

Using modality, achieving ‘modernity’, portraying morality: Marine Le Pen’s (adverbial) stance in interviews

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1. Marine Le Pen’s new ethos and shifting discursive strategies

The ‘dediabolisation’ campaign of Marine Le Pen, leader of the Front National since 2011, led to a new perception of her party by both journalists and the public: formerly described as extreme-right, the party is now described as populist, a more neutral qualification. In fact, the party has been described as “modernized/ professionalized” in the mainstream press as well as in academic research (Shields 2013; Mayer 2013). Politically, Le Pen’s more flexible approach to many sensitive social issues (abortion, gay marriage, etc.) contrasts with her father’s stances, and even contradicts them: when he denounced civil servants as ‘loafers’, she promoted the need for a welfare state. Like many far-right leaders in Europe, the FN leader has therefore opted for a type of ‘newspeak’ referring to ‘cultural differentiation’ in order to avoid a racially discriminatory tone. On the personal side, she is seen as radically different from her father, and has been described by her enemies as having a better temper, and even as being “simple, reassuring and efficient” (Schneiderman 2011).¹ She has then opted for another FN leader’s ethos and has adopted new discursive strategies (Williams 2011;

¹ « Heureux caractère au demeurant, pas de risque de se faire mordre la main dans un mouvement de colère, comme avec le père. [...] La sympathie qu’inspire cette bonne fille au rire franc et spontané. [...] La Chine fait peur. L’Europe ne rassure pas [...] Pour le peuple français anxieux, Marine Le Pen propose sa recette. *Simple, réconfortante, efficace.* » (Daniel Schneiderman, *Libération*, 4 avril 2011).

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Shields 2013; Mayer 2013). Her electorate success has been attributed in equal parts to the social and economic circumstances favoring the extreme movements in Europe, as evidenced by the 2017 election in Austria and to this shift in the emotional and discursive stance. The party has found favour in a new electorate, especially among women (who used to be extremely reluctant to vote for the Front National) as well as among the working and lower middle classes (Mayer 2013, Mauger and Pelletier 2017). However, while the arguments of the former president of the National Front, J.-M. Le Pen, have been the subject of much research (Le Bart 1998; Bonnafous 2001; Amossy 2010, among others), the discursive strategies of Marine Le Pen have not yet raised the same interest, and the few studies that do exist diverge in their conclusions. Some maintain that her speeches demonstrate an overwhelmingly negative tone (Shields 2013; Mayer 2013; Falzone and Lassalle 2013), for example, describing France as being assaulted by barbarians invasions, rural France being ravaged by an invisible enemy and taxmen being ‘vultures practicing selective taxation’.² Baider et al. (2014, 2015), however, have suggested that in her *interviews*, even if the discourse can be described as hyperbolic, Le Pen strove to focus as well on the Self (i.e., Marine Le Pen, the party, the Nation, the people) and positive emotions (dignity, pride, empathy, hope). This signalled a shift from her father’s negative feelings (contempt, fear, threat) focused on the Other (the migrant, the left-winger, the elite, etc.), in his speeches and interviews (Amossy 2010).³ The present work continues to examine Marine Le Pen’s strategies as revealed in interviews and debates, and specifically how the use of adverbial modality seems to help her build a strong argument (*a positive ethos*) directed toward her conclusion (*a legitimate, credible leadership*). More precisely, we analyse how the most common adverbs used in her interviews (when compared to her ordinary speech), i.e. *d’ailleurs* and some – *ment* adverbs, reveal how her discourse is a purposeful strategy, one that will allow her to be perceived as ‘présidentiable’, i.e., a charismatic, competent and credible politician.

In the first section of this article we describe our theoretical framework and the key concepts underlying this study (populist discourse, ethos and modality within the functional grammar), and in the second

² *Villages ravagés par un ennemi invisible, les vautours de la taxation sélective.*

³ This does not mean, of course, that the use of emotions such as fear and anger is absent in her discourse strategy.

we present our data, methodology of analysis and quantitative findings. The last section focuses on the qualitative analysis of *d'ailleurs* and the most frequent – *ment* adverbs in her interviews.

2. Theoretical framework

Our study is framed by three concepts: the definition of populist discourse and how it can be characterized linguistically; the concept of ethos, i.e., the presentation of oneself, which is especially important for a politician; the concept of modality, which we will limit here to the use of modal adjuncts.

