

## **Intrinsic opposition in the debate on New Caledonian independence: a critical discourse analysis**

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This paper analyses part of the discourse of the ongoing independence debate between France and New Caledonia by combining Systemic Functional Linguistics and Pragma-Dialectics. It is shown how two politicians, as representatives of a more dominant social group, attempt to influence and change the social representations of the Kanak minority in order to obtain a preferred outcome by persuasively arguing their case through the use of both shared and inferred knowledge. It will become clear that tacit knowledge seems to be taken for granted by the French protagonists and that the negotiation process does not appear to constitute a cooperative dialogue. The paper aims to clarify this process in order to demonstrate how highly incongruent goals and values on both sides can create an intrinsic opposition. A quantitative systemic functional analysis is integrated as linguistic evidence into a qualitative Critical Discourse Analysis to reconstruct and critically evaluate the arguments of three political actors, as representatives of the most significant discourse communities involved in the debate: independence leader Jean-Marie Tjibaou, former French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin and nickel magnate Jacques Lafleur. Shared knowledge appears to be wielded as a rhetorical ploy by the latter two to achieve free association with France.

**Keywords:** systemic functional linguistics; Pragma-Dialectics; argumentation theory; critical discourse analysis; rhetorics

### **1. Argumentative discourse**

Discourse is ideologically motivated, which entails that discursive events are linked and underlying beliefs are being reproduced over time, as embodied in human communication and action. Only the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), developed by Wodak, includes argumentation, as opposed to other existing conceptual frameworks. The approach lends itself well to the study of social practices such as discrimination of vulnerable groups of people in society. For this purpose, Wodak sums up various means to influence discourse, including argumentation (Reisigl and Wodak 2001). However, argumentation cannot simply be added to the available repertoire of conscious strategies, since it is more of a process, in which individuals or even entire communities participate.

Fairclough's most recently developed approach focuses on how the discourse under investigation is structured, with its main purpose to describe the course of action that forms the outcome of the argument contained in the uttered discourse (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012). Even though an emphasis on the speaker's intended goals seems highly commendable, the premise of values as an expression of ideologies held by both individuals and

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groups still deserves consideration, in accordance with earlier theories proposed by Toulmin and Janik (1996).<sup>1</sup> A critical analysis of any argument should not neglect these social representations, as they may form important reasons for a recommended course of action, being interwoven throughout the discursive event. Individuals collectively construe meanings in order to explain the world that surrounds them. They rationalise their actions accordingly and produce discourse to create new realities, based on the assumption that the process is essentially discursive in its nature and determined by contextual factors. Therefore, a social constructionist view is adopted in this paper (Berger and Luckmann 2011) by following the concept of “imagined communities” (Anderson 1991).

The impetus for this study came from the ongoing independence debate between France and New Caledonia. As a result of how discourse and rhetorical devices are employed by members of these two societies, disparities between the discourse communities have occurred, leading to a conflict situation. It will be shown that the negotiation process between the two main parties does not constitute a cooperative dialogue. Instead, it appears to be a powerful discursive strategy of the French side to maintain a status quo. Furthermore, it will become clear that the French protagonists assume that the audience shares the same republican values and ideals and, as such, the same tacit knowledge required to come to a unanimous agreement on the issue (Simon-Vandenberghe, White, and Aijmer 2007). More specifically, the study demonstrates how the underlying ideologies held by each of the parties, linked to the values in the arguments of their representatives, and their imagined realities of a new identity for New Caledonia, linked to the goals mentioned, actively impede a consensus from taking place, resulting in a cross-cultural clash.

## **2. Combining systemic functional linguistics and Pragma-Dialectics**

The study complements Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL) with Pragma-Dialectics to investigate various lexical and grammatical selections made by the three protagonists, as well as their use of rhetorical ploys to coax the opposing side into accepting a preferred course of action. SFL maps language as a system based on choices made by active human agents. These selections may be integrated into the context in which the verbal interaction is happening by making use of the notions of “context of situation” and “context of culture”, coined by Malinowski (1935). By adopting a pragmatic perspective, Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) indeed appears to be a useful instrument for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

Three discourse samples were selected, based on the fact that they have been produced by representatives of each discourse community, at a given point in time. The first excerpt is part of a speech made by independence leader and martyr for the independence movement Jean-Marie Tjibaou at the Place des Cocotiers in Nouméa on 18 May 1983 (Tjibaou 1996). The second excerpt belongs to a speech made by former French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin at Nouméa on 5 May 1998 (Jospin 1998) and the third excerpt is an extract from an interview given by New Caledonian self-made man and nickel magnate Jacques Lafleur on 16 December 2009 (Interview de Jacques Lafleur 2009). A total of 80 clauses was analysed. In this study, each of the politicians is considered a representative of a particular discourse community: either French, Kanak or New Caledonian. The analysis proceeded on the assumption that individuals belonging to divergent social groups use their own specific register and shared meaning potential and that, when these communities need to come to an agreement in a conflict situation, a significant clash may occur. It is paramount to note that cultures, within this perspective, are seen as fluid, non-reified entities with permeable boundaries.

