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Illocutionary Acts and Functions in President Macron's Speech at the "Choose Europe for Science" Summit: A Searle–Leech Framework

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Article History	ABSTRACT
Received 07-12-2025 Accepted: 19-01-2026 Published: 03-04-2026	<p>Background: This study discusses how Macron uses language strategically in his "Choose Europe for Science" speech to promote academic freedom and encourage international scientific collaboration. Beyond its political dimension, the speech reflects a deliberate effort to frame science as a shared European responsibility, conveyed through carefully selected pragmatic theories.</p> <p>Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine the categories of illocutionary acts and the illocutionary functions employed in Macron's speech by applying a pragmatic perspective.</p> <p>Method: This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach. A total of 189 utterances were selected from the official transcript of the "Choose Europe for Science" summit. The analysis is based on Searle's (1979) illocutionary act categories and Leech's (1983) illocutionary functions. Data analysis was conducted through systematic coding procedures to reveal the pragmatic patterns which present in his speech.</p> <p>Results and Discussion: The results show 25 representative acts are the most frequently used category (57.14%), followed by directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative acts. This pattern suggests that the speech relies strongly on factual statements while also seeking to mobilize and guide its audience. In terms of illocutionary functions, collaborative functions dominate (77.25%), accompanied by convivial, competitive, and conflictive functions. These findings indicate a combination of informative, persuasive, polite, and critical communicative strategies. Overall, the analysis demonstrates how pragmatic choices are used to establish scientific credibility, influence audience perception, and subtly criticize policies viewed as barriers to scientific progress. By focusing on a scientific political forum that has rarely been examined in previous studies of Macron's rhetoric, this research contributes to filling an existing gap in the literature.</p> <p>Conclusions and Implications: The study concludes that Macron's speech is pragmatically organized to promote scientific diplomacy through the strategic use of illocutionary acts. These findings highlight the potential for further research using multimodal or corpus-based methods to deepen the understanding of political pragmatics, particularly within post-pandemic scientific discourse.</p>

Keywords:

Pragmatics; Speech Act; Illocutionary Acts; Illocutionary Functions; President Macron

ABSTRAK

Latar Belakang: Penelitian ini membahas bagaimana Macron menggunakan bahasa secara strategis dalam pidato "Choose Europe for Science" untuk mendukung kebebasan akademik dan mendorong kerja sama ilmiah internasional. Di luar dimensi politiknya, pidato tersebut mencerminkan upaya sadar untuk memosisikan ilmu pengetahuan

sebagai tanggung jawab bersama di tingkat Eropa, yang disampaikan tuturan tertentu. **Tujuan:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kategori tindak ilokusi dan fungsi ilokusi yang digunakan dalam pidato Macron dengan menggunakan kajian pragmatik.

Metode: Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif. Sebanyak 189 tuturan diambil dari transkrip resmi pidato pada pertemuan "Choose Europe for Science". Data dianalisis dengan mengacu pada kategori tindak ilokusi Searle (1979) dan fungsi ilokusi Leech (1983). Proses analisis dilakukan prosedur koding sistematis untuk mengungkap pola pragmatik yang muncul dalam pidato tersebut.

Hasil dan Pembahasan: Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tindak ilokusi representatif merupakan kategori yang paling dominan (57,14%), diikuti oleh tindak direktif, komisif, ekspresif, dan deklaratif. Pola ini menunjukkan bahwa pidato tersebut banyak bertumpu pada pernyataan faktual, sekaligus berupaya menggerakkan dan mengarahkan audiens. Dari sisi fungsi ilokusi, fungsi kolaboratif paling sering digunakan (77,25%), disertai fungsi konvivial, kompetitif, dan konfliktif. Temuan ini mengindikasikan adanya perpaduan strategi komunikasi yang bersifat informatif, persuasif, santun, dan kritis. Secara keseluruhan, analisis menunjukkan bahwa pilihan pragmatik dalam pidato ini dimanfaatkan untuk membangun legitimasi ilmiah, membentuk persepsi audiens, serta secara implisit mengkritik kebijakan yang dipandang menghambat perkembangan ilmu pengetahuan. Dengan mengkaji forum politik ilmiah yang relatif jarang dikaji dalam penelitian sebelumnya mengenai retorika Macron, penelitian ini dapat berkontribusi dalam mengisi celah penelitian yang ada.