2.1. Proximity and authority as a populist discursive stance

According to many discourse analysts (van Dijk 1998; Charaudeau 2005; Jagers and Walgrave 2007; Cambon 2007), a legitimate leader for a party described as 'populist' tends to frame his/her discourse within two ideological oppositions: the innocent people vs. the corrupted elite, and the natives vs. the immigrants. Leadership style for a populist leader can also be described as twofold: on the one hand, *authoritarianism* prevails in the leadership, hence Marine Le Pen's use of powerful formulas, and her dynamic demeanor and tone of voice; on the other hand, the trait of *proximity* must also be part of the discourse strategies, since the leader is supposed to represent the people. At the same time, Charaudeau (2005: 52) explained that it is primarily through verbal confrontations, and the way politicians express their adversarial posture that they present their credibility and legitimacy; in fact, they often do so by attacking the opponent's credibility and legitimacy, which are central qualities to leadership as we shall see in our next section. Confrontations can be managed at two levels: at the level of discourse, via the *content* and *form* of statements; at the level of the interactions and exchanges, via the *behavior* and the *management of the exchanges*. Indeed, it is in their public appearances that politicians use speech and body language to convince and persuade their audience, and where they build their key political stances. These include, proximity and authority which will be achieved in part linguistically with the use of modality (Lewis 2004; Hyland 2005; Simon-Vandenberg and Aijmer 2005; Simon-Vandenberg 2007), which in this paper will be focused on the strategic use of adverbs (among the various modal lexico-grammatical means that can achieve such an aim). We will show

that such lexical items are an intrinsic part of the discursive management of the exchanges both in form and content; this management further includes face work and the management of ethos.

2.2. Credibility and ethos of a 'présidentiable' candidate

The word *ethos* can be defined and used in a variety of ways, and as such it has been the topic of numerous studies in rhetoric, pragmatics, discourse analysis and sociology (Goffman 1973; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1992; Amossy 1999, 2010, 2014; Charaudeau 2011). Barthes (1962) reworked the philosophical definition of ethos to redefine it as the means employed to be perceived as credible, i.e., to demonstrate the qualities of wisdom (*phronesis*), sincerity (*arête*), and benevolence (*eunoia*). In Barthes' words, the speaker should convince an audience to "follow him/her" (*phronesis*), "to believe him/ her" (*arete*), "to love him/ her" (*eunoia*). Amossy has also suggested that credibility is core to the notion of ethos (2014: 13), defining ethos as "the image the speaker builds of himself/ herself to ensure his/ her credibility" (1999: 127). Indeed in the context of the word *presidential*, a recent study of lexical frequencies in the French press has proposed a semantic profile of the lexical unit in which credibility is very much present, along with legitimacy, competence and experience (Baider, 2015). Therefore, we will work with the hypothesis that such qualities (credibility, legitimacy, experience and competence) would be those that Marine Le Pen aims to convey in her public exchanges. Such qualities can be understood in terms of face work theory as proposed in previous studies focused on face work and political discourse (Bull 2008; Bull and Fetzer 2010), face being defined by Goffman (1967: 5), as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact". Upholding positive face, understood as "essentially the need to be well regarded by others" (Bull and Fetzer 2010:160), is the first objective in the context of political interviews or debates since the approval of the politician 'ultimately depends on the approval of a majority of people in their own constituency' (Bull and Fetzer 2010:161). This face work could be understood as 'branding' (Amossy 2014: 20). The process of branding argumentation strategies used to oppose arguments is also key to their success. Modality is thus a choice that plays a key role insofar as it ensures a "dialogic orientation" that serves the politician's purpose. For a populist leader, the modality balances two main ideological opposites, already mentioned in our previous section: authority and proximity.

2.3. Modality framing credibility

The credibility of a populist leader will be framed by his/her authority/proximity stance, both positions that are realized by the so-called “burden of proof qualifiers” (Tseronis 2009: 11). Indeed, in order to convince, one needs to put forward arguments to back up one’s claim, i.e.:

the burden of proof is the obligation for the one who has advanced a standpoint to assume responsibility for it and thereby to provide argumentation in support of it, answering the questions of the other party (Tseronis 2009: 11).

