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Les articles proposés doivent respecter la ligne éditoriale de la revue. Ils doivent être originaux et n'avoir jamais fait l'objet d'une acceptation pour publication dans une autre revue à comité de lecture. Ils sont soumis à une sélection initiale par l'éditeur, puis à un processus rigoureux d'évaluation par les pairs en double aveugle avant publication.

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Discursive Issues in Emmanuel Macron's Speeches on Leadership (2017-2022)

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Abstract

This research critically examines the discursive dimensions of Emmanuel Macron's leadership speeches spanning from 2017 to 2022, a timeframe characterized by considerable national and international challenges. Utilizing theoretical frameworks derived from Critical Discourse Analysis and pragmatics, the study investigates the strategic deployment of language by Macron to assert authority, legitimize his position, and foster a narrative of collaboration with domestic constituencies and global stakeholders. The analysis concentrates on recurrent rhetorical devices, metaphorical constructs, and interactional stances that shape his public identity as a globally engaged leader. The corpus encompasses addresses delivered at press conferences in Marigot (Saint Martin), Carbet Loubère (Guyane), and joint press engagements with Presidents Mahamadou Issoufou, Roch Kaboré, Mauricio Macri, and Alassane Ouattara. Macron adapts discourse to address security, education, and governance. Via pragmatic analytical perspective, the study elucidates how Macron engenders solidarity, negotiates power dynamics, and positions France's involvement as essential for regional stability and socio-economic advancement. Findings highlight a systematic use of inclusive pronouns, evaluative language, and future-oriented commitments that frame France's actions as imperative and mutually advantageous. This study contributes to the broader scholarly discourse on political communication, leadership rhetoric, and the pragmatic strategies through which contemporary leaders influence public perception and international relations.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Discursive strategies, Leadership discourse, Pragmatics, Speeches.

Enjeux Discursifs dans les Discours de Leadership d'Emmanuel Macron (2017-2022)

Résumé

Cette recherche analyse de manière critique les dimensions discursives des discours de leadership d'Emmanuel Macron entre 2017 et 2022, une période marquée par d'importants défis nationaux et internationaux. Mobilisant l'Analyse Critique du Discours et la pragmatique, l'étude examine comment Macron utilise stratégiquement le langage pour affirmer son autorité, légitimer sa position et construire un récit de coopération avec les publics nationaux et les partenaires internationaux. L'analyse porte sur les procédés rhétoriques récurrents, les métaphores et les postures interactionnelles qui façonnent son identité de dirigeant engagé sur la scène mondiale. Le corpus comprend des interventions à Marigot (Saint-Martin), Carbet Loubère (Guyane) et lors de conférences conjointes avec les présidents Mahamadou Issoufou, Roch Kaboré, Mauricio Macri et Alassane Ouattara. Macron adapte son

discours pour traiter des enjeux de sécurité, d'éducation et de gouvernance. À travers une perspective analytique pragmatique, l'étude montre comment il suscite la solidarité, négocie les rapports de pouvoir et présente l'implication française comme essentielle à la stabilité régionale et au développement socio-économique. Les résultats soulignent l'usage systématique de pronoms inclusifs, d'un langage évaluatif et d'engagements tournés vers l'avenir, qui cadrent l'action française comme nécessaire et mutuellement bénéfique.

Mots-clés : Analyse critique du discours, Discours de leadership, Discours politiques, Pragmatique, Stratégies discursives.

Introduction

Political language works as a form of power because it shapes how people think, react, and understand events. It doesn't just describe reality; it actively influences it. When leaders communicate, their words can guide public attitudes, frame debates, and steer collective behaviour. Because of that, language becomes central to any process of national change or transformation.

Used effectively, it can build unity, challenge existing ideas, or mobilise people toward a shared goal. But it can also do the opposite: fuel conflict, deepen divisions, or provoke strong emotional reactions that lead to condemnation or even violence. In that sense, political language isn't neutral, it's a strategic tool that can stabilise or disrupt, depending on how it's used. Through discourse, leaders not only communicate policy but also craft identities, manage public emotions, and frame the meaning of crisis" (Ayoola, 2016, p.26). Emmanuel Macron's presidency offers a particularly compelling site for examining these dynamics. Since his taking office in 2017, Macron has faced a series of political, social, and international challenges, each necessitating a meticulously crafted discursive strategy. His speeches throughout this tenure not only elucidate his interpretation and framing of events but also demonstrate the way he constructs, defends, and adjusts his leadership identity.

