourses of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK press. *Discourse & Society* 19(3): 273–306.

doi Billig, Michael. 2010. *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage.

doi Blommaert, Jan & Bulcaen, Chris. 2000. Critical Discourse Analysis. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 29: 447–466.

doi Cap, Piotr. 2018. "We don't want any immigrants or terrorists here": The linguistic manufacturing of xenophobia in the post-2015 Poland. *Discourse & Society* 29(4): 380–398.

doi Chilton, Paul. 2005. Vectors, viewpoint and viewpoint shift: Toward a Discourse Space Theory. *Annual Review of Cognitive Linguistics* 3: 78–116.

Chouliaraki, Lilie & Fairclough, Norman. 1999. *Discourse in Late Modernity: Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis*. Edinburgh: EUP.

doi Cramer, Jennifer. 2010. "Do we really want to be like them?": Indexing Europeanness through pronominal use. *Discourse & Society* 21(6): 619–637.

doi de Cillia, Rudolf, Reisigl, Martin & Wodak, Ruth. 1999. The discursive construction of national identities. *Discourse & Society* 10(2): 149–173.

de Fina, Anna. 1995. Pronominal choice, identity and solidarity in political discourse. *Text: Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of Discourse* 15(3): 379–410.

doi Dekavalla, Marina. 2010. Tax, war and waiting lists: The construction of national identity in newspaper coverage of general elections after devolution. *Discourse & Society* 21(6): 638–654.

Fairclough, Norman. 1989. *Language and Power*. New York NY: Longman.

doi Fontana, Cary & Parsons, Craig. 2015. "One woman's prejudice": Did Margaret Thatcher cause Britain's anti-Europeanism? *Journal of Common Market Studies* 53(1): 89–105.

Hardt-Mautner, Gerlinde. 1995. "Only connect": Critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics. *UCREL Technical Paper 6*. Lancaster: University of Lancaster.

doi Hiltunen, Turo, Räikkönen, Jenni & Tyrkkö, Jukka. 2020. Investigating colloquialization in the British parliamentary record in late 19th and early 20th century. *Language Sciences* 79, 101270.

doi Hunston, Sarah. 2007. Semantic prosody revisited. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 12(2): 249–268.

Imao, Yasu. 2008–2018. *CasualConc* (Version 2.0.7.) [Computer software] <https://sites.google.com/site/casualconc/download> (17 August 2021).

doi Íñigo-Mora, Isabel. 2004. On the use of the personal pronoun *we* in communities. *Journal of Language and Politics* 3(1): 27–52.

Islentyeva, Anna. 2018. The undesirable migrant in the British press: Creating bias through language. *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 119(2): 419–442.

Krizsán, Attila. 2011. *"The EU is Not Them, But Us!" The First Person Plural and the Articulation of Collective Identities in European Political Discourse*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars.

doi Lenz, Friedrich. 2003. Deictic conceptualisation of space, time and person: Introduction. In *Deictic Conceptualisation of Space, Time and Person* [Pragmatics & Beyond New Series 112], Friedrich Lenz (ed.), vi–xiv. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Ludlow, Piers. 2002. Us or them? The meaning of Europe in British political discourse. In *The Meaning of Europe*, Mikael af Malmborg & Bo Stråth (eds), 101–124. Oxford: Berg.

McEnery, Tony, Brezina, Vaclav & Baker, Helen. 2019. The UK, Europe and the path to Brexit – the long view: Europe in two centuries of British newspapers. Plenary given at BCICLE 2019: 8th Biennial International Conference on the Linguistics of Contemporary English, 26–28 September 2019. Bamberg, Germany.

doi Mollin, Sandra. 2007. The Hansard hazard: Gauging the accuracy of British parliamentary transcripts. *Corpora* 2(2): 187–210.

Mühlhäusler, Peter & Harré, Rom. 1990. *Pronouns and People: The Linguistic Construction of Social and Personal Identity*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

doi Oddo, John. 2011. War legitimation discourse: Representing 'us' and 'them' in four US presidential addresses. *Discourse & Society* 22(3): 287–314.

doi Partington, Alan. 2004. "Utterly content in each other's company": Semantic prosody and semantic preference. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 9(1): 131–156.

doi Partington, Alan, Duguid, Alison & Taylor, Charlotte. 2013. *Patterns and Meanings in Discourse: Theory and Practice in Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS)* [Studies in Corpus Linguistics 55]. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

doi Petersoo, Pille. 2007. What does 'we' mean? National deixis in the media. *Journal of Language and Politics* 6(3): 419–436.

doi Proctor, Katarzyna & Su, Lily I-Wen. 2011. The first person plural in political discourse: American politicians in interviews and in a debate. *Journal of Pragmatics* 43: 3251–3266.

Räikkönen, Jenni. 2020. Metaphors separating the United Kingdom from the EU in British parliamentary debates from 2000 to 2016. In *Metaphor in Political Conflict: Populism and Discourse*, Ruth Breeze & Carmen Llamas (eds), 27–54. Pamplona: EUNSA.

doi Riihimäki, Jenni. 2019. At the heart and in the margins: Discursive construction of British national identity in relation to the EU in British parliamentary debates from 1973 to 2015. *Discourse & Society* 30(4): 412–431.

Sinclair, John. 1991. *Corpus, Concordance, Collocation*. Oxford: OUP.

doi Sinclair, John. 2004. *Trust the Text: Language, Corpus and Discourse*. London: Routledge.

doi Slembrouck, Stef. 1992. The parliamentary Hansard 'verbatim' report: The written construction of spoken discourse. *Language and Literature* 1(2): 101–119.

doi van Dijk, Teun. 1993. *Elite Discourse and Racism*. Newbury Park CA: Sage.

doi Wodak, Ruth. 2011. "Us" and "them": Inclusion and exclusion – Discrimination via discourse. In *Identity, Belonging and Migration*, Gerard Delanty, Ruth Wodak & Paul Jones (eds), 54–77. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Wodak, Ruth, de Cillia, Rudolf & Reisigl, Martin. 2009. *The Discursive Construction of National Identities*. Edinburgh: EUP.

ARTICLE
2

At the Heart and in the Margins: Discursive Construction of British National Identity in Relation to the EU in British Parliamentary Debates from 1973 to 2015

Jenni Riihimäki

Article

At the heart and in the margins: Discursive construction of British national identity in relation to the EU in British parliamentary debates from 1973 to 2015

Jenni Riihimäki
Tampere University, Finland

Abstract

The study focuses on the discursive construction of the UK's identity in the European Union (EU) in the debates of the British House of Commons. The data come from the *Hansard*, and the time period analysed is from the start of the UK's membership in the European Community (EC) in 1973 up to the general election of 2015, in which Brexit, that is, the national referendum on leaving the EU, was one of the main themes. Methods of corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) were adopted in the analysis of the debates. The findings suggest that even though the identity of a 'leader' in the EU has been frequently constructed in parliamentary discourse, a competing representation of the United Kingdom as an outsider and as a nation insecure of its role in the EU has been strongly present throughout the membership.

Introduction

In this article, I examine the discursive construction of the UK's national identity in relation to the European Union (EU) in the debates of the British House of Commons. The

Corresponding author:
Jenni Riihimäki, Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences, Tampere University, Kalevantie 4, 33100 Tampere, Finland.
Email: jenni.riihimaki@tuni.fi

focus is on how Members of Parliament (MPs) have represented the UK's role in the EU since the start of the membership in 1973 up to the general election of 2015 in which Prime Minister Cameron promised a vote on EU membership if the Conservatives win the election. A more explicit campaigning for Leave and Remain began after the election of 2015, and therefore that period is not included in the analysis. I am interested in how the representations of the UK's role as a member of the EU changed during the membership and how the membership was seen as affecting the country's identity. The study is part of a larger diachronic study in which changes in the discursive construction of the EU, and the UK's role in it, are examined in British parliamentary debates and press.[1]

The United Kingdom had a role in increasing co-operation between European countries after the Second World War, but it did not take part in founding the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957. According to Young (1993), the United Kingdom did not want to be treated as 'just another European country', but instead preferred being 'associated' with the EEC, without any loss of sovereignty (pp. 14, 32). The country joined the European Communities (ECs) in 1973 after two vetoed membership applications, but the debates over membership continued (Kavanagh et al., 2006: 107, 114–115). The Labour Party arranged the first referendum on continued membership of the EC already in 1975, and the country has negotiated five opt-outs in different areas of legislation and treaties in the Union.[2] In June 2016, the Conservative Party organised the second referendum on the membership, in which a small majority (51.9%) voted for leaving the Union (turnout 72.2%).

Many of the previous linguistic studies on the UK's identity in the EU have concentrated on small selections of texts about the EU, whereas studies using quantitative methods and systematically analysing changes in texts from a long time period are scarce, and this study aims at filling that gap. Unlike previous studies, which have tended to focus on well-known speeches and debates, this study examines 'everyday' parliamentary debates. By methods of corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS), I analyse what types of identities have been constructed for the United Kingdom as a member of the EU and what differences there are in the ways different political parties represent the UK's role.

The article is divided into four main sections. I start by giving an overview of the discursive construction of national identities. This is followed by the introduction of the data and methods used in the study. I present the results of the analysis in the fourth section, and discussion on the results is included in the concluding section.

Discursive construction of national identity

According to *social identity theory* (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), which was developed further for linguistic studies by Bucholtz and Hall (2005), identities are relational in that they are always constituted in relation to others (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005: 585). When talking about national identities, this means that by comparing the characteristics of *our country* to those of other countries, we construe the sense of who *we* are in relation to others. National identities, as well as identities in general, are not stable but constantly in the process of change, and they are produced and reproduced discursively (Hall, 1996: 4; Wodak et al., 2009: 4). Thus, diachronic analysis of data from a long time period is necessary to reveal the changes in identity constructions and how they are connected to the

changes in the context in which they are constructed. Also, as Reicher and Hopkins (2001) point out, a self-definition provides 'a guide to action', as it determines our values and beliefs and how we see the world in which we live (p. 56). In the case of the United Kingdom, the way the British people see themselves and the country's relation to the EU has an effect on whether they see leaving the EU as being in their interests (Wenzl, 2018).