According to Halliday (2004: 48) functional grammar and adverbials phrases such as ‘on the other hand’, ‘moreover’, etc., may be used in paratactic clauses as these can help the speaker expand and build an argument for an alternative and more favorable conclusion for the party or to strengthen one’s position in the debate. We will see that such a strategy allows Marine Le Pen to express value judgements, assessments and feelings (Baider 2017), or what Biber et al. (1999: 72) define as a stance. Such a lexical strategy is also described by Halliday and Matthiesen (2004: 422) as a modality, which is an expression of indeterminacy conveyed by a modal operator such as a verbal group or a modal adjunct. Expansion clauses (see Halliday and Matthiesen 2004: 395 *in passim*) especially, linked by a logical-semantic relation to another clause, can help elaborate judgements. These modal adjuncts can be modal auxiliaries or the result of “the interplay of lexical means including modals nouns, adjectives and adverbs” (Traugott 2010; Szczyrbak 2017: 91). They build an epistemic stance, claiming or confirming “an alignment with or dis-alignment from other utterances” (Szczyrbak 2017: 94). While *elaboration* clauses specify or describe the meaning expressed beforehand with exemplification, description (exposition) or clarification, *extension* clauses “extend the meaning of another [clause] by adding something new to it”; they can be additive, adversative or alternative (Halliday and Matthiesen 2004: 396–422 for the explanation). An *enhancement* clause qualifies the meaning of another clause by specifying “time, place, manner, cause or condition” and is thereby temporal, concessive, conditional, etc. Such markers of expansion may be “multivalent”. They also construct or transform relationships between the speaker and the addressees: *of course* or *certainly* may create relationships of solidarity, while *indeed* and *clearly* may create relationships of power and authority (Szczyrbak 2017: 97), both important objectives for a populist leader for whom the opposite

ideologies of proximity and of authority are key to leadership. Adverbs such as *extrêmement* are also core to modality, and central to argumentation (Biber et al. 1999: 72) as they allow evaluation of people and events; they express strength of commitment through a more or less intense epistemic or affective attitude (Aijmer 2007: 330).

In summary, in discourse, modal adjuncts express probability, orientation, polarity, etc., and contribute to ‘a dialogic orientation’. They are linguistic devices that help a politician present the values expected by the audience, and may, at the same time, underscore such values for the opponent. On the interactional level, ‘comment adjuncts’ in particular allow the speaker to build an interpersonal relationship and express his/her own point of view, his/her “commitment to or an evaluation of the propositional content” (Molinier and Levrier 2000; Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 263).

These discursive strategies will, therefore, be used to build a relationship based on the authority of the speaker while demonstrating the speaker’s proximity to the audience.

3. Data, methodology, results

In this section we present the data explored, as well as the corpus linguistics approach adopted to classify the modal adjuncts framing Marine Le Pen’s discourse. In the final subsection (3.3), we present the most frequent linguistic units and select certain of these for further analysis.

3.1. Data and methodology

Corpora allow the researcher to uncover what is probable and typical, as well as what is unusual about the phenomenon observed (Grisot and Moeschler 2014: 13, cited in Szczyrbak 2017: 96). Studying a politician’s public performances is important in order to understand his/her stance. We collected data in two different files: speeches (39,583 words) and interviews (32,020 words)⁴ given by the FN leader between 2004–2016 (Annex 1 provides details of the themes explored in the interviews and debates):

- 10 speeches made by Marine Le Pen since 2011 and her presidency of the FN, available on the FN site⁵ or YouTube;

⁴ When reading the results in section 3.1.3, this slight difference in number of words is considered.

⁵ <http://www.frontnational.com/>

- 15 interviews and debates which took place since 2004, available publicly (e.g., on YouTube), the most recent (2011 onwards) transcribed for the purpose of this study or already transcribed for previous studies. Recent interviews include a 2015 interview in New York, and an interview with Arlette Chabot in 2016 after Brexit.⁶

We used corpus linguistics to explore frequencies, which gives us a global reading and enables us to identify the lexical units with the highest frequency in both files. We then identified the most frequent lexical units that could be categorized as modality, and considered these as salient and framing the discourse (cf. Giora 2003 for the concept of salience). To understand their role in the argumentative strategies, we went back to the KWIK abstract (concordances) to arrive at a broader reading of the dialogic sequence embedding the lexical unit. We focus on the role of each frequently used modal adjunct adopting the categories described in our theoretical summary (functions of expansion, enhancement, etc.), so as to develop hypotheses about the motivation underlying such lexical choices.

3.2. Differences in the two corpora

Lexical item frequencies were quite similar in both files, as we can see in the six tables below. Most dissimilarities could be attributed to two different genres: interviews are more or less spontaneous exchanges, while a speech is a text read aloud in a less spontaneous style. We could even say that speeches are staged performances: the text is prepared in advance, sometimes by someone other than the leader, and is often read.⁷

In Table 1, we see that the words embodying the fundamental ideas of the Front National discussed in section 1.1 are found in both data; these include the concepts of Nation (*France, français, pays*) and nativism (*immigration*). Although specific social categories (*paysans/ farmers, travailleurs/ workers*) are very much present in Marine Le Pen’s speeches, these are merged under the generic *gens* ‘people’ in the interviews, denoting a less formal register:

⁶ For long interviews we limited our transcription to the first 20 minutes.