Political actors are fundamentally driven by the need to persuade their supporters that their loyalty is both rational and enduring. To achieve this, they draw on a wide range of communicative resources designed to shape public trust, influence perceptions, and guide collective behavior, thereby reinforcing their political authority. In doing so, politicians actively seek to reorient the beliefs of citizens, encouraging them to reconsider previous allegiances and adopt new ideological positions aligned with their own agendas. This persuasive effort is central to the maintenance and expansion of political influence, as it enables leaders to cultivate legitimacy, mobilize support, and sustain their presence within the competitive arena of public opinion.

Furthermore, the interpretation of meanings conveyed through language is significantly enhanced when contextual factors are considered. Essentially, meanings are most accurately constructed with the assistance of context. Context in language refers to the elements that surround a given text. This encompasses not only the text itself but also the broader discourse and patterns of language used. This reinforces the idea that examining these speeches as discursive practices shows how leadership is performed through language. Macron's rhetoric frequently shifts between calls for national unity, assertions of presidential authority, and attempts to present himself as a modern, reform-oriented leader. These rhetorical shifts expose deeper discursive tensions between technocratic reasoning and emotional appeal, national identity and European ambition, and vertical authority and participatory dialogue. Such dynamics extend beyond stylistic variation; they shape how leadership is interpreted, contested, and legitimised within the public sphere. In Macron's case, these tensions illuminate the complex balancing act required to project authority while maintaining openness, to defend national interests while advocating European integration, and to combine expert-driven governance with gestures toward democratic engagement. Together, they reveal how contemporary political leadership is constructed through competing discursive pressures that influence both public perception and the broader communicative environment in which power is negotiated.

This study investigates the discursive issues embedded in Macron's leadership speeches from 2017 to 2022, focusing on how linguistic choices function to project authority, foster cohesion, and manage public perception across key moments of his presidency. Drawing on insights from Critical Discourse Analysis, pragmatics, and political linguistics, the research examines rhetorical strategies, metaphorical patterns, framing devices, and interactional positioning. By analysing speeches across a five-year period marked by volatility and transformation, the study offers a nuanced understanding of how political discourse adapts to shifting contexts and how leaders use language to maintain legitimacy in times of uncertainty.

This article contributes to the broader scholarly discourse on the discursive construction of political leadership by elucidating how linguistic practices both mirror and actively shape the dynamic relationship between political leaders and the constituencies they aim to govern. Furthermore, it underscores the significance of analyzing discursive phenomena as critical arenas wherein political authority is continuously negotiated, contested, and reconstituted. Through a meticulous examination of Emmanuel Macron's speeches, the study reveals the

intricate interrelations among discourse, identity, and power within the context of contemporary French political communication.

1. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in an integrated theoretical framework that draws primarily on Critical Discourse Analysis and Pragmatics to examine how Emmanuel Macron constructs leadership through his public speeches from 2017 to 2022. These two perspectives offer complementary insights into how political meaning is produced, interpreted, and strategically managed in discourse. Furthermore, combining Critical Discourse Analysis and Pragmatics allows the study to reveal how Macron shapes broad political ideas while also managing the finer details of interaction that help him present himself as a leader. As Kendrick, & De-Poli, 2024 notes, "discourses are never neutral; they become ideological when they help construct and sustain unequal power relations among social groups". Critical Discourse Analysis situates Macron's speeches within broader structures of power, social change, and political conflict, while Pragmatics highlights how meaning is negotiated in real communicative situations. Together, these perspectives provide a comprehensive lens for understanding how Macron linguistically constructs authority, manages crises, and maintains legitimacy over time. This integrated framework is therefore well suited to analysing leadership discourse in contemporary political communication.

1.1. Critical Discourse Analysis

At the end the 1970s, Critical Discourse Analysis was established as one of the domains of research in discourse studies. It is known as an approach that is based on the union of language studies and social theory (Fairclough, 1992). Critical Discourse Analysis investigates how social power is misused and how text and talk represent, procreate, and resist dominance and inequality in the social and political context. The most notable figure in this domain is Norman Fairclough, who has developed a three-dimensional framework for studying discourse. The aim of this framework is to integrate three dimensions into another analysis of language text. In other words, it refers to analysis of discourse practice (processes of text production, distribution and consumption) and analysis of discourse events.

Critical Discourse Analysis focuses on public speeches, such as political speeches, advertisements, newspapers, official documents with the aim to examine the relationship between the language ideology. Saussure argues that "every language community has its own language, independent of its social context". This insight reinforces the relevance of Critical Discourse Analysis to the present study, as Macron's presidency has unfolded amid significant

political and social challenges, making his discourse a key site for negotiating legitimacy, managing public sentiment, and reinforcing institutional authority.

1.2. Pragmatics

Pragmatics enriches the analysis by focusing on how meaning is shaped through context, intention, and inference (Tracy, 1998: 1-28). Crystal 1997:301 defines "Pragmatics as the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication."