Kesimpulan dan Implikasi: Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa pidato Macron disusun secara pragmatis untuk memajukan diplomasi ilmiah melalui pemilihan tindak ilokusi yang strategis. Temuan ini menunjukkan pentingnya penelitian lanjutan dengan pendekatan multimodal atau berbasis korpus guna memperdalam pemahaman mengenai pragmatik politik, khususnya dalam wacana ilmiah pada era pascapandemi.

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Kata Kunci

Pragmatik; Tindakan Tutur; Tindakan Tutur Ilokusi; Fungsi Ilokusi; Presiden Macron



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INTRODUCTION

French President Emmanuel Macron's speech at the "Choose Europe for Science" summit, on 5 May 2025, drew broad international attention for its clear and direct stance on academic freedom and Europe's role in global science. In his address, Macron urged researchers worldwide to engage with the European Union in safeguarding scientific work that remains free, open, and democratic at a time when academic autonomy faces increasing pressure. As highlighted by The Guild [1], Macron framed Europe as a potential haven for scholars, supported by increased investment and more efficient research structures. Central to this vision is the launch of the Choose Europe for Science program, which is backed by funding of up to €500 million and seeks to strengthen Europe's attractiveness as a leading centre for research and innovation. Macron also underscored the value of cross-border and interdisciplinary cooperation in responding to global challenges, while repeatedly affirming academic freedom as a cornerstone of Europe's long-term competitiveness. Overall, the speech not only reiterates Europe's commitment to fundamental

scientific values but also positions the continent as an increasingly appealing destination for international research talent.

Examining the utterances in the speech is essential to understanding how Macron strategically communicates with his audience while advancing the scientific values promoted by the European Union. Utterances can be seen as manifestations of human thought expressed through language, and they always carry meaning, including performative utterances, which function as the smallest units of communication.[2], [3] According to Searle, speech acts are forms of communicative action through which speakers convey intended meanings, and they are classified into three types: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts.[4], [5] Among these, illocutionary acts are particularly significant in political discourse, as they often reveal implicit meanings, such as indirect criticism or subtle insinuations.[6], [7] Illocutionary acts relate to what speakers intend to accomplish through their utterances in shaping the listener's interpretation [8], [9]. Searle further classifies illocutionary acts into five categories: representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative.[10] Each utterance thus performs a social action that is closely influenced by contextual factors and norms of politeness. Extending Searle's framework, Leech introduces four illocutionary functions, such as competitive, convivial, collaborative, and conflictive, which could help explain how communicative intentions interact with social considerations.[11]

Previous studies in political pragmatics demonstrate that political leaders strategically employ illocutionary acts in accordance with socio-political contexts and institutional settings. Research on Macron's speeches shows a consistent dominance of representative or assertive acts in formal political discourse, such as development-oriented policy speeches [12], diplomatic addresses to international institutions [13], and interviews related to public health governance.[14] Crisis-focused analyses further reveal that indirect and carefully mitigated illocutionary strategies function as tools for maintaining legitimacy and public trust during periods of uncertainty, including the COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical conflict.[13], [15], [16] Beyond Macron-focused research, studies in international political pragmatics emphasize that discourse strategies are increasingly shaped by audience expertise and institutional roles rather than electoral mobilization.[17]

Parallel findings are also observed in recent studies of educational and scientific policy discourse outside the European context. Research on Makarim's policy communication regarding the cancellation of university tuition increases illustrates how political actors adopt epistemic, declarative, and collaborative pragmatic strategies to justify policy decisions and align with expert communities rather than mass publics [18] Additional international studies on political-scientific communication confirm that policy speeches delivered in knowledge-based forums prioritize cooperation, rational justification, and shared epistemic values.[17], [19] However, scientific policy speeches delivered at international academic summits remain underexplored, particularly with regard to how illocutionary categories and functions operate together. This study therefore positions itself by examining Macron's opening speech at the "Choose Europe for Science" summit as a distinct genre of political-scientific discourse. Consequently, examining this previously overlooked context becomes important for understanding how Macron adjusts his use of illocutionary acts when the objective shifts from crisis management to scientific diplomacy. In response to this gap, the present study is guided by three research questions: (1) which categories of illocutionary acts are most prominent in Macron's address to the scientific community?; (2) what types of illocutionary functions emerge within this particular communicative setting?; (3) how do these pragmatic patterns operate as persuasive strategies in positioning Europe as a global center for scientific research?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pragmatics & Context

Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics concerned with how meaning is constructed and interpreted in relation to context. Rather than focusing solely on grammatical structure or lexical meaning, pragmatics examine how speakers and hearers rely on situational, social, and interpersonal factors to understand utterances. Yule defines pragmatics as the study of the relationship between linguistic forms and their users, highlighting the role of speakers in meaning construction.[20] Similarly, Levinson describes pragmatics as the study of the relationship between language and the context that enables language comprehension.[21] Allan further emphasizes that pragmatics deals with the assignment of meaning to linguistic expressions in ways that are highly dependent on context, whether in spoken or written communication.[22] Taken together, these perspectives underline the idea that meaning does not reside in language alone but emerges through the interaction between linguistic forms and contextual circumstances.

From another perspective, pragmatics is often understood as the study of implied or intended meaning, what speakers mean beyond what is explicitly stated. Interpreting such meaning requires interlocutors to share background knowledge, assumptions, and communicative expectations. Yule identifies several key areas within pragmatics, including deixis, presupposition, reference, inference, politeness principles, face-threatening acts, and speech acts.[23] Among these, speech act theory, introduced by Austin, offers an important framework for understanding language as a form of action.[24] Austin argues that certain utterances do not merely describe reality but perform actions; for example, the statement "I promise I will come" constitutes the act of promising itself.[25] In line with this view, Chaer and Agustina describe speech acts as individual and psychological phenomena influenced by speakers' linguistic competence and their awareness of context.[26] This perspective reinforces the idea that speech acts connect linguistic expressions to real actions and demonstrate the performative nature of language in communication.

Context is therefore central to the interpretation of speech acts. Schmidt and Richards point out that contextual factors strongly influence how intended actions are understood by both speakers and hearers.[27] An utterance such as "You had better study now," for instance, may function as a command when spoken by a parent, but as a suggestion when used among peers. This example illustrates how pragmatic interpretation is shaped by social relationships, shared norms, and the specific communicative setting in which language is used.

Illocutionary Act

Searle distinguishes three types of speech acts.[28] Locutionary act involves producing meaningful utterances (the act of saying something). Illocutionary act refers to performing an action through utterances (the act of doing something), including stating, promising, commanding, requesting, or naming. Perlocutionary acts concern influencing the hearer (the act of affecting someone), such as causing anger or providing comfort. In essence, all utterances have action-oriented properties and include acts such as stating, asking, commanding, apologizing, thanking, or congratulating. Illocutionary acts, as noted by Searle, involve actions performed through utterances accompanied by responsibility to carry out the intended act.

Searle classified illocutionary acts into five categories.[29] Representatives commit speakers to the truth of propositions through stating, explaining, reporting, informing, complaining, claiming, or mentioning. Directives aim to get the hearer to perform an action, including commanding, requesting, suggesting, recommending, or demanding. Commissives commit speakers to future actions such as promising, offering, vowing, threatening, or volunteering. Expressives convey psychological states such as praising, criticizing, apologizing, thanking,

congratulating, mourning, or blaming. Declarations change the status or reality of an entity by utterance alone, such as deciding, canceling, prohibiting, permitting, or creating new statuses.

Illocutionary Function

Searle identifies five felicity conditions that determine the validity of an illocutionary act: the speaker must intend to fulfill the promise; believe the action benefits the hearer; believe they are capable of performing it; predict a future action; and predict their own future act.[28] Based on those conditions, Leech emphasizes that illocutionary acts form the core of speech acts because they embody communicative intention shaped by context and politeness norms.[30] Expanding Austin and Searle's perspectives, Leech proposes four illocutionary functions.[11] Competitive functions reduce politeness and impose actions on the hearer, such as ordering, requesting, demanding, and begging. Convivial functions promote politeness and social harmony through offering, inviting, greeting, thanking, or congratulating. Collaborative functions remain neutral toward social goals and serve to inform, report, announce, or teach. Conflictive functions oppose social harmony and cause offense or violation, such as threatening, accusing, cursing, scolding, or criticizing.

