Promoting the European Union:

Attitudinal stance adjectives in three genres of EU communication to the public

Pro Gradu Thesis
English philology
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6 May 2011
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## Contents

1. Introduction ................................................................................................................... 5
2. The European Union ..................................................................................................... 6
3. Research aims ............................................................................................................... 9
4. Communication, message design, and intended audience .......................................... 11
5. Genre analysis: concepts and preliminaries .............................................................. 13
   5.1. Genre, register, and text type ............................................................................... 14
   5.2. Discourse communities ....................................................................................... 17
6. Stancetaking in discourse ............................................................................................ 19
   6.1. Stance markers ..................................................................................................... 22
   6.2. Stance adjectives ................................................................................................. 24
   6.3. Stancetaking functions ......................................................................................... 27
7. Methodology ............................................................................................................... 30
   7.1. Genre analysis ...................................................................................................... 30
   7.2. Stance markers ..................................................................................................... 33
      7.2.1. Stance marker criteria ................................................................................... 33
      7.2.2. Stance marker categorization ........................................................................ 35
8. Material ....................................................................................................................... 37
   8.1. EU information booklets ...................................................................................... 40
   8.2. EU press releases ................................................................................................. 41
   8.3. The General Report on the Activities of the European Union ............................. 42
9. Description and preliminary analysis of the genres ..................................................... 42
9.1. Information booklets ................................................................. 42
  9.1.1. Situational context and background ........................................ 42
  9.1.2. Refined situational analysis and institutional context ............ 45
9.2. Press releases ........................................................................... 47
  9.2.1. Situational context and background ........................................ 47
  9.2.2. Refined situational analysis and institutional context ............ 50
9.3. The EU General Report .......................................................... 53
  9.3.1. Situational context and background ........................................ 53
  9.3.2. Refined situational analysis and institutional context ............ 56
10. Analysis ..................................................................................... 58
  10.1. General observations ............................................................ 58
  10.2. Information booklets ............................................................. 60
    10.2.1. General analysis ............................................................... 60
    10.2.2. Stance adjective distribution .............................................. 63
  10.3. Press releases ....................................................................... 64
    10.3.1. General analysis ............................................................... 64
    10.3.2. Stance adjective distribution .............................................. 67
  10.4. General Report ................................................................. 69
    10.4.1. General analysis ............................................................... 69
    10.4.2. Stance adjective distribution .............................................. 71
  10.5. Summary ............................................................................. 73
11. Discussion ................................................................................................................. 75

11.1. Attitudinal stance adjective use .......................................................................... 75

11.2. Variation between genres ................................................................................... 77

11.3. Communicative purpose ..................................................................................... 79

12. Conclusions ............................................................................................................... 83

Bibliography .................................................................................................................... 87

Websites .......................................................................................................................... 89

Material ........................................................................................................................... 90

i. Information booklets ................................................................................................ 90

ii. Press releases ............................................................................................................. 90

iii. The General Report ................................................................................................ 92

Tables .............................................................................................................................. 93

Appendix ......................................................................................................................... 94

i. Word list ................................................................................................................... 94

ii. Category list ............................................................................................................. 98
1. Introduction

From the 1980s and throughout the end of the 20th century, the developed world has rapidly become more and more interconnected into a global whole. Political organizations such as the United Nations or military treaties such as NATO have created platforms for international collaboration. In Europe, a treaty which originally joined six countries in a coal and steel community to prevent new wars has, during the course of only half a century, grown into a complex and comprehensive political union connecting 27 member states in a single market, under a single currency. In the recent history of Europe, the EU and its preceding treaties have played a decisive role in the way society has developed.

Travelling has become ever more time-efficient, and the digitalization of data has revolutionized the way we process and handle information, and the breakthrough of the Internet has enabled real-time communication across the globe. In our daily lives, we communicate and interact in a wide range of contexts and situations and with various interlocutors. The domains and the media, however, have increased and developed over time. We sign agreements, chat on social media online, talk over the phone, or go to lectures. We communicate in speech, writing, through computer-mediated communication, and we are bound to follow certain rules set down through language in legally binding documents. Almost any information is accessible at the click of the mouse, and organizations and companies now struggle to stand out in the vast amount of information available. Another challenge is using the right medium and creating appropriate texts in order to communicate the desired message to the targeted audience. Even the notion of “text” has expanded into encompassing audiovisual media, creating an abundance of options for any communicative task at hand.
In society and in the political field, the first decade of the 21st century has brought with it considerable changes in the political climate. The financial crisis has led to a rise of extremist or populist political parties in a number of European countries, and the optimism of the 1980s has never seemed further from the current climate. Well-known and traditionally stable societal structures are being questioned and challenged more ardently than before. One such structure is the European Union, a unique political entity in terms of its functioning and effects on the member states.

2. The European Union

The EU is a young union under constant development, and there are vivid political discussions concerning how the EU should work in the future. It needs constant renewal of its procedures, and even some of its fundamental principles. This is not always an easy process, as the Dutch referendum in 2005 on the EU Constitution showed. The Dutch rejection of the Constitution led to a complete failure to pass the new treaties. Finally in 2009, the Lisbon Treaty was ratified by all EU member states, and it modernized the Union in several decisive ways. However, in the fall of 2009, EU supporters were still holding their breath awaiting the results of the Irish referendum on the Treaty, proving beyond any doubt that public opinion matters.

The EU publishes millions of pages of documents each year, including official legal documents such as directives, decisions and regulations, as well as reports, campaign material, brochures and press releases. All such documents are a necessary part of the EU’s image. The political work that is carried out at political summits, during the European Parliament’s plenary sessions, in the offices of each EU institution, or indeed in the corridors and during the coffee breaks, surfaces in the form of political
documents and public political discourse. These documents constitute the basis on which all other communication to the public is drafted. Websites, information booklets, promotional material, and official reports must all convey truthful accounts of the activities of the EU. Many EU policies do not, however, serve the interest of all member states entirely equally. One example is the EU maritime policy, which will decisively affect the candidate country Iceland if it is to join the EU, because it depends largely on its fishing industry. In order to gain public support for new policies, decisions or reforms, the EU needs to communicate that information in a way which appeals to the public. In much communication towards the citizens, and indeed in almost all political discourse, there may be a hidden or overt political agenda.

Today, the European Union is a multicultural and multilingual union with 27 member states and 23 official languages, operating on the principle of equality of all its official languages. It communicates to the citizens in all those 23 languages in written documents and publications, as well as through interpretation during plenary sessions, conferences, and negotiations. Today, the day-to-day work among EU officials is carried out in the three procedural languages English, French, and German, adding efficiency to both meetings and negotiations, as well as to the process of drafting documents. Nevertheless, the EU promotes a language education policy that encourages all citizens to learn two languages in addition to their own mother tongue. This complexity of promoting multilingualism and linguistic diversity whilst maintaining an efficient workflow is a major challenge for the EU. Despite the multilingual values of the EU, the working environment of the union is growing more and more unilingually English. Second-language English, or, some would argue, "Bad English", is the lingua franca of the Western world, and increasingly so for the EU. This affects the quality of original draft documents which in turn, despite the best efforts of the translation and
editing services, affects the final multilingual set of official documents and the efficiency of the communication of the EU to its citizens.

According to the published history of EU Commission translation, the EU translators, including web translators, editors, and revisers, work to ensure the “legitimacy, effectiveness and transparency of the EU” (Translation at the European Commission: A History 2010: 52). Therefore, in the name of transparency and democracy, the European Union must make sure it informs its citizens of its aims, values and activities. This principle, however, includes the notion of quality as well as that of efficient and clear communication. The information conveyed must be accurate, topical, and presented so that it can be understood by different readerships with different needs.

The EU has long been aware of how difficult it is to inform the public, to promote its activities, and to raise awareness in EU affairs. In theory, the multilingualism policy ensures that all EU citizens can find relevant information in their mother tongue on the web or in the legal document database EurLex, and since the founding of the modern union, there have been conscious efforts to improve texts and take different target audiences into consideration. Despite these efforts, citizens may still not find it easy to find the information they need, or indeed to assess the relevance of the information available. Worse yet, they may not care enough about EU affairs even to start looking for the information.

The challenge for the EU in terms of reaching the citizens is two-fold: Firstly, it must arouse the interest of the citizens towards understanding its activities. The EU procedures are fairly complex and difficult to understand, and citizens in the member states typically refer to the EU as “them” or “over there in Brussels”, even though they are in fact part of the EU themselves, and despite the fact that they are
represented as citizens in the European Parliament and in the European Council by the Prime Minister or head of state on a regular basis. Secondly, the EU must thoroughly inform the citizens and thereby convince them that the existence of a European Union is warranted, and that it aims to safeguard the interest of each member state on equal terms. This secondary agenda of convincing the audience is a natural part of any marketing strategy, but in the case of a political union such as the EU, this agenda cannot always be completely overt.

This study discusses, based on the analysis of a relatively small body of promotional material about the EU, how EU drafters have approached these challenges. Based on this study, I hope to draw some conclusions about how language is used to promote EU affairs and to convince, even manipulate, the reader into supporting certain courses of action. In the following chapter, the research aims for this study is discussed in further detail.

3. Research aims

In this study, I examine three genres of EU communication, namely information booklets, press releases and the General Report on the Activities of the European Union (GR). These texts are aimed specifically at informing the citizens about the functioning and the achievements of the EU, and they also serve the purpose of promoting the EU as such. In chapters 8 and 9, these three genres are described and discussed according to their context, as a tentative analysis of how these texts communicate what they set out to communicate. The analysis also discusses what features of structure, linguistic form and style, context, communicative purpose, functions, authorship and intended
audience\(^1\) define them as three separate genres. This is done with the tools provided by genre analysis, which operates within the realm of discourse analysis. The material is then analyzed on the linguistic level (chapter 10), with regards to the use of attitudinal stance adjectives, which are described more closely in chapter 6. The aim is to examine the material thoroughly enough to be able to answer the following research questions:

1. How does the political agenda of promoting the EU surface in the use of attitudinal stance adjectives in the material?

2. What are the key differences in this respect between the three genres of EU communication included in the material?

3. How do these texts serve the overall communicative purpose of the EU’s communication towards the citizens, namely informing the citizens and promoting the EU?

This is an exploratory study that analyzes the material according to the principles of qualitative research. Genres are defined according to certain linguistic aspects of style and discourse, but much more importantly, they are typically context-bound and adapted to specific discourse communities or intended audiences. Because this study deals with genres which have not previously been studied and compared in the context of EU communication, the focus will be on examining a relatively small body of texts in order to characterize the genres, rather than on finding quantitative regularities.

\(^1\) For a more detailed discussion of communication and intended audiences, see chapter 4.
4. Communication, message design, and intended audience

The present study is concerned with written communication from a political institution to a broad group of possible readers, namely the citizens of the European Union or indeed anyone who wishes to have access to the written information. Before discussing that communication further, a brief definition of communication, message design, and the intended audience is needed.

There are numerous definitions of ‘communication’, but because of its regular use in daily speech, it is difficult to establish one single definition which is sufficiently comprehensive and exact for scientific research. Fiske’s (1990: 2), seemingly simple definition, “social interaction through messages”, provides an adequate starting point for the scope of discussion here, in that it includes the main features of interest for the research aims of this Pro Gradu thesis: social (relating to human society), interaction (reciprocal action) and messages (the form in which information is transmitted). Neil Thompson (2003: 10) points out that the term communication may refer to transmitting information as an interpersonal occurrence, but it may even concern the transmission of goods or people. However, communication involves more than the mere transmission of data. Through communication, humans can maintain and create relationships, convince others of certain values or opinions, or make others do something. Communication takes place in a social context, and the interpretation of messages depends on that context, on the form of the message and on the receiver of the message. Classic communication theory (Shannon & Weaver 1949, and others) sees communication as interaction between a transmitter and a receiver. Today, communication theory takes into account various other aspects which affect how
a message is designed, transmitted, and interpreted (Thompson 2003: 14, Littlejohn 2002: 6).

Messages are often designed for a specific group of receivers, the *intended audience*. The form and contents of the message is adapted to that intended audience so as to serve the communicative purpose of the message. Scholars have studied strategies of message selection and design in relation to the communicative aims of the transmitter. Often such aims are to “gain compliance” and manipulate the receiver into acting or thinking in a certain way (Littlejohn 2002: 105). The structure and contents of the message are key to the success of conveying the message, and if the communicative aim is to gain compliance or manipulate, various factors relating to how the message is presented affect its persuasiveness (van Dijk 1988: 82-86, McGuire 2001). According to McGuire (2001: 27), such factors include message clarity, literalness and forcefulness, as well as the use of humor, metaphoric language, or even literary tropes.

Allan Bell (1984: 159) explains that audience design happens because the speaker takes its intended audience (or addressee) into account in communicating, but that the process is re-evaluated with the help of responses or feedback from the audience, which leads to style shifts. When the audience is physically absent, like in the case of mass communication, the lack of feedback leaves the speaker without some of the tools for adapting the message. Bell also identifies a mechanism which he calls *referee design* (1984: 186-192), which may occur in cases where the speaker, for social reasons, starts directing their speech at a third party that is absent. That third party may be more closely linked to the speaker than the present addressee, which leads to a situation where the sociolinguistic codes or the style shifts “past” the present audience, as it were. The speaker has then adopted a style of speaking which corresponds with his or her own social network but not with that of the present addressee, a phenomenon
which Bell calls *ingroup referee design* (1984: 191-192). While Bell treats referee
design as strictly deliberate on the part of the speaker, it is possible that the same
phenomenon would occur on a less deliberate level in cases where a speaker or author is
not completely aware of the codes or styles with which the audience identifies.
Knowing the intended audience and designing the message specifically is therefore
crucial for successful communication. This professionalism is part of the skills which
are required from official drafters, editors and writers.

The above theories account for both the communicative strategies used in
the situation of interaction and the actual design of the message. Because of the social
norms governing all interpersonal communication, message design and communicative
strategies must be in line within the socially accepted ways of interaction. In the case of
this study, the authors of three genres directed to the public must, accordingly, design
the message in a way which does not deviate considerably from the norms, such as the
genre conventions and the constraints of politically correct discourse.