Pronoun use, in particular, has been considered as deserving special attention in the field of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1989: 127–128; Meyer, 2001: 16), especially in political rhetoric, as strategic use of pronouns is an important technique in making the separation between in-group and out-group (Wodak, 2011). According to Billig (2010), small deictic words such as *we, here* and the definite article *the* function as 'flags' with which to refer to the national context in a habitual way (p. 99). As a result, *our* national identity is constructed by separating *us* from *them*, since *we* implies that there is *they*, and *here* implies *there* (Billig, 2010: 99). The words of national deixis are characteristic for *banal nationalism*, in which the sense of community is implied without the need to name the country explicitly (Billig, 2010: 98). For instance, in a London-based newspaper 'the Prime Minister' normally refers to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, unless another country is mentioned.

Different aspects of national identity have been studied by analysing national deixis and especially the use of pronouns. In particular, Scottish devolution, which led to the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, has encouraged researchers to study the construction of Scottish identity versus British identity in the Scottish press (e.g. Higgins, 2004; Ichijo, 2012; Law, 2001; Petersoo, 2007). Previous literature on the UK's identity in the EU has found two opposing types of representation of the United Kingdom: the first represents the country as an important member of the EU that leads others (Gibbins, 2014), while the second type represents the United Kingdom as somehow separate from the Union (Wodak, 2016). Both Gibbins (2014) and Wodak (2016) analysed discourses on the EU, Gibbins concentrating on predication, presupposition and subject positioning, while Wodak used methods of discourse-historical analysis and argumentation analysis. Gibbins (2014) analysed the discursive construction of the UK's national identity in a selection of parliamentary debates, political speeches, memoirs and diaries produced in relation to three major events in the history of the United Kingdom in the EU: the ECs Membership Referendum in 1975, the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 and the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007. Gibbins (2014) concluded that the most pervasive identity that is visible over all three events is that the United Kingdom is seen as a 'power that matters', and that the 'characteristic of leadership is frequently referenced' (p. 180). Wodak (2016) analysed Prime Minister David Cameron's 'Bloomberg Speech' on the EU delivered in 2013 and examined the discursive construction of *us* and *them*, the United Kingdom and the Europeans. Wodak (2016) noted that, in his speech, Cameron placed the United Kingdom outside Europe and described Europe in a positive way as the 'geographical neighbourhood' of which the United Kingdom is not part (pp. 9–10). Also, by describing the country as an 'island nation', Cameron strengthened the image of the United Kingdom as separate from the European continent, while he also stated that the United Kingdom is at 'the heart of Europe' (Wodak, 2016: 18; see also Musolff, 2017).

This study focuses on the use of national deixis, more specifically on the use of *we* and *us* referring to the United Kingdom in the context of the EU, and I look at the topic

from a wider perspective than has been done in previous studies. In the next section, I describe the methodology in more detail.

Data and methods

The primary data for the study consist of all the debates of the British House of Commons from the start of the UK's membership of the EC in January 1973 to May 2015, the end of the parliamentary session before the general election of 2015, in which Brexit was one of the main themes. The data come from the *Hansard*, which is the name used for the official transcripts of the parliamentary debates in the United Kingdom and in many Commonwealth countries. For the debates from 1973 to 2004, I used a local copy of the *Hansard Corpus* (Alexander and Davies, 2015–),[3] and the debates from 2005 to 2015 I collected from the *Commons Hansard archives* and compiled them into an unannotated corpus for this study. The size of the two corpora combined is circa 450 million words. A local copy of the *Hansard Corpus* enabled me to study longer excerpts of text, and even complete speeches if needed, which is not be possible with the online version of the corpus.

As discussed by Mollin (2007) and Slembrouck (1992), using the transcripts of the debates provided by the *Hansard* as data in studying the language spoken in the British parliament has its restrictions, as the transcriptions differ in many ways from the language actually used by the speakers represented in the record. However, since the editing of the *Hansard* mostly concerns certain characteristics of spoken language, such as hesitations and inconsistencies, it does not affect the way the United Kingdom is represented in the speeches.

I adopted methods of CADS (Baker, 2006; Partington et al., 2013). Corpus linguistic methods were utilised to find relevant parts of text for a closer analysis. For this, I used CasualConc (version 2.0.7), a concordance programme that can read text in Extensible Markup Language (XML) files. Using the concordancer, I searched for excerpts in which the first-person plural pronoun *we* or *us* co-occurred with *the European Community* or *Communities* (from 1973 to 1993) or *the European Union* (from 1994 to 2015)[4] in a span of nine words to the left and right. The span usually used when analysing collocation, for instance, is five words to the left and right (Baker et al., 2008: 278). Using a wider span returned more data to analyse, and as I analysed each instance manually, the strength of the connection between the pronoun and the search term is not as relevant in this study as in studies analysing collocation.

The search was case-insensitive and clause boundaries were ignored. It retrieved 12,187 hits in total, and Figure 1 presents the normalised frequencies of the hits per year.

Figures 2 and 3 show the development of the frequencies of the search words individually. Figure 2 shows that the frequencies of the pronouns *we* and *us* are fairly stable, with a steady increase of the pronoun *we* from 1985 onwards. In Figure 3, we can see that in 1994, the term used in the parliament (or at least in the *Hansard*) changed and *the European Union* became more frequent than *the European Community*. For this reason, I used the search term *the European Communit** until 1993 and *the European Union* from 1994 onwards.

I analysed all the hits retrieved by the query in two stages. First, I manually identified the referents of the first-person plural pronouns (*we* or *us*). This was done either by
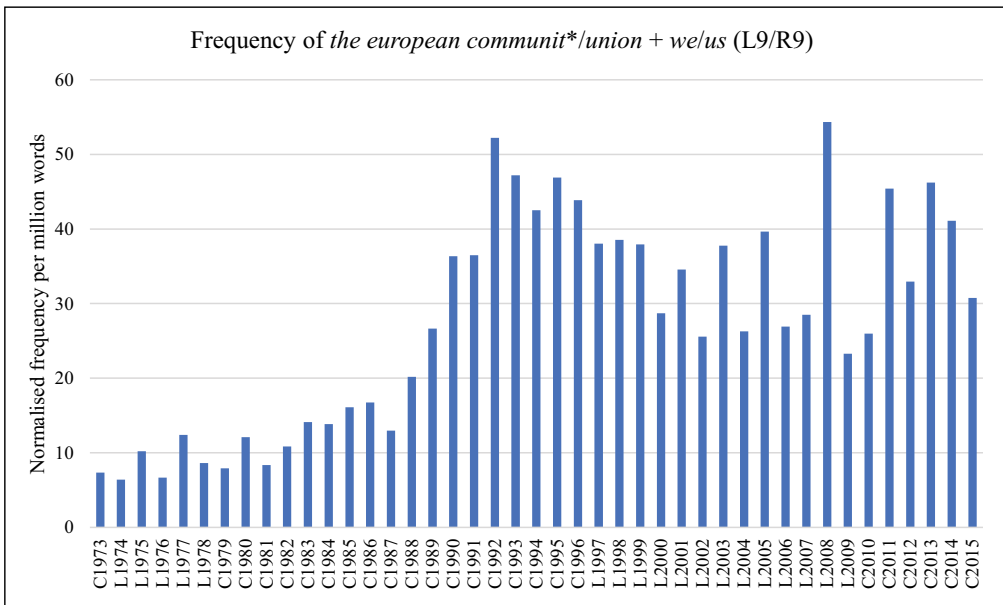
Figure 1. Normalised frequencies of *the European Communit**/*Union* + *we*/*us* (L9/R9). The letters 'C' and 'L' stand for the party in government (Conservative or Labour).
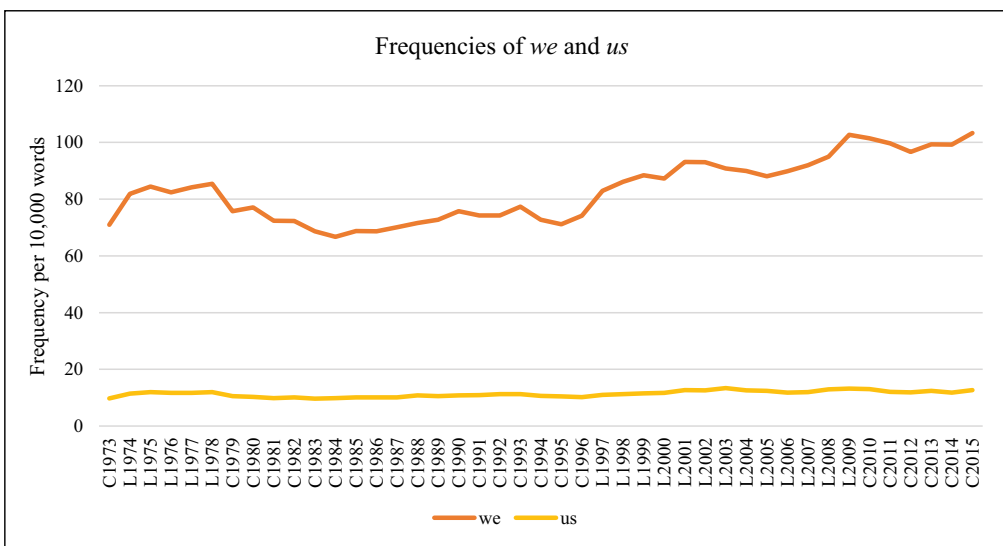