Research Gap & Positioning

Theoretical and empirical research in political pragmatics underscores that illocutionary acts are inseparable from discourse genre and epistemic norms. Studies grounded in speech act theory consistently show that representative acts function to construct epistemic authority, while directives and commissives serve to mobilize collective commitment in policy-oriented discourse.[12], [31], [14] Broader work in international political discourse analysis further demonstrates that expert-oriented forums favor collaborative and informational strategies over competitive or conflictive ones, reflecting the communicative norms of epistemic communities.[17], [19] In contrast, crisis and security discourse tolerates more confrontational pragmatic strategies due to urgency and threat perception.[13], [16]

Despite these advances, no prior study has systematically integrated Searle's illocutionary act categories with Leech's illocutionary functions to analyze a scientific policy summit involving transnational research governance. Existing studies either focus on political crises, domestic policy justification, or diplomatic confrontation [12], [13], [14], [16], [31], [18], leaving scientific diplomacy pragmatically under-theorized. By applying the Searle–Leech framework to Macron's Choose Europe for Science speech, this research fills that gap and positions itself as a contribution to political pragmatics by conceptualizing scientific summits as hybrid discourse genres in which political authority is linguistically negotiated through collaboration, epistemic legitimacy, and shared scientific values.

METHOD

Research Design

Creswell explains that a research design refers to the overall procedures used to collect information in addressing research problems, and that these procedures are shaped by the researcher's underlying philosophical assumptions.[32] In line with this view, Rukajat describes qualitative descriptive research as an approach that seeks to present systematic, factual, and accurate accounts of the characteristics and relationships of the phenomena under investigation.[33] Based on these considerations, the present study employs a qualitative descriptive design [34] to examine and interpret the types and functions of illocutionary acts found in President Macron's opening speech at the "Choose Europe for Science" summit. With regard to the research scope, Abdussamad defines a population as a set of subjects or objects that meet particular criteria relevant to the unit of analysis.[35] Accordingly, the population of this study comprises all utterances delivered by President Macron in the opening speech of the Choose Europe for Science

conference. The data were obtained from a video uploaded to the official YouTube channel of France 24, entitled *Discours d'Emmanuel Macron lors du sommet "Choose Europe for Science"*.^[36] As a result, this research adopts a total population approach, in which the entire corpus of utterances constitutes both the research population and the data analyzed.

Data Collection & Analysis

Daruhadi and Sopiati describe data collection as the set of methods used to obtain research data.^[37] In this study, the researcher employed a literature review and transcription-based document analysis to examine illocutionary acts in Macron's speech. Social context analysis was applied to identify both the categories of speech acts and their illocutionary functions. According to Najmi and Nurhayati, social context analysis links textual data to its broader socio-cultural setting and situational environment.^[38] The results of this analysis align with established theories on speech acts, particularly within the context of international scientific forums. The data analysis followed a systematic coding process consisting of four stages: (1) transcribing all utterances from Macron's speech video; (2) classifying utterances containing illocutionary acts based on Searle's (1979) framework; (3) identifying illocutionary functions using Leech's (1983) framework; and (4) calculating frequencies and conducting interpretative discussions based on the findings.

RESULT

This section reports the findings of the study on the categories and functions of illocutionary acts, drawing on the frameworks proposed by Searle (1979) and Leech (1983). The analysis focuses on identifying how illocutionary acts are employed by President Macron in his opening speech at the "Choose Europe for Science" summit. The discussion presented below is based on the researcher's interpretation of the data.