All of the excerpts are genres that belong to a type of discourse that is primarily oral. Each excerpt may be further situated, since the whole debate has its own particular context of situation for the social practice of argumentation, as it is enacted by the social actors involved in the event (Halliday and Hasan 1985/1989). The features found as a result of the linguistic analysis need to be seen as part of an overarching narrative, characterised by a particular “semantic drift” (Butt 1983). By investigating these consistencies in meaning – as woven into the fabric of the three texts – the Malinowskian notion of “context of situation” comes into focus, since each of the excerpts contains an argument that occurs against the setting of the overall debate (Malinowski 1923).

The social practice, of which the discourse forms a part, may be referred to as argumentation or deliberation. Within a Pragma-Dialectical view, argumentation is seen as a social activity in which interactants actively participate by reacting to the opposing discourse (Van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004). A logical outcome of the debate between France and New Caledonia would be a solution to which all parties can agree. However, argumentation constitutes a discursive practice that is essentially dialogical in nature (Bakhtin 1981) and that requires a high amount of shared knowledge among the social actors in order to be able to construct such a consensualised reality. As Lambrecht (1994) points out, “devious exploitation of presuppositional structure” (70) proves to be a common strategy used by politicians to present highly contentious propositions as if these were shared knowledge.

When both ideational and interpersonal meanings are carefully mapped out, they may reveal consistent patterns that, subsequently, can be aligned with the argumentative structure of each discourse sample. The three politicians unconsciously draw from the language-specific resources at their disposal in order to construct these meanings. Some of the resources at hand are ideational, related to the type of action, the agency of the subjects and circumstances, as described by Halliday (2004). A closer look at the transitivity system elucidates the ideational meanings as imaginary constructs of the interactants, shedding light on how they view the situation. The interpersonal function in SFL, then, indicates social distance and may also be related to power relations. Caffarel (2006) explains how, in French, the functions of Subject, Finite and Predicator “are, as a general rule, crucial, both to the negotiation process in French and to the realization of Mood options” (123). As the protagonists in the debate display their attitudes through the interpersonal function of language, modality may shed further light on the underlying social representations expressed in the discourse, and also on how the social actors position themselves in light of these ideologies in terms of a desired outcome of their discursive acts.

Any salient findings of the systemic functional analysis are integrated as linguistic evidence into a critical evaluation of the arguments, based on the principles of Pragma-Dialectics. Following Van Eemeren (1989), each discourse sample in this study is considered as a complex speech act of argumentation “aimed at convincing another person of the acceptability of a standpoint” (368–369). The desired effect of this speech act is to persuade the other party to accept a viewpoint that not necessarily coincides with their own opinion on the matter.

Any imaginary constructs of reality that are revealed through the analysis may be linked to the goals’ premise in the argumentative structure and any social representations may be linked to the values’ premise of the argumentative structure, under the form of concerns with regards to the proposed solution. After having described the various premises, each argument needs to be carefully reconstructed.

In order to obtain a solution to the independence issue, the interactants are expected to follow a set of general rules of communication, based on the Gricean maxims of communication (Van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004). Whenever interactants do not comply with these rules, fallacies occur in the structure of their argument, which may be analysed within a Pragma-Dialectical perspective by focusing on individual violations.

A four-tiered model for CDA analysis was used for the study. The investigation started by situating the texts within their wider sociocultural and historical context, which may be referred to as the macro-level. It then zoomed in onto the contexts of situation, in which the meaning potential is realised, based on shared knowledge held between the interactants (Halliday and Hasan 1985/1989). This brought the focus onto the micro-level, on which various lexico-grammatical choices within the language-specific register, containing field, tenor and mode, are made. The fourth level is perceived of as superseding the other three and includes various motivators for human action, such as power, ideology, imaginary, cognitive and emotional constructs. The textual analysis was firmly embedded within its context and after investigating any lexical and grammatical choices made by the participants in the debate, each argument, contained within the three political discourse samples, was reconstructed and evaluated. This whole process aimed to reveal consistent and, as such, significant linguistic patterns that were subsequently compared in a cross-cultural fashion.

