

# **GRAMMAR AS POLITICAL ACTION: MAPPING TRANSITIVITY IN MACRON'S LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION**

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## **Abstract**

This study investigates the transitivity processes underpinning Emmanuel Macron's leadership discourse using M.A.K. Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar as the analytical framework. Leadership communication as a strategic use of discourse by leaders not only transmit information but also amplifies credibility construction. Adopting a descriptive design, the corpus encompasses the 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. These were examined for their discursive and transitivity functions. The analysis identifies five transitivity processes: material processes highlight action-oriented leadership; mental processes reveal cognition, intention, and emotional stance; relational processes define political roles and agendas; verbal processes articulate policy objectives; and existential processes frame international agreements through which Macron constructs authority, expresses solidarity, signals commitments, legitimises political positions, and formalises

bilateral intentions. Together, these linguistic choices demonstrate that Macron's leadership is enacted through a strategic interplay of pragmatic force and functional grammar, positioning language as a central resource for shaping perception, constructing credibility and negotiating political relationships.

**Keywords: Emmanuel Macron, Leadership Discourse, Political Communication, Systemic Functional Grammar, Transitivity Processes.**

## **Introduction**

Language is a central resource through which political leaders construct credibility for leadership, negotiate legitimacy, and shape public understanding of national and international events. Leaders use language to navigate uncertainty, align collective action, and maintain a shared sense of coherence across shifting organisational contexts and national events. As Fairclough (2015:3-5) argues, political discourse is never neutral; it is a strategic site where power is enacted and contested. In this sense, leadership is performed not only through policy decisions but also through the linguistic choices that frame action, responsibility, and collective identity. Emmanuel Macron, President of France since 2017, provides a compelling case for examining how contemporary leaders mobilise language to project competence, manage crises, and articulate diplomatic priorities across diverse geopolitical contexts.

To analyse such linguistic construction, Systemic Functional Grammar offers a robust theoretical lens. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014: 20-23) conceptualise language as a social semiotic system in which grammatical choices realise specific meanings shaped by context. Central to this model is the transitivity system, which represents how speakers encode experience through material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioural, and existential processes Halliday and Matthiessen (2014: 213-215). Scholars such as Eggins (2004:206-210) and Thompson (2014:94-98) emphasise that these processes reveal how actions, thoughts, identities, and relationships are linguistically constructed, making transitivity analysis particularly valuable for political discourse. Although previous studies have examined Macron's rhetoric from ideological or stylistic perspectives such as

Krzyżanowski, (2020:12-15), limited attention has been given to the grammatical mechanisms through which his leadership is enacted across domestic and international settings.

This study addresses this gap by analysing the transitivity processes in Macron's speeches delivered between 2017 and 2022. By examining how different process types are deployed to represent action, cognition, political identity, and diplomatic engagement, the study demonstrates how Macron's leadership is linguistically shaped through patterned grammatical choices. The findings contribute to broader scholarship on political communication by showing how transitivity functions as a key resource for performing leadership in contemporary presidential discourse.

### **Language and Discourse**

Language is widely recognised as a fundamental social resource through which individuals construct meaning, negotiate relationships, and participate in social life. As Halliday and Matthiessen (2014:23) argue, language is "a social semiotic" system that enables speakers to represent experience and enact social roles. This view positions language not merely as a vehicle for communication but as a structured system of choices shaped by context. In discourse studies, this functional orientation has been influential in explaining how linguistic patterns reflect broader social, political, and ideological structures. Fairclough (2015:3-5) emphasises that discourse is both socially shaped and socially shaping, noting that linguistic choices contribute to the reproduction or transformation of power relations. Similarly, van Dijk (2016:10) highlights that discourse is a form of social action through which elites, including political leaders, influence public cognition and shape collective interpretations of events.