⁷ On a personal note, having listened to a number of speeches and interviews of Marine Le Pen, I found her style when giving speeches to be very constrained, both in intonation and gestures; her ‘free style,’ on the other hand, makes her an interesting debater and interviewee.

Table 1. Most frequent nouns. *Copyright: Fabienne Baider. License: CC BY*

Category	Lexical unit	Interviews		Speech	
		Occ.	Perc. ⁸	Occ.	Perc.
Nouns	France, français	234	41.5	552	51.5
	politique	76	13.5	170	16.0
	pays	60	10.5	130	12.0
	Immigration	49	8.5	81	7.5
	Europe	41	7.5	59	5.5
	gens	38	6.5	8	0.5
	gouvernement	34	6.0	32	3.0
	liberté	29	5.0	65	6.0

Table 2. Most frequent pronouns. *Copyright: Fabienne Baider. License: CC BY*

Category	Lexical unit	Interviews		Speech	
		Occ.	Perc.	Occ.	Perc.
Pronouns	Je, moi	612	46.5	338	24.0
	Nous, notre	242	18.5	842	60.5
	vous, votre	457	35.0	213	15.5

With regard to pronouns (Table 2), there is quite naturally a high frequency of *I* and *you* in interviews and a strong preeminence of *we* in the speeches, with the audience as the main addressee.

In the interviews the most frequent verbs of modality (Table 3), i.e., those expressing the politician's standpoint, are, unsurprisingly, *je pense, je crois*. In contrast, the modality of obligation (*il faut, nous devons*) is the most frequent in speeches, since here the politician calls for (her) changes in politics, the word *politique* being also more frequent in speeches than in interviews (cf. Table 1).

⁸ The percentages were calculated on the total number of units present in each column and the numbers were rounded down.

Table 3. Most frequent verbs. *Copyright: Fabienne Baider. License: CC BY*

Category	Lexical unit	Interviews		Speech	
		Occ.	Perc.	Occ.	Perc.
verbs	Faut, devoir (devons...)	94	32.5	124	56.5
	Crois, pense	119	41.5	26	12.0
	pouvoir (peut, etc.)	74	25.5	69	31.5

Table 4. Most frequent adverbs (without –ment adverbs). *Copyright: Fabienne Baider. License: CC BY*

Category	Lexical unit	Interviews		Speech	
		Occ.	Perc.	Occ.	Perc.
Adverbs	Plus, moins	127, 26	13.5, 3.0	311, 45	25.0, 36.5
	Tout, rien	122, 34	13.0, 3.5	119, 64	9.5, 5.0
	bien	90	9.5	119	9.5
	comme	73	8.0	145	11.5
	très	69	7.5	50	4.0
	même (quand même, etc.)	67	7.0	122	10.0
	aujourd'hui	55	6.0	66	5.5
	oui, non	53, 93	5.5, 10.0	29, 77	2.5, 6.0
	peu, beaucoup	45, 42	5.0, 4.5	29, 24	2.5, 2.0
	jamais	29	3.0	32	2.5

With regard to adverbs,⁹ there is an almost systematically greater use in speech rather than in interviews, except for *très*, *peu*, *beaucoup*, and the expected more frequent use of *oui / non* (see Table 4).

Among the conjunctions we found one unusual frequency: the adverbial phrase *d'ailleurs* was used 63 times in interviews compared to 14 times in speeches, and represents the greatest disparity between speeches and interviews (Table 5). In this way, therefore, we might describe it as a 'marker' in Marine Le Pen's *spontaneous* speech. The

⁹ We separated the adverbial phrases and the conjunctions (see Table 5).

Table 5. Most frequent conjunctions and adverbial phrases. *Copyright: Fabienne Baider. License: CC BY*

Category	Lexical unit	Interviews		Speech	
		Occ.	Perc.	Occ.	Perc.
Conjunction					
Adverbial phrase	mais	265	51.5	172	45.5
	alors	75	14.5	82	22.0
	parce (que)	70	14.0	54	14.5
	d'ailleurs	63	12.0	14	3.5
	car	30	6.0	44	11.5
	puisque	12	2.0	10	2.5

adverbial phrase has not been the subject of specific research except in Baider (2017) and in the next section we will explore the functions of such an adjunct.

Finally, in terms of the adverbs ending in *-ment*, and taking into consideration the slight difference in total word frequency for the two corpora, there are almost twice as many adverbs in interviews as in speeches (Table 6). The most salient adverbs for interviews are *totale-ment*, *exactement*, *évidemment*, and these will be also be analysed in the next section.