Similarly, Yule 1996:32 argues that "pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by the speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader)". In the same vein, Spencer-Oatey and Zegarac 2002:74 emphasise that pragmatics focuses on "the interrelationship between language form, (communicated) messages, and language users". Thus, pragmatic analysis is essential because political leadership relies heavily on what is implied, suggested, or strategically framed rather than merely stated. It highlights how Macron positions himself in relation to citizens, constructs shared responsibility, and manages the interpersonal dimensions of crisis communication.

2. Analysis

2.1. Discursive Issues and Contexts on Pledge of Supports in the Selected Speeches

There are several discursive issues projected in the speeches of President Emmanuel Macron. These issues are made concrete or evident by certain contexts of discussion. Also, the contexts of discussion give the discursive issues better clarity and understanding. A central dimension of Macron's leadership discourse between 2017 and 2022 concerns the transformative role of education in national development, anti-corruption efforts, and economic growth. His speeches consistently frame education as both a domestic priority and a strategic instrument of international cooperation. This aligns with existing research showing that political leaders often mobilise education discourse and anti-corruption to legitimise governance reforms and to signal commitment to long-term development. This analysis will present the issues with the discussion of the discursive context.

President Macron pledges support of his government to different governments in his speeches. There are several pledges of support of different kinds by the president. Based on the relationship between the two countries, most especially the G5 Sahel bond between the countries.

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2.2. Supports on Security in the G5 Sahel

President Macron promises to continue to accompany Burkina Faso in the field of security and in its economic and social development policy. Burkina Faso and other countries such as Mali have been terribly disturbed by terrorist over the years which has retarded the socio-economic growth of the countries. President Macron uses his speech to pledge France support to President Kabore – the President of Burkina Faso and President of the G5 Sahel to support the fight against terrorism and poor economic growth.

G5 Sahel was formed in 2017 in response to the growing number of armed and violent extremist organizations, as well as the region's failing security. It was launched by the Heads of State of the G5 countries, which are Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, with the aim of ensuring the safety and security of their populations and ensuring a favorable environment for socioeconomic development of the region by pooling and multiplying their national efforts to fight against common security threats. President Macron, having awareness of the role played by the G5 Sahel promises to provide President Kabore, the G5 Sahel president with not only with military forces by also financial support. President Macron promises his supports to help Burkina Faso build formidable security architecture.

> *J'ai rappelé au Président KABORE qui prendra la présidence en février prochain du G5 Sahel mon engagement personnel et celui de la France à vos côtés, en soutien des pays de la région dans ce combat. Un soutien évidemment financier que nous avons d'ores et déjà honoré et pour lequel nous nous sommes engagés à plusieurs reprises durant toute l'année pour lever des fonds au travers des différents engagements et en mobilisant nombre de nos partenaires européens et non européens, mais un engagement également à travers la force Barkhane dont j'ai confirmé la mobilisation et auprès de laquelle je me rendrai dans quelques jours au Tchad*

"I reminded President Kabore, who will take over the presidency of the G5 Sahel next February, of my personal commitment and that of France at your side, in support of the countries of the region in this fight. Obviously financial support that we have already honoured and for which we have committed ourselves several times throughout the year to raise funds through various commitments and by mobilizing many of our European and non-European partners, but a commitment also through the Barkhane force whose mobilization I have confirmed and to which I will be visiting Chad in a few days." (My translation)

« Cet engagement, c'est celui par lequel nous luttons activement contre le terrorisme dans toute la région. Terrorisme qui menace, déstabilise et qui touche très profondément, nous l'avons là aussi vécu ensemble dans notre chair cette année, le Burkina Faso. Vous le savez, Monsieur le Président, la France restera un partenaire indéfectible face à ce défi et c'est pourquoi je me

réjouis de la signature un peu plus tôt de l'accord intergouvernemental qui va permettre de conforter un accord qui existait déjà et d'améliorer le cadre juridique de la coopération entre nos forces dans le plein respect de la souveraineté de chacun ».

"This commitment represents our proactive engagement in combating terrorism across the region. Terrorism poses significant threats, destabilizes societies, and profoundly affects communities; Burkina Faso has also endured such challenges firsthand this year. As you are aware, Mr. President, France remains a steadfast partner in addressing this issue. Consequently, I welcome the recent signing of the intergovernmental agreement, which serves to reinforce an existing accord and enhance the legal framework governing cooperation between our forces, while fully respecting each nation's sovereignty". (My translation) « *En outre, la France continuera de soutenir, à la demande des autorités burkinabés, l'effort en cours de modernisation du dispositif sécuritaire et judiciaire* ».