The three genres of written communication examined here were each
formed according to their communicative purpose, as discussed in further detail in
chapters 5 and 9. Furthermore, the texts contain stance markers conveying authorial
stance, which in turn reflects a set of values (cf. 6.1). Therefore, the transmission of a
particular message to an intended audience in a particular context is a key process for
this study.

5. Genre analysis: concepts and preliminaries

In order to better understand the scope of discussion, it is necessary to clarify some key
concepts of genre analysis. Some concepts that have traditionally been used in genre
discussions are elusive and can easily be understood as overlapping, such as ‘genre’, ‘register’ and ‘text type’, which will be discussed in the following.

5.1. Genre, register, and text type

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) defines genre as “[a] particular style or category of works of art; esp. a type of literary work characterized by a particular form, style, or purpose”. John M. Swales further exemplifies these general common-sense definitions, saying that genre is often succinctly thought of as any “distinctive category of discourse of any type, spoken or written, with or without literary aspirations” (1990: 33). For scholars of contemporary linguistics, this general definition focusing on literary works is far from sufficient.

Lilo Moessner (2001: 132) suggests that the term genre could be more adequately understood if we add “[R]eader expectations, societal conventions, pragmatic context, communicative function etc.” to the definition suggested by the OED. Irma Taavitsainen (2001: 140) further clarifies that “genres are inherently dynamic cultural schemata used to organize knowledge and experience through language”. A key feature of genres, as explained by Swales and Taavitsainen alike, is that they are governed by context and agreed conventions, as well as by their function and structure. They must have a beginning, an end, and a communicative purpose. Genres, for example sales promotion letters, legal acts, editorials, or business reports, are less defined by style or language as such, and more by the overall effect of how language and style and structure are combined with a communicative purpose in mind.

Swales specifies how genres can be defined by the discourse communities (see 5.2.) that make use of them:

A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are
recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. [...] In addition to purpose, exemplars of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience.

(1990: 58)

Swales’ definition recognizes the communicative function of a genre as an event in which a certain community participates on a regular basis and on specific terms. He further determines that a genre must have a structure that follows certain conventions agreed upon by the producers and users of the genre in question. The set of communicative purposes is, according to Swales, a main criterion for a genre, because the prototypicality of genres tends to vary considerably. Vijay K. Bhatia (1993: 13) further clarifies that the “nature and construction” of a genre is also affected by factors such as “content, form, intended audience, medium or channel”, but that it is “primarily characterized by the communicative purpose that it is intended to fulfill”.

In sociological disciplines of genre research, genres can be seen as communicative frameworks for users of the genre. According to Bergmann and Luckmann (1995), genres serve as communicative solutions to a communicative problem. The communicative genre framework provides the reader with some basic knowledge of context, and a further tool for interpreting the information based on that framework. This means that our previous knowledge of the world and of the norms of the society we live in affects the interpretation of a given message. According to Brian Paltridge (1997: 42-43), genres are not only socially embedded, but they also maintain relationships between the users of a genre and contribute in social processes.

The term register has been widely used within the field of linguistics, and registers have been defined as “situationally defined varieties” (the Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English 1999:5, henceforth LGSWE). According Swales (1990),
the distinction between the terms genre and register lies in both structure and language. Register is the kind of language that is used for a given purpose but with certain restraints and conventions. These conventions concern vocabulary, syntax and style, and are (at least partly) identifiable in spoken registers such as relaxed speech, news reporting, or written registers like bureaucratic language, academic language etc. Bhatia (1993: 17) exemplifies the distinction clearly: if we consider a chemistry research article and a chemical lab report as two comparable instances of the “scientific English” register, we have failed to consider the distinct characteristics of the text that are governed by the intended audience. Moreover, this would disregard the obvious similarities between e.g. a chemistry research article and a biology research article as genres. In short, “genres are realized through registers, and registers in turn are realized through language” (Swales 1990: 40, adapting Martin 1985: 250).

This Pro Gradu thesis will also discuss the material in terms of its text type. According to Taavitsainen, a key difference between genre and text type is that the former is distinguished by “external evidence in the context of culture, and the latter by “internal linguistic features of text” (2001: 140). This means that text types are less defined by structure and communicative purpose. Genres, on the other hand, are always produced in a particular context. In his work on text grammar, Egon Werlich (1983: 39) defines text types as “an idealized norm of distinctive text structuring which serves as a deep structural matrix of rules and elements for the encoder when responding linguistically to specific aspects of his experience”. According to this definition, these “rules and elements”, being the linguistic features of the text, form a whole set of norms which the writer (encoder) of the text follows fairly consistently. Douglas Biber (1989: 4) further clarifies that “the types are defined such that the texts in each type are maximally similar in their linguistic characteristics, while the different types are
maximally distinct from one another”. The linguistic features of text types may of course coincide with those of a particular genre, but both concepts offer different angles of approach on two different levels – one being chiefly linguistic, the other context-bound.

When discussing the three genres in further detail in chapters 9 and 10, I refer to the text type classifications developed by Werlich (1983: 39-41). He divides written communication into five text types based on the contextual focus of the text in relation to the realia or the information presented. He distinguishes between texts that are descriptive, narrative, expository, argumentative and instructive. Descriptive texts present “factual phenomena in space”, with regular declarative “phenomenon-registering sentences”, for example: *The remote control is on the sofa*. Narrative texts deal with “phenomena in time”, or something that happened: *Everyone understood his instructions*. Expository texts describe matters as a whole and how a given phenomenon is to be understood: *The committee consists of five members*. Argumentative texts present relations between different phenomena, or cause and effect. According to Werlich, the encoder proposes relations by using “quality-attributing sentences”, thereby conveying some degree of judgment on the proposition at hand: *The obsession with durability in the arts is not permanent* (Werlich’s example 1983: 39). Finally, instructive texts relate to planning and preparing: *Stop doing that!*

### 5.2. Discourse communities

Swales defines a discourse community as a group of individuals communicating regularly within a domain of shared interest, sharing six characteristic traits:

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2 My examples, unless otherwise stated.
- A discourse community has a broadly agreed set of common public goals.

- A discourse community has mechanisms of intercommunication among its members.

- A discourse community uses its participatory mechanisms primarily to provide information and feedback.

- A discourse community utilizes and hence possesses one or more genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims.

- In addition to owning genres, a discourse community has acquired a specific lexis.

- A discourse community has a threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevant content and discoursal expertise.

(Swales 1990: 24-27)

One of the defining factors of a genre, then, is the function of the genre in relation to its users, often highly specialized. The definition also includes the notion that discourse communities develop and affect the texts they deal with by creating new jargon and by more specialized and context-bound vocabularies. The functional approach to defining a genre is helpful, because it is sensitive to subtle changes in functions that may, in some cases, even produce another genre.

Swales (1990: 41) makes another important distinction: while genres are typically defined by the communicative purpose of the text, properties of one genre may be used for humorous effect or emphasis in another genre. However, that will not change the fact that the genre is still intact, as it were, in terms of its communicative purpose.
6. Stancetaking in discourse

Texts are rarely entirely neutral or objective. While news reports or casual conversation are known for having an angle or a viewpoint, even registers commonly perceived as more or less objective, such as academic studies or scientific reports express in some way the stance of the author through language. In the majority of registers, a closer linguistic examination of a text will expose some degree of personal opinion or a set of values. Based on those opinions or values, something can be said about the societal conditions which the author and the text represent.

In this section, the terminology of this area of academic study will be discussed, as well as some of the main issues which have become topical for linguists interested in evaluative language features. In addition, I will discuss the functions of authorial stance in the author-reader relationship. Finally, I will relate these features to the present study.

Evaluative features of language, whether grammatical, lexical, or lexico-grammatical, have been a subject of academic interest for some time. However, a wide range of terms is and has been in use for phenomena that overlap to a large degree, which makes some clarification necessary. While the term connotation is widely used for “[t]he signifying in addition; inclusion of something in the meaning of a word besides what it primarily denotes; implication” (OED), it is hardly sufficient for a phenomenon that specifically concerns the viewpoint of the author or speaker. Some scholars have used terms such as affect (Besnier 1993) or appraisal (Martin and White 2005). Douglas Biber (1999, 2006) settles on stance, whereas Thompson and Hunston (2000: 2) argue in favor of the superordinate term evaluation. According to Besnier (1993: 163), the term affect has connotations of emotion, and includes the
human need to express excitement, sorrow, or approval in language. Besnier also
discusses the different levels of transparency depending of the channel of expression,
comparing prosodic features in speech, such as word stress (less transparent), with
lexicalized items such as interjections (more transparent). According to Besnier, more
transparent stance markers deliver the message more efficiently. In their discussions of
appraisal, Martin and White (2005: 2) extend the concept to include not only the
feelings of the writer/speaker, but the status or authority of the writer/speaker in relation
to the audience. According to Martin and White, “attitudinal evaluations operate
rhetorically to construct relations of alignment and rapport between the writer/speaker
and actual or potential respondents.” (2005: 2). They perceive stance markers as a
vehicle of conveying attitudes, evaluations and values to the intended audience. In the
LGSWE, Biber defines authorial stance as “personal feelings, attitudes, value
judgements, or assessments” (1999: 966). An important aspect of this definition is that
although these assessments are subjective in the sense that they are expressed by the
author, it does not mean that they should all be relating to emotion or attitude.
Thompson and Hunston have chosen to further specify the concept of evaluation by as
follows: “[E]valuation is the broad cover term for the expression of the speaker or
writer’s attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or
propositions that he or she is talking about.” By this definition they highlight the author
perspective, because the term evaluation is often understood as something which is
done by the target audience, rather than by the author (2000: 5). Out of the two most
appropriate terms for the purpose of this study, evaluation and stance, I use the term
stance, proponed by Biber et.al.
Hunston (2011: 10-14) accentuates that there is a consensus among authorial stance researchers about a number of features of authorial stance\(^3\) (termed *evaluation* by the author). Notably, stance is always rooted in a value system shared by the speaker and the writer even though they may be disagreeing on a particular proposition. Furthermore, according to Hunston, researchers agree that stance is subjective but that it nevertheless occurs in interaction with “a social other”. In this study, the shared value system serving as a basis for authorial stance could be characterized for instance as “Western democratic values”. Finally, stance is always context-bound and cannot be reliably examined out of context (Hunston 2011: 12).

In this study there will be more focus on the communicative purpose of the texts, which is to persuade the audience, and on how authorial stance affects and strengthens that purpose, than on the actual evaluation on the part of the readership. The communicative purpose itself involves convincing and manipulating the reader into accepting the values of the discourse community, but this study does not examine whether or not this process was successful in actuality.

Contrary to what we might commonly assume, stance is prominent not only in spoken registers but also in written ones, only in different ways (cf. Conrad and Biber 2000, Biber 2006). Research on this subject has revealed some surprising findings, for instance that stance marking is almost twice as common in written academic language as in written news registers (Conrad & Biber 2000: 64). As the aforementioned scholars point out, registers or genres show different patterns of stance markers, relating to the “communicative characteristics” of each register or genre (58).

\(^3\) Not all of those features are of equal relevance for the present study. For a more detailed discussion, see Hunston 2011.
6.1. Stance markers

Stance can be expressed in a number of ways. Most commonly, it is expressed through a variety of grammatical devices, such as adverbials, adjectives, or adverbial clauses, all being instances of lexical and lexico-grammatical choice on the part of the speaker. It may also be expressed by paralinguistic means, by raising the pitch, pausing or adding emphasis. Finally, stance can be expressed in non-linguistic ways, i.e. through body language, facial expressions or gestures (Biber et.al. 1999). This study is concerned with grammatical devices only, because paralinguistic and non-linguistic information does not apply to the written registers, and therefore does not apply to the three genres discussed in this study.

Among the grammatical devices used to express stance, Biber differentiates between three different types of stance markers, namely epistemic, attitudinal and style-of-speaking stance (adapted from Biber et.al. 1999 and Conrad and Biber 2000, stance markers in bold type):

- Epistemic stance marks certainty or actuality from the speaker or writer perspective, precision or limitation, as well as where the information comes from:

  a) *Those with low qualifications are also much less likely to upgrade their skills* (…).  

  (IP/10/123)\(^4\)

  b) *(…) putting forward a prospective analysis of the probable regional impact of the four key challenges facing Europe *(…)*

  (GR 2008: 94)

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\(^4\) Examples from the material, see Material list.
- Attitudinal stance indicates feelings, emotions, attitudes, or judgments about the proposition being discussed:

  c) State aid measures proved **effective** tools for helping achieve the objectives of the climate change package (…)

  (GR 2009: 104)

- Style-of-speaking stance comments on the how something is being said from the speaker or writer perspective:

  d) **Honestly**, I’ve got no patience whatsoever.

  (LGSWE 1999: 975)

It is perhaps also useful to distinguish between grammatical stance constructions and value-laden lexical choices (also expressing stance). While grammatical constructions include both a proposition and an evaluation of it (my examples e) and f) below), lexical marking of stance involves only one proposition, and stance is marked by the choice of words in that proposition (my examples g) and h) below), most often a noun, an adjective, or a main verb.

  e) **Sadly**, he couldn’t make it today.

  f) That is **obviously** not true.

  g) That is **nice**.

  h) I **love** that song.

As Biber points out, it is sometimes not entirely clear how something is evaluated if the only source of information is a value-laden word. Moreover, stance could be read into any number of words in a text. While it is easy to see that words such as **horrible** or **magnificent** are laden with negative or positive value respectively, it is not as easy to define why that is. Therefore, we have to turn to the context in order to interpret
authorial stance, and lack of contextual information can lead to misleading interpretations. In contrast, grammatical stance marking includes both a proposition and some additional information on that proposition, which allows for a more specific interpretation (Biber 2006). Despite this apparent challenge, the present study will include both grammatical constructions, such as complement clauses, and pure value-laden lexical choice, in this case, adjectives. The context of the stance marker occurrences in my material is fairly easy to determine, because the texts and the genres have in fact been chosen because of their shared context and communicative purpose. Therefore, it is reasonable to include both adjective-noun occurrences and adjective-complement clause occurrences in this study for the sake of including all cases of interest. In the following section, the major grammatical devices to express stance are briefly described, with specific focus on adjectives.