Figure 2. Frequencies of the pronouns *we* and *us* in the *Hansard*.

finding a clearly identifiable referent to the pronoun in the surrounding text (anaphora or cataphora) or, if there was none, on the basis of extralinguistic information (exophora). The pronouns whose referent could be categorised as 'the UK' – the country or the
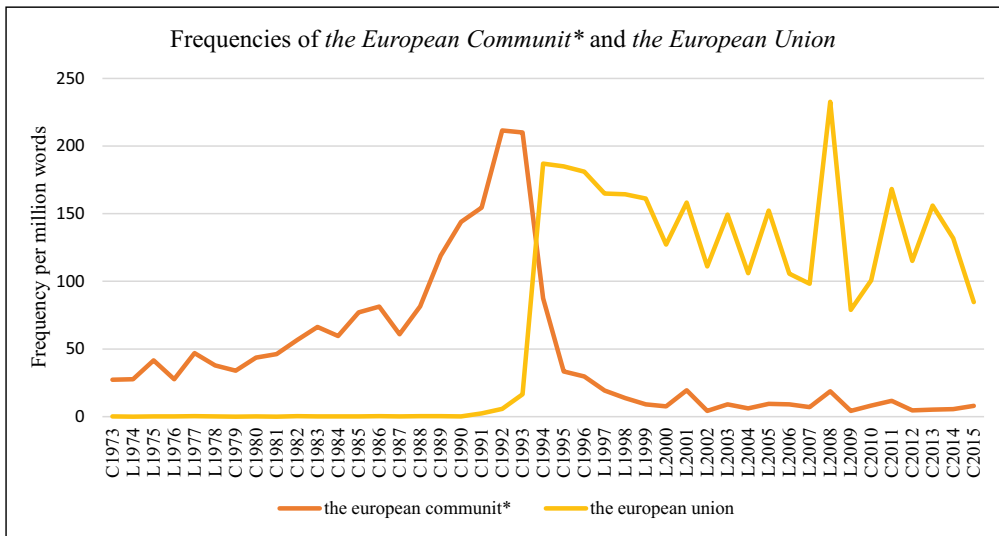
Figure 3. Frequencies of *the European Community/-ies* and *the European Union* in the *Hansard.*

British people – were included in the second stage of the study. I ignored all the instances in which the pronoun was inside a quote (141 hits) or the search term was included in another term (such as 'Treaty of the European Union') (499). There were also instances in which the pronoun did not occur in the span that was set (762), and these were naturally ignored as well. Overall, the excluded hits accounted for 12% of all the hits that were retrieved.

In the second stage, I read through the hits and searched for the ones in which the character or actions of the United Kingdom in the EU were somehow described, that is, descriptions of how *we are* and *act* in the EU, and how the membership *affects us*. This was followed by a closer analysis of these excerpts, in which I divided the instances heuristically into identity categories on the basis of what type of a role or identity was constructed in them.

Table 1 shows how many of the hits retrieved by the original query were included in the closer analysis after excluding all the irrelevant instances. The first column shows the number of hits retrieved by the query, the second column the number of hits in which the referent of the pronoun was put in the category 'the UK', and the third the number of hits in which the role or identity of the United Kingdom was described.

In the next section, I introduce the identity categories that were found and discuss each of them separately.

The UK's identities in the EU

The representations of the UK's identities in the EU that were repeatedly constructed in the parliamentary debates were grouped into the following five categories. The United Kingdom as

Table 1. The number of hits that were included in the closer analysis after excluding the irrelevant instances.

Query	Hits retrieved	'the UK' as referent	Representation of identity
The EC/EU+ *we* (L9/R9)	10,503	4786 (46%)	805 (8%)
The EC/EU+ *us* (L9/R9)	1684	596 (35%)	82 (5%)
Total	12,187	5382 (44%)	887 (7%)

EC: European Community; EU: European Union.

Table 2. Identities constructed by the political parties.

Category	Conservative	Labour	LD/Lib	Lab/Co-op	Others[a]	Total
Insecure	147	66	17	5	1	236
Leader	159	61	11	2	2	235
Willing	89	55	4	5	0	153
Isolated	48	38	9	4	1	100
Reluctant	42	21	3	1	0	67
Misc	55	32	3	3	3	96
Total	540	273	47	20	7	887

[a]Alliance (1), DUP (1), PC (1), SDLP (1), SDP (1), SNP (1), UUP (1).

1. A *leader*
2. A *willing member*
3. *Insecure of its role*
4. A *reluctant member*
5. An *isolated member*

Instances that could not be put into any coherent category in this way were put in the category *Miscellaneous* (96/887). In these, no clear patterns emerged, or there were only a few instances that could be put into a common category. Below are two examples of instances in the *Miscellaneous* category (emphases in all of the examples are mine):

1) She told him, and through him **the European Community** and the rest of this country, that *we* would not be a soft touch. (Iain Sproat, Con, 21 May 1979)

2) *We* are not functioning only in the European Union or the European continent. (Jacqui Lait, Con, 17 June 1994)

The representations of the UK's identity in the *Miscellaneous* category are also interesting, but I will not discuss them further in this study, as I want to focus on the more coherent categories. Table 2 shows the distribution of the identity categories between political parties across the entire timeline. The numbers represent the raw number of instances in which the identity was found.

As can be seen in Table 2, the largest categories overall are the *insecure* and *leader* categories. The speeches by different political parties are not distributed evenly, which is why the raw numbers cannot be directly compared but the ranks can. In the case of the Conservative Party, the *leader* and *insecure* categories are clearly the most frequent ones. For the Labour Party, the sizes of the categories are more even, with the *insecure, leader* and *willing member* identities being the most frequently constructed ones.[5]

There was a long period of Conservative government from 1979 to 1997, which was followed by an almost as long period of Labour government from 1997 to 2010. During the Conservative administration, the *leader* identity was clearly the most frequently constructed identity in the speeches of Conservative MPs (124/344 instances), while Labour MPs represented the United Kingdom mostly as an *insecure* member (25/68) and as an *isolated member* (20/68). During the Labour government, these were the other way around: Labour MPs represented the United Kingdom as a *leader* (51/153), while the *insecure* identity was the most frequent in the speeches of Conservative speakers in the opposition (38/84). This suggests that government want to show confidence in the UK's international role, because that helps them build public trust. Opposition, on the contrary, want to challenge the government and offer alternative solutions, because in order to be successful at the next election, the opposition need to show that the government's actions are not making the country stronger.

Next, I will present each identity category in more detail. I start with the more 'pro-EU' identities, in which the United Kingdom is represented as working for and with the EU (*leader* and *willing member*). Then I introduce the *insecure* identity, and the last two are more 'anti-EU' identity categories: *reluctant member* and *isolated member*.

The United Kingdom as a leader

The *leader* role is one of the most common roles assigned to the United Kingdom in the parliamentary debates. This identity category is also the clearest one, since words such as *leader, lead* or *leadership* are explicitly used, as in example 3, where Mr Vaz speaks about immigration:

> 3) The new members of **the European Union** treat our country with such respect. They know that *we* have shown *leadership* on this issue. (Keith Vaz, Lab, 1 November 2005)

When the United Kingdom is represented as a *leader*, it is described as being at the forefront of developments in the EU. Phrases such as 'playing a major role' (Hague, Con, 2011), 'exercise our leading role' (Arnold, Con, 1992), 'taking the lead' (Major, Con, 2011) and 'shaping the debate' (Hoban, Con, 2012) are used to construct a picture of a dynamic country. There are also other types of 'leading', in which the role is more implicit. The most common of these is the type in which the United Kingdom is represented as being *ahead* or *above* the other member states. When the United Kingdom is compared with other EU countries, comparative and superlative adjectives, such as in *higher standards, better placed, lowest employment rates, highest growth, best practice* and *most attractive*, are also used to construct the leader role.

The *leader* identity is also constructed by highlighting the great influence that the United Kingdom has in the EU. Words such as *central, core, heart* and *pivotal* are used to highlight the country's importance in the EU, and the United Kingdom is described as having a *significant* or *prominent role* and being a *major player*. The *leader* identity can also be seen in the way the United Kingdom is represented as an example to others in the EU (see Alasuutari et al., 2018), as in example 4:

> 4) It is important not only that we have the right approach, policy and scrutiny as regards the handling of imports, but that *we encourage others* elsewhere in **the European Union** to *learn from our experiences* and take their own precautions. (Margaret Jackson, Lab, 28 June 2001)

Figure 4 shows that, overall, the Conservatives represent the country as a *leader* most often, but, when in government, the Labour also constructs this identity. There are few years in which the *leader* identity did not come up in the data and they are all in the first decade of the membership (1974, 1979 and 1981). However, there are examples of the *leader* role already in the first years of the membership. Example 5 contains the first instance of the word *lead* in the data, which is from 1973, the year the United Kingdom joined the EC:

> 5) One hopes that *we can lead* **the European Community** *in hallmarking* in future. (Jerry Wiggin, Con, 6 April 1973)

In example 5, the language is more modest than later during the membership in that there is *hope* that the United Kingdom can lead on a very specific issue, namely, hallmarking. Mr Wiggin continues by saying that 'it is to be *hoped* that on some date *in the long-term future*', the United Kingdom will get other countries to agree to the same system. Thus, British leadership is not portrayed as being strong at the beginning, even though the identity is visible throughout the membership. However, from 1985 onwards the tone changes. Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister in 1979, and the government's economic policies were often discussed and evaluated in the parliamentary debates. Consequently, in the period from 1985 to 1996, the *leader* identity is mostly constructed by talking about the economic success. Especially in this period, the United Kingdom is described as being *ahead* or *above* the other EC countries. Also, the use of the word *lead* becomes more common from 1985 onwards, and it is used in wider contexts than before, meaning that it is not only single issues on which the United Kingdom takes the lead. For instance, in example 6, the United Kingdom is said to be the leader in the EC's foreign policy:

> 6) …if we take the initiative in the economic area of **the European Community**, *we* can also continue and strengthen *our role as the leader in foreign policy*. (Ian Taylor, Con, 11 July 1988)

The peak in 1988 (see Figure 4), however, largely comes from the Junior Health Minister and the Minister of Roads and Transport describing the United Kingdom as the leader in the areas of health care and traffic safety.