"In addition, France will continue, at the request of the Burkinabé authorities, to support the ongoing effort to modernize the security and judicial apparatus". (My translation)

A recurring discursive pattern emerging across the excerpts is the tension between asserting French leadership and simultaneously framing France's actions as supportive, invited, or respectful of sovereignty. This creates a recurring duality in agency and power. France is presented as both a leading actor and a respectful partner, creating a tension between authority and deference. Macron emphasizes strong French commitment; military, financial, and diplomatic, signalling respect for political autonomy, even while France maintains a strong operational presence. This dual positioning forms the core discursive issue.

From the preceding context, it becomes clear why President Macron refers to Operation Barkhane in his speeches. The French military launched Operation Barkhane, an anti-insurgency campaign targeting Islamist organisations in the Sahel region, on 1 August 2014. The initiative is overseen by the G5 Sahel—Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger—five former French colonies that established the framework during a summit in Nouakchott on 16 February 2014. The G5 Sahel was designed to strengthen the link between security and economic development while coordinating regional efforts against jihadist groups such as AQIM, MUJWA, Al-Mourabitoun, and Boko Haram.

Within this broader framework, President Macron underscores his administration's dedication to addressing terrorism in Francophone West Africa. He reiterates this position during his discourse with the President of Niger, wherein he emphasizes the military advancements

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achieved against insurgent factions and contends that these accomplishments will enhance the coherence and operational efficacy of the G5 Sahel Joint Force. Concurrently, Macron highlights that enduring stability is contingent upon progress in sectors such as agriculture, energy, employment, decentralization, and the delivery of essential services. These points are exemplified in the following excerpt :

> *La France est présente à travers l'opération "Barkhane", vous l'avez rappelé, non seulement dans toute la région mais tout particulièrement au Niger. Je ne reviendrai pas sur cette opération qui est essentielle pour lutter contre le terrorisme et qui a d'ores et déjà permis, notamment à travers "Serval", de stopper les avancées au Mali des troupes terroristes, de démanteler nombre d'entre elles, de stabiliser certaines régions et de reprendre du terrain.*

"France is present through Operation 'Barkhane', as you recalled, not only throughout the region but particularly in Niger. I will not elaborate further on this operation, which is essential in the fight against terrorism, and which has already made it possible, most notably through Operation 'Serval', to halt the advance of terrorist groups in Mali, dismantle many of them, stabilise certain areas, and regain territory." (My translation)

France's commitment to supporting the G5 Sahel countries in their fight against terrorism and in building a robust regional security architecture, a theme he articulates repeatedly in his speeches. He frames French military engagement—particularly through Operation Barkhane and its predecessor, Operation Serval—as an indispensable contribution to regional stability. As he notes, France is present "not only throughout the region but particularly in Niger," and these operations have "halted the advance of terrorist groups in Mali, dismantled many of them, stabilised certain areas, and regained territory." By emphasising these concrete military achievements, Macron constructs France as a reliable and effective security partner whose involvement is both necessary and legitimate. He reinforces this stance by linking military action to the broader strategic framework of the G5 Sahel Joint Force, stating: « *Je l'ai dit, le premier semestre 2018 doit donner lieu à des victoires claires de nos armées contre les terroristes et le déploiement des forces conjointes G5 Sahel est indispensable à cet égard. Je sais votre engagement en la matière et je sais aussi l'engagement de tous vos collègues de la région.* »

"As I have said, the first half of 2018 must produce clear victories by our armed forces against the terrorists, and the deployment of the G5 Sahel Joint Force is essential in this regard. I am aware of your commitment to this effort, as well as that of all your colleagues in the region." (My translation)

This articulation positions France not as an isolated actor but as part of a coordinated regional effort, thereby legitimising continued French involvement. Furthermore, Macron extends this logic to development policy, presenting security and development as mutually reinforcing pillars of regional stability. He highlights this in his reference to the Alliance for the Sahel: « *L'Alliance pour le Sahel vise à rendre plus cohérentes, plus efficaces les actions que nous menons sur le terrain en termes de développement ; nous l'avons là aussi lancé en juillet dernier et nous allons agir sur cinq défis clés, l'agriculture, l'énergie, l'emploi, la décentralisation, et les services de base.* »

"The Alliance for the Sahel aims to make our development actions on the ground more coherent and more effective; we also launched it last July, and we will be acting on five key challenges: agriculture, energy, employment, decentralisation, and basic services." (My translation)

By integrating military, political, and developmental commitments, Macron constructs a comprehensive narrative in which France's presence is framed as indispensable to both immediate security needs and long-term regional transformation. Macron's discourse repeatedly situates France's military engagement in the Sahel within a narrative of legitimacy, partnership, and shared responsibility. He underscores France's operational presence by recalling the central role of Operation Barkhane; hence, France is consistently positioned as the primary guarantor of security and development in the Sahel, reinforcing a hierarchy of capability. Macron's discourse normalises military intervention by presenting operations like Barkhane and Serval as indispensable and routinely successful. Local governments are acknowledged, but their agency is overshadowed by France's central role, producing an asymmetry masked as partnership. A shared-threat narrative ("terrorisme") is used to justify continued French presence and create a sense of collective obligation. Development initiatives are framed as coordinated efforts, yet France emerges as the organiser and driver, blending influence with the language of cooperation.