Within this perspective, discourse is understood as language in use that is language that performs actions, constructs identities, and organises social reality. Gee (2014:16) describes discourse as a way of "saying, doing, and being" that integrates linguistic form with social practice. This means that political speeches, press conferences, and public addresses are not neutral texts; they are strategic performances through which leaders project authority, justify decisions, and cultivate legitimacy. Wodak (2015:25-28) further argues that political

discourse is inherently persuasive and contextdependent, shaped by institutional norms, historical conditions, and the speaker's communicative goals. Thus, analysing political language requires attention not only to what is said but also to how it is grammatically constructed and what social meanings these constructions realise.

In this study, language and discourse are approached through the lens of Systemic Functional Grammar, which provides a systematic account of how grammatical structures encode experiential, interpersonal, and textual meanings. The transitivity system offers insight into how speakers represent actions, mental states, relationships, and events. As Eggins (2004:206-210) notes, transitivity patterns reveal how speakers construe reality and position themselves and others within it. Examining these patterns in Emmanuel Macron's speeches therefore enables a deeper understanding of how leadership is linguistically enacted, how political roles are framed, and how diplomatic relationships are discursively negotiated.

## **Methodology**

This study employs a descriptive qualitative methodology to analyse the transitivity processes of Emmanuel Macron's leadership discourse. The corpus consists of addresses delivered at press conferences spanning from 2017 to 2022, a timeframe characterized by considerable national and international challenges at Marigot (Saint Martin), Carbet Loubère (Guyane), and joint press engagements with Presidents Mahamadou Issoufou, Roch Kaboré, Mauricio Macri, and Alassane Ouattara, and guided by Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar, the analysis focuses on the transitivity system to identify how Macron linguistically represents action, cognition, identity, communication, and existence through material, mental, relational, verbal, and existential processes. Eighteen clauses were employed and each clause was examined to determine how these processes encode leadership orientations, political intentions, and diplomatic positioning.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study adopts Systemic Functional Grammar, developed by M. A. K. Halliday, as its theoretical framework. SFG conceptualises language

as a social semiotic system in which speakers make grammatical choices to enact meaning within specific contexts of situation and culture (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014:22). Central to Systemic Functional Grammar are its three meta functions—ideational, interpersonal, and textual which explain how language represents experience, negotiates social relations, and organises information in discourse. This theoretical orientation is particularly suited to political communication, where linguistic choices are instrumental in constructing authority, legitimising action, and shaping public interpretation.

Within this framework, transitivity processes function as the analytical tools used to examine how experience and action are encoded in clauses. These processes include material, mental, relational, verbal, and existential types, each corresponding to different ways of representing

doing, thinking, being, saying, and existing (Eggins, 2004:210). While Systemic Functional Grammar provides the overarching conceptual structure, the transitivity processes constitute the operational categories through which Macron's grammatical choices are analysed. This distinction ensures a coherent methodological alignment. Hence, Systemic Functional Grammar frames the study theoretically, and the linguistic processes enable systematic clauselevel analysis of the selected leadership discourse.

## **Results and Discussions**

In Halliday's transitivity system, six distinct process types—material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioural, and existential are recognised as the fundamental grammatical resources through which experience is represented in language. While the textual meta function organises these meanings into coherent discourse by integrating linguistic choices with contextual factors, the transitivity system specifically reveals how speakers construe actions, thoughts, identities, and events. Across President Macron's speeches, these transitivity processes are strategically deployed to communicate information, frame political intentions, and construct leadership.

## Material Processes

Material processes, which encode actions, events, and concrete doings in the world, are central to the experiential meaning of political discourse. In Hallidayan terms, they involve an Actor (the doer of the action) and a Goal (the entity affected by the action), and they may occur in either active or passive constructions. Across Macron's speeches, material processes are deployed to foreground agency, responsibility, and the execution of policy commitments to construct an image of decisive, action-oriented leadership.

In the first excerpt « J'ai réaffirmé ma volonté... d'agir » the clause "j'ai réaffirmé" functions as a material process in which "je" (Macron) is the Actor and "ma volonté" is the Goal. By reaffirming his will "d'agir... de manière accrue et rapide", Macron positions himself as an active agent committed to accelerating development efforts in Burkina Faso. The material process réaffirmer foregrounds personal resolve, while agir projects future action, reinforcing a leadership persona grounded in intervention and support.