After the Conservatives had been in the government for almost two decades, the Labour party won the general election of 1997 and Tony Blair began his first term as
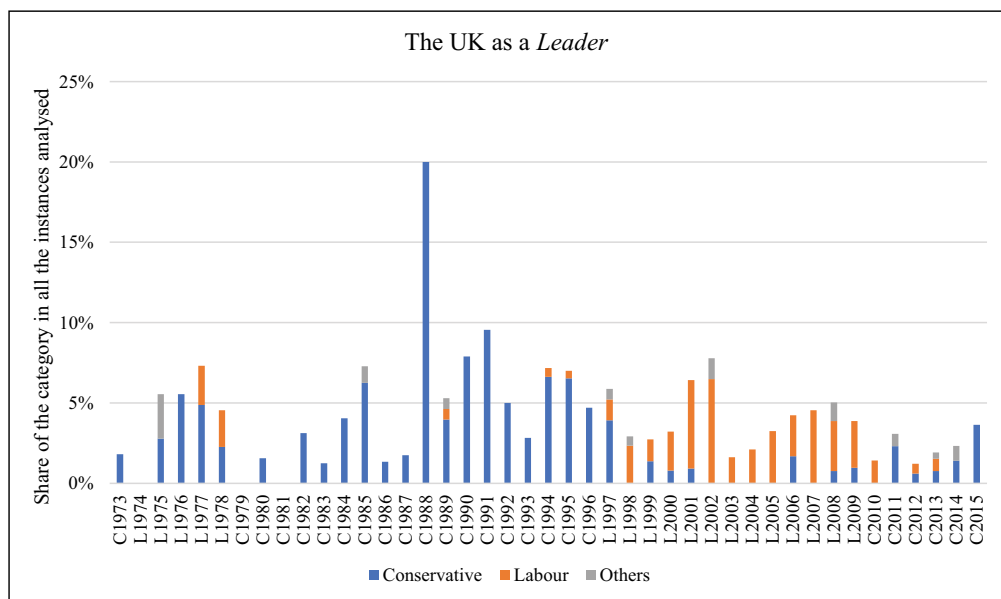
Figure 4. Shares of the instances where *leader* identity was found. The number is counted against all the instances where 'the UK' was the referent of the first-person pronoun.

Prime Minister. From 1997 onwards, comparing the UK's economic success to that of the other EU countries becomes less frequent. In this period, the *leader* role is constructed in more implicit ways. In example 7, the metaphor of the United Kingdom being 'at the heart' of the EU (see Musolff, 2017) appears for the first time in this data:

> 7) *We* are very much *at the heart* of the European Union, and are driving forward the changes. (Elliot Morley, Lab, 16 October 2002)

Closer to the Brexit vote, the *leader* identity becomes less visible and there are constructions such as '*still* a hugely influential voice' (Vaz, Lab, 2008), 'it *should not be forgotten* that we are valuable members' (Wilson, DUP, 2008) and 'we *still* have a massive part to play' (Buckland, Con, 2014) which suggest that the *leader* role is more forced and not as evident as it was before.

The United Kingdom as a willing member

When the United Kingdom is represented as a *willing member*, it is described as being a *positive* and *active* member that works together with other member states. In example 8, Mr Trippier uses exactly those words in describing the United Kingdom in the EC:

> 8) My hon. Friend places me in a difficult position. As he knows, *we* are *a keen, active and positive member* of **the European Community** and we participate actively at European Council meetings of Ministers. (David Trippier, Con, 27 June 1990)
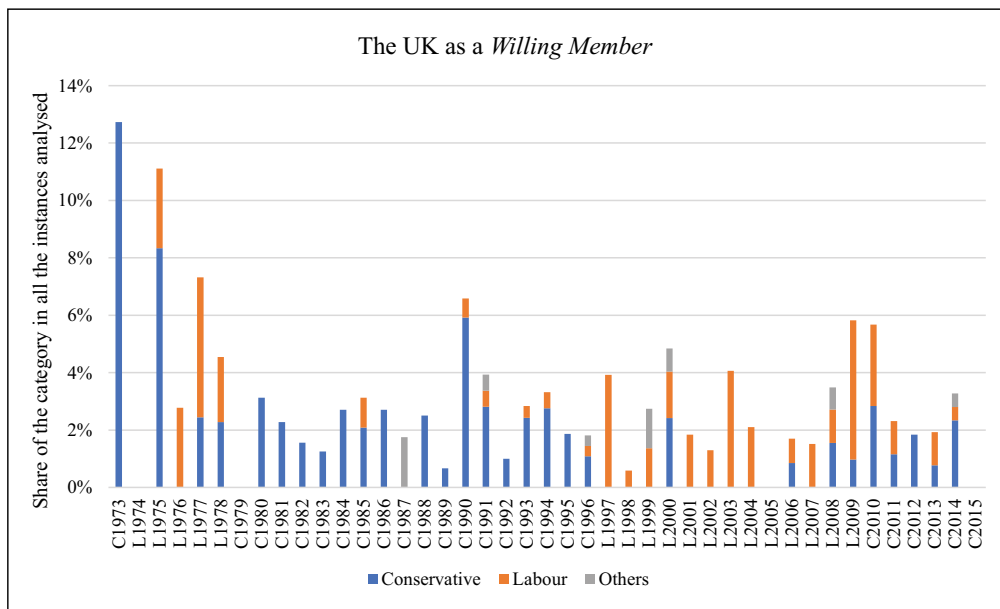
The UK as a *Willing Member*

Figure 5. Shares of the instances where *willing member* identity was found. The number is counted against all the instances where 'the UK' was the referent of the first-person pronoun.

As can be seen in Figure 5, similarly to the *leader* identity, the *willing member* identity is mostly constructed by the party in government. However, in the 2010s, the Labour continue to construct this identity in opposition, as well, which suggests that promoting this type of an identity was not only in the interests of the party in government but became more a cross-party issue.

In the first years of the membership, the *willing member* identity is brought up fairly often, and in 1973 and 1975, it is the largest identity category in the data. In this category, the speakers bring up the benefits of membership, one of which is said to be that the United Kingdom has more influence through the EU. After the referendum on continuing membership of the EC in 1975, the speakers highlight that *now* the United Kingdom is a committed member and will play a constructive part in the EC, as in example 9, where the topic is the EC's agricultural policy:

9) We hold this debate today in the knowledge that, as a nation, *we are now a fully committed member* of **the European Community**. The shadows of renegotiation are over. (Robert Hicks, Con, 17 October 1975)

In the 1980s, there are not many examples of the *willing member* identity, but in the 1990s, this identity becomes more visible again, and the pattern *we play a(n)* ADJ *part/role* is used, highlighting how active the United Kingdom is in the EU. Examples of the adjectives used in this pattern are: *full, major, constructive, positive, active* and *significant*. Other similar constructions are also used, as in 'we are *full players*' (Devlin, Con, 1996) and 'highly valued by our partners in the European Union for *the role we play* in that debate' (Brown, Lab, 1999).

As debates on EU membership become more common in the parliament towards the EU referendum, pro-EU MPs try to convince the parliament that the country is *better off* in the EU than outside it, which is why the share of this identity does not decrease. However, while the United Kingdom is still described as being active and playing a full part, words such as *remain* and *maintain* are used, which give the impression that this type of role is not self-evident anymore. In example 10, Mr Lidington asserts that even though the United Kingdom does not use euro, is not part of the Schengen area, and co-operates with countries outside the EU, the country's role in the EU has not changed:

> 10) That does not mean, as some have said, pulling back from our relationship with **the European Union**. *We remain a full member* of the European Union, and that membership is vital to our national interest. (David Lidington, Con, 13 December 2011)

Thus, the tendency is similar to that discussed in relation to the *leader* identity.

The United Kingdom as insecure of its role

Leaving the EU has been discussed in the British parliament ever since the United Kingdom joined the EC. At the same time, the United Kingdom has tried to establish a prominent role in the Union from which to lead and influence others. In the debates, the United Kingdom is often raised *above* other countries, where it is separate from the Union, but at the same time at the *centre* of it (in the *leader* category). MPs try to find a balance between more and less involvement, without losing too much sovereignty, and because of this, the country's role is often unclear, and the country does not want to sacrifice sovereignty to be at the centre, even though that would be the place where the United Kingdom would have the most influence. This is an important part of the identity here called *insecure of its role.* Example 11 from Mr Cash's speech brings up many characteristics of this identity:

> 11) There is a huge problem as to *whether or not we can exert an influence* within **the European Community**, as evidenced by the fact that, when the former Chancellor of the Exchequer went to Copenhagen to try to convince the rest of the Community that there were fault lines in the exchange rate mechanism— which *was supposed to reflect the fact that we were at the heart* of Europe and *could influence* what went on— *the other member states turned round and told us to go away.* (William Cash, Con, 23 July 1993)

Mr Cash states that it is not certain that we have the influence in the EC that we were supposed to have. The last words also create an image of a hostile environment in the EC where the United Kingdom is left alone. As can be seen in Figure 6, this identity is fairly prominent across the entire timeline, but becomes less visible from 2009 onwards.