Based on the analytical framework applied in this study, all categories and functions of illocutionary acts were found to be present in President Macron's opening address. The results indicate the occurrence of 108 representative acts, 49 directive acts, 15 commissive acts, 14 expressive acts, and 3 declarative acts. With regard to illocutionary functions, collaborative functions clearly predominate, comprising 146 of the 189 utterances (77.2%), while convivial, conflictive, and competitive functions appear far less frequently. This strong preference for collaborative functions suggests that Macron prioritizes the sharing of information, explanation, and collective reasoning over confrontation or coercion. Such a communicative orientation is consistent with the norms of scientific epistemic communities, which emphasize rational deliberation, the co-construction of knowledge, and cooperative discourse as key elements in sustaining credibility and legitimacy within science-related policy discussions.^{[7], [39]}

Moreover, these findings highlight a genre-specific difference between scientific policy speeches and overtly political or campaign-oriented discourse. While political rallies often accommodate competitive and conflictive pragmatic strategies, discourse in scientific forums generally favors collaborative approaches in order to build trust, encourage consensus, and align institutional interests.^[28] Therefore, the predominance of representative acts and collaborative functions in Macron's speech can be understood as a strategic adjustment to the expectations of a scientific audience, which ultimately strengthens the persuasive impact of his message in an international science-policy context. A detailed overview of these results is provided in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Illocutionary act categories found in President Macron's speech at "Choose Europe for Science" summit

Categories (Searle, 1979)	Amount	Percentage
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Representative	108	57.14 %
Directive	49	25.92 %
Commissive	15	7.94%
Expressive	14	7.41%
Declaration	3	1.59%
Total	189	100%

Table 2. Illocutionary functions found in President Macron's speech at "Choose Europe for Science" summit

Function (Leech, 1983)	Amount	Percentage
Competitive	4	2.12%
Convivial	20	10.58%
Collaborative	146	77.25%
Conflictive	19	10.05%
Total	189	100%

DISCUSSION

A. Illocutionary Act Categories

1. Representative

Representative acts are those that generate the speaker's propositional commitment to the truth of a proposition, such as stating, describing, explaining, claiming facts or opinions.[39] In this regard, Macron uses representative speech acts to express issues and link them to scientific knowledge, democratic values and competitiveness. In his political speeches, such statements serve to instil shared assumptions so that the proposed policy measures seem reasonable in light of the circumstances on the ground (descriptive & evaluative), thereby ensuring that the audience accepts the premises before being asked to take action. Furthermore, examples of the use of the representative category can be found in the data below:

Data (13), 02:34 - 02:40

Au fond, c'est comme si depuis la pandémie du COVID-19, nous vivions constamment dans des temps où les impensables se succédaient.
[Since the COVID-19 pandemic, it is as though we have been moving from one unthinkable situation to another]

The above utterance performs as a broad interpretative claim. In this case, Macron presents an evaluative generalisation that summarises the collective post-pandemic experience. Linguistically, he uses the metaphorical construction *les impensables* and the indicative mood to assert the reality he claims. Meanwhile, pragmatically, the statement binds the audience to the shared premise that the current situation is unusual and requires a swift collective response. Thus, the representative category of the statement is appropriate, because the speaker does not request immediate action but rather states an assessment of truth/circumstances as the basis for his next argument, so that the rhetorical effect is to raise issues that justify the urgency of the scientific policies he will propose.

Data (18), 03:01 - 03:07

J'ai eu l'occasion de le dire d'ailleurs il y a quelques semaines à l'université du Caire, c'est encore plus vrai pour l'Europe.
[I said it a few weeks ago at Cairo University, and it is even more true for Europe.]

In the above utterance, Macron uses references to previous events to reinforce his claim. This form serves as a legitimisation strategy to increase the credibility of his representative statement. Linguistically, this statement can be strengthened by the comparative *encore plus vrai*, which shifts global relevance to the European context, so that the statement serves to convey a generalisation supported by empirical evidence. Therefore, this statement falls into the representative category, because the essence of the statement is to state facts/assessments, not to direct actions.

2. Directive

Directives are speech acts that attempt to make the listener do something, such as requests, recommendations, commands, suggestions, invitations, and commitments directed at the actions of the speech partner.[40] In relation to the analysis results, Macron's speech uses directives to form collective actions or policy statements that encourage changes in speech structure. This strategy is typical of state speeches in terms of policy, not always giving clear orders, but rather directing norms and expectations so that public actors act in accordance with the agenda. Examples of the use of directive speech can be found in the following data:

Data (12), 02:27 - 02:33

Il faut mesurer que nous sommes à un moment de rupture très profond où l'impensable est au cœur de notre actualité.