6.2. Stance adjectives

Grammatical stance devices include a wide range of constructions, including single-word adverbs or adjectives, modal verbs, complement clauses and prepositional phrases. The intention of the examples below (adapted from LGWSE 1999: 969-975) is to demonstrate this diversity of stance markers before examining constructions involving adjectives in further detail:

1. Stance adverbials (single adverbs, prepositional phrases, adverbial clauses etc.)

   i) *Unfortunately*, we cannot do anything about it.

   j) *In actual fact* only a fraction of this number actually occurs.

   k) *You just have to try and accept it, I guess.*
2. Stance complement clauses (controlled by verbs, adjectives, nouns etc.)

l) I just hope that I’ve plugged it in correctly.

m) I’m very happy that we’re going to Sarah’s.

n) The fact that he will get away with attacking my daughter is obscene.

3. Modals

o) I might be up before you go.

p) She has to go to a special school.

4. Stance noun + prepositional phrase

q) They deny the possibility of a death wish lurking amidst the garden of lust.

5. Premodifying stance adverbs (stance adverb + adjective or noun phrase)

r) I’m really happy for you.

The examples above demonstrate the main constructions in which stance markers tend to occur. This study will focus specifically on adjectives occurring as stance markers and therefore, a closer look at adjectives or adjective constructions functioning as stance markers is useful. Attitudinal stance will be the semantic category in focus, because those stance markers describe an attitude and an opinion, rather than what is certain or uncertain (epistemic stance), or how a proposition is addressed in speech (style-of-speaking stance). Indeed, this study aims to reveal attitudinal markers in texts which aim to reflect an institution, in this case the EU, in a positive light.
With respect to the categories presented above, adjectives as stance markers can be summarized with the examples below:

1. Single adjectives

   s) *It is a very positive signal for EU-India relations* (...)  
      (IP/10/1696)

   t) (...) *while calling for robust defence of the Union’s interests* (...)  
      (GR 2007: 228)

2. Adjective + complement clause

   u) *We can be certain that the differentiation of the division of labour inevitably produces a decline.*  
   v) *I was curious to see why it had happened.*  
      (LGSWE 1999: 973)

3. Adjective + extraposed complement clause

   w) *So it was possible that he had taken the letter home.*  
   x) *It’s tragic that the Health Service is taking second place to a holiday camp.*  
      (LGSWE 1999: 974)

Stance adverbs and adverbials have thus far been more eagerly studied than stance adjectives, and as the summary above demonstrates, adjectives as stance markers are far more limited grammatically than adverbs are. This also implies that the study will include mainly lexical stance markers (value-laden words). The intention is to provide a description of how this category of words work to enhance the nouns or propositions they determine, and to discuss how this, in turn, serves to manipulate the audience into
complying and agreeing with what is said in the texts. The following section will
discuss this function.

6.3. Stancetaking functions

Why, then, is it important to study stancetaking in discourse? As briefly mentioned
above, almost any text contains, whether explicitly or implicitly, a set of values that are
conveyed through language. Thompson & Hunston (2000: 1) have examined these
values in terms of what is ‘good’ and what ‘bad’, which are seen in positive and
negative evaluations. These evaluations emerge as linguistic features expressing
deviation from the norm, either positive or negative. Furthermore, Hunston suggests
that ‘good’ and ‘bad’ may also be understood as things which help or prevent the
achievement of a given goal (Hunston 1989, Thompson & Hunston 2000: 14). Various
other dichotomies can be identified depending on the intended communicative purpose
of the text in question. However, determining this deviation from the norm involves a
subjective stancetaking on the part of the speaker or writer.

While it has been established that stance offers an opinion on a proposition
in terms of it being for example ‘good’ or ‘bad’, ‘important’ or ‘unimportant’, ‘certain’
or ‘uncertain’, the question of how stancetaking works and what it is used for is yet to
be addressed. In Thompson and Hunston’s work on stance, three main functions are
identified as follows:

- to express the speaker’s or writer’s opinion, and in doing so to
  reflect the value system of that person and their community,

- to construct and maintain relations between the speaker or writer
  and hearer or reader,

- to organize the discourse.

(Thompson and Hunston 2000: 6)
They point out that one, two, or all of these functions may be at play in the same text. As discussed above, even though stance essentially expresses the writer’s perspective, stancetaking nevertheless takes place within a value system. In the case of this study, the texts must reasonably express the values of the EU, being promotion and information material with the public as their intended audience. While the reader may not agree with the writer on some of the more specific propositions, both the writer and the reader function within the same broad framework of values. The opinion of the writer must concur with the “opinion” of the EU as a whole, and some of those values have been commonly agreed upon by the Member States in the form of e.g. treaties, decisions, and resolutions.

Constructing and maintaining relations between the writer and reader, according to Thompson and Hunston (2000: 8), can be divided into three categories: manipulation, hedging, and politeness. The author can manipulate the reader into absorbing and accepting the values of the author’s society or discourse community, which can be seen in the stance-marking pattern of a text. A common strategy is to assume that the reader agrees, with lexical devices such as of course or obviously. Similarly, using negative stance markers, such as calling an event an atrocity, expresses the opinion of the author and is easy for the reader to absorb while reading a full text. According to Teun van Dijk (1988: 83-84), news discourse, for instance, uses rhetorical devices in order to persuade the reader, mainly because the news itself is a “market commodity that must be promoted and sold”. By presenting new information to the reader, the journalist informs the intended audience, but by formulating that information in a way that leads the reader to accept it as truth, the writer can successfully persuade or manipulate the reader. The following example of a journalistic text illustrates how
authorial stance is used to establish or influence a public opinion of a matter which is deemed as wrong by the newspaper (stance markers bolded):

Human rights laws are protecting the **wrong** people

Telegraph View: A legal system that **protects** the "**rights**" of people **who are not citizens**, and who have behaved in ways which **threaten** the safety of those **who are**, has **clearly** got things **back to front**.

Respect for human rights is an **essential** part of any legal system. **Undermining** a government's ability to keep its citizens **safe** is **emphatically** not. But **thanks to** the way that the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) has been interpreted by judges in Strasbourg and Britain, that is what "**human rights**" have become: a means of **undermining** public safety, not of helping to **protect** it.

*(The Telegraph 2011)*

The excerpt includes several explicit (or in Besnier’s words, transparent) stance markers expressing view which are presented as pre-established facts. The first paragraph includes citation marking of the word *right* and *human rights*, adding a meaning of “supposed”, “alleged” or “so-called”. It is claimed that “the respect for human right is essential for any legal system”, and according to the writer (in this case *The Telegraph* as a newspaper), the current situation is “clearly” wrong, emphasized by the stance adverb. The expression “back to front” comments explicitly on the state of affairs, and the use of such a colloquial expression makes the writer assume a higher status position towards the matters discussed, which is further accentuated by the use of irony in “thanks to the way”. The writer is, judging from the abundance of negative stance markers, not grateful at all for the court’s way of dealing with the issue. The relative clause “who are not citizens” determines the status of “people” as undeserving of the
same rights as “those who are”. The use of verbs such as undermining and threatening takes a stance toward the propositions discussed, as does the adverb emphatically.

In contrast to the above example, Thompson and Hunston also discuss hedging, which is particularly common in academic registers, and functions to “adjust the truth-value or certainty attached to a statement”. This involves “toning down” a strong claim that something is true by using clauses such as “it might be suggested that”, “it would be fair to assume that” or verbs, adverbs or other constructions such as indicate, suggest, perhaps, or conceivably. Thompson and Hunston (2000: 10) go on to suggest that hedging also works as politeness, because it delicately introduces information known to the author but new to the rest of the discourse community. In this study, manipulation is the key function of stance markers in the three genres being examined.

7. Methodology

The following chapter describes the methodology used in this study, and the theoretical criteria for selecting and analyzing the material.

7.1. Genre analysis

In this paper, I focus on examining the three genres mentioned above in order to establish factors that are characteristic of each genre, and how context and communicative purposes determine genre limits. For this purpose, I apply a seven-step framework developed by Bhatia (1993: 22-35) which takes into account aspects of the function, form, and language of an unknown or previously undefined genre. This methodology acknowledges the great variety of contexts in which texts may be produced. I also note the specific discourse communities which produce these texts, and
briefly discuss how these communities may not always coincide with the intended audiences. In the following, I summarize Bhatia’s steps (1993: 22-35):

1. **Placing the given genre in a situational context**

   involves placing the text in a situational context based on intuition. The analyst discusses why the genre might be written the way it is based on encyclopedic knowledge and his/her understanding of the communicative conventions of similar texts.

2. **Surveying existing literature**

   examines previous research or methodologies which may be relevant to the discourse community which makes use of the genre in question. This step also includes information about that discourse community.

3. **Refining the situational/contextual analysis**

   means defining the intended audience, the speaker/writer/author of the text, the network of surrounding text and the topics or subjects which the text addresses.

4. **Selecting a corpus**

   means presenting the material and defining the boundaries and the criteria for the genre or genres, as well as the relevance of the corpus to the research question.

5. **Studying the institutional context**

   further examines the linguistic, social, cultural, academic or professional conventions which affect the language usage of the genre. This step also takes into account the organization
which commissioned or produced the texts, and any organizational conventions which might produce restrictions or additional rules for producing texts.

6. Linguistic analysis

examines the language and the text on one or several levels, e.g. on the structural or lexico-grammatical level or with regard to textualization.

7. Specialist information in genre analysis

Bhatia’s formula for analyzing unfamiliar genres is intended to cover as many of the factors that constitute and define a genre as possible. While the seven steps are comprehensive and well-motivated, they are open to adaptation, omission or rearranging according to the researcher’s needs. The material will be presented first (step 4, chapter 8), followed by a contextual analysis in chapter 9 (steps 1-3 and 5). Finally, in chapter 10, the material will be analyzed based on the attitudinal stance adjective findings.

As stated above, chapter 9 presents each genre according to Bhatia’s steps 1, 2, 3 and 5. The aim of this contextual analysis is to identify the features which make each genre distinguishable from other genres. For this purpose, steps 1 and 2 have been merged to a section where the genres are placed into a situational context according to intuition, and the aim of the analysis is to define the genre conventions and some

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Bhatia’s step 7 involves reaffirming the results of the analysis by consulting a specialist informant who is a member of the discourse community in question. This step excluded from the present study because it is beyond the scope of a Pro Gradu thesis.
possible reasons behind them (step 1). This information is then related to the background knowledge available and to the communicative conventions of the professional discourse community which produces the genre (step 2). Excerpts from the material are used to demonstrate the communicative purpose and the context in which the text has been produced. In subsections 9.1.2, 9.2.2, and 9.2.3, Bhatia’s steps 3 and 5 are combined. In this section, the speaker/author and the intended audience are defined, and the topics or subjects which the genre attempts to describe are discussed. Finally, the implicit rules and conventions governing the speaker/author are discussed, along with any circumstances bound to the organizational context. These specific ways in which such implicit conventions surface in language will be enlightened by excerpts from the material.

7.2. Stance markers

The following sections describe how and according to which criteria the attitudinal stance markers found in the material were compiled and categorized for further analysis.

7.2.1. Stance marker criteria

The main forms of lexical and grammatical stance adjectives are described in the theory section above. In this study, only attitudinal stance markers have been included in the material, because the focus of the study is on quality judgments on the part of the author, not evaluations of probability or commentary on the style of speaking. Attitudinal stance adjectives were extracted from the text, first by a detailed read-through, and then by using the concordance program AntConc6. This examination

produced an adjective list consisting of 215 different lexical items and 1406 individual occurrences divided across three genres.

The attitudinal stance markers in the three genres constituting the material reflect the author’s or discourse community’s “feelings, emotions, attitudes, or judgments” about a certain thing or state of affairs (LGSWE 1999: 966). As discussed in chapter 6, stance markers are not always unambiguous in terms of their functions. However, in simple terms, an adjective that can reasonably be interpreted as either a positive or a negative attribute to a proposition must be considered a stance adjective. Reversely, if the adjective does not evoke any sense of positive or negative evaluation in the reader, it is not a stance adjective. Such “neutral” adjectives include ones that describe features of a given noun that can be considered more or less factual, e.g. digital, interconnected, European, foreign, temporary, voluntary, multilateral, legal, cultural, structural.

In the following, I discuss some of the main criteria used in this study for determining which adjectives qualify as stance markers. I will also describe some of the common ambiguous cases encountered in the process of producing the word list.

All potential attitudinal stance adjectives were added to the list following the read-through. The adjectives were then critically examined with the concordance program AntConc in order to determine the word class, the context of the assessed word, and any repetitions which would affect the reliability of the analysis. This process also helps ensure that certain adjectives are not unintentionally overlooked in any of the three genres. Any homonyms belonging to another word class were then eliminated, along with words occurring in hyperlinks, tables, names of institutions, committees or well-established policies (e.g. the Common Agricultural Policy, the Integrated Maritime Policy). This elimination was done because adjectives such as the ones mentioned
above cannot possibly convey authorial stance, primarily because they are not optional lexical choices. Moreover, set expressions or terms such as sustainable development or best practice were eliminated for the same reasons.

In a number of instances, the extracted adjectives proved ambiguous: they may either express a “factual” state or authorial stance. Most of them, however, reflect a set of values, or assumptions if you will, which are commonly agreed upon within the discourse community. Such an assumption is that something which is new is good, and that “great mobility” is preferred over reduced or limited mobility, and so on. Similarly, “close collaboration” is considered a more efficient form of collaboration, “fast measures” is the aim, and “common values” and “democracy” for their part constitute an ideal explicitly laid down in the EU treaties. Other adjectives are ambiguous as lexical items, and their different meanings were determined according to the OED and then checked against the context in which they occur. Consequently, adjectives such as low (referring to a low level), great (meaning ‘big’), poor (meaning ‘of bad quality’), rich (meaning ‘plentiful, abundant, ample’, OED) were included in the list, and occurrences which did not correspond to these meanings were excluded.

7.2.2. Stance marker categorization

As previously stated, the interpretation of stance adjectives is dependent on context – which is particularly true for this study. In this case, the context is pre-determined by the material, and the shared ground of values is upheld by the discourse community. However, in order to draw any conclusions regarding the distributions of the stance adjectives in these texts, some further categorization is needed. The list of adjectives was therefore divided into 16 categories according to the ideal value or quality expressed by the adjectives (see Appendix ii). The OED online edition served as the
authority in terms of this semantic classification. However, it is important to note that, inevitably, such a categorization is far from problematic. The exact meaning of each adjective on the list may vary according to context and between occurrences, or they may be entirely open to interpretation, or deliberately ambiguous. The adjectives were therefore categorized according to the context in which they occur. The following list shows the categories in which the adjectives were placed according to the quality they express. The name of the category itself may prove misleading for some of the lexical items, and therefore the category descriptions are important to keep in mind.