Before the mid-1990s, some speakers express worry about the UK's reputation in the EC. There are instances, such as 'we simply fail as a country to make any useful contribution' (Clarke, Con, 1979), 'our partners may lose patience' (Forman, Con, 1989) and 'getting us a bad reputation' in the EC (Monro, Con, 1993), which represent the United
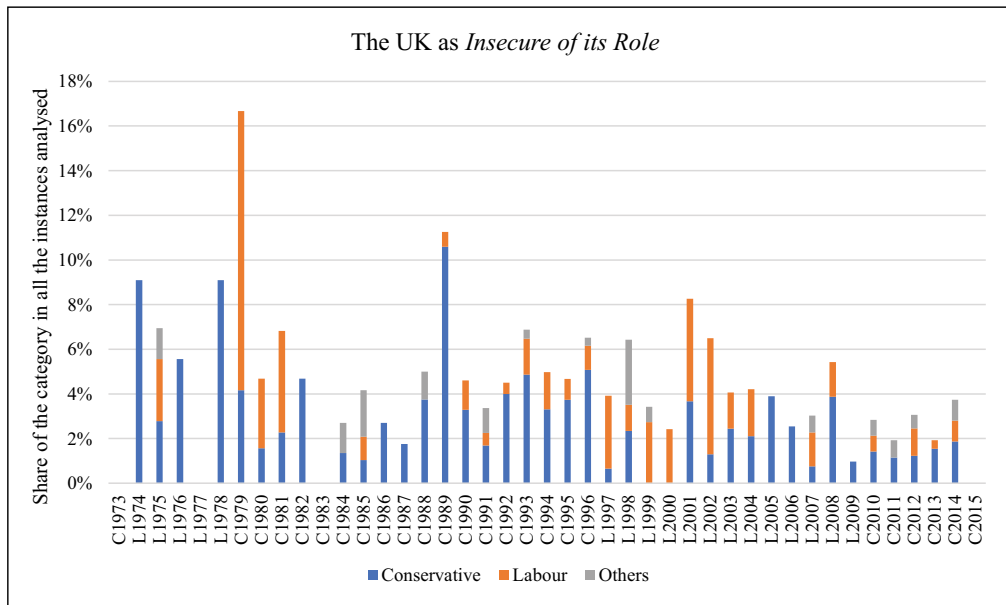
Figure 6. Shares of the instances where *insecure* identity was found. The number is counted against all the instances where 'the UK' was the referent of the first-person pronoun.

Kingdom as a country that does not do enough for the community and is a disappointment to the others. In example 12, Mr Meyer speaks about the relationship between national parliaments and the European Parliament, and how the United Kingdom was expected to set an example to other members on this issue, but the country failed to meet those expectations:

12) In this respect, Britain has been *a great disappointment* to the other members of **the European Community**, who looked to us, in this matter above all, to set them a good example. (Anthony Meyer, Con, 26 June 1986)

From the end of the 1980s onwards, speeches in which MPs challenge the representation of the United Kingdom as a leader or as an influential member start to appear more frequently. Especially in 1989, the country's attitude towards and commitment to the EC are discussed: if the country is not *wholeheartedly* in the Community, it cannot have influence. In example 13, Mr Haselhurst argues that the United Kingdom needs to do more for the EC and work with the partners, or else the country is in danger of being *marginalised*:

13) We stand in *danger of being sidelined or marginalised* if our commitment to **the European Community** is not *wholehearted*. (Alan Haselhurst, Con, 21 November 1989)

The *insecure* identity often comes up in debates concerning the EU. In those, the UK's role in the Union is discussed explicitly and so are the risks of not being a 'full member'.

Mostly, the speakers worry about how the country is perceived by the others. For instance, the United Kingdom opted out of the Social Chapter of the Maastricht Treaty, which was signed in February 1992. The Labour Party was against the opt-out (Young, 1993: 163), and the Conservative Party did not agree on the treaty itself, as a number of Conservative MPs did not support it (Heppell, 2002). In the debates about the Treaty, the role is represented as unclear and speakers are worried about the implications on the country's international influence of not taking part in the developments in the Union, as in example 14:

> 14) If we accepted amendments that meant that the Government could not ratify the treaty, *we* would end up outside **the European Community** or, at best, *we would become a second-class member* of the Community. (Clive Betts, Lab, 24 March 1993)

Some MPs state that British influence in the world exists only because of the EU and not because of the country's own history or actions. Consequently, towards the Brexit vote, the possibility of leaving the EU raises concerns of what happens to the British influence. In example 15, Mr Green says that the United Kingdom would not be taken seriously outside the EU:

> 15) It is not credible that an American President, a Chinese leader or an Indian business person would take *Britain as seriously if we pulled out* of **the European Union** as they would if we stayed in and played a leading and constructive role in it. (Damian Green, Con, 17 October 2014)

Thus, balancing between less and more involvement in the EU is closely connected to the UK's identity and international role. In the debates, the country is seen as an important actor inside and outside Europe, but that role might be endangered if the country left the EU.

The United Kingdom as a reluctant member

The *reluctant member* identity is the smallest identity category in my data. This category includes two types of construction: the first is a more 'anti-EU' identity, in that the EU is seen as preventing the United Kingdom from achieving its full potential, and in the second type the speakers are more concerned with how the country is seen from the outside if the United Kingdom is too reluctant to work with others.

In this category, 24% of all the instances are metaphors that represent the EU as holding the United Kingdom back or restricting the UK's freedom, as in: 'constrained by the EU' (Johnston, Lib, 1980), 'we are locked into the European Union' (Nicholls, Con, 1996) and 'we would be freed from [the European Union's] shackles' (Hollobone, Con, 2011). The metaphors are used evaluatively (see Partington et al., 2013: 131), and they simplify the issues related to the EU and make such an abstract object appear more tangible for a wider audience (see Charteris-Black, 2011: 33). Furthermore, in the first type, it is argued that the United Kingdom does not need the EU but would succeed outside it. The speakers talk about how the EU *lectures* the United Kingdom or 'tell[s] us how we should order our priorities' (Moate, Con, 1988), even though the United Kingdom 'should not need the European Union to require' (Walker, Con, 2013) anything of it.
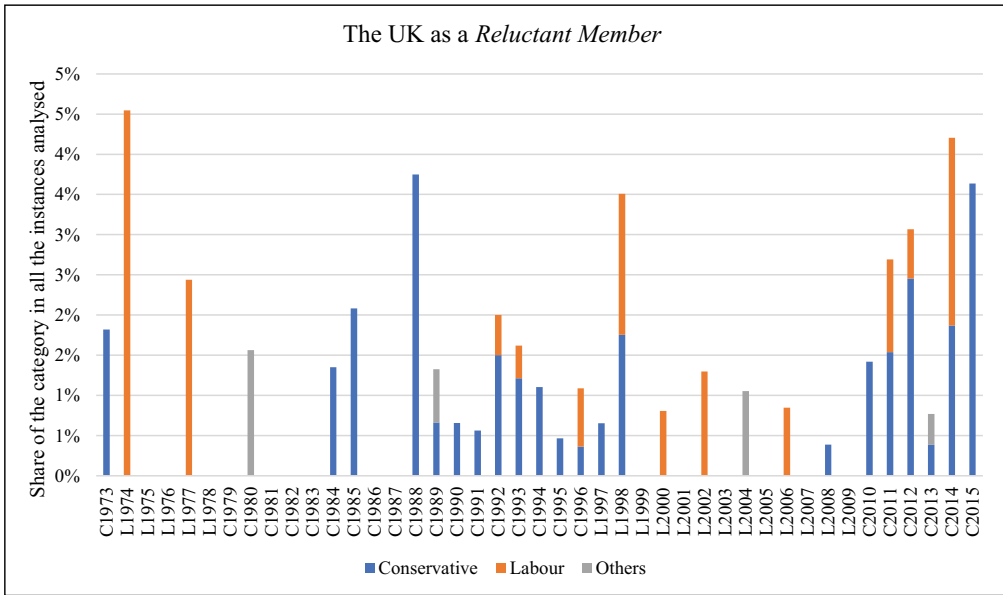
Figure 7. Shares of the instances where *reluctant member* identity was found. The number is counted against all the instances where 'the UK' was the referent of the first-person pronoun.

The constructions in the second type in this category are more concerned with how the UK's reluctance is seen by the other members. In this type especially, and in most of the constructions in *reluctant* category, the United Kingdom is represented as a passive member that does not want to work with other member states. There is a concern that such reluctance and passivity would diminish the country's influence in the EU. In example 16, the topic of the debate is Scottish fishing industry, and Mr Kirkwood warns against being too reluctant to follow the EU's regulations:

> 16) Such schemes will not be countenanced with any sort of good will by **the European Community** if *we drag our feet*, or appear to drag our feet, on a decommissioning scheme… (Archy Kirkwood, LD, 21 November 1989)

As Figure 7 shows, the *reluctant member* identity was not found in many instances in the data. This sounds counter-intuitive, as Euroscepticism has a long history in the British parliament (see, for example, Forster, 2002). However, this identity becomes more visible as the debates on the membership become more common, and in the 2010s, the *reluctant member* identity is mostly constructed by the more 'anti-EU' speakers.