[We must recognise that we are living through a profound rupture in which the unthinkable has become central to our current reality.]

The use of *il faut* in the above statement is a form of expression that indicates obligation. In this statement, Macron instructs the audience (collectively) to adopt a certain understanding of the current situation. Thus, this statement falls into the category of normative directives, not technical actions, but rather cognitive-moral demands to acknowledge structural changes. Meanwhile, from a rhetorical point of view, this expression creates a sense of urgency that justifies further procedures or policies.

Data (96), 21:01 - 21:04

Réfléchissons collectivement à la lourde tâche d'archivage de certains savoirs spécifiques.

[Let us collectively reflect on the immense task of archiving specific bodies of knowledge.]

The imperative utterance *Réfléchissons* above calls for collective action, not imposing solutions but demanding active participation. Pragmatically, this utterance constructs the meaning of consultation and shared responsibility. Thus, this utterance belongs to the directive category that emphasises the process (thinking together) as an action that must be taken now. Pragmatically, this utterance constructs consultation and shared responsibility.

3. Commissive

Commissives are speech acts that bind the speaker to future actions, such as commitments and intentions.[39] In political speeches, commissives also serve to establish institutional credibility. Several of Macron's utterances indicate state promises/commitments that signify concrete intentions for action (funding, research infrastructure). In a political context, Macron's commissive utterances are used to bind listeners (researchers, universities, the public) to a framework of

thinking that can be held accountable. Examples of the use of commissive utterances can be found in the data below:

Data (46), 09:08 - 09:10

C'est ça que nous voulons rattraper nous européens, ce en quoi nous croyons.
[This is what our Europe must catch up, this is what we believe.]

This utterance expresses a shared desire, not merely stating a fact, but a shared commitment to European identity towards a goal (catching up). Thus, pragmatically speaking, this utterance falls into the commissive category because it binds the collective subject *nous européens* to a future goal, with its rhetorical function forming an aspirational consensus that can be operationalised through policy.

Data (93), 19:52 - 20:02

¹³
Et donc je souhaite que dans les prochains mois, nous puissions finaliser les initiatives essentielles pour préserver ces bases de recherche, leur financement au niveau européen.

¹⁷
[Therefore, I hope that in the coming months we will be able to finalize the essential initiatives needed to safeguard these research foundations and to secure their funding at the European level.]

Although the utterance *je souhaite* takes the form of a hope, it contains an implied institutional commitment. In this case, Macron sets a target time frame *dans les prochains mois* and a concrete policy objective (preservation of the research base and funding). Furthermore, in the commissive category, this type of utterance is considered a promise/target that binds the short-term political agenda.

4. Expressive

Expressive is speech act that displays the psychological/emotional attitude of the speaker, such as expressions of gratitude, pride, regret, and hope.^[40] Expressions of gratitude to the panelists, statements of joy at returning to the Sorbonne, and projections of hope for 'many Marie Curies' (your expressive utterances) serve to soften the discourse, build emotional bonds and moral legitimacy. Expressive is also used here to motivate academic listeners. Examples of the use of expressive utterances can be found in the following data:

Data (2), 00:34 - 00:41

Et je veux remercier aussi nos panelistes d'avoir accepté de plancher aujourd'hui et défendu à cause qui est la leur et qui est la nôtre.

[And I would also like to thank our panelists for agreeing to contribute their reflections today and for defending a cause that is both their own and ours.]

This utterance is a strong expression of appreciation. In this case, Macron manifests public gratitude towards the panelists while embracing the collective value of *la cause qui est la leur et la nôtre* (the cause that is theirs and ours). Its pragmatic function is to consolidate the community, connecting the academic elite with political leadership through appreciation. This utterance falls into the expressive category because the core of the statement is a feeling of gratitude, not an argument or instruction.