We decided to analyse only the interviews, as their higher frequency of adverbs use may signal a space where politicians are more spontaneous in building their stance. As mentioned above, we will focus on the unusual frequency of *d'ailleurs* and the most frequent adverbs (*totale-ment*, *exactement* and *évidemment*), and will analyse their function as (interactional) stance markers: we look at how they help the speaker guide the audience towards her own take of the event, person or idea expressed or implied, that is, how she manages the dialogic orientation of the interaction thanks to these adverbs.

4. Modal adjuncts framing a populist discourse

In section 2.3 we delineated the analytical categories we used to assess the functional use of the adverbial phrases. Although all modal adjuncts under study can be analysed as building an ethos of authority and proximity, *d'ailleurs* functions more frequently to background an argument, while the *-ment* adverb tend to foreground it.

Table 6. Most frequent adverbs in –ment for each corpus. *Copyright: Fabienne Baider. License: CC BY*

Adverbes in –ment > 5	Interviews	Speech + proportionate figure expected
Totalement	24	15 => (31)
Seulement	7	19 => (10)
Exactement, précisément	16, 1	7, 9 => (20)
Évidemment	14	19 => (23)
Effectivement	13	5 => (17)
Notamment	13	11 => (15)
Probablement	11	7 => (14)
Absolument	9	11
Justement	10 ¹⁰	7 => (18)
Parfaitement	8	6 => (10)
Extrêmement	7	5 => (9)
Particulièrement	7	9
Clairement	6	10 => (8)
Éventuellement	6	2 => (8)
Également	5	8
Systématiquement	4	9
Tellement	3	11 => (4)
Largement	3	8 => (4)

4.1. *D'ailleurs*: building the 'proximity' and authority arguments

Given the frequency of *d'ailleurs*, we can infer its importance to Le Pen's discursive and interactional strategies for appealing to her audience. Indeed, on a linguistic level, the adverbial phrase fulfils the role of a multivalent marker of expansion, ultimately building the authority and proximity positions on an interactional level.

¹⁰ Some adverbs such as *justement* are frequent in the earlier interviews, but not in the most recent ones (i.e., 2011 onwards), even though journalists use the adverb in their questions or comments. We decided therefore not to study the adverb.

4. 1.1. A “qualifier of burden of proof”: the competence argument

In an earlier study (Baider 2017), we described how Marine Le Pen uses *d’ailleurs* to emphasize criticisms, conclusions and explanations that concern party fundamentals, such as its anti-EU or anti-American stance. In this section we show how this word acts as a typical qualifier of burden of proof, if we adopt Steronis’s (2009) definition:

- It is an extra element structurally detached and peripheral to the main constituent of a sentence;
- It supplies extra information that is not directly essential to the understanding of core meaning of what is being said;
- It facilitates the understanding of what is said and / or relates what is said to the context in which it is said and therefore adds coherence to the discourse. (2009: 26)

Indeed, we found that *d’ailleurs*:

- is structurally detached and peripheral to the main constituent of a sentence;
- adds an extra element of information;
- this extra information is not or does not seem to be directly essential to the debate, but in our case, plays an important role in the politician’s strategy.

Our data indicate that the adverbial phrase most frequently functions linguistically as a marker of expansion, generally *emphasizing* the link between the previous clause and whatever follows the adverb, whether the link is an extension, an enhancement or an elaboration. In example (1) below, *d’ailleurs* puts the emphasis on the adverb *là*, which represents the idea in the preceding paragraph related to the fight against terrorism, and links fight with what follows *d’ailleurs*, the specificity of the Front National. Thus, the clause functions as a concluding addition to the previous paragraph, a role that is not listed in Halliday and Matthiesen’s list:

1. C’est pourquoi nous proposons aujourd’hui, à la différence des partis de l’UMPS, et dans un esprit de responsabilité, une réponse globale, qui va bien au-delà, sans la sous-estimer bien entendu, de la simple lutte anti-terroriste. Notre réponse entend s’attaquer par tous les bouts aux dimensions extrêmement variées des défis posés par l’islamisme radical. *Je pense que c’est là d’ailleurs la spécificité la plus importante de la contribution du FN.*

In example (2), *d’ailleurs* emphasizes a clause that elaborates on the preceding one discussing the potential moratorium on the 1905 law (that guarantees secularity), which is described as *contresens total* (total nonsense); in fact, it gives an example of that nonsense: Sarkozy’s apparent attempt to introduce communitarianism in the Constitution. It subsequently highlights Sarkozy’s (supposed) folly and enhances her credibility (*je n’oublie pas*):

2. La laïcité doit être fermement défendue: je ne fais pas partie de ces voix [...], qui demandent un « aménagement » ou un « moratoire » sur la loi de 1905: ce serait un contre-sens total, une victoire des communautaristes sur la République française. Je n’oublie pas, d’ailleurs, la mission que Nicolas Sarkozy avait confiée à Simone Weil pour intégrer le communautarisme dans la constitution et que celle-ci avait refusée.