A possible reason for there not being more instances of this identity is that when anti-EU attitudes are expressed, the first-person pronoun referring to the United Kingdom is probably not usually present, because that would entail that the actions of the United Kingdom were also brought up, not just those of the EU. Also, it is perhaps rhetorically more effective if the speakers can mention specific areas where the EU membership is harmful (such as fishing industry) than just saying generally that 'we' suffer from the membership.
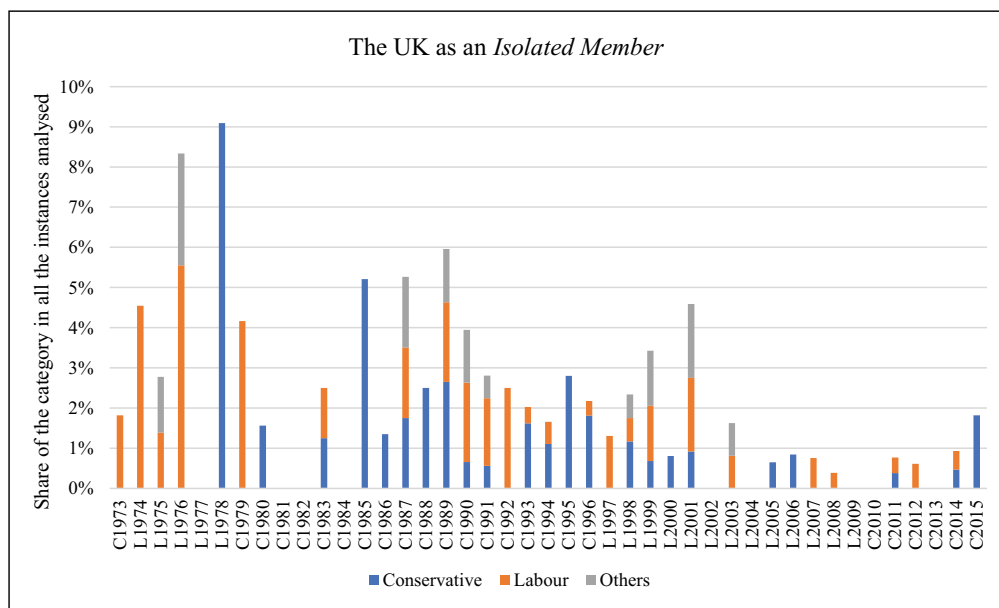
The UK as an *Isolated Member*

Figure 8. Shares of the instances where *isolated member* identity was found. The number is counted against all the instances where 'the UK' was the referent of the first-person pronoun.

The United Kingdom as an isolated member

While the United Kingdom is placed at the centre of the EU when representing it as the *leader*, in the *isolated member* identity it is described as being in the margins of the Union or lagging behind other members. In these representations, speakers usually argue that being in the margins is not beneficial for the country. Figure 8 shows that this identity is quite evenly constructed by the major parties, but, in relative terms, the Labour Party constructs the United Kingdom as an *isolated member* more often than the Conservatives (see Table 2). Also, other parties (mostly Liberal Democratic Party and Labour and Co-operative Party) take a visible share of the instances.

In the first years of the membership in 1970s and in the 1980s, some MPs say that the United Kingdom is an outsider in the EC because the country joined the EC too late. The United Kingdom applied for membership two times, in 1961 and 1967, before they were accepted in 1973. Consequently, it is argued that the United Kingdom is an outsider in the Community, because the country did not take part in building the EC. Also, other members are said to be *ahead* of and progressing faster than the United Kingdom. For instance, in example 17, Mr Warren says that the other members were able to make use of the EC before the United Kingdom joined, which puts the United Kingdom in a disadvantageous position:

> 17) From 1957 to 1973 *we manoeuvred* [sic] *around the outside* of **the European Community** and let others get *ahead of us* in exploiting it. (Kenneth Warren, Con, 29 June 1983)

The United Kingdom is also described as acting differently from the rest or being the only member to do something, as in example 18, where Mr Evans talks about food and drink regulations being different in the United Kingdom than in elsewhere in the EC:

> 18) It is quite crazy that *we* are going down one route while *the rest* of **the European Community** seems to be going down another. (Nigel Evans, Con, 9 July 1993)

In contrast to the *leader* identity, in which the United Kingdom was represented as an exceptional member in the EU in a positive sense, the *isolated member* identity is constructed by talking about the issues that are worse in the United Kingdom than in the rest of the EU. Also, in the first half of the 1990s, words such as *isolated* and *marginal* are used when talking about policies that the country is taking in relation to the EC. Isolation is said to be the price of not taking part in developments towards further integration, such as the monetary union or, as in example 19, the social dimension of the Maastricht Treaty:

> 19) In **the European Community**, *we stand totally isolated* against the social dimension of the single European market of 1992. (George Robertson, Lab, 14 July 1989)

As can be seen in Figure 8, the *isolated member* identity almost disappears in the data in the 2000s and there are only a few examples in the 2010s. It could be that in the early 2000s, the United Kingdom became more integrated into the EU and was seen as more strongly part of it. Some language external evidence could be seen to support this. For instance, for several EU countries, the first half of the 2000s was a time of economic growth (Balcerowicz et al., 2013: 11), which probably increased interest in the EU. Furthermore, Tony Blair's close relations with President Bush and participation in joint military actions with the United States could have erased the feeling of isolation, as the United Kingdom was seen as an interlocutor between the United States and the EU (see, for example, Blair, 1997; Gibbins, 2014: 25). Closer to the Brexit vote, a probable reason for the absence of the *isolated member* identity is that as the membership itself was so much discussed, maintaining the central role was perhaps not considered crucial.

Discussion and conclusion

In line with previous studies on the UK's identity in the EU, the analysis showed that the United Kingdom is represented as being both at the centre and in the margins of the EU. When at the centre or 'heart' of the EU, the country is an important member of the Union that leads others, whereas in the margins, the country cannot influence what happens in the EU, as the power is somewhere else. Constructing the United Kingdom as a *leader* can have two types of implications: while it draws an appealing image of an arena where the United Kingdom can influence, it also creates a representation of the rest of the EU as something to be dragged along. Furthermore, the outcome of representing the United Kingdom as being isolated in the EU could be that the British people feel detached from the EU, and consequently do not see the benefits of staying part of it.

The image of the United Kingdom as somehow separate from the rest was a common discursive construct in the parliamentary debates. The 'outsidedness' was seen most clearly in the constructions of the *isolated member* category, in which the country was compared with the other members and described as being different from the rest in different ways. However, the United Kingdom was seen as separate from the rest in other identity categories, as well. In the representations in the *leader* category, the United Kingdom was placed 'above' others, and it was seen as an exceptional country that leads others by example. Also, in the *reluctant member* category, the United Kingdom was represented as an outsider in that it did not want to take part in the developments in the EU. Finally, in the *insecure* identity category, the speakers warned against being marginalised in the EU, as being isolated and unable to influence what happens in the EU was seen as a threat to the United Kingdom.

Because such an extensive dataset was used, the analysis revealed that politicians' views on the UK's international role and identity are not as clear as it has seemed to be in studies using smaller datasets. The largest identity category in my data represented the country as insecure of its international role and, in the instances, the Union was represented as offering the United Kingdom a place in the world. It was also said that the United Kingdom has international influence only because the country is a member of the EU. When methods of CADS are used, only a few rules need to be set when searching for relevant bits of text from a large dataset for analysis, which means that only a few things are expected before the analysis. Because of this, CADS offers a means to find representations that are not specifically searched for but are so common that they attract the researcher's attention and can be analysed closer. Even though not every instance of identity representation was necessarily found because concordances instead of complete speeches were analysed, the instances in this study showed enough variation to offer a balanced look at how the UK's role in the EU has been described in the British parliament. The results showed that MPs are not always certain what the country's identity and international role is – an 'independent island' or a leader 'at the centre' – and, consequently, that there is uncertainty of whether it is in the country's interests to belong to a community such as the EU.

Acknowledgements

Declaration of conflicting interests

Funding

Notes

1. My PhD dissertation on the representations of the European Union (EU), and the UK's role in it, in British parliamentary and media discourses. The work is expected to be ready by 2021.
2. The United Kingdom opted in to the Social Chapter of the Maastricht Treaty in 1997 under Labour government.
3. I would like to thank the SAMUELS project at the University of Glasgow, especially Marc Alexander and Fraser Dallachy, for providing me with the local copy of the corpus, and also Jukka Tyrkkö at Linnaeus University for preparing the copy for my use.
4. There are other search words that could have been used, such as *the EC/EU, the Common Market* and *the Community/Union*, but adding these search words to the analysis was out of the scope of this article. They could bring different results, as they are used in different types of contexts, and for that reason provide an interesting topic for further research.
5. The data are aggregated in the sense that there are differences inside parties in how individual Members of Parliament (MPs) represent the UK's role. Individual variation is not discussed in detail in this article, but I am interested in investigating the issue further.

References

Alasuutari P, Rautalin M and Tyrkkö J (2018) The rise of the idea of model in policymaking: The case of the British parliament, 1803–2005. *European Journal of Sociology* 59: 341–363.

Alexander M and Davies M (2015–) Hansard Corpus 1803–2005. Available at: http://www.hansard-corpus.org

Baker P (2006) *Using Corpora in Discourse Analysis*. London: Continuum.

Baker P, Gabrielatos C, KhosraviNik M, et al. (2008) A useful methodological synergy? Combining critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics to examine discourses of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK press. *Discourse & Society* 19(3): 273–306.

Balcerowicz L, Rzonca A, Kalina L, et al. (2013) *Economic Growth in the European Union*. Brussels: The Lisbon Council.

Billig M (2010) *Banal Nationalism* (reprint edition). London: SAGE.

Blair T (1997) Speech by the Prime Minister Tony Blair at Lord Mayor's banquet, 10 November. Available at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20070701145014/http://www.pm.gov.uk/output/Page1070.asp (accessed 26 October 2018).

Bucholtz M and Hall K (2005) Identity and interaction: A sociocultural linguistic approach. *Discourse Studies* 7(4–5): 585–614.

Charteris-Black J (2011) *Politicians and Rhetoric: The Persuasive Power of Metaphor*, 2nd edn. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Fairclough N (1989) *Language and Power*. New York: Longman.

Forster A (2002) *Euroscepticism in Contemporary British Politics: Opposition to Europe in the British Conservative and Labour Parties since 1945*. London: Routledge.

Gibbins J (2014) *Britain, Europe and National Identity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hall S (1996) Introduction: Who needs 'identity'? In: Hall S and Du Gay P (eds) *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: SAGE, pp. 1–17.