5. Declaration

Declaration is a speech act uttered by the appropriate authority in the appropriate context [39], such as changing the status of the social world. The statement launching the "Choose Europe for Science" programme is a declarative act. Because Macron has authority (as President) and a formal audience (policy makers, academics), this declaration is illocutionarily effective. Examples of the use of declarative speech can be found in the following data:

Data (3), 00:42 - 00:45

Je vais m'exprimer en français.
[I will deliver it in French.]

communicative parameters (the linguistic code) and signals a new phase of speech. The declarative illocutionary force arises because the speaker's decision to speak in a particular language creates new communicative conditions that shape audience reception and redefine the listener's interpretive position.

B. Illocutionary Functions

1. Competitive

Competitive function refers to an illocutionary purpose that exerts pressure, demands a response or action, and prioritizes social goals over politeness norms, typically realized through direct commands, expressions of urgency, or calls for rapid transformation.[39] Several of Macron's utterances exhibit this competitive tone, signaling his push for accelerated policy shifts and immediate institutional commitment. Within the Sorbonne context, such a tone serves to mobilize political and economic actors by framing scientific advancement as an urgent, collective imperative. Examples of the competitive function can be observed in the following utterances:

Data (16), 02:51 - 02:57

Alors, quand je disais que ce qui est évidemment en jeu, c'est le cœur de ce que nous sommes.

[Thus, when I state that what is unmistakably at stake is the very core of who we are.]

This utterance falls under the competitive function because it implicitly pressures the audience to recognize the urgency of questions concerning European identity and cultural essence. By stating *ce qui est évidemment en jeu*, the speaker demands a form of acknowledgment from the hearers as an initial step toward concrete action. The competitive function emerges when a speaker advances a claim that potentially requires a response and a sense of responsibility from the interlocutors, thereby containing a subtle element of coercion. While the utterance is not overtly impolite, it carries argumentative force that signals an expectation for the audience to engage in serious reflection.

Data (123), 24 :55 - 24 :56

Allons-y vite fort
[Let us move quickly.]

This utterance constitutes a direct imperative marked by urgency and pressure. The phrase demands immediate and forceful action (*vite fort*), reflecting a competitive function because it prioritizes achieving a social goal over maintaining politeness. Pragmatically, the expression signals a commanding stance in which efficiency and prompt action override considerations of politeness. The speaker does not seek approval but instead urges collective action, aligning with the characteristics of the competitive function, which frequently manifests through direct commands.

2. Convivial

Convivial is an illocutionary function that fosters positive social relations, encompassing acts such as formal greetings, expressions of praise, and friendly invitations.[40] In this context, formal salutations addressed to officials and acknowledgments directed toward founders and members of the academic community serve to consolidate social networks and garner moral support for the speaker's initiatives. This reflects a political convivial strategy that integrates public ethics with subtle persuasion. The use of the convivial function is illustrated in the following data:

Data (54), 10:58 - 11:01

Et c'est cela ce que nos pères fondateurs et mère fondatrice.

[And that is what our founding fathers and mother fought for.]

Although this utterance is syntactically incomplete, its core function is to express respect toward the founders of Europe. The convivial function is evident through the use of a historical reference as a form of social homage. This utterance reinforces shared values and collective identity. Pragmatically, it fosters emotional closeness and conveys appreciation rather than imposing any request or obligation.

Data (59), 12:22 - 12:37

Beaucoup de choses ont été faites, je pense aux chers de professeur junior qui ont permis de recruter sur 600 lauréat, 60 % de chercheur étrangers ou exerçant à l'international, ce qui est six fois plus que ce qui a cours d'habitude dans nos recrutements.

[Many initiatives have already been accomplished. I am thinking here of the junior faculty positions that have enabled the recruitment of 600 laureates, 60% of whom are foreign researchers or scholars working abroad, that six times higher than what is typically observed in our recruitment processes.]

This utterance praises a collective achievement, particularly the successful recruitment of international scholars. The convivial function is realized through the speaker's expression of appreciation toward the academic community's efforts. By foregrounding these positive outcomes, the utterance fosters a shared sense of pride, mutual respect, and an atmosphere of collaborative engagement.

