

## Background

- **Co-rumination** is the cyclical process of two individuals engaging in an extensive and **excessive problem-focused discussion** (Rose, 2002).
- Although co-ruminating may cause anxiety and exacerbate negative feelings, past research has shown a **relation between co-rumination and feeling closer** and more connected to individuals (Rose et al., 2007).
- In parallel, previous work has found that **“we-talk” is linked to greater trust, love and partner-reported closeness**. (Robinson et al., 2019)
  - We-talk represents a pivotal shift from being self to relationship oriented, and reflects interdependence and sharing (Karan et al., 2019; Honeycutt., 2009).
- **It has not yet been studied whether increased closeness is dependent upon who is the focus of the problem during the co-rumination, or specific qualities of the co-ruminative conversation.**

## Research Questions

- Is **more co-rumination** associated with increased **closeness** when the co-ruminative discussion is **self-focused, other-focused, and also shared-focused**?
- Does the use of **“We-language”** strengthen the potential relationship between increased co-rumination and closeness?
  - We hypothesize that the relationship will be especially strong for individuals who recall instances of co-rumination using more we-language.

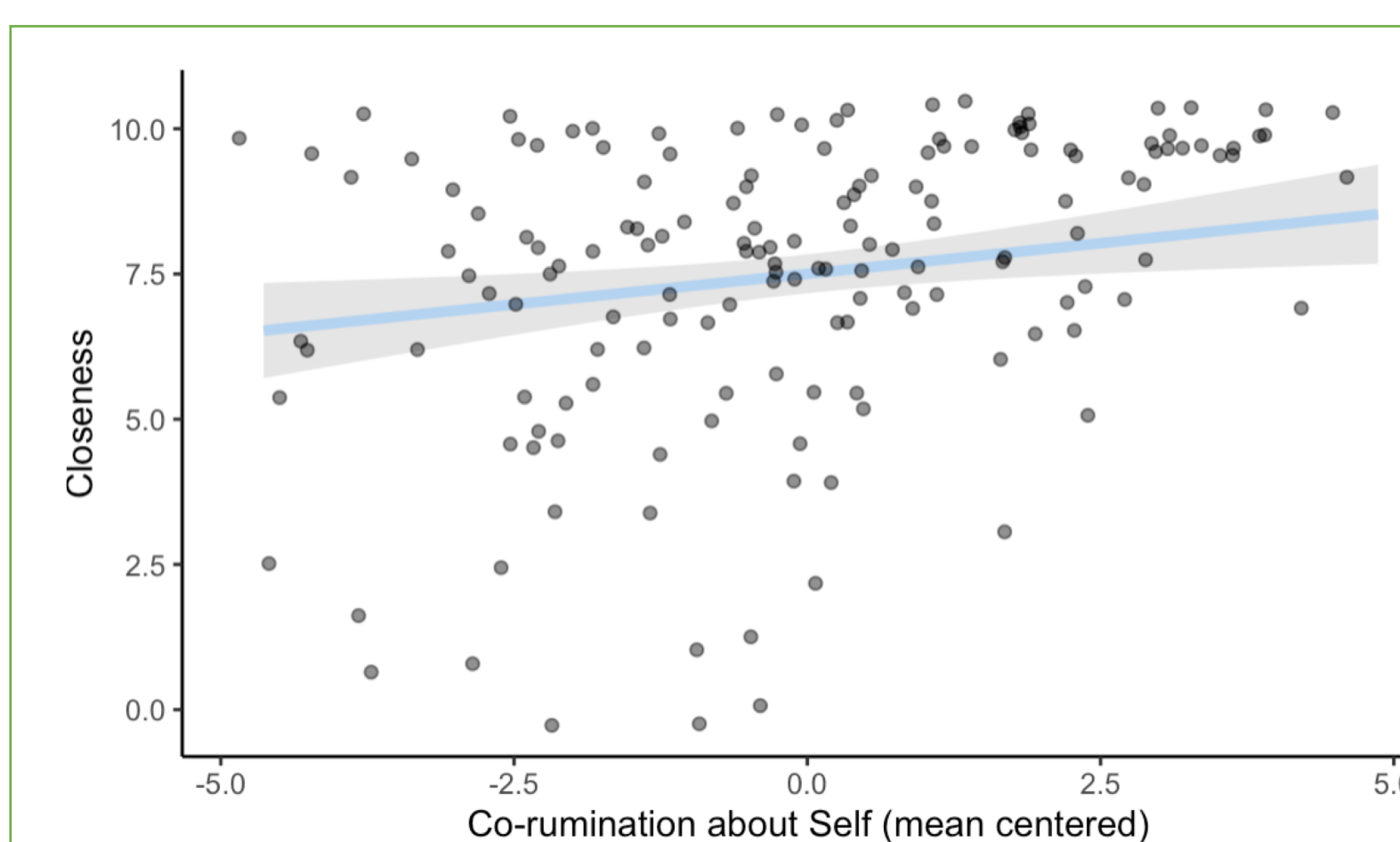
## Method

- **158 participants** from Columbia/ Barnard completed a Qualtrics survey about their relationship with a partner or a close friend.
- They wrote about three **co-ruminative conversations with different foci** (self, partner, shared), filled out the Co-Rumination Questionnaire and closeness measures in relation to each of the interactions, and answered questions about general relationship quality.
- The conversation transcripts were analyzed with **LIWC** to code for the **percentage of we language** (we, us, our) out of the total number of personal pronouns.
- Three separate multiple regression models were run to test our hypotheses.