On the argumentative level both examples reveal how the phrase functions to provide proof of her competence as leader of the FN: in example (1) the adverbial phrase introduces the important conclusion that her party is and has the only answer to terrorism; and in example (2) her political opponent is associated with a nonsensical law (*contresens total*) and confirms her wisdom as a leader.

Competency can also be proven more indirectly, as inferred by her management of turn-taking and her body language. Indeed, an important objective of politicians in discussions or debates is to control the theme of the verbal exchange in order to foreground their agenda and avoid embarrassing moments that could endanger their credibility. In example (3) below, Marine Le Pen faces strong opposition from the journalist with regard to her support for the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. In order to cut short these accusations and preempt a potential politically dangerous question, Marine Le Pen uses an embedded clause containing *d’ailleurs* (‘and as a matter of fact you can multiply this kind of adjective’). She describes the Syrian president with, we would argue, a rather axiologically neutral adjective (*autoritaire*), clarifying that the journalist can ‘multiply’ such an adjective that in fact he has not actually used. This expansion elaborates her choice of the adjective, stressing the fact that compared to ISIS, Assad is the lesser of two evils:

3. Jst : Madame le Pen, il faut dire que que [sic] Bachar al Assad reste au pouvoir ? C’est la meilleure solution ?
MLP : écoutez c’est la moins pire toujours. Voyez-vous, je dis clairement, parce que moi, je n’ai pas l’habitude de faire de langue de bois, entre fondamentalistes islamiques et un pouvoir certes autoritaire (et vous pouvez

d'ailleurs multiplier ce genre d'adjectifs) mais laïc qui était capable de préserver les minorités ethniques et les minorités religieuses [...].¹¹

This embedded clause also allows her to convey her power in relation to the journalist, since she indirectly admonishes him not to pursue qualifications, which he never even made. It not only defuses further debate (and therefore further questions from the journalist on the topic), but allows the politician to reject further arguments as futile, using the rather derogatory lexical unit *multiply* and the expression *this kind of*.

The phrase *d'ailleurs* functions here as a marker of expansion, stressing the most important argument of the speaker. These expansions are used to prove her competence and credibility.

4.1.2. Proximity argument

The use of *d'ailleurs* also allows the speaker to add comments that support her *proximity* stance, building a positive ethos with the addressees. In example (4) the adverbial phrase allows her to stress:

- a clause in which she flatters the journalist, which may also serve to promote/ build a positive image of the politician (polite, courteous);
- a clause stating her forthrightness and responsibility as a political leader, emphasizing her clairvoyance;
- a clause showing her empathy for the 'French people' and their supposed feelings, all the while implicitly putting forward the argument of referendum, a fundamental tenet of the FN.

4. Jst: Vous êtes, vous faites partie de millions et de plus d'amis sur Facebook, qui soutiennent le bijoutier de Nice.

MLP: Non, je n'ai pas cliqué sur une pétition. Non, à la différence de beaucoup de Français, j'ai la possibilité d'exprimer (*je vous remercie d'ailleurs pour cette invitation*) ma position sur ce sujet. *J'ai été d'ailleurs très claire, responsable politique et avocate que je suis*, et j'ai expliqué que j'avais de la sympathie pour l'homme dont je comprenais l'exaspération, mais qu'évidemment, *comme beaucoup de Français d'ailleurs*, je n'ai pas d'empathie [...].

In example (5) below, *d'ailleurs* is embedded in a clause referring to the official tribute to the police forces, a tribute organized by the government. In this case, *d'ailleurs* expresses a consequence of actions

¹¹ *Grand rendez-vous d'Europe 1*, septembre 2013

described in a previous clause, a function that is not described in Halliday and Matthiesen (2004). The presence of *d’ailleurs* puts the focus on the words *Nation* and *tribute*, indirectly expanding Marine Le Pen’s own tribute to the law enforcement (*que j’ai bien entendu immédiatement félicitées*). We could argue that the proximity stance here is found in the parallelism between *Marine Le Pen* congratulating the police and the *Nation* giving their respects to the law enforcement, a populist leader representing the people:

5. Les forces de l’ordre, que j’ai bien entendu immédiatement félicitées vendredi dernier, sont parvenues à mettre un terme en un temps record aux exactions des terroristes islamistes. La Nation leur a d’ailleurs rendu hommage dimanche, de façon très émouvante.

We will now discuss the *-ment* adverbs, which are very frequent among the lexical units, focusing on how most of these adverbs serve to fulfill the burden of proof as well, but qualitatively.