3. Collaborative

The collaborative function refers to an informative or cooperative orientation that promotes dialogue and shared understanding, typically through the presentation of neutral facts, contextual clarification, or invitations to collective reflection.[40] Macron employs this function to construct argumentative scaffolding and encourage collective reasoning, thereby creating a discursive space that facilitates joint policy formation and scientific-political consensus. This collaborative function is evident in the following data:

Data (7), 01:21 - 01:28

³*Madame la présidente, à l'instant et vous le portez tous, mais je pense qu'il ne faut pas réduire ce qui se joue aujourd'hui.*

[Madam President, at this moment and you are all aware of it, but I believe we must not narrow down what is unfolding today.]

This utterance provides an evaluative reminder that discourages oversimplification of the ongoing issue. The speaker delivers a rational assessment without issuing commands or expressing

strong emotion. The purpose is informational-argumentative, to clarify the frame of discussion so that the audience maintains a broader understanding. Because it prioritizes information sharing and reasoning, this utterance falls under the collaborative function.

Data (39), 07:51 - 08:02

Sinon, nous vivons, nous maîtrisons à vivre, peut-être, ils sommes-nous déjà dans des démocraties liquides où démêler le vrai du faux devient impossible et qui est au fond le lit des complotismes.

[Otherwise, we live and will learn to live, perhaps we are already in liquid democracies where distinguishing truth from falsehood becomes impossible and which fundamentally become the breeding ground for conspiracy theories.]

This utterance presents a socio-political risk analysis should current conditions go unchecked. Its function is informative rather than directive. Macron uses the concept of *démocraties liquides* to illuminate an epistemological problem. By emphasizing the difficulty of distinguishing truth from falsehood, he offers critical analysis rather than urging immediate action. Thus, the utterance is appropriately categorized as collaborative.

4. Conflictive

Conflictive functions denote acts of opposition, strong criticism, accusation, or rhetorical threat [39], which enable the speaker to construct rhetorical antagonism toward another party. In this case, Macron criticizes the abolition of research programs and rejects dogmatic conceptions of truth. Such utterances frame certain actors as rhetorical adversaries and emphasize threats to scientific freedom, thereby employing the conflictive function to underscore the urgency of defending science. Examples of the conflictive function appear in the following data:

Data (8), 01:29 - 01:42

³ *Personne n'aurait pu imaginer il y a quelques années qu'une des plus grandes démocraties du monde allait supprimer des programmes de recherche sous prétexte qu'il y avait le mot diversité dans ce programme.*

[No one could have imagined a few years ago that one of the world's largest democracies would abolish research programs on the grounds that the word "diversity" appeared in them.]

This utterance contains strong criticism of the policy banning certain research programs. The conflictive function emerges because the speaker explicitly highlights and condemns the actions of another party, carrying an accusatory implication. The expression *sous prétexte* (on the grounds that) signals rejection and opposition toward such a practice. This illocutionary act carries conflictual potential as it targets the political decision of a specific state.

⁶ CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Based on the results and discussion, the examination of 189 utterances from Emmanuel Macron's "Choose Europe for Science" speech reveals a deliberate deployment of all five categories of illocutionary acts proposed by Searle (1979). Representative acts emerge as the most prevalent (57.14%), followed by directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. This distribution suggests that Macron primarily relies on factual and propositional reasoning to legitimize his sociopolitical claims, while the presence of directive and commissive acts reflects an effort to mobilize collective engagement and signal long-term commitments to scientific development. Although expressive and declaration acts occur less frequently, they nonetheless contribute to reinforcing the speaker's credibility and formalizing the institutional weight of the initiative.

In addition, all illocutionary functions outlined by Leech (1983) are identified within the speech. Collaborative functions dominate (77.25%), followed by convivial, competitive, and conflictive functions. This pattern indicates that the discourse simultaneously aims to inform and persuade, maintain diplomatic politeness, and articulate implicit critiques of existing scientific policies. Taken together, the findings suggest that the speech constitutes a carefully structured form of political discourse, integrating rational argumentation with affective appeals to advance the agenda of European scientific sovereignty and innovation.

Future studies may benefit from incorporating multimodal perspectives, rhetorical analysis, or Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in order to further explore underlying ideological positions and power relations in European scientific communication. Comparative analyses involving speeches by other global leaders, as well as the use of corpus-based or automated analytical tools, are also recommended. Moreover, examining perlocutionary effects, such as audience reception or subsequent policy outcomes, which could provide deeper insight into the broader impact of such political discourse.

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