The argumentation that occurs between the two discourse communities largely depends on what the audience considers to be reasonable, valid or acceptable, based on their common values and beliefs. Since the debate is considered to constitute a dialogical exchange over a prolonged period of time, an agreement would require a large amount of intersubjectively shared knowledge, as well as trust in the validity and truth of the other party's claims (Habermas 1984-1987). The three arguments compete with each other in their common search for the truth and in their attempts to reach a consensus, which will be based on their ability for rational reasoning. However, interactants such as Jospin or Lafleur seem only to focus on an outcome that is more advantageous for France, which is why they may be expected to persuade the Kanak side to accept the French solution. If the two parties fail to come to an agreement, this would probably be because the antagonists deem the French argument to be invalid, based on how they interpret the argument, the independence issue and the resulting conflict situation.

A closer look at the consistencies in meaning that may be discerned within the discourse uttered in the negotiation process reveals how each of the speakers has made various "motivated selections" that reflect how they perceive the conflict situation, what they believe about how it can or should be resolved, and their ideological stance and attitude towards the antagonistic side of the discursive battle (Fontaine, Bartlett, and O'Grady 2013, 51).

### **3. Historical background**

The independence debate in New Caledonia has currently reached a concluding stage that is aimed at closely following the Nouméa Accord. The next four years are seen as a time of transition towards "self-determination". During this period, New Caledonia will need to vote for or against a referendum that is deemed to be decisive for the island's future. The 1998 agreement between the French Republic and New Caledonia, signed by former French Prime Minister Jospin, stipulates that a referendum will be held somewhere between 2014 and 2018, after which the island's inhabitants will need

to decide whether they wish to become independent or, instead, prefer to stay with France (Chappell 1999). If, for any reason, this does not happen, the French State will take hold of the situation and organise pivotal elections on New Caledonia's behalf.

According to Van Eemeren, Grootendorst, and Snoeck Henkemans (1996), the process of resolving a particular conflict includes four subsequent stages. Both the overall argumentation and each specific argument on both sides need to pass through these stages. Consequently, the whole debate between France and New Caledonia may be brought back to a specific moment in time when a confrontation took place between the representatives of both discourse communities. Even though it may prove to be quite hard to pinpoint the exact moment when the first difference of opinion occurred, it seems that everything started with Kanak politician Jean-Marie Tjibaou audaciously suggesting a particular solution for New Caledonia's future under the form of full independence. This subsequently led to the French government vehemently opposing it. The disagreement that arose from this opposition in views then led to a continuous string of discourses arguing for or against the proposed course of action. This may be referred to as the opening stage, which coincided with the moment when the two opposing parties were clearly identified. Both sides further evaluated whether there was sufficient common ground for a satisfying dialogue that could lead to a solution for the problem situation (Van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004).

The confrontation stage, then, included numerous samples of political discourse, all defending a particular standpoint. By arguing for their own desired course of action, each party aimed to reduce any existing doubts about their viewpoint while at the same time reacting to the opponent's previously conducted argument. Jospin's argument may therefore be seen as an attempt to ease any ill feelings about the French solution that were lurking among French and New Caledonian audiences, whereas Tjibaou's argument seems to be more of a boisterous plea for independence, as well as an argument of resistance to the reality of French occupation and previous colonialism. It seems evident that Lafleur masterfully plays the "pathos" card in his own, more recent, argument that appears to align with the French solution.

The current concluding stage involves an evaluation, by all parties involved, of the collectivity of previous discourses. They need to determine whether the conflict has been resolved or not. Consequently, if the Kanak discourse community withdraws its claim for full independence and accepts the French solution of partial independence, this would mean that the whole issue is over. Of course, both sides can always decide to restart the dialogue, perhaps by proposing another solution.

#### **4. Contexts of situation**

Tjibaou's speech occurred on the same day protest marches had been organised by both the pro-independence movement and a group of individuals rallying against Kanak independence. By giving a speech in public, Tjibaou was attempting to comfort his fellow protesters after the death on 11 May of Louis Poitichily, who gave his life for the cause. The occasion was also marked by a visit from Georges Lemoine, a high official from France, to whom Tjibaou refers in his speech. Jean-Marie Tjibaou represents an ominous indigenous viewpoint by arguing for full independence from France.

Former French Prime Minister Jospin's speech discusses the future of New Caledonia and, in particular, the success of the Matignon Agreements and the application of both these and the Nouméa Accord, which had only been signed one month before, on 21 April 1998. This last agreement was concluded between France and the two main political

parties in the Overseas Territory: the FLNKS and the RPCR. The Matignon Agreements were signed on 6 June 1988 by Jean-Marie Tjibaou, Jacques Lafleur and Michel Rocard (Chappell 1993). For a period of ten years, the agreements assured a peaceful ongoing negotiation between France and New Caledonia. Jospin's speech constitutes an evaluation of the progress made in this process of deliberation. As a representative of the French government, he concisely verbalises the goals and concerns of the institution to which he belongs, which allows us to see his speech as a sample of the overarching French argument pleading for free association.