4.2. Adverbs in *-ment*: commitment and evaluation

We used Halliday’s typology (2004) to classify the adverbs and analyse how they convey commitment to and evaluation of the propositional content (Molinier and Levrier 2000; Simon-Vandenberg and Aijmer 2007: 263). We categorized the most frequent adverbs in our data as comment adjuncts; these are core to the constructed meaning of utterances and serve to convey the speaker’s point of view.

4.2.1. Evaluative function

Most of the adverbs belong to the *asseverative* category (see Table 7). As the word *asseverative* implies, these adverbs are used to strongly declare that the speaker is telling the truth, important for a leader and disarming to the opponent. We focus on the two most frequent adverbs, *évidemment* and *exactement*.

Exactement is often used with performative verbs (such as *to explain*), engaging the audience to listen further to a detailed explanation, or encouraging the audience to hearing proof of the argument. For example:

- a. *je vais vous expliquer exactement comment cela va se passer, [...]*
- b. *ce sont exactement les mêmes chiffres au point que d’ailleurs [...]*

Table 7. Most frequent comment adjuncts. *Copyright: Fabienne Baider. License: CC BY*

Comment adjunct > 5 occurrences		
Propositional	<i>évidemment</i> (13)	asseverative
	<i>clairement</i> (6)	asseverative
	<i>notamment</i> (13)	asseverative
	<i>exactement</i> (15)	asseverative
	<i>probablement</i> (11)	asseverative
	<i>particulièrement</i> (7)	asseverative
Speech functional	<i>Effectivement</i> (13)	factual

As a matter of fact, the burden of proof announced implied by these adverbs very often refers to the Front National's fundamental policies: in example (6) this means the necessity of recovering borders, and in example (7) that the Socialist party and the Conservative party (the UMPS for the FNists) work with the same immigration figures, despite the claim that they would apply different policies regarding immigration:

6. On ne peut remettre en cause un accord que si on retrouve la maîtrise de notre frontière ; je vais vous expliquer *exactement* comment cela va se passer. Donc tous les grands humanistes qui veulent la révocation des accords du Touquet [...] (Interview LCI, 29/06/16)

7. Ce sont *exactement* les mêmes chiffres au point que d'ailleurs, au point que d'ailleurs, monsieur Valls avait dit en arrivant je compte faire comme monsieur Sarkozy [...]

By using these adverbs the speaker conveys an absoluteness regarding the evaluation of the propositional content; moreover, these adverbs also compel the addressee to accept this certainty and follow or understand the Front National reasoning which led to such certainty.

Similarly, the adverb *évidemment* puts forward conclusions and inferences, which are actually 'not obvious' despite the use of *évidemment*; most often it accompanies the introduction of a new topic related to the main argument, i.e., expanding on it. The use of the adverb forces the addressee to accept the speaker's reasoning, as seen in example (8) below, where Marine Le Pen presents the worsening of 'the problem of illegal immigration' as an obvious consequence of Albania entering the EU, inferring that anyone from Albania (once it is in the EU) will be a

potential illegal immigrant, conveniently ignoring the Schengen agreement of freedom of movement¹²:

8. [...] l’Albanie c’est très intéressant, l’Albanie qui *va bien évidemment aggraver le problème* de l’immigration clandestine.

In example (9), the speaker forces the audience to accept an equivalence between the concepts of ‘nation’ and ‘border’. If one does not challenge the *évidemment*, he/she accepts the reasoning of a populist discourse, i.e. the FN conclusion that, within the Schengen area, countries are no longer nations:

9. [...] c’est ainsi, je crois que l’histoire démontre que les français ont raison de réclamer le retour de la protection de la nation et *qui dit nation dit évidemment frontières* [...]

If the adverb *exactement* foregrounds fundamental tenets of the Front National, the adverb *évidemment* presents hypotheses as obvious conclusions, without having offered any argument for such conclusions, i.e., presenting the speaker’s prejudices as well-known truths, as a *fait établi*.

4.2.2. Commitment function

Other adverbs frequently used in her interviews fall into the category ‘mood adjunct of intensity’ (see Table 8), and most have a high value of intensity (Halliday 2004).

Table 8. Most frequent adjuncts of intensity. Copyright: Fabienne Baider. License: CC BY

Mood adjunct of intensity in Marine Le Pen interviews > 5 occurrences		
Degree	Total	High
	<i>Totalement</i> (24), <i>absolument</i> , (9) <i>parfaitement</i> (8) <i>extrêmement</i> (7),	
Counter-expectancy	Exceeding	Limiting <i>Seulement</i> (7)
Total	48	7

¹² An EU citizen cannot be an illegal immigrant *a fortiori* in an EU member state. Maybe Marine Le Pen had another idea in mind. We also note the irony in her use of *intéressant*.