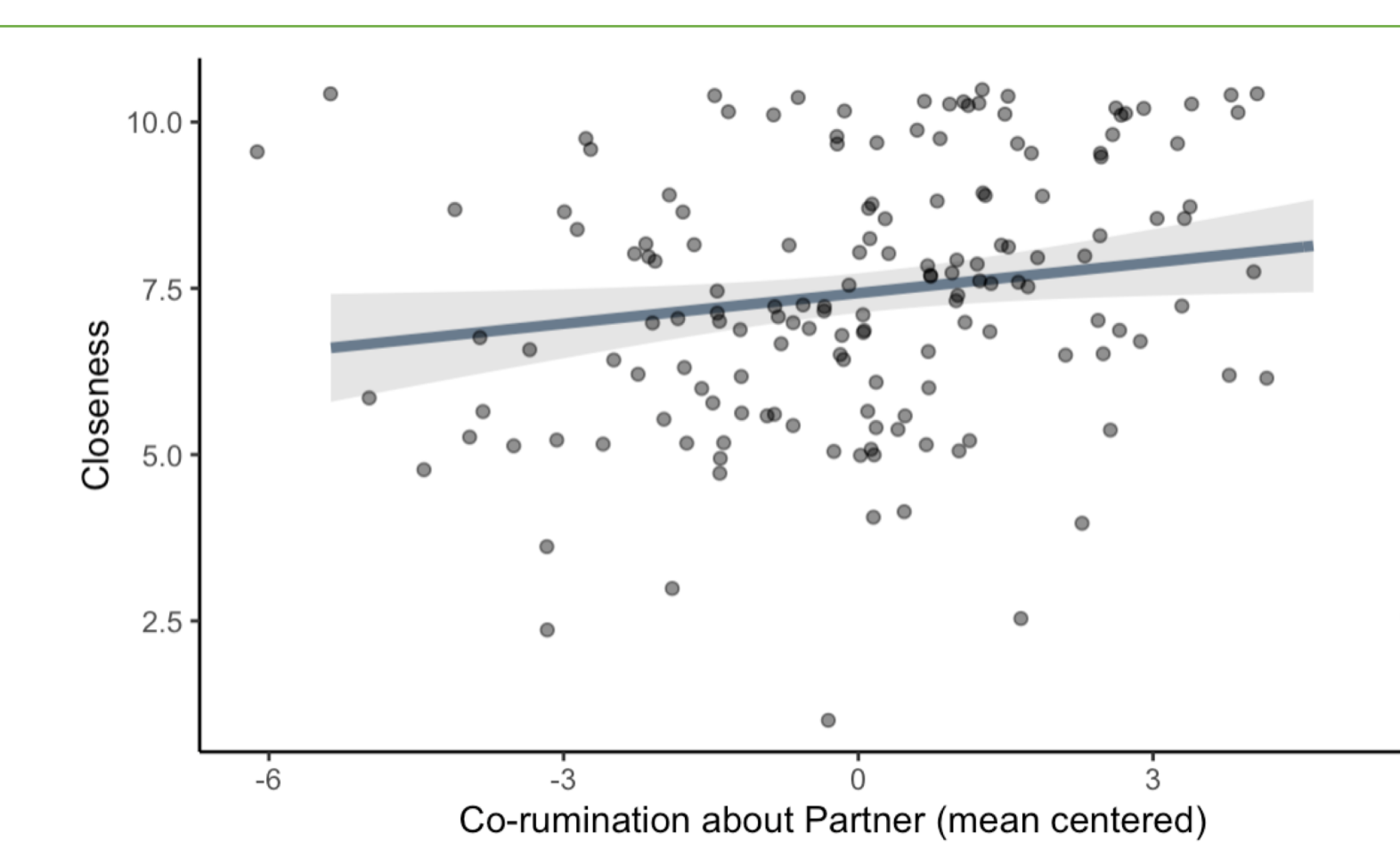
## Results

Variable	Co-rum Self			Co-rum Partner			Co-rum Shared		
	Estimate	Std. Error	Sig	Estimate	Std. Error	Sig	Estimate	Std. Error	Sig
Intercept	7.5	0.17		7.43	0.15		7.2	0.19	
Co-rumination	<b>0.21</b>	<b>0.08</b>	*	<b>0.15</b>	<b>0.07</b>	*	<b>0.17</b>	<b>0.08</b>	*
We language	0.02	0.08		-0.02	0.08		<b>0.17</b>	<b>0.06</b>	**
Co-rumination x We Language	-0.02	0.04		0.02	0.03		-0.01	0.03	
Relationship Quality	<b>0.71</b>	<b>0.09</b>	***	<b>0.45</b>	<b>0.07</b>	***	<b>0.58</b>	<b>0.09</b>	***
Partner Type	0.07	0.34		0.33	0.31		0.08	0.39	