- **Accessibility**: ‘being available and accessible’
- **Clarity**: ‘being coherent, clear, unambiguous, explicit, and simple’
- **Collectivity**: ‘being shared, integrated, and common’
- **Efficiency**: ‘being efficient and fast’
- **Fairness**: ‘being equal, fair and just’
- **Functionality**: ‘bearing result, having effect, having power, being resistant’
- **Importance**: ‘bearing importance, playing a central role’
- **Informativeness**: ‘providing new and/or sufficient information, including all relevant information’
- **Innovativeness**: ‘being updated, progressive, innovative, and forward’
- **Persistence**: ‘being persistent and long-lasting’
- **Quality**: ‘being good or bad, of a good or a poor quality’
- **Safety**: ‘being safe or prudent’
- **Stability**: ‘being stable and balanced’
- **Inexpensiveness**: ‘being inexpensive’
- **Uniqueness**: ‘being unique, being unusual’
- **Validity**: ‘being valid, credible, or relevant’
The qualities included in each category are perceived as ‘good’ by the discourse community. The stance adjectives extracted from the material reflect either a positive or negative side of this ideal value, producing a set of dichotomies such as fair – unfair (fairness), clear – unclear (clarity), or updated – outdated (innovativeness). However, as we shall see in the analysis, all of these categories do not include representations of both the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ values, and all occurrences do not, of course, have an opposite pair in the material. The distribution allows for numerical observations of what type of adjectives are more or less frequent in each genre. It is also possible to determine how frequent negative stance markers are compared to the positive stance markers, and in what kind of context they tend to occur.

A key observation in the analysis will be that there are adjectives which may be interpreted as either positive or negative, such as the word complex. The contextual aspects of these findings will be discussed further in the analysis section.

8. Material

The material chosen for this study represents three genres of written communication from the EU to its citizens. “The citizens” as an intended audience is understood here in the very broadest sense, i.e. all citizens in an EU member state or outside the EU who may wish to read information about and published by the European Union. The EU has an obligation to inform the citizens of the member states of its activities. However, this does not exclude people from outside the EU from the potential readership: the material is available to anyone who might wish to have access to it. Moreover, the EU works with the explicit aim of being transparent and open, but whether or not this is put into practice is another discussion entirely. Transparency is a fundamental value set down in
the EU treaties, and for the purpose of this study, I work according to the assumption that the information conveyed by the EU is relevant and truthful.

As I analyze the material more closely in chapters 9 and 10 we will see that even though the EU informs “everyone”, it must, ideally, accommodate some of its written material to the different intended audiences so as to reach beyond the discourse communities (such as ‘EU officials’, or ‘public servants in the member states’). These efforts are seen in the style, structure and various linguistic aspects of the three particular genres discussed here. I have chosen the texts according to the following criteria:

- They are available to anyone, via the Internet or on request.
- They are in English, and the overwhelming majority were also drafted in English.  
- They are recent publications, and should therefore have been drafted according to the EU plain language recommendations.

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7 Because almost three quarters of EU documents sent for translation are in English, it is important that these drafts be of a very high quality. While the EU editing and translation services do consider quality of the text a top priority, it is not possible to revise or edit all texts before publication. However, two of the genres discussed here are published via printed media and are therefore carefully revised before publication. The third group of texts, the press releases, are written explicitly for publication and are also carefully revised. This means that each type of text is written and edited deliberately for an agreed purpose by EU language experts.

8 The EU has launched several campaigns which aim to improve the quality of original English draft documents, e.g. “Fight the Fog” in 1998, the Action plan for better regulation in 2002, and a new plain language campaign in 2010.
- Their primary purpose is informing the reader (as opposed to being legally binding).

- They attempt to convey a positive image of the European Union and inform the reader of its accomplishments and its potential. They are in effect both information material and promotional material.

- They address subjects which are as non-specialized as possible and as relevant as possible for the everyday lives of citizens who are not themselves specialized in terms of their profession or level of education.

- They address subjects which concern all member states alike.

I have excluded any legal texts or documents from my study because of their specific nature. Their chief purpose is to be legally binding, and this is achieved by linguistic means, including the use of legal terminology, syntax and other types of specialized usage. Therefore, the form of any legal text, whether it is an act, a recommendation, or a decision, is affected by the requirements of legal documents to be precise, all-inclusive and unambiguous (Bhatia 1993, among others). Any register or genre upon which such qualities are imposed has to be carefully constructed with clear communication in mind.

I have also excluded texts which were drafted specifically for websites, for the following reason: web texts (if they are indeed a genre) are less characterized by form, structure and function than other genres, and more concerned with issues of being concise and stylistically “web-friendly”. Web texts are constantly revised and quickly become outdated. Many scholars and language planners would nowadays agree that the dynamic nature of the Internet has created a language usage that needs specialized expertise in order to be adequately planned or efficiently improved.
The three genres included in this study are EU information booklets, EU press releases and the General Report on the Activities of the European Union. All three texts meet the criteria listed above, and all texts remain unamended once they are published. In the case of the information booklets, however, revised editions may be published over time. This material is the least likely to include highly specialized vocabulary or political jargon, or similar features which might make the contents difficult to grasp for the reader. Each body of text (per genre) contains around 20,000-30,000 words (see Material list). The different sizes of the genres have been taken into account in the analysis, as attitudinal stance adjectives are discussed both according to absolute numbers and frequencies.

8.1. EU information booklets

I have selected two larger booklets containing information on the functioning of the European Union. They were retrieved from an online website included in the Europa portal (www.europa.eu) called the Easy Reading Corner, which aims to provide elementary easy-to-read information about the EU.

To a large extent, they cover the same topics as the press releases, because they are general overviews of matters that are thought to be of interest to the average citizen. The material includes the following two booklets:

- *How the European Union Works* (12,685 words)
- *Europe in 12 Lessons* (16,932 words)
8.2. EU press releases

I have selected 25 press releases encompassing 20,642 words collected from *Press Rapid*\(^9\), the EU press release database made available through the Europa web portal. The database includes approximately 70,000 press releases\(^10\) spanning the entire scope of the European Union’s activities. The press releases are translated into all three procedural languages (English, French, and German), but often also into any number of the 23 official languages of the Union, depending on the relevance of the release for specific readerships.

The press releases in the database are categorized according to their topic, and I have chosen my material among the four topics\(^11\), which were most closely related to the everyday lives of EU citizens, provided that they otherwise meet the requirements listed above:

- Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth
- Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship
- Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
- Health and Consumer Policy

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\(^9\) Available at <http://europa.eu/rapid/>.

\(^10\) Figure retrieved in November 2010.

\(^11\) These topics have been named according to the areas of responsibility assigned to each of the European Commissioners.
8.3. The General Report on the Activities of the European Union

This body of material consists of excerpts from the three most recent General Reports (henceforth GR). The excerpts are complete chapters from the reports, which deal with citizen-related matters and general values and procedures of the EU. The underlying principles for publishing the GR is described further in section 9.3. The material includes the following chapters:

- General Report 2007: Chapter VI: Life of the Institutions and Other Bodies (10,901 words)
- General Report 2008: Chapter III: Solidarity (7,057 words)
- General Report 2009: Chapter XX: More Improvements for the EU’s Citizens (10,350 words)

9. Description and preliminary analysis of the genres

In the following, I describe and discuss each genre according to the methodology developed by Vijay K. Bhatia (1993), as described in chapter 7.

9.1. Information booklets

This subsection describes the genre of information booklets and the specificities of that particular part of the material.

9.1.1. Situational context and background

On a regular basis, the EU publishes a broad set of material aimed at providing concise and relevant information on the activities of the EU. While much of the information is
produced in the form of reports and statistical overviews, the EU Directorate-General for Communication publishes different types of campaign material or texts for specific purposes in collaboration with the Publications Office of the European Union.

Generally speaking, brochures and booklets naturally vary considerably in size, content, layout, and structure. However, one communicative convention for booklets is easily identifiable: the aim is to be concise and clear as well as visually attractive, because booklets have limited space and are often handed out or published as promotional material. The EU booklets are structured in ways that give easy access to the relevant information, as exemplified by their titles: *Panorama of the European Union*, *Europe in 12 Lessons*, or *Key Facts and Figures*. They therefore tend to include informative and brief headings, as well as lists, figures, and illustrations to make the information accessible and attractive. The two booklets studied here are specifically intended to be non-specialized and accessible to young or adult readers of any level of literacy.

Because larger bodies of texts, such as the ones included in the material, are rarely uniform from beginning to end in terms e.g. of style, diction and complexity, they are difficult to categorize as one text type only. However, according to the main tendencies, the material from this genre fits well into Werlich’s description of expository texts and argumentative texts (1983: 39-41), because the author tries to explain how the different elements of the EU work as a whole, but regularly includes “quality-attributing” sentences, i.e. sentences that include attitudinal stance adjectives. However, such sentences do not occur evenly throughout the text, nor do the attitudinal stance adjectives. Entire sections are written as chiefly expository texts. In addition, the material does include a small number of narrative sections, for example in the chapter on the history of the EU. The text informs and teaches, but the material is not in itself
instructive, because it does not give explicit instructions to the reader, nor does it aim at making the reader do something. The following examples (1-3) demonstrate the expository nature of the EU booklets, while example (4) further down exemplifies the argumentative text type:

(1) It depends on the political system of each country whether their participant is the president and/or the prime minister.

(How the European Union works, 9)

(2) EU enlargement must not make ordinary people feel that their national or regional identities are being diluted within a standardised EU.

(Europe in 12 Lessons, 10)

(3) These laws, along with EU policies in general, are the result of decisions taken by the institutional triangle made up of the Council (representing national governments), the European Parliament (representing the people) and the European Commission (a body independent of EU governments that upholds the collective European interest).

(Europe in 12 Lessons, 11)

A key feature in the style of this genre is that it is not written entirely in the passive tense, like many other EU texts, which makes it easier to read. Moreover, complex syntax and complicated references to EU legislation have been avoided. All three excerpts describe relationships between factual phenomena. In example (1), the choice of a representative of the member state is described in a clear and simple manner. Example (2) expresses a value of the EU in equally straightforward terms. This second sentence aims to make the reader understand that multilingualism is a key principle of the EU. It is also worded like the kind of catch-phrase that often appears in marketing or election campaigns, stating a matter of affairs which cannot be condoned. Example (3)
again explains EU procedure in a declarative sentence that ends with a list of EU institutions.

9.1.2. Refined situational analysis and institutional context

The booklets were produced by the Directorate-General for Communication, which has been assigned the task of informing all interested parties, be it fellow officials, politicians, the press or the citizens. These particular booklets were written and edited by EU officials who are communication or language experts, with the specific intention of selecting the most relevant, interesting and important information and compiling it into an easy-to-read form.

There are certain challenges involved in analyzing this genre according to my definitions of *genre* and *discourse community*. The texts are produced by a discourse community, i.e. a professional group of people who follow norms which are agreed upon by members of the group, but in this case, the discourse community does not equal the intended audience. Rather, the discourse community produces texts which are, perhaps paradoxically, non-specialized in terms of terminology or jargon, but highly specialized in terms of how they communicate the message, in this case through plain language. Plain language most often requires special skills in communication and professional writing in order to be appropriate for a given purpose. When it comes to simplifying EU procedure, such expertise is most certainly needed.

The communicative purpose of the booklets is two-fold: to help the reader understand the EU system and to present the EU as a positive institution. The authors and editors have not used a neutral diction, but instead one that creates a positive image of the EU. The following excerpt demonstrates the language and style of this genre as
well as some stance-taking features which serve to manipulate the reader into accepting certain statements as fact (attitudinal stance markers in bold type):

(4) The EU wishes to promote humanitarian and progressive values, and ensure that mankind is the beneficiary, rather than the victim, of the great global changes that are taking place. People’s needs cannot be met simply by market forces or imposed by unilateral action.

So the EU stands for a view of humanity and a model of society that the great majority of its citizens support. Europeans cherish their rich heritage of values, which includes a belief in human rights, social solidarity, free enterprise, a fair distribution of the fruits of economic growth, the right to a protected environment, respect for cultural, linguistic and religious diversity and a harmonious blend of tradition and progress.

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which was proclaimed in Nice in December 2000, sets out all the rights recognised today by the EU’s member states and their citizens. These values can create a feeling of kinship between Europeans. To take just one example, all EU countries have abolished the death penalty.

(Europe in 12 Lessons, 5)

The excerpt (4), an example of the argumentative text type, includes a variety of stance markers in the form of verbs, adjectives, one adverb, and most notably, nouns. By using an abundance of positive stance nouns such as progress, diversity, kinship, solidarity, respect, etc., the author presents the EU in a positive light. In addition, and true to plain language standards, the text is clear and explicit, stating what the “EU wishes to promote” and what the “EU stands for”. The excerpt also shows how the author attempts to convince the reader by claiming a number of “truths”, for example that “the great majority of [the EU’s] citizens” support certain views, and that these “values can create a feeling of kinship between Europeans”.
Table 1: Summary of the information booklet genre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Information booklet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discourse community</td>
<td>EU officials/editors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intended audience</td>
<td>EU citizens needing or wanting easy reading material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative purpose</td>
<td>Informing, explaining, teaching/promoting, persuading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Open to revision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main text types</td>
<td>Expository, argumentative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse/register</td>
<td>Plain language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.2. Press releases

In the following, the genre of press releases is described and discussed.

9.2.1. Situational context and background

The various EU offices and institutions publish press releases to inform the press of recent news, reports, events, or research. The press releases are organized into a multilingual database, *Press Rapid*, where they can be retrieved with the help of advanced searches. The 25 press releases included in the material vary in length, scope and focus, but they were all written according to the EU’s own standard for press releases. This standard does not differ significantly from the common principles for writing press releases or certain types of journalistic texts. In journalism, the principle of the inverted pyramid means that the most important information is presented first in brief, and details of the issue or incident are added below that information. Journalistic texts have a headline and in most cases, a lead, which together serve as an introduction to the news item (van Dijk 1985, van Dijk 1988: 54). Accordingly, all EU press releases include a headline worded to arouse the interest of the reader. The headline is followed
by the lead, containing the basic information as an introduction of some ten lines. The length of the rest of the text ranges from 300 to 1,000 words.