Ex 1 : « Deuxième volet sur lequel je souhaitais que nous puissions en effet faire le point, c'est précisément celui du développement. J'ai réaffirmé ma volonté au Président KABORE d'agir sur ce point de manière accrue et rapide au profit des populations, en particulier des régions du Nord et de l'Est du Burkina ».

"The second aspect on which I wanted us to be able to take stock is precisely that of development. I reaffirmed my will to President KABORE to act on this point in an increased and rapid manner for the benefit of the populations, the northern and eastern regions of Burkina Faso". (My translation)

A similar pattern appears in the second excerpt « j'ai réitéré hier cet engagement à étudier ». Here, "je" again serves as the Actor, and «cet engagement» is the Goal. The material process réitérer signals continuity and reliability, presenting Macron as a leader who honours institutional commitments. The action of «étudier» les propositions further emphasises procedural responsibility and responsiveness to local demands in Guyane.

Ex 2 : « Le troisième volet des accords de Guyane, c'est la demande complémentaire présentée de 2 milliards 100. Mon prédécesseur ne s'était pas engagé sur ce sujet, il y avait une hauteur de 2 milliards 100. Mon prédécesseur ne s'était pas engagé sur ce sujet, il y avait un engagement à étudier les propositions qui sont faites. Et j'ai réitéré hier cet engagement à étudier dans le cadre des Assises ces propositions qui sont faites ».

"The third part of the Guyana agreements is the additional request for 2 billion 100. My predecessor was not committed to this subject; there was a commitment to study the proposals that are made. And yesterday I reiterated this commitment to study in the framework of the Assises these proposals which are made". (My translation)

The third excerpt « Nous avons déjà mobilisé...un agent technique » contains the material process mobiliser, with "nous" as Actor and "un agent technique" as Goal. This clause highlights concrete administrative action already undertaken, signalling efficiency and proactive governance. By emphasising that mobilisation has been ongoing "depuis plusieurs mois", Macron constructs a narrative of sustained governmental engagement rather than reactive intervention.

Ex 3 : « Nous avons déjà mobilisé depuis plusieurs mois, au sein de la collectivité, un agent technique du ministère de l'Éducation nationale qui assiste les fonctionnaires territoriaux pour le pilotage des travaux ».

"We have already mobilised for several months, within the community, a technical agent of the Ministry of National Education who assists the local officials in the management of the works". (My translation)

Finally, in the 4th excerpt « Le ministère des Transports fournira un soutien » the material process fournira assigns Actor status to "Le ministère des Transports" and Goal status to "un soutien". This clause frames state institutions as active contributors to logistical and infrastructural recovery. The subsequent infinitive clause "pour favoriser le transport par bateau" extends the material action, linking governmental support to tangible improvements in supply chains and reconstruction efforts.

Ex 4 : « Le ministère des Transports fournira un soutien pour favoriser le transport par bateau, afin de simplifier l’approvisionnement en matériaux et la reconstruction ».

“The Ministry of Transport will provide support to promote boat transportation, in order to simplify the supply of materials and reconstruction”. (My translation)

Across these examples, Macron’s use of material processes consistently foregrounds agency, commitment, and institutional action. Whether expressed through the firstperson singular, the governmental “we,” or state ministries, material clauses construct a discourse of leadership characterised by decisiveness, continuity, and operational capacity. This pattern reinforces Macron’s portrayal of himself and the French state as active agents capable of initiating, sustaining, and delivering concrete outcomes in both domestic and international contexts.

### **Mental Processes**

Mental processes encode meanings of perception, cognition, affection, and desire, and they involve two core participants: the Senser, who experiences the mental activity, and the Phenomenon, which is felt, perceived, or thought about. In political discourse, mental processes are powerful resources for projecting attitudes, values, and evaluative stances. Across Macron’s speeches, mental processes are strategically deployed to construct empathy, express conviction, and signal political alignment. The following excerpts illustrate how Macron uses mental processes to shape his leadership persona.