Both the physical and linguistic contexts gave the discourse issue its meaning. The speeches were presented before the presidents of Burkina Faso and Niger and the choice of words are politically inclined with words such as commitment, visit, welcome, launch, support used. France government backs the G5 Sahel Joint Force and its operations in the West African countries in their fight against terrorism to improve the economic downturn of the region. He believes that that strength and or building impeccable security architecture in the areas would be a tremendous effort at laying the foundation for development and developmental projects. President Macron bases the supports his government is rendering on the history France shares

with the said countries, their shared language, interests, friendships, and this fight for common security.

> *J'espère en tout cas cher Président, cher Roch que la visite française permettra de conforter l'ensemble des projets qui sont en cours et répondra à vos attentes mais vous le savez, le Burkina Faso est pour la France un allié, un ami et un pays fondamental dans cette région qui nous est chère et où nous sommes profondément engagés par l'Histoire, la langue en partage, des intérêts, des amitiés et ce combat pour la sécurité en commun.*

"In any case, dear President, dear Roch, I hope that the French visit will help to consolidate all the projects currently under way and will meet your expectations. You know, however, that Burkina Faso is for France an ally, a friend, and a key country in this region that is dear to us, where we are deeply engaged through our shared history, language, interests, friendships, and our common fight for security." (My translation)

Numerous challenges continue to affect the region, including the growing threat of organised crime and terrorism, the consequences of climate change, and rapid population growth, all of which contribute to structural fragility. These issues must be addressed through political, military, and developmental approaches, as they are shared concerns across the Sahel. The initiatives undertaken by the Sahel states enjoy the full support of France and its European and international partners. France's involvement alongside other international actors aim to prevent the region from becoming a permanent hub for terrorist organisations and various forms of trafficking; whether in people, narcotics, weapons, or migrant smuggling which could ultimately threaten France's own security.

Furthermore, Macron pledges support to Côte d'Ivoire in its fight against terrorism. He reiterates that the French government and its armed forces will continue to work closely with the country's Minister of Defence. These commitments are embedded in the speeches delivered during the press conference in Côte d'Ivoire. « *Nous avons tout d'abord parlé de sécurité et de lutte contre le terrorisme. J'y reviendrai brièvement, Monsieur le ministre de la Défense vous avez parfaitement résumé notre ambition commune et le Président a à l'instant rappelé ces enjeux* ».

"We first discussed security and the fight against terrorism. I will return to this briefly. Minister of Defence, you have perfectly summarised our shared ambition, and the President has just reiterated these challenges." (My translation)

Macron foregrounds alignment between French and Ivorian authorities, presenting counter-terrorism as a joint endeavour rather than a unilateral French initiative. He further

reinforces this commitment by stating : « *J'ai eu l'occasion à plusieurs reprises de m'affirmer sur notre engagement et l'implication de nos forces* ».

"I have had several opportunities to reaffirm our commitment and the involvement of our forces." (My translation)

Through these declarations, Macron constructs a narrative in which France's military presence is both responsive and indispensable, anchored in regional partnerships and legitimised by shared strategic objectives.

2.2.1. Support to Build Infrastructure

President Macron also discusses the building of infrastructures, he speaks about the support his government would provide in the building of infrastructures such as colleges, high schools, and vocational high schools and the benefits they will serve. First and foremost, he pledges the support of his government on education at the Saint Martin Press and Guyana Conference for his country, France, Niger, as well as Argentina. At Saint-Martin, President Macron relays his displeasure over the demonstration by schools on missing books and inappropriate timetables and promises to act the following week. Macron's discourse consistently foregrounds education as a cornerstone of national and international development, and his speeches reveal a deliberate attempt to position educational reform as both a domestic priority and a tool of diplomatic engagement. « *On sait que certaines installations, comme les collèges, les lycées et les lycées professionnels, présentent des horaires qui ne conviennent pas à l'école de la République. Hier, lors d'une démonstration, il y avait des livres manquants. Par conséquent, nous devrons satisfaire ces exigences dans les prochaines semaines* ».