In the ideal case, a press release is informative and concise, i.e. it contains a large amount of information in a condensed body of text. At the same time, the aim is to produce a text which could be published as such or with little revision in a newspaper or a website. Moreover, the texts have to be detailed enough to be interesting, but general and simple enough to make the reader’s read past the lead. According to Norman Fairclough (1995: 42) and van Dijk (1988: 120), media discourse is highly affected by the “economics of media”. Media texts and programs must respond to the need to be cost-efficient and appealing to their intended audiences. In order to be audience-oriented, media discourse must also be personal to a greater extent than other types of communication, for example by simulating communicative styles that are known to the public and used in their every-day lives. However, van Dijk (1988:74-76) also stresses that news or media discourse require a formal, passive-tense language that is often fairly complex in terms of its syntax. Moreover, news reporting relies on a certain degree of presupposed shared knowledge between writer and reader, in that it is typically angled, and leaves out a large portion of information due to the “economic” constraints on news items.

According to Werlich’s text-type classification, the press releases are mainly descriptive, but also to some extent argumentative. They describe the state of affairs at this moment, or events that are set to take place, or how some course of action has lead to a specific result. Argumentative sections often occur in where attitudinal stance adjectives are clustered or where quotes are featured in the text. Some press releases concern recent research or statistical reports, and these are more prominently narrative. Depending on the subject at hand, some sections in the press releases may
also lean towards the expository text type. The majority of the press releases in the material, however, use predominately descriptive present tense sentences, describing “phenomena in space” (Werlich 1983: 39). The following examples illustrate the descriptive parts of the texts:

(5) The EU rules concern discrimination in employment on grounds of religion, beliefs, disability, age and sexual orientation (Directive 2000/78/EC) and in employment in almost all other areas of everyday life on grounds of race (2000/43/EC).

(IP/10/1429)

(6) What happens to your personal data when you board a plane, open a bank account, or share photos online?

(IP/10/1462)

(7) The European Commission addresses gender inequality in education both by encouraging policy co-operation between EU countries and through its funding programmes.

(IP/10/695)

Example (6) is an example of the relaxed media language register, approaching the reader directly. It is the first sentence of the lead, although the press release changes tone further along when it provides further facts and figures. Example (5) is a fairly atypical sentence for the genre. It has been included in the lead, the section of the press release which is meant to give a brief explanation of the subject. Instead, the text refers to an EU Directive because of the need to provide background information and the legal grounds for decisions or actions. Despite the fact that media language is sometimes complex, the “heaviness” of example (5) derives from its diction and detailed references. It is an interesting example of political diction meeting media language. The
effect is that the excerpt strays notably from the journalistic convention of attractive, “economic” language. Example (7) illustrates a descriptive text which provides information on the EU’s efforts to promote equality in more simple terms.

The discourse community which produces this genre of EU communication consists mainly of journalists. Other groups of professionals who may use the press material include public servants in the member states, or even individuals who are generally interested in the subject, whether by profession or not, and, of course, other journalists. The press services thus provide the media with the relevant material, and the media, in turn, serve the public by selecting information for their newspapers or news services. The citizens could be seen as the secondary audience of this particular genre, or indeed as a sub-audience. They are, however, not part of the main discourse community of journalists who produce and make use of these particular texts.

9.2.2. Refined situational analysis and institutional context

The EU press releases mainly concern recent developments in EU policy or measures which will or have been taken. Many press releases also present recent research, projects or results from the Eurobarometer, which surveys various aspects of European society on a regular basis. Such research often point to areas where improvements are needed, and the press releases present these issues as their main topic, often featured in the headline.

There are a few aspects specific to the European Union press releases which give rise to certain challenges for the editors. First of all, the press releases tend to be based on material such as reports, European Commission decisions or resolutions. In the editing or drafting process, it becomes difficult to avoid certain phrases and usages which do not typically belong to the media language register. This tendency is
evident in the material chosen for this study, for example in the sheer number of
domain-specific words which may be difficult to understand for the average reader of a
newspaper, and maybe even for journalists. Secondly, as a consequence of the
bureaucratic nature of EU politics, there is a need to refer back to treaties and official
documents in order to be precise and provide background information to explain the
developments described in the press release. Such references tend to make a text
“heavier” and more challenging to grasp.

As the more detailed analysis in chapter 10 shows, the press release genre
also makes use of stance markers in order to present the EU as a potent and efficient
union. Certain state-of-affairs or actions are described explicitly or implicitly as
warranted or efficient, and recent achievements of the EU are highlighted. While the
journalists or writers drafting the press releases are reporting facts, they nevertheless
present the information in a way which is attractive to the reader. Much journalism is
subjective or angled, and so are the press releases. The following excerpt of
argumentative text from the material shows how stance markers are used to reinforce
the positive nature of the actions or events described:

(8) The Commission’s **new initiative** outlines the situation across
Europe regarding early school leaving, its **main** causes, its **risks** for
future economic and societal development, and proposes ways to **tackle**
the **problem more effectively**.

(IP/11/109)

(9) The Directive is accompanied by an **Action Plan** on organ donation
and transplantation. The **Action Plan**, which runs for the period 2009 to
2015, sets out 10 **priority actions** which aim at **increasing** organ
**availability**, making transplantation systems **more efficient** and
**accessible**, and strengthening **quality** and **safety**.

(IP/10/724)
The 2010 European Year aims to raise greater awareness of the causes and consequences of poverty in Europe, both among key players such as governments and social partners and among the public at large. It also aims to mobilise these different partners in the fight against poverty; promote social integration and inclusion; and encourage clear commitments on drawing up EU and national policies to tackle poverty and social exclusion.

Example (8) is written in a fairly neutral language, and the stance markers are not among the most radical occurrences. The excerpt is nevertheless explicit without any significant rhetorical devices added. The choice of tackle nevertheless enforces the effect of the EU grabbing hold of the problem and stopping it. The adverbial phrase “more effectively” expresses the notion that the problem is already being tackled, but that this will be done in a more efficient way. Example (9) also states explicitly that systems will be made more efficient, and the potency of the EU is underlined in the choice of strengthening instead of improving. Although the term action plan is widely in use in political discourse, it has connotations of activity and resourcefulness. In example (10), the author has gone even further by using the metaphorical expression “to fight poverty”, as well as the verb tackle, again highlighting the strength of the EU.

Table 2: Summary of the press release genre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Press releases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discourse community</td>
<td>Journalists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intended audience</td>
<td>Journalists, the general public (secondary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative purpose</td>
<td>Informing, promoting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Standardized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main text types</td>
<td>Descriptive, argumentative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse/register</td>
<td>Media discourse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.3. The EU General Report

The following sections describe the GR according to Bhatia’s methodology (chapter 7).

9.3.1. Situational context and background

Every year the EU publishes a General Report (GR) on its activities. It includes topics ranging from economical growth, citizenship, and culture to industries, development aid, or the environment. Each report focuses on issues that have been particularly topical during the past year. Previously, the EU published a monthly bulletin which reported on the activities of the month in each field of EU work. In addition, an annual GR was published, providing a summary of activities which had already been discussed in detail in the bulletin. After the Lisbon Treaty came into force on 1 December 2009, the bulletin was discontinued and recent EU news are published on the EU news website, in the form of news items rather than the previous bulletin texts which were written in detailed and jargon-heavy language. Today’s General Report is decidedly more reader-oriented, clearer, and more concise than the bulletin.

The Commission is required to publish the GR according to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. Article 249(2) of the Treaty states that “[t]he Commission shall publish annually, not later than one month before the opening of the session of the European Parliament, a General report on the activities of the Union.” The Treaty does not specify further how the report should be compiled or what information it should include. Therefore, the contents, form, structure and style of the GR are, in theory, entirely open to revision and discussion. This means that logically,

12 The consolidated version is available at
we would assume that the report is drafted in a way that serves its communicative purpose to the highest degree possible.

Political reports are often perceived as comprehensive and difficult to read, because they are written in a bureaucratic language rich with jargon and specialized political or technical terminology. This is certainly true for the GR, but between the three reports examined in this Pro Gradu thesis (2007, 2008, and 2009) there are notable differences in terms of layout, structure and, most importantly, the choice of contents and point of view, which are due to a conscious effort to improve and enhance the readability of the GR. In the latest report, the information is more clearly organized under topics which appeal to the reader, while the earlier reports are more elaborate and in-depth on every subject, and, arguably, include almost too much information. According to the GR website of the Europa.eu portal\(^{13}\), the intention is to “transform[ing] the Report into a real communication product, which is easier to read, whilst still providing an account of the EU’s major initiatives and achievements throughout the year”. All three reports contain thematically organized information, under topics ranging from the specific activities of the political bodies of the EU to descriptions of more general developments in different areas of the life of the EU citizens.

According to Werlich’s classification, the GR consists of mainly narrative, but also argumentative texts. It recounts the activities of the previous year in the imperfect, thereby “more or less selectively dealing with […] phenomena in time” (1983: 39). The texts also include sections describing cause, effect and relations, which are typically expository or argumentative elements, depending on the subject matter of

\(^{13}\) <http://europa.eu/generalreport/index_en.htm>
the text, as exemplified by example (14) below. The following excerpts represent the main text type of the GR, the narrative text type:

(11) The challenge posed by the H1N1 pandemic was met with efforts at EU and international level to maximize coordination.

(GR 2009: 107)

(12) Parliament approved the outcome of the conciliation on the third rail package, and completed the second readings of a number of important items, such as the coordination of certain rules in the Member States governing audiovisual media services, and the first readings of some other, such as the definition, description, presentation and labeling of spirit drinks, review procedures concerning the award of public contracts, and Fiscalis 2013.

(GR 2008: 221)

(13) As for prospective enlargements, accession negotiations continued with the candidate countries and closer links were forged with the potential candidate countries.

(GR 2007: 12)

Example (11) explains the actions following the H1N1 pandemic without any additional information explaining why or in what context. The assumption is that the reader is already aware of the implications of the H1N1 pandemic and expects the EU to have taken measures. Example (12) contains 67 words is a narrative text and list of things achieved, but it is difficult to understand its meaning without previous knowledge of the matter. The references to specific procedures or cases, such as “Fiscalis” or the “public contracts” mentioned in the text, are difficult to understand even as part of an entire chapter. Example (13) is equally formal in tone, which in this case adds to its vagueness, as there is no further information on the “closer links [that] were forged” and what exactly those links involve. All three examples are noun-heavy and include diction associated with political discourse.
9.3.2. Refined situational analysis and institutional context

The GR is published for the public, but it is detailed enough to include references and concepts which are not necessarily part of the common knowledge realm of an average EU citizen. It is a working document for public servants or professionals in business life who are more directly affected by the activities of the Union. The discourse community, including both the producers of the text and the intended audience, includes EU officials, lobbyists, politicians, business professionals and other professionals in the member states and outside the EU, all of whom may want more detailed information about EU activities.

For this particular genre, it becomes increasingly relevant who the intended readership is and what the purpose of the publication is. The GR has been institutionalized because its publication is mandatory for the EU and part of the EU’s pledge to be open and transparent. Aspects of clear communication or the quality of the report are not addressed in the treaties mentioned above, nor are the contents of the report. Therefore, it is entirely up to the drafters to continuously improve the layout and linguistic form of the GR. The author or the voice behind the GR is in effect the EU itself, with the blessing of the European Commission, which officially adopts the GR before publication. The GR begins with a foreword by the President of the EC who comments on the general state of the European Union today, but other than that it is officially authorless, reflecting the common decision of the Commission.

The communicative purpose of the GR is, to a large degree, to present the EU in a positive light and promote its activities as useful, efficient and unifying. Simultaneously, it must account for the actual decisions which have been made and how the EU funds have been spent. Authorial stance is visibly present throughout the three reports studied here. Typically, negative turns of events are presented as challenges

What the report is doing, whether successfully or not, is to depict the Union as a valid institution which is capable of fast results and political unity, and above all, “a policy of good neighbourliness” (GR 2009: 59). The lexical choices which reflect stance have been highlighted in bold type in the following argumentative excerpt from the GR:

(14) At its spring meeting the European Council reiterated that the European Union is committed to maintaining international leadership on climate change and energy. It called for a coherent legislative package based on the conclusions of the spring 2007 meeting to be adopted by the beginning of 2009 at the latest. With a view to achieving these objectives, in particular with regard to energy efficiency, on 13 November the Commission adopted the second strategic energy review (7).

The European Council also expressed the view that a key challenge will be to ensure that this transition to a safe and sustainable low-carbon economy is handled in a way that is consistent with EU sustainable development, competitiveness, security of supply, food security, sound and sustainable public finances, and economic and social cohesion.

The European Council of 15 and 16 October reaffirmed its commitment to achieve ambitious targets in this area.

(GR 2008: 105)

The above excerpt (14) contains a number of stance markers, most notably adjectives such as safe, consistent and ambitious. Despite the fact that sustainable development is a term referred to numerous times in the GR, the word appears as an independent adjective twice in the same paragraph. The GR needs stance markers for emphasis and in order to make its otherwise bureaucratic discourse more vivid and more attractive.
Yet it must maintain the air of professionalism, which is important for strengthening the EU’s image as a valid institution. Moreover, the GR strictly stays within the boundaries of political discourse and “bureaucratic language” despite the shift towards plainer structures in the GR of 2009.

**Table 3: Summary of the General Report genre**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>General Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discourse community</td>
<td>EU officials, lobbyists, politicians, business professionals, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intended audience</td>
<td>EU officials, lobbyists, politicians, business professionals, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative purpose</td>
<td>Informing, promoting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Open to revision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main text types</td>
<td>Narrative, argumentative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse/register</td>
<td>Political discourse, media discourse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. **Analysis**

In this chapter, the material is analyzed according to the methodology described in chapter 7. The attitudinal stance adjective findings will be described in turn for each of the three genres, and will then be compared to each other.