In ex 5, « Je me réjouis d’avoir accueilli... » the mental process *se réjouir* expresses affection, signalling positive evaluation. Here, “je” (Macron) is the Senser, while the Phenomenon is the act of welcoming President Kaboré. By foregrounding his delight, Macron constructs a relationally warm and diplomatically appreciative stance, reinforcing solidarity with Burkina Faso. This affective mental process softens the political tone and frames the encounter as mutually respectful and symbolically significant.

Ex 5 : « Je me réjouis d’avoir accueilli aujourd’hui à l’Elysée le Président du Faso, le Président Roch KABORE. Et cette visite qu’il entame

aujourd'hui en France est particulièrement symbolique, elle se situe un an, un peu plus d'un an après la visite que j'avais effectuée au Burkina Faso fin novembre 2017 ».

"I am delighted to have welcomed the President of Faso, President Roch KABORE, to the Elysee Palace today. And this visit that he is starting today in France is particularly symbolic, it takes place a year, a little over a year after the visit I made to Burkina Faso at the end of November 2017". (My translation)

In Ex 6, « Je suis très heureux d'accueillir... » also deploys an affective mental process, être heureux. Again, "je" functions as the Senser, and the Phenomenon is the presence and activities of President Kaboré during his visit. This repeated expression of happiness strengthens Macron's interpersonal positioning, presenting him as a leader who values partnership and honours diplomatic ties. The mental process here works to humanise political engagement and emphasise shared history and cooperation.

Ex 6 : « Je suis très heureux d'accueillir le Président KABORE pour un déplacement qui lui a permis des premiers échanges avec plusieurs ministres de la Justice pour faire le suivi des engagements que j'avais pris l'année dernière. Ensuite à Dijon où vous vous rendez à l'université de Bourgogne dans laquelle vous avez fait vos études pour une cérémonie où vous sera remis le titre de docteur honoris causa dont je vous félicite ».

"I am very happy to welcome President KABORE for a trip which allowed him to have first exchanges with several Ministers of Justice to follow up on the commitments I had made last year. Next is to Dijon where you will go to the University of Burgundy where you studied for a ceremony where you will be awarded the title of doctor honoris causa which I congratulate you". (My translation)

The 7th excerpt « Je crois très profondément à un changement de méthode radical » deploys the cognitive mental process croire. Here, "je" is the Senser, and the Phenomenon is "un changement de méthode radical". This clause foregrounds Macron's ideological stance and his belief in reform. Mental processes of belief are particularly significant in political discourse because they reveal underlying principles and

convictions. By emphasising deep belief, Macron positions himself as a reform-minded leader committed to structural transformation.

Ex 7 : « Mais surtout, je crois très profondément à un changement de méthode radical, si les milliards suffisaient à régler les problèmes, d'abord à chaque fois que le président de la République se déplace il aurait des milliards à distribuer ; mais je veux ici vous rappeler que ces milliards ce sont ceux des Françaises et des Français et qu'il faut bien que quelqu'un à la fin les paye et, donc, que l'activité permette de s'engager ».

"I believe very deeply in a radical change of method, if the billions were enough to solve the problems, first of all each time the President of the Republic moves he would have billions to distribute; but here I want to remind you that these billions are those of French women and men and that someone has to pay them at the end and, therefore, that the activity makes it possible to engage". (My translation)

The 8th excerpt « Je ne crois pas aux anciennes méthodes... » also uses the cognitive mental process *croire*, but in a negated form. Macron again serves as *Senser*, while the *Phenomenon* is *les anciennes méthodes*". The negation intensifies his rejection of outdated governance practices, reinforcing his self-presentation as a modernising leader. Through this mental process, Macron distances himself from past administrations and legitimises his policy direction as forward-looking and pragmatic.

Ex 8 : « C'est que je ne crois pas aux anciennes méthodes et, donc, je ne prendrai pas des engagements que je roulerai comme des boules qui ne seront jamais tenues. Je ne prendrai que des choses que je tiendrai, nous l'avons vu hier, je me suis engagé sur des choses d'ores et déjà votées ou actées ».