In an interview on a popular local radio station, Lafleur, when asked by the journalist about the future of New Caledonia, gives his own rather peculiar view on the contentious matter of independence. He represents the right wing of the powerful elite on the island, which consists of hardworking second-generation migrants and of large landowners who have always sworn loyalty to the mother country, France.

## **5. Systemic functional analysis**

The micro-analysis constitutes a linguistic description of various lexical and grammatical choices made by the three politicians introduced earlier, aiming to disambiguate these seemingly logical selections. Through an investigation of the ideational function, which is realised centrally in a clause by the transitivity system, grammatical choices that are explored here are the process types, since these appear to be more revealing. A closer look at how the interpersonal function, realised by the mood system, is applied then focuses our attention to the following significant selections: deontic modality and pronominal choices. Even though lexical choices are just as important as grammatical ones, the focus of this paper had to be limited to the latter only.

## **6. Process types**

The following process types are used in Tjibaou's speech: material, mental, verbal, behavioural, existential and relational. However, he mostly uses relational processes, which may reflect his passivity and a feeling of disempowerment towards the reality proposed by French politicians such as Jospin. Tjibaou's text is mainly characterised by relational processes of the attributive type, since he seems to aim to describe the state of things and, most importantly, how these things ought to be.

Jospin appears to use more material processes, showing a much anticipated higher degree of active agency by New Caledonia and its inhabitants. This seems to be mainly a desired form of agency, projected onto the future, as nearly all of the processes are in the future tense. Jospin's discursive strategy evokes a reality, in which New Caledonia is only partially independent and in which France still holds the most important powers.

Lafleur also appears to have a preference for relational processes, both from the attributive and the identifying type, which indicates he mainly describes how things are and how they ideally should be, seen from his perspective. It seems clear, from simply reading through his argument, that he makes a strong appeal to pathos and to the audience to show more willingness to live together as French citizens. Overall, his answers form an enthusiastic plea for New Caledonia to remain French (Table 1).

Table 1. Frequency of process types used by Tjibaou, Jospin and Lafleur.

Process type	Frequency of use		
	Tjibaou	Jospin	Lafleur
Material	14	<b>16</b>	12
Mental	1	6	8
Verbal	11	3	0
Behavioural	0	1	2
Existential	3	1	1
Relational	<b>20</b>	9	<b>18</b>
Total	49	36	41

## 7. Deontic modality

Halliday (2004, 586–658) refers to deontic modals as mood metaphors or incongruent realisations of modality. The meaning of deontic modals strongly depends on the context in which they are used, as well as on the person using them. When employed in the third person, these forms ensure a higher degree of authoritative force (Hodge and Kress 1993). As the protagonists in the debate display their attitudes through the interpersonal function of language, modality may shed further light on the underlying social representations expressed in the discourse, and also how the social actors position themselves in light of these ideologies in terms of a desired outcome of their discursive acts.

Deontic modalities, under the form of perlocutionary speech acts, such as “directives” and “commissives” are especially important, as these may be linked to the notion of institutionalised power (Searle 2008). In French, deontic modals may be expressed using the imperative mood, modal verbs or desiderative verbal processes, and also through impersonal constructions or tense (Caffarel 2006).

Tjibaou uses only one deontic modal or metaphorical expression of modality in his speech:

- [explicit, objective, high]

- (1) **25** On a dit qu’il **fallait** “faire du Blanc” pour éliminer la revendication kanak.  
*It was said **it was necessary to** “act white” to silence Kanak demands.*<sup>2</sup>

Jospin, however, uses numerous directives and commands, thereby expressing a dominant attitude:

- [explicit, objective, median]

- (2) **1** Chacun admet que pour continuer à construire ensemble la Nouvelle-Calédonie de demain, **mieux vaut** une consultation qui rassemble qu’une consultation qui divise.  
*Everyone agrees that, in order to continue building the New Caledonia of tomorrow, **it is better** to have a consultation that brings people together than a consultation that divides.*

- [explicit, objective, high]

- (3) **27 Il vous faut** la rendre plus belle pour tous ceux qui y vivent.  
***You need to** make it more beautiful for all of those who live in it.*



In a similar fashion, the strong, explicit and objective deontic modals used by Lafleur also indicate a feeling of superiority that shows itself in an authoritative attitude:

- [explicit, objective, high]

(4) **14 Il faut pas** avoir honte d'être Français.