Halliday (2004) posits that adverbs of intensity *deepen* the expectations of the addressee; they demonstrate a high commitment by the speaker on the one hand, while they demand a similarly strong engagement from the addressee, on the other hand.

The adverb *totalement* in examples (10) and (11) below focuses on the negative and polarized adjectives *superficielle* and *défaillante*. They foreground Marine Le Pen's arguments against the EU developed in the rest of the paragraph, arguments that are the burden of proof for such assertiveness. Once again, certain cognitive shortcuts are required to accept the linguistic parallelisms deployed in these quotations: in example (10) a pro-EU / anti-EU new divide in French political parties is stated to have replaced the left / right divide. This new divide is rephrased to become the people who believe in France/ those who do not believe in it:

10. Bon il y un autre phénomène [...] c'est que je ne crois pas à la fracture entre la droite et la gauche, je pense qu'elle est *totalement superficielle* et que la vraie fracture aujourd'hui est entre la nation et le mondialisme, c.à.d. entre ceux qui croient à la France et ceux qui n'y croient plus.

In example (11) the '*nous avons vu*' explicitly reveals a 'taken-for-granted' strategy, presenting a personal opinion as a generally known or agreed upon fact, and making the proposition less arguable (Sbisà 1999)¹³:

11. Il faut arrêter de compter sur les autres ; nous avons vu que l'UE était *totalement défaillante* dans ce domaine, que l'ouverture totale des frontières en l'espèce est une véritable folie. Depuis des années nous réclamons la suspension, et en ce qui me concerne définitive, de Schengen et je crois que chaque jour qui passe révèle que nous avons raison de réclamer cette mesure de protection au minimum

In the quotes above we can observe that not only does the adverb highlight the arguments to come, but it also foregrounds the argumentative force of the speech: in example (11) *totalement défaillante* (totally useless) is further developed by the accumulation of lexical units echoing the argumentative force of the adverb (*ouverture totale, véritable folie, suspension définitive, au minimum*) in parallel with the party's immense

¹³ Intonation plays a role in this call to engagement, since Marine Le Pen tends to stress most adverbs. With *d'ailleurs* she tends to mark a pause after the adverb (Baider 2017).

effort to stop this utter incompetence (*depuis des années, chaque jour qui passe, réclamons*).

To summarize this section, we have found that both intensity modal adjuncts and comment adjuncts function to foreground the argument, summarizing the reasoning or argument that will follow. They invite listeners to engage with the dialogue on the argumentative level, and because of this prerequisite engagement, adverbs guide the audience to agree with the FN leader’s position (Hyland 2005: 176). This guidance has the potential to serve as an ‘authority’ stance.

5. Final remarks

The adverbials investigated in this paper, *d’ailleurs* and *–ment* adverbs, can be described in Marine Le Pen’s discourse as her personal stance markers, and as characteristic features of her discursive style. They function as consistent discursive devices and contribute to an articulate, clear-headed leadership ethos. We have observed that *d’ailleurs* often functions in our data as a marker of expansion, backgrounding the preceding clause, stressing consequences or examples to justify the argument just put forward¹⁴. The most frequent *–ment* adverbs, in contrast, summarize the speech to come, i.e., foregrounding the arguments to be developed. On the theoretical level we could therefore suggest that the expansion functions could include *emphasis*, as illustrated in example (4); the extension category could include a *conclusive* category (not only additive), as observed in example (1); the enhancement function could include the *consequence* category as shown in example (5). Going back to Goffman theory we would also conclude from the analysis of our data that these adverbs and in particular the adverb *d’ailleurs* fulfill the three basic kinds of facework as defined by Goffman (1955, 1967) and as described in Bull and Fetzer (2010:158): an avoidance process (avoiding potentially face-threatening acts by taking the floor or guiding the conversation), a corrective process (giving a proof for a redressive act), and making points (the most used by Marine Le Pen). Not only are they valuable persuasive devices, but they also contribute to the construction of a power relationship with the addressees (Simon-Vandenberg and Aijmer 2007: 55–56), “stamping a personal authority” (Hyland 2005: 176), a *sine qua non* for a populist leader.

¹⁴ *D’ailleurs* could also be analysed as an evidential since it fulfils the four conditions stipulated by Anderson (1986: 274).

The often-hyperbolic stance observed in this study intensifies moralistic statements and conveys a feeling of emergency, a useful emotion for a politician who can then posit herself as a self-proclaimed savior of the nation, who will take her moral duty to heart (Amossy 2010).

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Annex 1 - Interviews

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Annex 2 -

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