"It is that I do not believe in the old methods and, therefore, I will not make commitments that I will roll like balls that will never be kept. I will only take things that I will keep, as we saw yesterday, I am committed to things that have already been voted or acted on". (My translation)

Across excerpts 5-8, Macron's use of mental processes consistently by positioning himself as a *Senser* who feels, believes, recalls, and

evaluates; he foregrounds emotion, belief, evaluation, and cognitive engagement which articulates political values, signals alignment with partners, and frames his leadership as both principled and relational.

## **Relational Processes**

Relational processes encode meanings of being, having, and becoming, and they function to ascribe attributes, define identities, or establish relationships between participants. In Hallidayan terms, relational clauses operate in two major modes: attributive, where an Attribute is assigned to a Carrier, and identifying, where one entity is equated with or defines another. In Macron's speeches, relational processes are strategically deployed to articulate governmental priorities, clarify institutional roles, and frame France's diplomatic stance.

In excerpt 9, « Ce n'est pas moi qui vais définir où sont les priorités au Niger... » deploys a relational process in a negated identifying structure. The clause « ce n'est pas moi » positions "moi" (Macron) as the Identified, while the negation signals what he is not in relation to Niger's internal governance. By asserting that he is not the one who will define Niger's priorities, Macron uses the relational process to delineate boundaries of authority and respect for national sovereignty. This relational framing reinforces a diplomatic stance that avoids interference, while simultaneously acknowledging President Issoufou's agency « le président a un plan ». The relational process here constructs a leadership identity grounded in respect, non-imposition, and recognition of partner autonomy.

Ex 9 : « Ce n'est pas moi qui vais définir où sont les priorités au Niger, le président a un plan, le plan de renaissance. Il a réussi, il l'a dit à lever justement des fonds, avoir une confiance de la communauté internationale et Paris a facilité ce travail, mais c'est votre crédibilité qui a joué ».

"It is not I who will define where the priorities are in Niger, the president has a plan, the plan for rebirth. He succeeded – he said so – in raising funds, having the confidence of the international community and Paris facilitated this work, but it was your credibility that played a role". (My translation)

In the 10th excerpt « Notre volonté sur ce sujet, c'est de pouvoir créer... un vrai cluster de compétences... » the relational process « c'est » again functions in an identifying mode. “Notre volonté” is the Identified, and “de pouvoir créer... un vrai cluster de compétences” is the Identifier. Macron uses this relational configuration to articulate the government's intention as a clearly defined developmental goal: the creation of a skills cluster around the university. This relational process not only defines governmental intention but also frames it as a catalyst for synergy, innovation, and national development. By linking governmental will to concrete institutional transformation, Macron positions his administration as forward-looking and committed to capacity building.

Ex 10 : « Notre volonté sur ce sujet, c'est de pouvoir créer autour de l'université un vrai cluster de compétences qui permettra de mettre en synergie les laboratoires déjà existants, les enseignants-chercheurs présents, en valorisant aussi et le ministre et sa collègue en charge de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la recherche et l'innovation s'attacheront d'ici la fin de l'année à faire des propositions concrètes l'attractivité pour des postes hautement qualifiés; et en y associant l'Agence pour la biodiversité qui détachera sur place, dans ce cluster, des agents ».

“Our desire on this subject is to be able to create around the university a real cluster of skills which will allow the synergy of the already existing laboratories, the lecturer-researchers present, while also promoting and the Minister and his colleague in charge of higher education, research and innovation will endeavour by the end of the year to make concrete proposals – attractiveness for highly qualified positions; and by involving the Biodiversity Agency, which will second officers to this cluster on site”. (My translation)

Across these relational clauses, Macron consistently uses identifying relational processes to define governmental objectives, clarify political boundaries, and articulate long-term developmental intentions. These processes enable him to construct a discourse of principled leadership one that is coherent, respectful of sovereignty, and oriented toward structural transformation. Relational processes thus serve as key grammatical resources through which Macron stabilises meaning, frames policy identity, and positions France within broader diplomatic and developmental contexts.