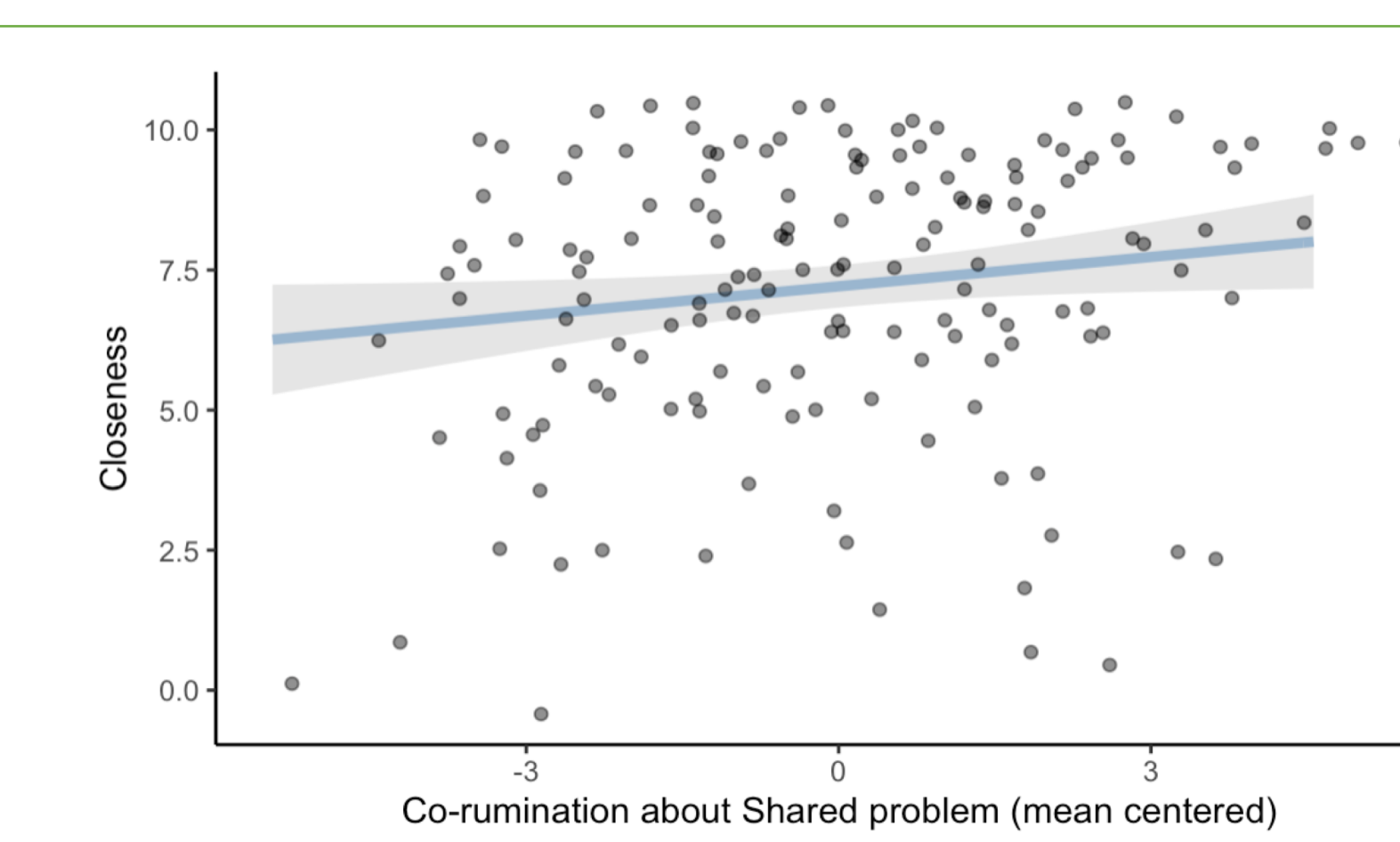
**Table 1:** Table of the results from the three multiple regression models for self-oriented, partner-oriented, and shared co-rumination conversations.