10.1. **General observations**

In this section, the key numbers of this study are briefly discussed, along with some shared features for all of the texts. Attitudinal stance adjectives occur throughout the whole body of the material, and they are relatively evenly distributed in each genre. Table 4 below shows the size of the material with attitudinal stance adjective frequencies.
Table 4: Distribution of attitudinal stance adjectives (ASA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENRE</th>
<th>Information booklets</th>
<th>Press releases</th>
<th>General Report</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of ASAs</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>587</td>
<td>1,406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of words per genre</td>
<td>29,617</td>
<td>20,642</td>
<td>33,728</td>
<td>83,987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency, ASA/1,000 words</td>
<td>15.02</td>
<td>18.12</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>16.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequency is considerably lower in the information booklets than in the press releases and the GR, but as the detailed analysis below shows, the preferred types of adjectives vary to some extent between the genres. The complete list of adjectives (see Appendix i) shows that all three genres share a repertoire consisting of only 215 different lexical items, including their inflectional variations. These adjectives can be seen as an integral part of the discourse shared by the discourse community producing these texts, in these cases “the public officials at the European Union”. The study also revealed that positive stance markers occur 1311 times in total, with a frequency of 15.64 per 1,000 words. Interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, negative stance markers are not very frequent in the material, occurring only 92 times or 1.10 times per 1,000 words. It is evident in the material that negative stance markers are avoided, and when they occur, they tend to be paired with a verb which describes action against whatever phenomenon is discussed.

A closer reading of the text with adjectives and stance marking in mind led to a number of general observations regarding the nature of the texts. A common feature for all three genres is that they are, in general, quite dense with stance-marking nouns, and based on a general impression, it appears that nouns are indeed particularly
frequent in these texts. The way many sections of the texts are written suggests that a noun has been deliberately chosen over an adjective, as a number of examples below show. Moreover, attitudinal stance adverbs are not very frequent in any of the three genres. Style-of-speaking adverbs do not occur at all because the texts lack a designated speaker or first and/or third person voice. Epistemic and attitudinal stance adverbs, such as efficiently, purely, sufficiently, and democratically, occur to some extent, but much more frequently in the information booklets. The distribution of these adverbs is as follows: information booklets N=43, press releases N=18, and GR N=13.

The texts have been produced for a specific communicative purpose which serves as the guiding motif for drafting the texts. The authors are, reasonably speaking, also well aware of the intended audience. Therefore, the ways in which adjectives are being used give some insight into how deliberate lexical and grammatical choice serves the communicative purpose – in this case promoting the EU. In the following section, each genre will be described separately according to the concordance findings.

10.2. Information booklets

The following sections discuss the information booklets in terms of the attitudinal stance adjective findings in the material.

10.2.1. General analysis

The two information booklets are similar in structure, and they aim to convey simple and coherent information divided into smaller sections. Both booklets describe the EU institutions and their functioning, and they are written chiefly as expository texts, as described more closely in chapter 9 (see also 5.1.). However, the booklet Europe in 12 lessons is the only document in the whole material with a designated author, which means that it is the only text where the viewpoint is traceable to one single person. The
language in both booklets is fairly plain, and complicated sentence structure has been avoided. As a consequence of the plain language ambition, “heavy” nouns are less prominent than in the GR, for instance, and sentences tend to be active rather than passive. However, the text is inevitably full of EU terminology including long names of institutions and policies. What is worth noting, however, is the distribution of the items: stance adjectives tend to appear in the same paragraphs, whereas other paragraphs lack stance adjectives altogether. *Europe in 12 lessons* includes a number of paragraphs with particularly densely distributed adjectives. These paragraphs, such as example (15) below, are typically argumentative. The general tone of positive promotion is also particularly evident in this excerpt (attitudinal stance adjectives in bold type):

(15) - Because the EU is the world’s *leading* trading power and therefore plays a *decisive* role in international negotiations, such as those at the 149-country World Trade Organisation (WTO), as well as in the implementation of the Kyoto protocol on air pollution and climate change;

- Because it takes a *clear* position on *sensitive* issues affecting *ordinary* people, such as environmental protection, renewable energy resources, the ‘*precautionary* principle’ in food safety, the ethical aspects of biotechnology and the need to protect endangered species;

- Because it launched *important* initiatives for *sustainable* development on the whole planet, in connection with the ‘Earth Summit’ in 2002 in Johannesburg. (...)

So the EU stands for a view of humanity and a model of society that the great majority of its citizens support. Europeans cherish their *rich* heritage of values, which includes a belief in human rights, social solidarity, *free* enterprise, a *fair* distribution of the fruits of economic growth, the right to a *protected* environment, respect for cultural, linguistic and religious diversity and a *harmonious* blend of tradition and progress.

*(Europe in 12 lessons, 5)*
In the first three paragraphs, the EU is described as a leading and decisive force with the power to act in favor of its citizens. EU’s qualities are presented as facts through the conjunctions *because* and *therefore*, which express causality. In the fourth paragraph, values such as fairness, liberty, and harmony are expressed in the stance adjectives, and notably also in the choice of verbs (*support, cherish*) and nouns (*heritage, diversity, tradition, progress, fruits of...growth, respect*). It would be fair to say that the clear majority of verbs, nouns, or adjectives in this excerpt are in fact stance markers. This passage is a representative example of passages in the information booklets that make use of abundant stance marking. Passages which do not show the same frequency of stance adjectives tend to lean more towards Werlich’s descriptive text type, i.e. text that explain matters in a declarative way without adding information on the larger context (1983: 39-41). This is exemplified by the excerpt below. As discussed earlier, it is of course unlikely that an entire coherent text should meet unconditionally the criteria of only one text type.

(16) The Treaty requires the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission to make certain decisions under certain circumstances. If they fail to do so, the member states, the other EU institutions and (under certain conditions) individuals or companies can lodge a complaint with the Court so as to have this failure to act officially recorded.

*(How the EU works, 26)*

In this excerpt (16), the only adjective *certain* is an epistemic stance adjective, and the text is declarative. There are few other attitudinal stance markers at all, only *failure*, which can be interpreted as a stance noun.
10.2.2. Stance adjective distribution

The distribution of adjectives is discussed according to the qualities defined in chapter 7.2. The information booklets contain a total of 445 attitudinal stance adjectives, 32 of which are negative. Perhaps surprisingly, the information booklets have the lowest overall frequency of attitudinal stance adjectives. The most common categories of adjective are those expressing innovativeness (N=90), importance (N=92), functionality (N=47) and collectivity (N=43). The only category of adjectives not represented in this genre is “expensiveness” adjectives.

An interesting discrepancy compared to the other two genres is that the booklets have three times more uniqueness adjectives. Moreover, efficiency adjectives are not as frequent in the booklets. This implies that within this genre, the lexical choices place particular emphasize on EU as a progressive and active, important and powerful union with a shared common ground for all the citizens.

In order to better grasp the stance devices at play in this genre, a look at the adjectives at the word token level is useful. The list shows that the ten most common words in this genre are new (N=77), great*14 (N=26), common (N=23), major (N=16), important (N=14), equal (N=12), key (N=10), wide* (N=10), close* (N=9), and shared (N=8). Together these words represent almost half of all attitudinal stance adjectives in the text. They are undoubtedly common in general, and they are indeed also among the most common words in the other two genres. They are, however, distributed somewhat differently.

The information booklets have the second highest frequency of negative stance markers of the two genres. The words unfair, sensitive, and excessive are

14 The asterisk represents the inclusion of comparative and superlative forms in the entry.
somewhat more frequent, and words such as false, heavy, incorrect, less-favoured, misleading, unacceptable, unclear, utopian, and vanquished appear only in the information booklet genre. This is also the only genre to include words which could be perceived as somewhat unexpected and more dramatic, and which function in more metaphorical ways, such as victorious, vanquished, glorious, harmonious, momentous, and peaceful. These observations confirm the overall effect of the texts, namely that they are somewhat more freely worded and less bound to formal standards than the GR, for instance.

Despite the relatively small differences in adjective usage, some of the findings are somewhat unexpected. The most subjective and explicit category of adjectives is that of quality, containing words that simply assess what is “good” or “bad” (see Appendix ii). Due to the explicit authorship of one of the booklets, and because of the freer structure and style of this genre, a larger number of quality adjectives and of adjectives in general would be expected. Instead, this genre has the lowest frequency of quality adjectives and, more importantly, of all types of attitudinal stance adjectives.

### 10.3. Press releases

#### 10.3.1. General analysis

The 25 press releases selected for this study all concern similar topics within the same areas of the EU’s activities. The texts are descriptive and expository, and most often focus on what will be done or what has been done. They notify the public about recent research or surveys, and point to areas in society where improvements are needed. The style ranges from plain language to fairly complex structures including specialized terminology. This is particularly true for press releases describing new advances within
the legislative or scientific fields. Interestingly, this genre has twice as many attitudinal stance adverbs compared with the other two.

In line with the journalistic “inverted pyramid” (van Dijk 1985: 53) of presenting the most important information first, attitudinal stance adjectives occur more densely in the lead and the first few paragraphs of the press releases. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule among the press releases. Typically, bullet point lists and quotes also tend to have more stance adjectives, as demonstrated by the excerpts below.

- (17) Provide **better** incentives for employers and individuals to up-skill, and investment in skills must be **significant**, **smart** and not just financial;

- Open up the worlds of education and training by making education and training institutions more **innovative** and **responsive** to both learners' and employers' needs, and by developing **relevant** qualifications that focus on **concrete** learning outcomes;

- Offer a **better** mix of skills that is **more suited** to labour market needs;

- **Better** anticipation of future skill needs.

(IP/10/123)

(18) Over 80 million people in the EU are still living at risk of poverty and a quarter of these citizens are children. The economic crisis has exacerbated this situation, exposing **vulnerable** groups even more. With the 2010 European Year against Poverty and Social Exclusion drawing to a close, the EU must continue to step up its efforts for the decade to come on this key issue. Bringing vulnerable groups into the heart of our societies and labour markets is central to **sustainable** and **inclusive** growth. Poverty reduction is an engine for this future growth. At the initiative of the European Commission, EU leaders have already set, for the first time ever, a **concrete** numerical target to reduce poverty and social exclusion by at least 20 million by 2020. Today's communication, 'The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion' sets out ways to help Member States move up a gear in fighting social exclusion. Countries now have to set their own **ambitious** national targets,
reporting annually on their progress. The Commission will support these
efforts, mobilising – among others – policies like social protection,
employment and education, as well as EU funding. It will also promote
new partnerships and new ways of combating poverty through social
innovation to test new policy ideas.

(IP/10/1729)

The bullet points list (17) measures that are called for in order to “solve Europe’s skills
deficiencies”. It contrasts value-laden adjectives with neutral ones (significant and
smart vs. financial), accentuating that the aim is to provide relevant and innovative
training. Both excerpts are written in a decidedly journalistic style, employing
expressions such as to “open up the worlds”, “draw to a close”, “step up [the] efforts”,
“bring [them] to the heart of”, “set out ways to help”, “be an engine for […] growth”,
and “move up a gear”. Such rhetorical devices (abundant use of metaphor, phrasal verbs
etc.) are not found in the GR genre, nor can they be found in the otherwise less formal
language of the information booklets. The language of the excerpt nevertheless shares
some jargon with the other two genres, such as “combating poverty” or “fighting social
exclusion”. This is also true for the genre as a whole.

Sections which do not contain many attitudinal stance adjectives tend to
be more matter-of-fact descriptive texts, such as the following example:

(19) The European Commission plans to use a series of measures aimed
at significantly reducing the pay gap between men and women over the
next five years. The average gender pay gap in the EU currently stands
at 18%. To lower this rate, the Commission plans to raise awareness
among employers, encourage initiatives to promote gender equality and
support the development of tools to measure the gender pay gap.

(IP/10/236)
The excerpt is descriptive in that it contains chiefly declarative sentences with little conjunctions to explain relations, yet it is coherent, unambiguous, and written in plain language. There are no attitudinal stance adjectives in this paragraph.

10.3.2. Stance adjective distribution

The press release genre represents a smaller amount of text than the other two genres, with some 10,000 words less. Nevertheless, the sample includes 374 occurrences of attitudinal stance adjectives, 35 of which are negative stance markers. Out of all the three genres, the press releases have the highest frequency of attitudinal stance adjectives, at 18.12 per 1,000 words. This frequency is higher than the corresponding frequency for all of the material. The most common adjective categories are importance (=76), functionality (N=67), innovativeness (N=63) and quality (N=52). The high number of adjectives relating to action and result as well as innovation corresponds with the communicative purpose of the press releases, namely describing new research and measures that have been or will be taken, and promoting the EU in the light of its recent achievements. The press releases are also the only genre to use adjectives which concern the cost of different projects or policies, and collectivity is far less emphasized than in the other two genres (N=10 compared with N=43 and N=65). A possible explanation to this is that the press releases concern much more specific topics which are often bound to space and time, whereas the other two genres deal with the broader functions and longer-term activities of the union. Adjectives belonging to the quality category, which also tend to be more explicit, are almost equally frequent in all three genres. However, the press releases have the highest number of negative stance markers. Like in the other genres, they often occur in relation to verbs or nouns which
involve action or improving measures (stance marker in bold, relevant verbs underlined):

(20) There has been a decrease in complaints about unfair commercial practices and selling techniques. (IP/10/1313)

(21) Early school leaving is a complex problem and cannot be solved by education policies alone. (IP/11/109)

(22) Removing bureaucratic obstacles that impose extra costs and legal uncertainty on businesses is therefore a key part of the Commission’s drive to make life easier for companies and citizens. (IP/10/1705)

(23) The reform proposed by the Commission today includes four key changes: Abolition of the cumbersome exequatur procedure: (…)

The choice of strong verbs, or nouns derived from verbs, (decrease, remove, solve, abolish) expresses the EU’s power to act in a manner that leads to results. Example (23) also includes two other stance adjectives which strengthen this effect.

The ten most common words in the press releases are new (N=52), important* (N=20), key (N=19), special (N=13), specific (N=13), low (N=13), good (N=10), fair (N=9), sustainable (N=8), practical (N=8). Only two belong to the otherwise common importance category, and three of the highest ten reflect functionality. The most explicit category, being that of quality, is represented only by good and low.

Due to the nature of journalistic language, it is perhaps not surprising that many common words have high frequencies in this genre. However, the top ten does not reflect the fact that this genre includes a considerable number of adjectives used only in the press releases, such as consolidated, cost-effective, cumbersome, excellent, fierce, old-fashioned, pivotal, responsive, sweeping, and uncontested. Some of these reflect the
freer wording of journalistic language and the tendency towards metaphorical word choices.