## Verbal Processes

Verbal processes encode acts of saying, reporting, declaring, or attributing meaning through speech. They typically involve a Sayer (the source of the message), a Receiver (the addressee), and a Verbiage/Target (the content of what is said). In political discourse, verbal processes are powerful tools for constructing authority, legitimising actions, and shaping interpersonal relations. Across Macron's speeches, verbal clauses are strategically deployed to praise partners, reaffirm commitments, and publicly articulate political positions. The following three excerpts illustrate how verbal processes function in his leadership discourse.

In the 11th excerpt « je veux ici le dire très clairement... » the verbal process *dire* foregrounds Macron as the Sayer, with the Receiver being the Nigerien and French press, and the Target being the assertion that President Issoufou is “an example” of democratic governance. By explicitly stating “je veux... le dire très clairement”, Macron uses the verbal process to publicly validate Issoufou's leadership. This strategic praise strengthens diplomatic ties and constructs a narrative of mutual respect. The verbal clause also functions as a performative act: Macron is not merely describing democracy but actively conferring symbolic recognition upon his counterpart.

Ex 11 : « La démocratie c'est vous et je veux ici le dire très clairement devant la presse nigérienne et la presse française qui m'a accompagné. Vous êtes un exemple, nous le disions tout à l'heure avec une partie de française qui m'a accompagné. Vous êtes un exemple, nous le disions avec une partie de votre gouvernement ».

“Democracy is you and I want to say it very clearly here in front of the Nigerien press and the French press which accompanied me. You are an example; we said it earlier with a part of French which accompanied me”. (My translation)

The second excerpt « Vous êtes un exemple, nous le disions tout à l'heure... » contains the verbal process *disions*, which again positions Macron and his delegation as the Sayers, with Issoufou and his government as the Receivers, and “vous êtes un exemple” as the Target. By framing this praise as something “we said earlier,” Macron

reinforces the consistency and collective nature of the message. The verbal process here serves to legitimise Issoufou's reforms and democratic commitments, presenting them as acknowledged and endorsed by France. This rhetorical strategy strengthens bilateral trust and situates France as a supportive partner in Niger's democratic trajectory.

In excerpt 12 « Je vais... vous confirmer les deux changements majeurs... » the verbal process confirms positions Macron as the Sayer, with the Ivorian president as the Receiver, and the Target being the announcement of two major policy changes regarding monetary cooperation. This verbal clause performs a crucial diplomatic function: it publicly communicates France's readiness to embrace reforms long requested by West African partners. By using *confirmer*, Macron frames the message as authoritative and definitive, signalling transparency, responsiveness, and a willingness to recalibrate long-standing financial arrangements. The verbal process thus becomes a vehicle for policy declaration and reassurance.

Ex 12 : « Je vais pour ma part ici vous confirmer les deux changements majeurs qui accompagneront cette évolution et que la France a décidé d'embrasser à vos côtés. D'abord nous avons ensemble décidé de mettre fin à la centralisation obligatoire des réserves de change en France qui représentaient 50 % en actant la suppression du mécanisme du compte d'opérations. J'avais entendu combien à la fois le compte d'opérations et ses réserves obligatoires sur le compte spécial du Trésor étaient un souci, un sujet de crispation ».

"On my part, I am going to confirm to you here the two major changes which will accompany this development, and which France has decided to embrace by your side. First, we decided together to put an end to the compulsory centralization of foreign exchange reserves in France, which represented 50%, by eliminating the operation account mechanism. I had heard how both the operations account and its mandatory reserves in the special treasury account were a source of tension" (My translation)

Across these excerpts, Macron's use of verbal processes consistently foregrounds speech as action praising partners, reaffirming commitments, and announcing reforms. These verbal clauses

construct a leadership persona that is communicative, diplomatic, and responsive. They also demonstrate how political authority is enacted not only through decisions but through the strategic use of language to shape perceptions, build alliances, and articulate shared goals.