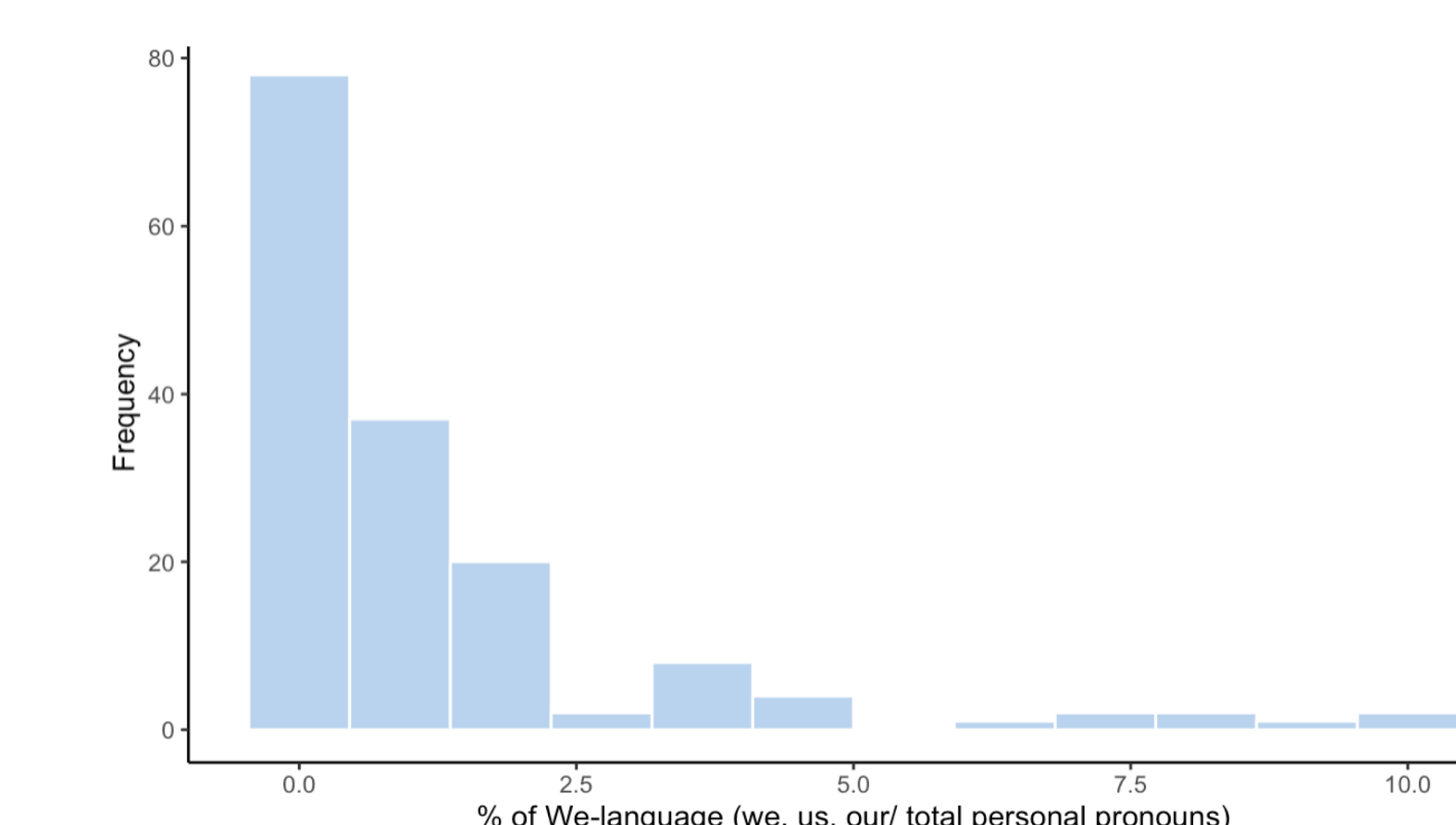
**Figure 2:** Relationship co-rumination questionnaire score and closeness during a discussion about a self-centered problem.