10.4. General Report

In the following, the attitudinal stance adjective findings in the General Report genre are analyzed first in general terms, and then according to the distribution of stance adjectives.

10.4.1. General analysis

The General Report is the most formal of the three genres. It consists of narrative texts in the past tense which recount the activities of the EU of the past year. The communicative purpose of the report is to inform the public of the state of the EU and of the most topical and most urgent matters which have been addressed, and thereby promote the EU as being efficient and ready for action. The language is fairly formal and it is dense with EU terminology and concepts which are unlikely to be familiar to the average citizen. One reason for this is that the intended audience, consisting of EU officials, lobbyists, politicians, and business professionals, is perhaps more qualified in this area. In addition, the GR needs to be more detailed than the booklets, yet it covers the entire scope of the EU activities. This is also the key difference between the GR and the press releases, which are detailed but more specific in terms of their topic.

While the language tends to be fairly complex, with long sentences, “heavy” vocabulary, and numerous references to EU law, there are some differences between the three reports included in the material here. Compared to the 2007 and 2008 reports, the report of 2009 has clearly been updated in terms of structure, layout, and language (see 9.3.1). The headings are more informative and closer to the journalistic style of organizing text and formulating headings, and the language is plainer.
Attitudinal stance adjectives are fairly evenly distributed in all three reports. However, the updated structure of the 2009 General Report includes leads to each section, and these leads tend to be denser in stance adjectives:

(24) Since its earliest days, the EU has played a major role in assuring the provision of food, and agriculture remains one of its principal areas of spending. Fisheries too is still an important EU industry, and it became clear that radical reform of the EU’s common fisheries policy is essential to provide for a competitive and sustainable industry in the 21st century. The EU’s integrated maritime policy is a comprehensive response to the crucial importance of the seas and oceans as a productive resource for Europe.

(GR 2009: 109)

This section contains an exceptionally high number of stance adjectives for the genre. The language is plain and clear but the adjectives become almost too prominent to maintain a credible and “manipulative” function (cf. Thompson and Hunston 2000: 8-10). The maritime policy addressed in this paragraph is a matter which has been surrounded by ongoing debate, and which divides the member states. The particularly high amount of stance markers in effect underline the urgency of the matter: it tries to persuade the reader that the EU has played a decisive role and that supporting and renewing fisheries and agriculture is the right course of action.

In terms of the frequency of attitudinal stance adjectives, the example below is perhaps more representative of the genre:

(25) In Lucchini (1), the Court had to rule on the principle of the primacy of Community law in a matter of State aid. It held that a national court was prevented from applying a domestic rule that might encroach upon the Commission’s exclusive authority to decide whether a State aid measure was compatible with the common market, including a domestic measure applying the principle of res judicata which in the
case at issue stood in the way of the recovery of aid that the Commission had declared incompatible.

(GR 2007: 232)

The passage (25) does include three attitudinal stance markers, but they are almost technical in nature. It consists of only two sentences which are both compact and noun-heavy, the second including multiple subordinate clauses and the Latin term res judicata. A large portion of the two earlier reports are equally compact and contain a smaller number of adjectives than the excerpt above.

10.4.2. Stance adjective distribution

As the most formal of the three genres, it would be reasonable to expect that the General Report would have the lowest frequency of attitudinal stance adjectives, but this is not the case. It contains 587 adjectives, but the frequency is only 17.4 per 1,000 words, compared to the 15.02 and 18.12 of the information booklets and the press releases respectively. Only 25 of these adjectives were negative, which represents the lowest number and the lowest frequency of all three genres. The most common adjective categories were innovativeness (N=103), importance (N=90), functionality (N=66), and collectivity (N=65). Consequently, the General Report emphasizes innovation and result, as well as the collective aims of the Union and the creation of a common ground for the member states. It is noteworthy that three categories were significantly more present in this genre than in the other two: those of persistence, efficiency, and stability (approximately 20 occurrences more per category). This genre favors the words active, better, effective, and integrated, all of which occur up to three times more often than in the other two genres. Somewhat surprisingly, the word important* only occurs less than 10 times in the General Report.
The ten most common words in the General Report are new (N=87), common (N=39), sustainable (N=24), better (N=23), equal (N=18), active (N=17), great* (N=17), integrated (N=16), key (N=15), and long* (N=14). Out of this group, the words better and active were not among the most frequent words of any other genre. Some words such as coherent, harmonised, radical, and stringent do not occur in the other genres, but due to the fact that they do not share any remarkable common features, this must be seen as coincidental. The word sustainable is used widely in this genre, more than twice as often as in the information booklets or press releases.

While the number of negative stance markers is very low, their occurrence and context in all three genres is still noteworthy. In the examples below, negative stance markers are, once again, used to illustrate the efficiency or power of the EU to act (stance markers in bold, relevant verbs underlined):

(26) This is a complex problem which requires a complex response, taking account of all aspects.

(GR 2008: 122)

(27) Moreover, the ECB’s monetary policy implementation framework allowed it to continue to enforce its monetary policy while some of its features helped the banking sector to withstand the volatile situation on the market.

(GR 2007: 238)

(28) The report is accompanied by a document describing in more detail the progress made and the challenges to be met in the areas selected for OMC work in 2007, such as child poverty, working longer, persistent health inequalities and long-term care.

(GR 2008: 98)

Examples (26) and (27) both follow the pattern of pairing negative states of affairs with a course of action, and they do so by stating that the problem “requires a response” (but
it is implicitly understood that one has not yet been provided), and that efforts have been made to “help [bankers] withstand” the situation. However, as the examples show, the wording is much more careful and less explicit than in the other two genres. In the third example (28), the author is particularly apologetic and uses the word *persistent* to emphasize the severity of the problem and the fact that it is not easily solved.

It is perhaps not surprising that the GR should be more careful and less dramatic in its way of describing negative propositions, conditions, or phenomena. After all, it is the only document that has some kind of official status (given that it is set down in the EU Treaties). The GR describes a European Union that aims to build a “better” and “sustainable” state of affairs by being “active”, more “integrated” and “effective”, and it acknowledges the needs for improvement. It is nevertheless a document which summarizes past achievements, and therefore cannot promise success in the future.

10.5. Summary

The distribution of attitudinal stance adjectives in each one of the three genres offers some insights into the nature of the genres. In chapter 9, the genres were described according to their situational context and the expected genre conventions which affect how each genre is written. In chapter 10, the genres were examined according to the distribution and use of attitudinal stance adjectives.

The findings showed that out of the three genres, the information booklets had the lowest frequency of attitudinal stance adjectives, but the language is nevertheless more plain and less formal than in the GR or in the press releases, the latter containing a fair number of references and more field-specific terminology. As far as the use of attitudinal stance adjectives go, the booklets highlight the importance and collective nature of the EU, as well as its uniqueness as a political entity. The
communicative conventions of the genre were reflected in the language and the organization of the information.

The press releases were the most dynamic genre, following the standardized conventions for press releases, but nevertheless showing a considerably more varied vocabulary and freer style than the other two. The press releases appear precise, descriptive\(^{15}\) and fairly explicit and clear, and to the point. The journalistic elements of metaphorical language and stronger stance-taking words enhance the desirable effect of drawing the reader’s attention. The texts are concerned with the “here and now”, and consequently, with the most topical issues at the moment. This impression is reinforced by the attitudinal stance adjective findings. The press releases had the highest frequency of such adjectives, including negative stance markers. They also had twice as many attitudinal stance adverbs as the GR and the information booklet.

The language of the GR is more bureaucratic and complex than that of the other two genres. The texts narrate past events and the contents are structured thematically, which affects the frequency of attitudinal stance adjectives. This genre had the second highest frequency of attitudinal stance adjectives, and the lowest number and frequency of negative attitudinal stance adjectives. The positive stance markers analyzed highlight the EU and its actions as innovative and important, and there was particular emphasis on functionality and the shared values of the EU.

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\(^{15}\) “Descriptive” here does not refer to the text-type classification developed by Werlich (1983), but to the general meaning of the word.
Table 5: Summary of attitudinal stance adjective (ASA) distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Information booklets</th>
<th>Press releases</th>
<th>General Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of words</td>
<td>29,617</td>
<td>20,642</td>
<td>33,728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of ASAs</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency, ASA/1,000 words</td>
<td>14.02</td>
<td>18.12</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of negative ASAs</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of negative ASAs of all ASAs</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>9.9 %</td>
<td>4.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of attitudinal stance adverbs</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Discussion

The research aim of this Pro Gradu thesis is to examine and discuss three genres of EU publications which communicate information to the public, directly or indirectly. In this chapter, I discuss each of my research questions in the light of the analysis results.

11.1. Attitudinal stance adjective use

My main research question is to examine how the political agenda of promoting the EU surfaces in the use of attitudinal stance adjectives in the material selected for this study. The qualitative analysis of each genre and the stance adjective findings in the material show that stance markers are notably present in all texts. It is therefore unlikely that the purpose of the writers of the texts should have been to avoid making authorial stance visible. It would even be fair to say that the texts are to an extent manipulative, in that the authors consistently used (chiefly positive) stance markers to accentuate certain aspects of the message.

Authorial stance is more prevalent in many texts and genres than we would intuitively assume, as discussed in chapter 6. Writing a text with the purpose of maintaining absolute “neutrality” is virtually impossible. Nevertheless, certain stance
markers appear to be more overt or explicit than others. Attitudinal stance adjectives are among the more explicit stance markers, because they refer directly to a noun or a noun phrase. Attitudinal stance nouns, on the other hand, tend to be more implicit, because such direct reference is avoided. The analyses showed that all three genres have a fairly high proportion of attitudinal stance adjectives, and that they are notably present in the texts. The scope of this study does not allow for a comparison with larger and more varied corpora. However, such a comparison would presumably reveal interesting results regarding variations between registers and genres in the use of attitudinal stance adjectives.

The more general observations made in the analysis of each genre suggest a tendency, similar to that of political discourse in general, of avoiding excessive use of adjectives, which in turn tends to elevate the style of the text. In the material discussed here, stance markers have not been avoided altogether. However, the authors appear to prefer attitudinal stance nouns to attitudinal stance adjectives, in accordance with the communicative conventions of their discourse community. Studying the considerably smaller number of attitudinal stance adjectives in these texts therefore targets the conscious exceptions to the stylistic tendency of avoiding explicit and plain.

A key observation in the analyses is that controversial issues are often described in the text with a particularly high number of attitudinal stance adjectives, as well as a higher number of stance markers in general. In such passages, the impression conveyed to the reader regarding authorial stance is one of urgency rather than mere “neutral” statement of fact. Correspondingly, whenever negative issues or problematic areas of EU society are discussed, negative stance markers tend to occur. The description of a “negative” situation is then typically paired with a verb or a noun expressing action and reaction, often through frequently occurring metaphors such as
“combating poverty”, for instance. Moreover, the occurrence of stance adjectives in a given passage corresponds with a shift in text types, and often that shift occurs from descriptive to expository, and from expository towards argumentative along with the frequency of attitudinal stance adjectives (cf. 5.1.)

Another interesting observation is the way adjectives are used in passages about the EU’s values, which are described with decidedly more abstract diction than more topical issues, such as press releases on new projects or research advances. There seems to be a kind of shared discourse characterized by a certain group of words which reoccurs more often in passages on EU values, accentuating matters such as the “rich heritage” or “common values of equality, humanity and diversity”. Although such stance marking adjectives and nouns may indeed serve the purpose of promoting the EU, they bring little innovation to the discourse that continues to exist within the EU discourse communities, and from which promotional information emanates to the public. The total number of different attitudinal stance adjectives, 215 per 83,987 words in total, demonstrates that in drafting its outward information, the EU discourse community stays safely within the limits of its “broadly agreed set of common public goals” and makes use of its “acquired specific lexis”, as described by Swales (1990: 24-27) in the quote in chapter 5.2.

11.2. Variation between genres

My second research question is to identify the key differences between the three genres included in the material in terms of the attitudinal stance adjectives findings. While the distribution of attitudinal stance adjectives varies across all three genres, there are similarities in terms of the text types. In all genres, the dominating text type, be it narrative, expository, or descriptive, gives way to argumentative sections, in which
attitudinal stance adjectives are denser. While the text-type characterization is not entirely ambiguous, particularly where the text type is either descriptive or expository, argumentative sections are easier to identify because of the less conspicuous nature of attitudinal stance markers.

The analyses show that the press release genre has the highest frequency of attitudinal stance adjectives. This genre is characterized in the genre analysis (chapter 9) as more innovative and varied in style, level of formality, and diction. In the press releases, attitudinal stance adjectives add momentum and emphasis to any important facts or events presented in the text, and indirectly, those facts may be perceived as accomplishments of the EU. In contrast, the information booklets make more explicit claims about the way the EU works and about recent EU developments. Constituting a genre containing mainly expository texts, the booklets present information and suggest and explain how factual elements fit together. The information booklet genre has the lowest frequency of attitudinal stance adjectives, and these stance markers tend occur in clusters within the same paragraphs, showing similarities with the GR distribution pattern discussed below. As far as this genre goes, the study showed that the more abstract the subject matter of the section, passage or paragraph (values vs. procedures, for instance), the higher the number of attitudinal stance adjectives.

The GR is the only one of the three genres which has official status. The obligatory nature of the document inevitably affects how it is written, especially in terms of the way the EU’s values are reflected through authorial stance. The GR must account for the actions and decisions of the EU during the previous year, and it must explain why certain policies or measures have been deemed necessary. Contrary to the more general information booklets and the more specific press releases, the GR deals with matters which are, will be, or have been under constant dispute. While the press
releases report on new advances and decisions almost in real-time, the GR constitutes
the only official explanation for those advances. The GR genre was the most dispersed
in terms of its attitudinal stance adjective distribution, in that some passages or
individual paragraphs included a relatively large number of attitudinal stance adjectives,
while others completely lacked attitudinal stance adjectives, or even stance markers in
general. This distribution pattern reflects how different parts of the GR may have been
written by different people, but more importantly, certain topics have been accentuated
as though they required more effort in terms of convincing the reader. In matters of
some controversy, the language tends to be more manipulative and promotional, and the
text type shifts toward argumentative. Considering the current discussions regarding EU
policies and the recent criticism directed towards its financial policies in particular, the
EU may have a stronger need than ever before to support and justify its decisions in an
official document such as the GR. Accessible and convincing information is more likely
to reach the media and convey the message than a document with excessive in-group
diction and political jargon.