Heppell T (2002) The ideological composition of the Parliamentary Conservative Party 1992–97. *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 4(2): 299–324.

Higgins M (2004) Putting the nation in the news: The role of location formulation in a selection of Scottish newspapers. *Discourse & Society* 15(5): 633–648.

Ichijo A (2012) Entrenchment of unionist nationalism: Devolution and the discourse of national identity in Scotland. *National Identities* 14(1): 23–37.

Kavanagh D, Richards D, Geddes A, et al. (2006) *British Politics*, 5th edn. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Law A (2001) Near and far: Banal national identity and the press in Scotland. *Media, Culture & Society* 23: 299–317.

Meyer M (2001) Between theory, method, and politics: Positioning of the approaches to CDA methods of critical discourse analysis. In: Wodak R and Meyer M (eds) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: SAGE, pp. 14–31.

Mollin S (2007) The Hansard hazard: Gauging the accuracy of British parliamentary transcripts. *Corpora* 2(2): 187–210.

Musolff A (2017) Truths, lies and figurative scenarios: Metaphors at the heart of Brexit. *Journal of Language and Politics* 16(5): 641–657.

Partington A, Duguid A and Taylor C (2013) *Patterns and Meanings in Discourse: Theory and Practice in Corpus-assisted Discourse Studies (CADS)*. Amsterdam; Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.

Petersoo P (2007) What does 'we' mean? National deixis in the media. *Journal of Language and Politics* 6(3): 419–436.

Reicher S and Hopkins N (2001) *Self and Nation: Categorization, Contestation and Mobilization*. London: SAGE.

Slembrouck S (1992) The parliamentary Hansard 'verbatim' report: The written construction of spoken discourse. *Language and Literature* 1(2): 101–119.

Tajfel H and Turner J (1979) An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In: Austin W and Worchel S (eds) *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole, pp. 33–47.

Wenzl N (2018) 'We want to trust the people': National identity construction and the EU referendum. In: *In the name of the people: representing the people in twenty-first century politics*, Pamplona, 22–24 November 2018.

Wodak R (2011) 'Us' and 'them': Inclusion and exclusion – discrimination via discourse. In: Delanty G, Wodak R and Jones P (eds) *Identity, Belonging and Migration*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp. 54–77.

Wodak R (2016) *'We have the character of an island nation': A discourse-historical analysis of David Cameron's 'Bloomberg Speech' on the European Union*. Working Paper RSCAS 2016/36, July. Fiesole: European University Institute.

Wodak R, De Cillia R, Reisigl M, et al. (2009) *The Discursive Construction of National Identities*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Young JW (1993) *Britain and European Unity, 1945–1992*. London: Macmillan Press.

Author biography

Jenni Riihimäki is a doctoral researcher at the Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences at Tampere University, Finland, and a member of DEMLANG Research Consortium of Tampere University and the University of Helsinki. Her research interests include, among others, critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics, and especially political discourse. She has taken part in compiling different types of textual corpora, one of which is the *Small Corpus of Political Speeches* (SCPS).

ARTICLE
3

Are 'We' European? *We* and *Us* in British EU-Related Newspaper Articles in 1975–2015

Jenni Räikkönen

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

JENNI RÄIKKÖNEN
TAMPERE UNIVERSITY

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.

CONTACT

Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences, Tampere University, Kalevantie 4, 33100 Tampere, Finland

jenni.raikkonen@tuni.fi

ORCID

0000-0001-5785-7660

LICENSE

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

Jenni Räikkönen
Tampere University

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 news-worthiness' 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-

---

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

---

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').

---

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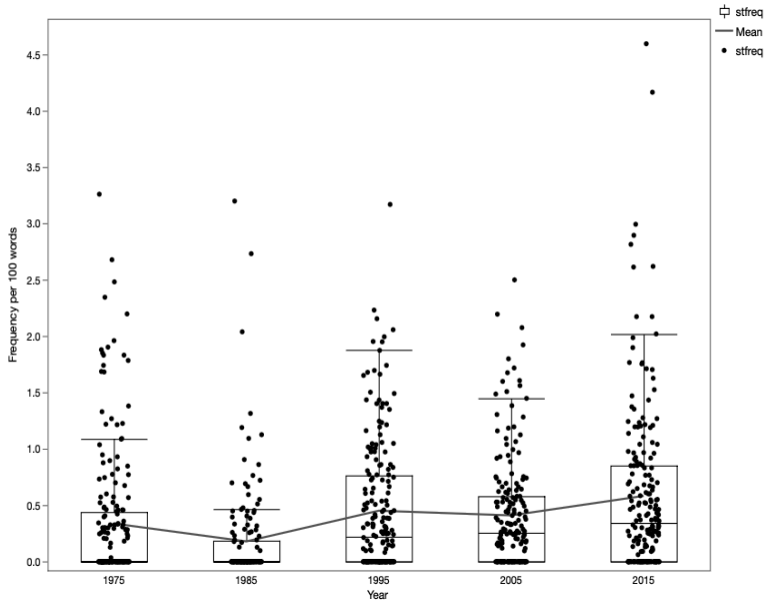
Figure 1: *Box plot of the frequencies of 1PP in the studied volumes. The centre line in each box represents the median frequency of the pronouns and the line connecting the boxes represents the mean of each year. The black dots represent individual articles and the frequency of the pronouns in them*
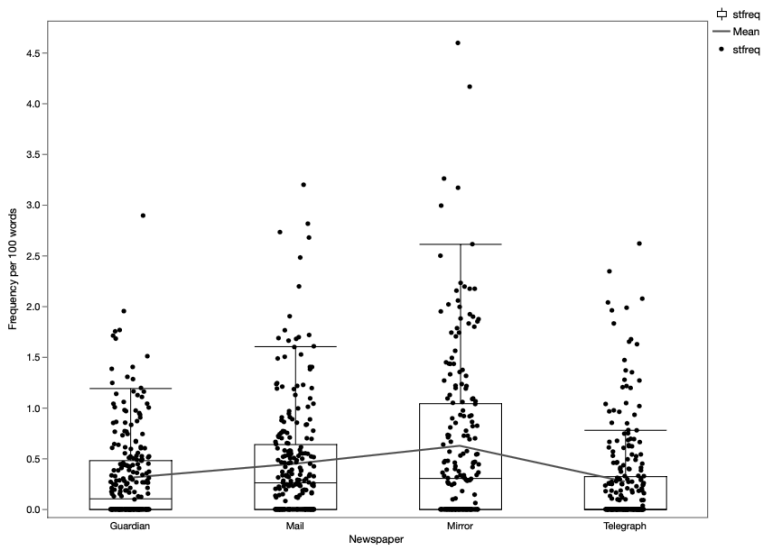

Figure 2: *Box plot of the frequencies of 1PP in each paper. The centre line in each box represents the median frequency of the pronouns and the line connecting the boxes represents the mean. The black dots represent individual articles and the frequency of the pronouns in them*

Article categories

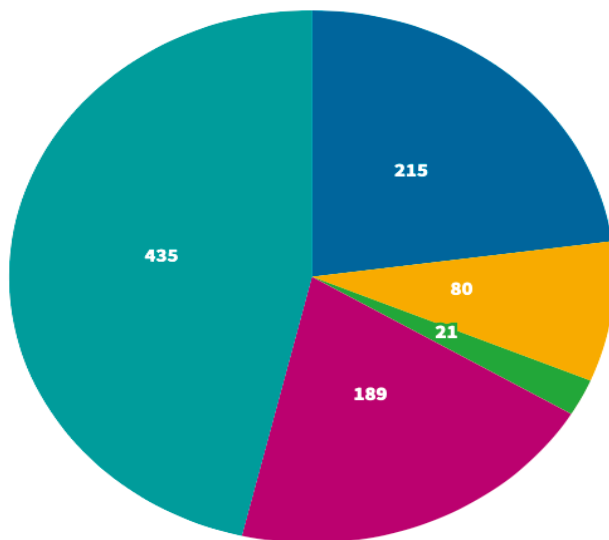🔵 1PP/Britain 🟡 1PP/EU 🟢 mixed 🟣 other pronouns 🟢 no pronouns

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*,

---

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 jour-
nalists 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,
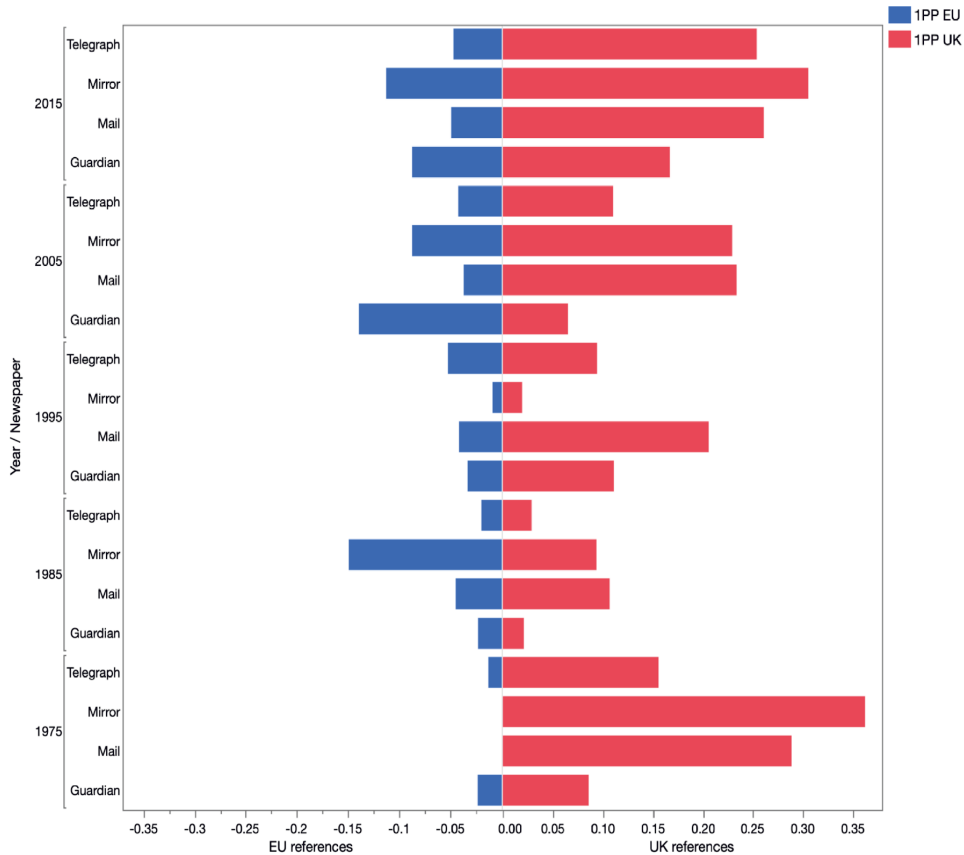while most of the 1PP/EU do not.