"We know that certain facilities, such as middle schools, high schools, and vocational schools, operate on schedules that are not compatible with the standards of the Republic's school system. Yesterday, during an inspection, several books were missing. We will therefore need to address these issues in the coming weeks." (My translation)

« *Depuis plusieurs mois, la collectivité a déjà fait appel à un agent technique du ministère de l'Éducation nationale qui soutient les fonctionnaires territoriaux dans la gestion des travaux* ».

"For several months now, the local authority has been working with a technical officer from the Ministry of National Education who supports territorial officials in managing the necessary works." (My translation)

Domestically, Macron's interventions at the Saint-Martin press conference and during his visit to French Guiana highlight his concern with infrastructural deficiencies and administrative

shortcomings within the French education system. His remarks on missing textbooks, inappropriate timetables, and inadequate school facilities "certain facilities, operate on schedules that are not compatible with the standards of the Republic's school system" construct a narrative of urgency and state responsibility. By promising immediate corrective action and emphasising ongoing collaboration with technical officers from the Ministry of National Education, Macron frames his government as responsive, accountable, and committed to restoring educational standards. President Macron promises to improve the quality of education by training teachers and working on academic and educational matters. His government is interested in improving artificial intelligence, research and other strategic areas in education by partnering with the Argentina president. The essence is to improve the bilateral relationship between the two countries.

> *En matière éducative et académique, là aussi, la relation est très intense, j'ai pu le voir moi-même ce matin en rencontrant plusieurs de vos écrivains et intellectuels. Nous souhaitons la poursuivre, à la fois en travaillant en partenariat sur notre ambition de formation des maitres – vous l'avez évoqué – mais de développement des liens bilatéraux en matière éducative, en matière de recherche, à ce titre, l'intelligence artificielle fait partie des domaines stratégiques.*

"In the educational and academic fields, the relationship is also very strong; I saw this myself this morning when I met several of your writers and intellectuals. We wish to continue this cooperation, both by working in partnership on our shared ambition to train teachers as you mentioned and by strengthening bilateral ties in education and research. In this regard, artificial intelligence is one of the strategic areas." (My translation)

« *Je souhaite que nos ministres puissent se rendre à nouveau pour l'été prochain, ici, dans votre pays, pour porter ce forum* ».

"I hope that our ministers will be able to come here again next summer, to your country, to support this forum." (My translation)

Internationally, Macron's discourse reveals a strategic use of education as a diplomatic instrument, particularly in his engagements with Niger and Argentina. In Argentina, he emphasises bilateral cooperation in teacher training, research, and artificial intelligence, presenting education as a domain through which France can strengthen cultural and economic ties. His statement that "the relationship is very strong, and we wish to continue this cooperation" positions educational collaboration as a mutually beneficial endeavour and a means of enhancing France's global influence.

« *Je souhaite aussi que nous puissions porter l'intensité de cette relation à la fois économique, culturelle et complète par je l'espère une visite de votre part et je tenais ici à vous inviter pour le premier semestre 2019 à Paris à nouveau* ».

"I also hope that we can further deepen the intensity of this relationship economic, cultural, and more broadly and, if possible, through a visit from you. I therefore wish to invite you once again to Paris in the first half of 2019" (My translation)

« *La relation bilatérale est donc essentielle et je pense que même si l'Argentine est le troisième partenaire* ».

«The bilateral relationship is therefore essential, and I think that even if Argentina is the third partner». (My translation)

Likewise, he highlights the need to create a cluster of skills around the university, to reduce the rate of unemployment, promote research and innovation and create decent positions for educated people; while Macron identifies the challenges of education in the insufficient teachers' training, lack of bilateral link in education, research, artificial intelligence and so on.

In Niger, Macron's discourse takes on a developmental and humanitarian dimension. He frames education alongside agriculture as an "absolute priority" for enabling young people to "receive training in their own country, to support their family and build a future there." This aligns with broader development narratives that link human capital formation to economic growth and poverty reduction. Macron's emphasis on girls' education, supported by a €15 million French contribution, further reflects global development agendas that view female education as a catalyst for demographic stability, gender equality, and long-term economic resilience.