11.3. Communicative purpose
The third research question of this Pro Gradu thesis was to discuss how the genres serve
the overall communicative purpose of the EU’s communication towards the citizens,
namely informing the citizens and promoting the EU. This study has shown that the
contents, structure, language, and stancetaking patterns of each of the three genres are
affected not only by the conventions imposed on the genre itself, but also by the
different communicative purposes attributed to each genre. The writers of the texts have
adapted their texts to the intended readership, towards which the information is being
directed. The texts appear to be drafted so as to present an image of know-how and
efficiency either to a readership that is well-informed and fairly critical towards the EU (GR), or to people with little or no previous knowledge of the EU (information booklets and press releases), who may indeed also be critical towards the EU.

The genre analysis of the three genres showed that drafters of the information booklets appear to have been particularly attentive to the intended audience. The booklets aim to teach the reader how the EU should be understood and appreciated, and it is reasonable to assume that the drafting process has been fairly reader-oriented, because of the booklet format and the plain language philosophy behind the material in the Easy Reading Corner. However, even though the booklets studied here are visually attractive illustrated products, they are detailed and technical, and they contain references to structures and processes specific to the EU, which may impede the reading flow for some readers or even cause problems understanding the text. Moreover, both brochures contain information on procedures and processes which are well beyond the scope of “European Union basics”-type brochures. Conversely, these two booklets available in the Easy Reading Corner online do not constitute the most simple and concise information available on the functioning of the EU. They are informative, clearly worded and neatly drafted, but may nevertheless be too advanced even for some native speakers of English. The EU has drafted even simpler and more concise information, but this information is featured as teaching material for students of different ages\(^\text{16}\). This material may in fact be equally appropriate for adult citizens.

The press releases are easily accessible to anyone and constitute, alongside the web portal itself, the fastest channel of communication to the public because they

\(^{16}\) The Europa web portal features a website entitled the Teacher’s Corner, containing teaching material about the EU for students aged 0-15 or older, available at <http://europa.eu/teachers-corner/>.
are directed to member state and world media. The press releases indirectly inform the public through journalists who, in turn, act according to their public service mission. However, because press releases are rarely published in the media in their original form, the message is further simplified before it reaches the public, and because press releases pass through the media, they must first attract the intended audience of journalists before they can reach the public. For those who are interested in a given topic, the press releases are available online as soon as they are published.

The EU’s press releases range from being demanding and dense with information to being short, easily read, and attractive to the reader. The topic of the press release affects the final linguistic form of the text. The press releases included in this study constitute a diverse material of simple and short texts with a clear, convincing message, as well as texts heavy with EU jargon and political style and diction. Such press releases require an in-between decoder of the message, such as a journalist or a public relations officer, if their contents are to be successfully conveyed to the public.

The GR is, in principle, directed towards more advanced and more critical readers. It recounts events in a fairly straightforward manner, but by choice of diction, the writer ascribes values to otherwise “neutral” events which have taken place. The GR is specific and condensed, and contains texts which are more limited in terms of their communicative purpose, conveying detailed information on all the areas of EU activities to readers who already understand EU procedures. For readers who do not have in-depth or even basic knowledge of the EU, it may be difficult to grasp the contents of the GR. Detailed reports such as the EU General Report are thus generally more exclusive in nature, while booklets and brochures explicitly aim to be inclusive. However, it is important to remember that the GR is not intended to give basic information, and is therefore not aimed primarily at the regular citizens. The GR, then, works on the level
of political lobbying and decision-making, addressing public officials and politicians in each of the member states and beyond the EU borders, and possibly also political journalists looking for more comprehensive information. However, the reports of 2009 and 2010\textsuperscript{17} have been updated in terms of their layout, structure, and language. In addition, the two most recent reports include a somewhat personal foreword by the president of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso. The foreword provides a direct comment on the state of the EU today, addressing the reader in a more direct manner, adding an element of personal concern and honesty to the contents of the report. According to the Europa web portal, the explicit aim of the Report is to serve as a “real communication product”\textsuperscript{18}. Undeniably, its refreshed layout and structures have rendered the GR more readable and visually attractive. If the intention is to make the GR more attractive to “regular” citizens, the new report is a step in the right direction. A more comprehensive discussion and comparison with older reports is therefore a possible topic for future research.

This brief and exploratory study of three genres of EU communication revealed some tendencies which can help categorize the types of promotional texts which are drafted within the EU discourse communities. The three genres discussed in this Pro Gradu thesis are also examples of EU discourse, and they include texts which are written by the discourse community mostly for people outside the discourse community. In line with Bell’s (1984) theories on ingroup referee design (see chapter 4), the “insider” perspective is nevertheless present in all three genres, as it is naturally

\textsuperscript{17} The GR of 2010 was adopted by the European Commission on 16 February 2011, and therefore could not be included in this Pro Gradu thesis.

\textsuperscript{18} <http://europa.eu/generalreport/index_en.htm>, for a more detailed discussion, see chapter 9.3.1.
difficult to address the audience entirely from the viewpoint of the audience, despite the fact that the intended audience is known to the author. Because the intended audience is so broad ("EU citizens"), and represents such a heterogeneous group of readers, defining and understanding its communicative styles and codes is an extremely challenging task. Instead, the EU discourse community uses a discourse that promotes the EU in a broad-based and general way to suit a variety of readers. That discourse is intended to be persuasive, most notably through its positive attitudinal stance markers, in order to convince the reader of the values already accepted in the discourse community. The drawback is that many readers may not identify with this approach, and may lose interest in the material because of its complexity. Inevitably, there is a gap between the authors and intended audience, and this gap may be widened by the fact that the texts concern such a complex subject matter as EU policy. It would appear, then, that the better the understanding of the target audience, and the more targeted the audience, the more efficient the delivery of the message.

For further research on this topic, it would be fruitful to examine a larger body of text in terms of its stance marking features, and a statistical corpus study could provide more exact and reliable results. A survey among the intended audience would perhaps also shed light on the more specific areas where further improvement is needed. The stylistic or discoursal specificities of these genres could be more thoroughly discussed though further in-depth qualitative genre analysis.

12. Conclusions

The European Union spends millions of euros each year on awareness projects, promotional material, and on developing its communicative tools, such as the web
portal, or different types of publications. The cost of informing the public through translated documents arose to approximately one sixth of the administrative budget each year. Nevertheless, informing the rest of the world of its activities and raising awareness of what the EU is and how it works is a necessity if the EU is to maintain and improve its image among the its citizens. Many citizens experience a gap between the EU and what they perceive as their own nationality, and EU citizenship may feel entirely secondary to most member state citizens. In fact, the entire concept of ‘EU citizenship’ and whether it can ever exist is under debate among social scientists. During the first decade of the 21st century, populism has been on the rise in Western Europe, fuelled by the worldwide financial crisis and the consequences of financial unity among the EU member states. Populism has created awareness of the problematic aspects of political, social and economical unity, and is making the citizens demand answers and explanations from the decision-makers. For the EU, then, it is more important than ever to provide easy, clear, and accessible information to any social layer of the EU member state population. It is equally important to provide regular reports on how EU funds have been used and absorbed in the member states, and why certain common policies have been put into place despite the fact that they may not be optimal for all member states.

The linguistic policies of the EU have developed towards an increasingly multilingual and multicultural approach, underlining that diversity is part of the European heritage and should be supported and promoted. The expansions of the EU

during the 1970-1995 and afterwards welcomed new languages into the multilingual ideal that promoted a Europe where the member states representative could use their own language during major proceedings and negotiations. This ideal still holds true to some extent, as the translation and interpretation services enable, for instance, the multilingual plenary sessions of the European Parliament. In practice, however, the use of the procedural languages adds efficiency to the daily workflow, and EU officials must always master one of the procedural languages French, English or German. French and German, alongside English, have remained widely used European languages with a strong cultural foundation and a large amount of speakers, bringing a multilingual atmosphere in the EU office corridors. EU document workflow statistics show, however, that roughly 75% of documents sent for translation are drafted English (Translating for a Multilingual Community 2009: 8), reflecting the fact that English is the most widely used procedural language in the EU offices.

The world of the early 21st century is open in terms of the availability and flow of information, travelling is fast, movement within the EU’s borders is flexible, and commerce is vivid across continents. Cultural and linguistic diversity is an inevitable part of the European reality today, and the EU hosts 27 official languages and some 60 regional or minority languages. The wide and complex patterns of collaboration within the EU seem to require a European lingua franca, despite the multilingual ideal. Possibly because of its position as the lingua franca of much of the Western world, the English language appears to be the most readily available language of communication within Europe. Yet, the rapid increase of material available on the Internet, and the abundance of social media, information and news services, seems to have created a demand for multilingual versions. All major search engines, social media, online video sites, peer review encyclopedias, or blog services are now available
in multiple languages, creating a truly multilingual information society online. The paradox of these tendencies towards an increasingly strong world *lingua franca* combined with an increasing availability of multilingual information is a development that we may not be able to explain in the near future. What we do know is that targeted communication of accurate and undistorted information becomes only more challenging because of the nearly unlimited possibilities provided by the Internet and digitalized technology. For the EU, raising awareness and creating an understanding of the growing and developing union depends almost entirely on educating and informing the citizens, particularly young Europeans of any cultural origin or education level. And it is only through accurate information and an understanding of how the EU works that the future decision-makers can continue working to improve EU society.
Bibliography


Websites


Material

i. Information booklets

All information booklets are available in full text at the Easy Reading Corner website, see Websites.


**Word count**

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ii. Press releases

All press releases are available in full text at the Press Rapid website, see Websites.

Press release IP/10/123: *Skills and jobs experts call for action now*. Published 4 February 2010, 743 words.

Press release/10/236: *European Commission aims to significantly reduce the gender pay gap*. Published March 2010, 1000 words.

Press release IP/10/249: *European Commission acts to ensure fair trial rights in the EU*. Published 9 March 2010, 853 words.

Press release IP/10/416: *Putting the media spotlight on poverty in Europe*. Published 12 April 2010, 525 words.

Press release IP/10/492: *European Consumer Centres act together to help volcanic ash crisis passengers claim their rights*. Published 4 May 2010, 803 words.

Press release IP/10/695: *Traditional stereotypes remain the biggest challenge for gender equality in education*. Published 7 June 2010, 910 words.
Press release IP/10/724: World Blood Donor Day: more Europeans are donating their blood, according to Eurobarometer, Published 11 June 2010, 663 words.

Press release IP/10/932: Half of Europeans would consider moving for work. Published 13 July 2010, 727 words.

Press release IP/10/1034: Commission addresses key issues in nuclear medicine, radiology and radiotherapy. Published 6 August 2010, 624 words.

Press release IP/10/1109: EU steps up academic co-operation with the USA and Canada. Published 10 September 2010, 1048 words.

Press release IP/10/1124: Youth on the Move – strengthening support to Europe's young people. Published 15 September 2010, 1090 words.

Press release IP/10/1164: European Day of Languages highlights benefits of multilingualism for small businesses. Published 23 September 2010, 711 words.

Press release IP/10/1277: Animal welfare: Commission awards prizes to children for their drawings in contest "How to make animals happy. Published 1 October 2010, 657 words.

Press release IP/10/1313: European Consumer Centres - 5 years at the service of European consumers. Published 12 October 2010, 692 words.

Press release IP/10/1352: The big stage: 50th anniversary of the Commission's traineeship programme. Published 20 October 2010, 694 words.

Press release IP/10/1377: Flexible work arrangements help both employers and employees, says new European Commission study. Published 26 October 2010, 1019 words.

Press release IP/10/1462: European Commission sets out strategy to strengthen EU data protection rules. Published 4 November 2010, 956 words.

Press release IP/10/1643: Eurobarometer on graduate employability: Employers value teamwork, adaptability, communication and language skills, Published 2 December 2010, 483 words.

Press release IP/10/1695: EU and India launch policy dialogue on culture. Published 10 December 2010, 390 words.

Press release IP/10/1705: European Commission to cut red tape in cross-border court cases for businesses and consumers. Published 14 December 2010, 1739 words.
Press release IP/10/1729: *EU puts the fight against poverty at the heart of goals for jobs and growth.* Published 16 December 2010, 766 words.

Press release IP/09/1965: *Gender equality is part of the solution to exit the crisis – new report.* Published 18 December 2009, 778 words.


**Word count**

25 press releases

**Total** 20,642

**iii. The General Report**

All General Reports are available in full text at the General Report website, see Websites.


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**Tables**

Table 1: Summary of the information booklet genre
Table 2: Summary of the press release genre
Table 3: Summary of the General Report genre
Table 4: Distribution of attitudinal stance adjectives (ASAs)
Table 5: Summary of attitudinal stance adjective (ASA) distribution
## Appendix

### i. Word list

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**TOTAL** | 445 | 374 | 587 | 1,406 |

**TOTAL NO. OF WORDS PER GENRE**

| GENRE | 29,617 | 20,642 | 33,728 | 83,987 |

**STANCE ADJECTIVES PER 1000 WORDS**

|          | 15.02 | 18.12 | 17.4  | 16.74 |

**OTHER: The following adjectives occurred only once in the material:**

abusive, beneficial, cheap*, concise, consolidated, cost-effective, costly, credible, cumbersome, declining, dedicated, definitive, degressive, devolved, disadvantaged, dissuasive, excellent, exclusive, explicit, false, fast, fast-growing, fierce, free, fruitful, functioning, glorious, harmonious, heavy, helpful, inappropriate, inconvenient, incorrect, informative, intense, intensive, interactive, lasting, lawful, less-favoured, malicious, misleading, natural, null, old-fashioned, outdated, pivotal, precautionary, precise, preventive, proactive, progressive, proportional, proportionate, prudent, regular, reliable, remarkable, responsive, satisfactory, simplified, sufficient, spectacular, suitable, sweeping, swift, systematic, topical, total, unclear, unconditional, uncontested, utopian, vanquished, viable, victorious, widening, volatile.

* = including comparative and superlative forms
**=including premodifications such as "highly skilled" or "low-skilled"
***=including comparative and superlatives and postmodifications such as "longer-term"
### ii. Category list

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N= Negative attitudinal stance adjective
PN = Negative and positive attitudinal stance adjective