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, fo-
cusing on the topics of the articles as well as the immediate textual context in which the
pronouns occur.

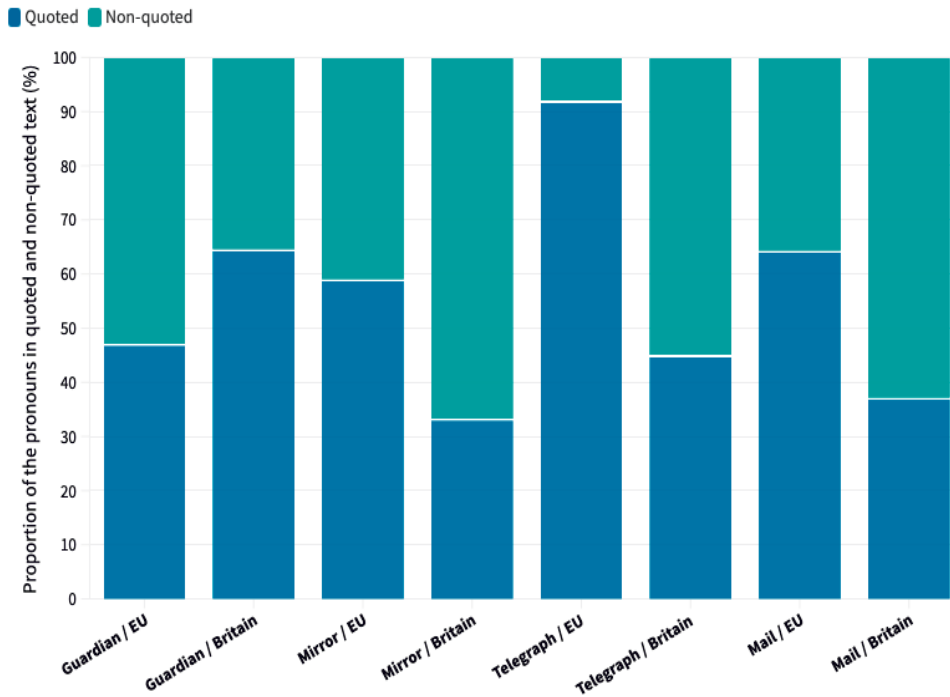**Proportions of the 1PP/EU and 1PP/Britain in quoted and non-quoted text**

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)

---

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.

Funding

---

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.

References

Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism.* London: Verso.

Anthony, L. (2019). AntConc (Version 3.5.8). [Computer Software]. Tokyo: Waseda University.

Ash, T. G. (2001). Is Britain European? *International Affairs, 77*(1), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.00174

Baker, P. (2006). *Using Corpora in Discourse Analysis.* London: Continuum. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350933996

Baranowska, P. M. (2014). The coverage of the Eurozone economic crisis in the British press. *Perspectives on European Politics and Society, 15*(4), 500–517. https://doi.org/10.1080/15705854.2014.922352

Billig, M. (2010). *Banal Nationalism* (reprint edition). London: Sage. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446221648

Brookes, R. (1999). Newspapers and national identity: The BSE/CJD crisis and the British press. *Media, Culture & Society, 21*(2), 247–263. https://doi.org/10.1177/016344399021002007

Bucholtz, M. & Hall, K. (2005). Identity and interaction: A sociocultural linguistic approach. *Discourse Studies, 7*(4–5), 585–614. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445605054407

Bednarek, M. & Cable, H. (2017). *The Discourse of News Values: How News Organizations Create Newsworthiness.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190653934.001.0001

Copeland, P., & Copsey, N. (2017). Rethinking Britain and the European Union: Politicians, the media and public opinion reconsidered: Rethinking the British media and the EU. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies, 55*(4), 709–726. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12527

Cramer, J. (2010). 'Do we really want to be like them?': Indexing Europeanness through pronominal use. *Discourse & Society*, *21*(6), 619–637. https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926510381217

Daddow, O. (2012). The UK media and Europe: From permissive consensus to destructive dissent. *International Affairs*, *18*. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2012.01129.x

De Cillia, R., Reisigl, M. & Wodak, R. (1999). The discursive construction of national identities. *Discourse & Society*, *10*(2), 149–173. https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926599010002002

Duszak, A. (2002). Us and Others: An introduction. In A. Duszak (Ed.), *Us and Others: Social identities across languages, discourses and cultures* (pp. 1–28). Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/pbns.98

Fairclough, N. (2013): *Critical discourse analysis: Critical study of language* (2nd ed.). London & New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315834368

Gamson, W. A. & Modigliani, A. (1989). Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power: A constructionist approach. *American Journal of Sociology*, *95*(1), 1–37. https://doi.org/10.1086/229213

Hansson, S. (2015). Discursive strategies of blame avoidance in government: A framework for analysis. *Discourse & Society*, *26*(3), 297–322. https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926514564736

Islentyeva, A. & Abdel Kafi, M. (2021). Constructing British national identity in the British press: The *Britain versus Europe* dichotomy. *Journal of Corpora and Discourse Studies*, *4*, 68–95. http://doi.org/10.18573/jcads.64

Kleinke, S. & Bös, B. (2018). Indeterminate *us* and *them*: The complexities of referentiality, identity and group construction in a public online discussion. In B. Bös, S. Kleinke, S. Mollin & N. Hernández (Eds.), *The discursive construction of identities on- and offline personal, group and collective* (pp. 153–176). Amsterdam & Philadephia: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/dapsac.78.07kle

Levy, D. A. L., Billur, A. & Bironzo, D. (2016). *UK press coverage of the EU referendum* [Report]. University of Oxford: Reuters institute for the Study of Journalism. Retrieved from https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2018-11/UK_Press_Coverage_of_the_%20EU_Referendum.pdf

Lischinsky, A. (2018). Overlooked text types: From fictional texts to real-world discourses. In C. Taylor & A. Marchi (Eds.), *Corpus approaches to discourse: A critical review* (pp. 60–82). London: Routledge.

Ludlow, N. P. (2002). Us or them? The meaning of 'Europe' in British political discourse. In B. Stråth & M. Malmborg (Eds.), *The meaning of Europe: Variety and contention within and among nations* (pp. 101–124). Oxford: Berg.

Marchi, A., & Taylor, C. (2009). Establishing the EU: The representation of Europe in the press in 1993 and 2005. In A.H. Juncker, D. Schreier & M. Hundt (Eds.), *Corpora: Pragmatics and discourse* (pp. 203–226). Leiden, Netherlands: Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789042029101_012

Mühlhäusler, P. & Harré, R. (1990). *Pronouns and people: The linguistic construction of social and personal identity*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Oktar, L. (2002). The ideological organization of representational processes in the presentation of us and them. *Discourse & Society*, *12*(3), 313–346. https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926501012003003

Partington, A., Duguid, A. & Taylor, C. (2013). *Patterns and meanings in discourse: Theory and practice in corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS)*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/scl.55

Petersoo, P. (2007). What does 'we' mean? National deixis in the media. *Journal of Language and Politics*, *6*(3), 419–436. https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.6.3.08pet

Räikkönen, J. (in press). Leaving the EU out of the ingroup: Diachronic analysis of the use of *we* and *us* in British parliamentary debates, 1973–2015. In M. Korhonen, H. Kotze & J. Tyrkkö (Eds.), *Exploring Language and Society with Big Data: Parliamentary discourse across time and space.* Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Riihimäki, J. (2019). At the Heart and in the Margins: Discursive construction of British national identity in relation to the EU in British parliamentary debates from 1973 to 2015. *Discourse & Society*, 30(4), 412–431. https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926519837394

Tajfel, H. & Turner, J. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33–47). Monterey, CA: Brooks & Cole.

Taylor, C. (2005). Electronic corpora in language study. *Dafwerkstatt*, *6*, 71–84.

Turner, J. C., Hogg, M. A., Oakes, P. J., Reicher, S. D., & Wetherell, M. S. (1987). *Rediscovering the social group: A self-categorization theory.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Van Dijk, T. (1995). Aims of Critical Discourse Analysis. *Japanese Discourse*, *1*, 17–27.

Wodak, R. (2018). 'We have the character of an island nation'. A discourse-historical analysis of David Cameron's 'Bloomberg speech' on the European Union. In M. Kranert & G. Horan (Eds.), *Doing politics: Discursivity, performativity and mediation in political discourse* (pp. 27–58). Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/dapsac.80.02wod

Wodak, R., de Cillia, R., Reisigl, M. & Liebhart, K. (2009). *The discursive construction of national identity (*2nd ed.). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

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

ARTICLE
4

The European Union as an Ingroup in British Press and Parliamentary Debates

Jenni Räikkönen