> *Nous allons donc poursuivre l'engagement en ce sens, mais je souhaite tout particulièrement marquer l'engagement de la France dans le domaine de l'éducation. Si nous voulons aider le Niger à réussir, il y a l'éducation et l'agriculture comme priorités absolues, pour – comme vous l'avez dit – permettre à chaque jeune, moins jeune d'être formé dans son pays, de s'y développer, de pouvoir s'y établir, nourrir sa famille et y construire un avenir.*

"We will therefore continue our commitment in this direction, but I particularly wish to highlight France's commitment in the field of education. If we want to help Niger succeed, education and agriculture must be absolute priorities, in order, as you said to enable every young person, and those who are no longer young, to receive training in their own country, to develop there, to settle there, to support their family, and to build a future there." (My translation)

The administration of President Macron believes the poverty margin can be improved through the provision of woman empowerment through quality education which will guarantee

reproductive and economic development. He is interested in helping the entire Africa in three major areas which are climate change, education for girls and gender equality. However, he attributed the problem of education in the speech he delivered at the conference at Guyana in the fact that French is not the mother tongue of the highest number of residents in the area. Notwithstanding, he is irrepressibly motivated to ensure the level is improved and made standard in the area to foster rapid development, boost employment rates and help the inhabitants build purposeful lives.

> *En outre, ce défi éducatif en Guyane est renforcé par le fait que le français n'est pas la langue maternelle d'un grand nombre d'habitants, français ou étrangers, car on parle à la maison le créole, le Portugais, le boni, le Saramaka, nous l'avons vu hier. Et donc il y a un vrai défi à l'école pour apprendre la langue de la République, qui permet d'accéder à l'emploi, que ce soit l'emploi public de l'emploi privé et de construire sa vie.*

"Moreover, this educational challenge in French Guiana is heightened by the fact that French is not the mother tongue of many inhabitants, whether French nationals or foreigners, as Creole, Portuguese, Boni, and Saramaka are spoken at home, as we saw yesterday. There is therefore a real challenge at school to learn the language of the Republic, which provides access to employment. Whether in the public or private sector and enables individuals to build their lives." (My translation)

Studies on French educational reforms during his presidency address guidance measures that support students moving from upper secondary education into higher education, including initiatives aimed at broadening participation among socially disadvantaged young people. In addition, a third strand of reform introduced a national digital platform in 2009 to oversee and coordinate higher-education applications and admissions. (Pin and van Zanten, 2021). Whether these reforms achieved their intended outcomes remains contested, but Macron's discourse clearly positions education as a lever for social cohesion and economic mobility.

2.2.2. Support to Fight Corruption

President Macron pledges support in the fight against corruption, fraud, and money laundering. He identifies corruption as a major obstacle to the country's development and asserts that his government will equip security agencies and the judicial system with the necessary expertise to address this social menace effectively. In addition, he swung the France National Financial Prosecutor's Office into an already planned course of action to properly trial culprits. Considering this, four government ministers left Macron's cabinet in 2017 amid accusations of corruption. Following claims that he exploited insider knowledge to obtain a real estate transaction for his wife, Richard Ferrand, the secretary-general of La Republique en Marche

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and President Macron's political assistant, resigned, according to the ministries for territorial integrity. A preliminary inquiry into the nepotism controversy was started by the French Prosecutor.

Another evidence of his fierce battle against corruption, laundering and fraud is the trial of the former French President, Nicolas Sarkozy. Former President Nicolas became the second head of state in the modern era to be convicted of a crime after leaving office. He was found guilty of corruption charges by a court in Paris, thereby sentenced to one-year prison term. President Macron reaffirms his commitment to eliminating corruption, fraud, and money laundering from French public life. He emphasises strengthening legal and security mechanisms and enhancing international cooperation to ensure that these offences are addressed effectively.

« *La lutte contre la fraude, le blanchiment et la corruption sera également renforcée* ».

"The fight against fraud, money laundering, and corruption will also be strengthened" (My translation).

> *Dans ce contexte, les autorités de sécurité et judiciaires disposeront de diverses compétences spécifiques pour combattre cette criminalité en col blanc. J'ai sollicité l'amélioration de la coopération internationale en sollicitant l'envoi d'équipes spécifiques tant en Guadeloupe qu'à Saint-Martin. Cela vise d'une part à intensifier les mesures essentielles pour combattre la corruption. De plus, je désire que le Procureur national financier puisse progresser rapidement sur les procédures déjà initiées.*

"In this context, security and judicial authorities will have a range of specialised capacities to combat this white-collar crime. I have requested enhanced international cooperation through the deployment of specialised teams in both Guadeloupe and Saint-Martin. This is intended, first, to intensify essential measures against corruption. In addition, I want the National Financial Prosecutor to make rapid progress on the procedures already under way." (My translation)

Besides, President Macron pledges additional support in agriculture, health, transportation, and other key sectors that drive economic development. He argues that these areas are essential for a nation's rapid progress. Macron extends this developmental framing by emphasising France's financial and technical support for key sectors in the Sahel. He aligns French action with national initiatives in Burkina Faso, stating: « *A cet effet, en cohérence avec le Plan d'Urgence Sahel mis en œuvre par le Gouvernement du Burkina Faso, l'Agence française de Développement investira près de 50 millions d'euros supplémentaires sur ces régions en 2019 dans les domaines de l'insertion professionnelle, de l'électrification rurale, de l'eau et de l'assainissement* ».