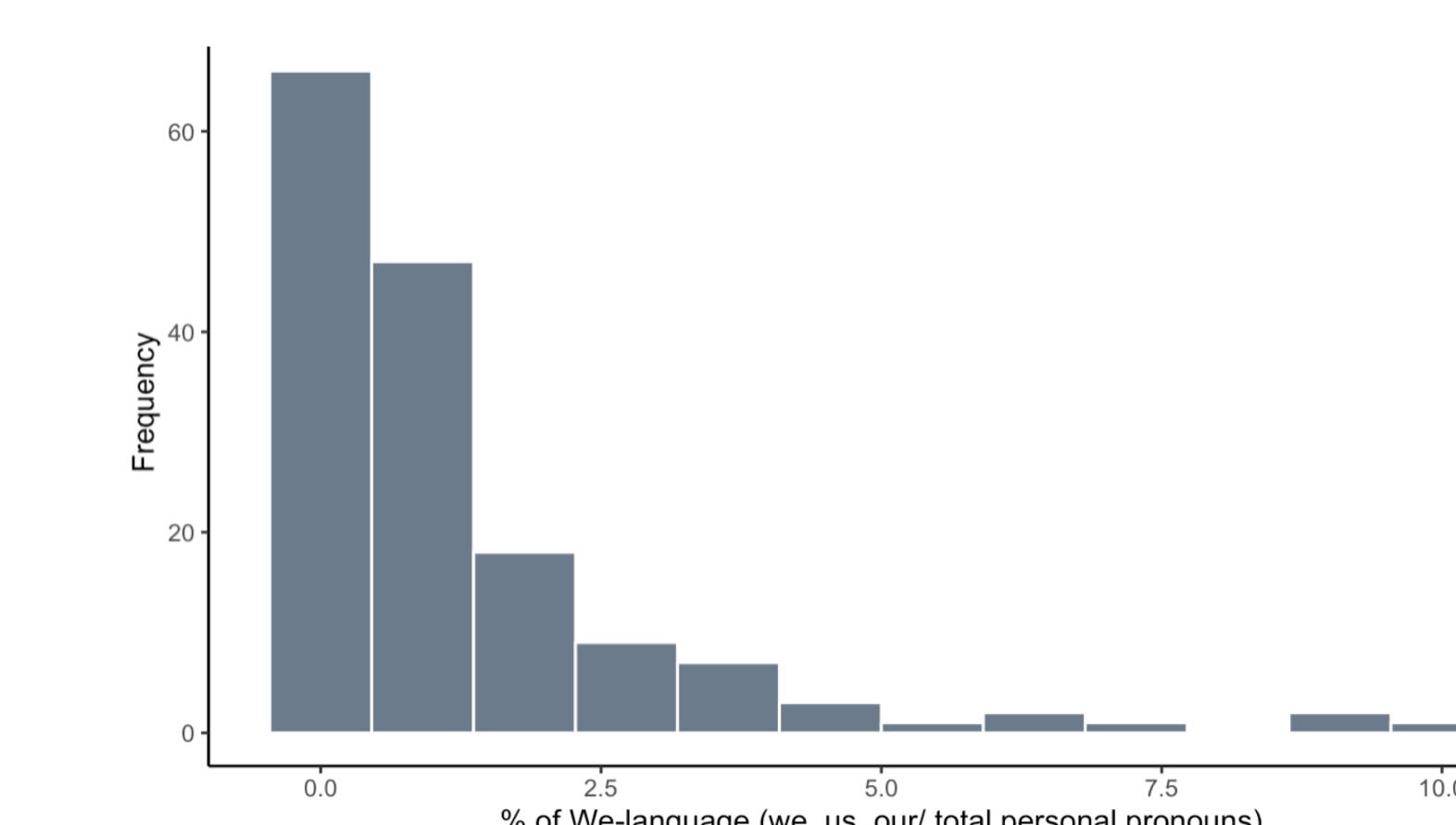
**Figure 3:** Relationship co-rumination questionnaire score and closeness during a discussion about a partner-centered problem.