## Existential Processes

Existential processes encode the existence or presence of an entity, situation, or condition. In Hallidayan terms, they are typically realised through the structure “there + process + existent”, where “there” functions as a grammatical subject and the Existent represents whatever is said to exist. In political discourse, existential clauses are powerful rhetorical tools: they allow leaders to acknowledge problems, highlight priorities, and demonstrate awareness of social realities. President Macron employs existential processes strategically to signal governmental attentiveness and to foreground issues requiring intervention.

In the 13th excerpt «ily avait un engagement à étudier les propositions... » the existential process *il y avait* introduces the Existent, namely “un engagement à étudier les propositions”. By stating that “there was a commitment”, Macron foregrounds the prior existence of governmental responsibility. This existential clause performs two key functions. First, it acknowledges continuity between administrations, signalling that the commitment predates his own intervention. Second, it reassures the public that the government recognises and upholds its obligations. The existential process thus becomes a device for reinforcing institutional reliability and sustaining public confidence in the state's responsiveness.

Ex 13 : « Le troisième volet des accords de Guyane, c'est la demande complémentaire présentée par le collectif à hauteur de 2 milliards 100. Mon prédécesseur ne s'était pas engagé sur ce sujet, il y avait une hauteur de 2 milliards 100. Mon prédécesseur ne s'était pas engagé sur ce sujet, il y avait un engagement à étudier les propositions qui sont faites. Et j'ai réitéré hier cet engagement à étudier dans le cadre des Assises ces propositions qui sont faites ».

“The third part of the Guyana agreements is the additional request presented by the collective for 2 billion 100. My predecessor was

not committed to this subject; there was a commitment to study the proposals that are made. And yesterday I reiterated this commitment to study in the framework of the Assises these proposals which are made". (My translation)

From the 14th excerpt, « il y a un vrai défi à l'école... » the existential process il y a introduces the Existent, "un vrai défi", referring to the educational challenges in Guyana. Here, Macron uses the existential clause to highlight the presence of a structural problem: the difficulty many residents face in learning French, the language required for access to employment and civic participation. By asserting that "there is a real challenge", Macron positions himself as a leader who recognises the lived realities of the population. The existential process functions rhetorically to demonstrate empathy, situate the issue as urgent, and justify forthcoming policy actions. It also frames the challenge as collective and systemic rather than individual, thereby legitimising state intervention.

Ex 14 : « 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 ».

"In addition, this educational challenge in Guyana is reinforced by the fact that French is not the mother tongue of many inhabitants, French or foreigners, because Creole, Portuguese and Boni are spoken at home, the Sarawak, we saw it yesterday. And so, there is a real challenge at school to learn the language of the Republic, which allows access to employment, whether public employment or private employment and to build one's life". (My translation)

Across these examples, Macron's use of existential processes serves to acknowledge existing conditions, signal awareness, and prepare the discursive ground for policy responses. By foregrounding what "there is" or "there was," he constructs a leadership identity that is observant, informed, and attuned to the needs of affected communities. Existential clauses thus play a crucial role in his discourse, enabling him to

articulate problems in a way that both recognises public concerns and reinforces governmental commitment to addressing them.

## **Conclusion**

This study has demonstrated that Emmanuel Macron's leadership discourse between 2017 and 2022 is systematically shaped through the strategic deployment of transitivity processes within the framework of Systemic Functional Grammar. By analysing material, mental, relational, verbal, and existential processes across selected speeches, the study shows that Macron constructs leadership through patterns of action, cognition, identity, communication, and acknowledgment of social realities. Material and mental processes dominate his discourse, projecting an image of a leader who acts decisively while reflecting thoughtfully on political and diplomatic challenges. Relational and verbal processes further consolidate his authority by defining governmental priorities, affirming partnerships, and articulating commitments, while existential processes highlight his awareness of structural issues faced by partner nations. Collectively, these findings reveal that Macron's leadership is not merely expressed through policy statements but is linguistically enacted through carefully patterned grammatical choices that frame his intentions, reinforce alliances, and negotiate political relationships. The study therefore contributes to broader scholarship on political communication by illustrating how transitivity serves as a powerful linguistic resource for performing contemporary presidential leadership.

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