"To this end, in line with the Sahel Emergency Plan implemented by the Government of Burkina Faso, the French Development Agency will invest nearly an additional 50 million euros in these regions in 2019 in the areas of vocational integration, rural electrification, water, and sanitation." (My translation)

This commitment positions France as a central partner in strengthening essential infrastructure and improving socio-economic conditions. Macron reinforces this approach through the broader framework of the Alliance for the Sahel, which he presents as a coordinated mechanism for development : « *L'Alliance pour le Sahel vise à rendre plus cohérentes, plus efficaces les actions que nous menons sur le terrain en termes de développement ; nous l'avons là aussi lancé en juillet dernier et nous allons agir sur cinq défis clés, l'agriculture, l'énergie, l'emploi, la décentralisation, et les services de base* ».

"The Alliance for the Sahel aims to make our development actions on the ground more coherent and more effective; we also launched it last July, and we will be working on five key challenges: agriculture, energy, employment, decentralisation, and basic services." (My translation)

Through these declarations, Macron constructs a narrative in which France's developmental engagement is both strategic and indispensable, complementing its security commitments and reinforcing its role as a long-term partner in regional transformation. Macron consistently frames France as the primary driver of anti-corruption efforts, granting security and judicial authorities expanded powers and mobilising international teams, which reinforces French institutional authority. Although he references cooperation with Guadeloupe, Saint-Martin, and Burkina Faso, the discourse foregrounds French initiative, expertise, and decision-making. Development support is presented as aligned with local plans, yet France is depicted as the financier and organiser, investing millions and directing key sectors such as electrification, water, and employment. The Alliance for the Sahel is described as a coordinated effort, but France again appears as the actor ensuring coherence and effectiveness. This blend of leadership and supportive rhetoric masks underlying power asymmetries and presents French involvement as both necessary and benevolent. Overall, the discursive issue lies in the tension between asserting control and performing partnership, a recurring pattern in Macron's speeches. Lastly, the context in which a discourse occurs plays a decisive role in shaping how a speech conveys its intended ideas. Discourse both draws meaning from its context and contributes to constructing that context, creating a reciprocal relationship that enables utterances to be interpreted accurately. An understanding of context therefore forms a fundamental premise for

any discourse analysis. In particular, the linguistic context provides the most immediate cues for interpretation, allowing meaning to become more accessible and analytically coherent.

Conclusion

In bringing this analysis to a close, the findings demonstrate that Emmanuel Macron's leadership discourse functions as more than a collection of political statements; it operates as a deliberate linguistic performance through which authority, solidarity, and strategic intent are continually shaped. His emphasis on education, security cooperation, and economic reform reveals a leadership style grounded in both technocratic rationality and relational diplomacy. The analysis shows how his rhetoric seeks to legitimise French action while positioning education and human capital as engines of long-term stability. Beard (2000: 12) observes that "the language of politics reveals the strategies individuals use to gain power and the methods they adopt to retain it", a point reinforced by (Blumenau & Lauderdale, 2022) (as cited in Osisanwo and Abidoye, 2025: 176-196) that politicians' arguments are commonly replete with rhetorical strategies, which are otherwise known as strategies of persuasion. Their political speeches are frequently characterised by contents that evoke persuasion; this is because the validity and acceptance of their arguments are largely hinged on the strength of these persuasive elements linguistic or paralinguistic deployed. The relationship between language and politics is further accentuated by (Opeibi, 2009: 4), who affirms that "language and politics, like Siamese twins, are inextricably linked". Together, these insights underscore the centrality of discourse in shaping political meaning and guiding public interpretation.

What emerges from the speeches examined is a leader who navigates complex pressures by shifting between assertive command and collaborative reassurance, crafting a narrative that both stabilises his position and responds to the expectations of diverse audiences. These discursive movements reveal that contemporary political leadership is negotiated not only through policy decisions but also through the careful orchestration of language that frames crises, mobilises collective identity, and manages geopolitical relationships. The tensions identified between influence and partnership, and between national priorities and international commitments, highlight the intricate balancing act required of leaders operating in volatile contexts. Ultimately, the study shows that Macron's discourse is dynamic rather than static; it evolves in response to shifting political landscapes, reaffirming that leadership is an ongoing communicative process. By foregrounding these dynamics, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of how political authority is constructed, maintained, and contested through discourse in the modern era.

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