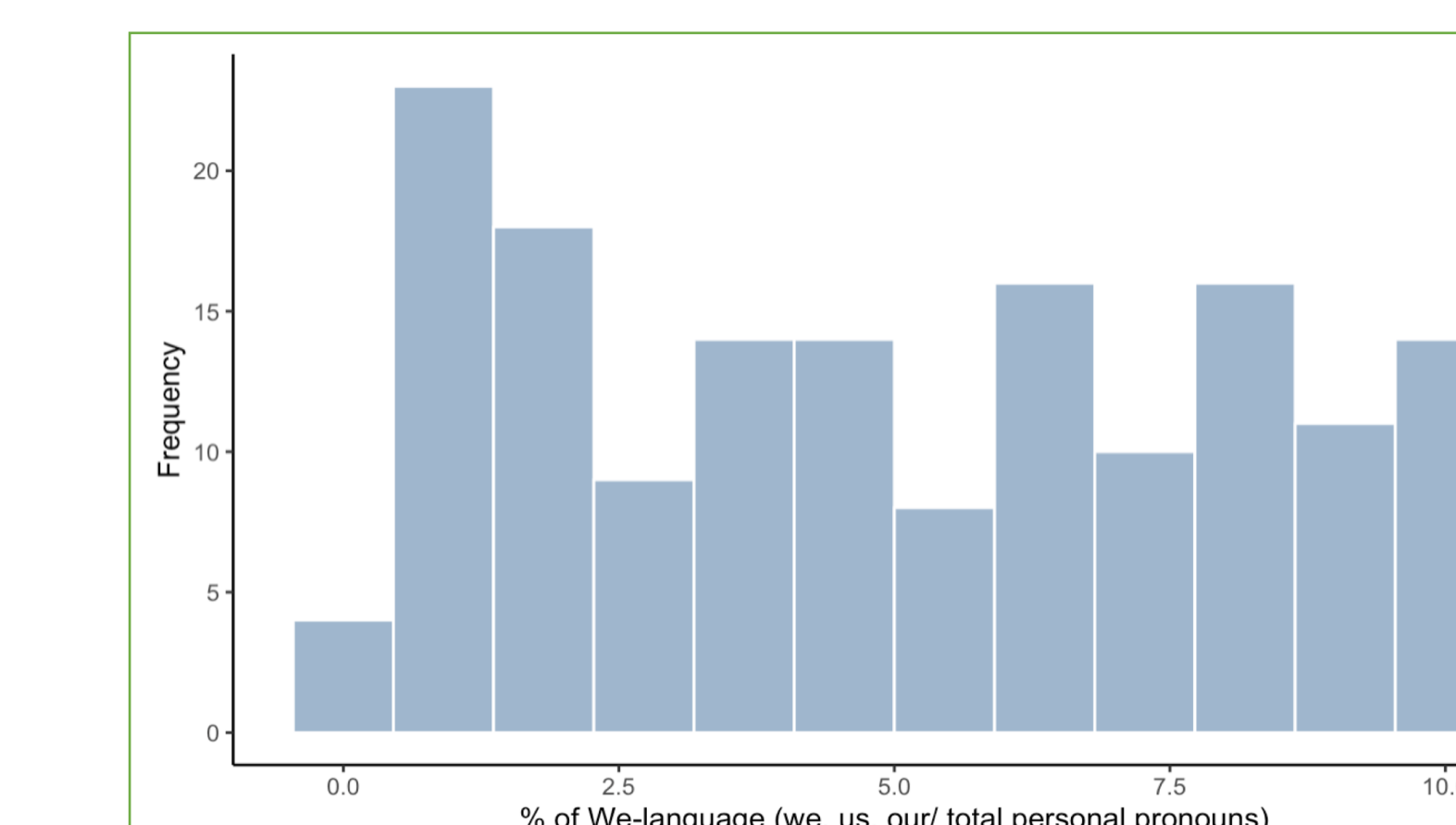
**Figure 4:** Relationship co-rumination questionnaire score and closeness during a discussion about a shared problem.



**Figure 5:** Frequency of We-language used during a co-ruminative discussion about a self-centered problem.



**Figure 6:** Frequency of We-language used during a co-ruminative discussion about a partner-centered problem.



**Figure 7:** Frequency of We-language used during a co-ruminative discussion about a shared problem.

## Discussion & Next Steps

- At average levels of we-language and relqual, **more co-rumination is associated with more closeness** across all three conditions (self, partner, and shared problem)
- **We-language is only associated with more closeness when the co-ruminative conversation is about a shared problem**
- We found **no evidence for an interaction between co-rumination and we-language**. The relationship between co-rum and closeness was not stronger when individuals used more we-language in any three of our conditions
- Very little we-language was used in self or partner oriented conversations in comparison to those on shared problems. Future research could experimentally manipulate the amount of we-language used.

- Karan, A., Rosenthal, R., & Robbins, M. L. (2019). Meta-analytic evidence that we-talk predicts relationship and personal functioning in romantic couples. *Journal of Social and Personality Psychology*, 117(1), 1-12.
- Honeycutt, J. M. (1999). Typological differences in predicting marital happiness from oral history behaviors and imagined interactions. *Communications Monographs*, 66(3), 276-291.
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- Robinson, M. D., Persich, M. R., Sjöblom-Schmidt, S., & Penzel, I. B. (2020). Love stories: how language use patterns vary by relationship quality. *Discourse Processes*, 57(1), 81-98.
- Rose, A. J. (2002). Co-rumination in the friendships of girls and boys. *Child development*, 73(6), 1830-1843.