*We **shouldn't** be ashamed of being French.*

- [explicit, objective, high]

(5) **19 Vous savez, moi, j'ai un discours que j'ai tout le temps tenu, depuis l'origine, qu'il faut** que ceux qui ont quelque chose aillent vers ceux qui n'ont pas.

*You know, I have been saying this all along, since the start, that the ones who have something **should** go towards those who don't.*

## 8. Pronominal choices

Pronominal choices made by the speakers also relate to the interpersonal function of language. Billig (1995) explains how politicians make specific pronominal choices to emphasise their nationalistic viewpoints. He refers to this strategy as “flagging” and points out that a “banal nationalism”, which is only implicitly present and thus largely unnoticed, may be deduced from the language used in political speeches. Any pronominal choices made by Tjibaou, Jospin and Lafleur are highly dependent on contextual factors and may disclose part of the politicians' ideological views and the categories with which they wish to align themselves. The personal pronoun “nous” (we) appears to deictically refer to the specific group with which each speaker most strongly identifies, as opposed to “ils” (they).

Tjibaou appears to make frequent use of the first person plural pronoun “nous” (we). He uses it 7 times throughout the whole speech, as in, for example:

(6) **1** “Mais la légitimité indigène, elle est en **nous**, elle est en vous”.

*But indigenous legitimacy is in **us**, it is in you.*

(7) **2** “**Nous** revendiquons l'indépendance kanak parce que **nous** revendiquons d'être ce que **nous** sommes !”

*We claim Kanak independence because **we** claim to be who **we** are!*

(8) **3** “**Nous** revendiquons notre droit à une part de soleil, comme n'importe quel peuple indépendant du monde”.

*We claim our right to a share of the sun, just like any other independent people in the world.*

Tjibaou clearly self-identifies with the group to which he belongs: the Kanak people, in the sense of pro-independence Melanesians who, according to him, have an unalienable right to the land on which they live and who are not responsible of any other independence but their own. He strongly disassociates himself from France by emphasising this Kanak identity. The “nous” he selects excludes any people who would in the first place refer to themselves as French, since it is only reserved to those people who consider themselves to be quintessentially Kanak.

Furthermore, Tjibaou's choices of the possessive pronouns “notre” and “nos” show that he associates himself with the categories “droit” (right) and “généalogies” (genealogies), elucidating his focus on the rights of the Kanak people:



- (9) 4 Nous revendiquons **notre** droit à une part de soleil, comme n'importe quel peuple indépendant du monde.

*We claim **our** right to a share of the sun, just like any other independent people in the world.*

- (10) 5 **Nos** généalogies chantent des pierres, chantent des arbres, des sapins, des cocotiers qui sont enracinés dans ce pays.

***Our** genealogies sing of rocks, sing of trees, of fir trees, of coconut trees that are deeply rooted in this land.*

In comparison, Jospin does not associate himself with these categories. Neither does Lafleur. The collocation of “notre droit” (our right) illustrates that the link between the Kanak community and their rights remains the main issue in Tjibaou’s view.

Jospin uses the first person plural pronoun “nous” (we) three times:

- (11) 6 “Ensuite beaucoup **nous** restera à faire”.

*After that, a lot will remain to be done.*

- (12) 7 “Ils s’interrogent, ils **nous** interrogeront avec une insistance croissante, ce que l’accord changera à leur vie quotidienne, quel avenir **nous** leur préparons”.

*They wonder, they ask **us** with increasing insistence, how the agreement will change their daily lives, which future **we** are preparing for them.*

It appears that Jospin strongly identifies with France and, more specifically, with the authoritative institution that carries high responsibility in the conflict situation: the French government. Jospin further uses the demonstrative pronoun “ceux” to refer to people who “remained partners in the Matignon agreements”, who “care about the future of the country”, and who “lives in it (the country)”, thus creating an idealised ideological group that shares the concerns of the French government and that is willing to cooperate, which does not necessarily coincide with reality.

Lafleur uses the first person plural pronoun “nous” twice, as shown in the example below:

- (13) 8 “Et ils **nous** respectent, et ils **nous** respecteront tant qu’on aura cette originalité, et il faut pas avoir peur de dire qu’on l’a, parce qu’on est Français”.

*And they respect **us**, and they will continue to respect **us** as long as we keep this originality, and we shouldn’t be afraid of saying that we have it, because we are French.*

He appears to self-identify with a powerful France that demands respect from other nations. It may be argued that the context of the difference in opinion between France and New Caledonia has largely influenced Lafleur’s pronominal choices, as these clearly show a pertinent desire to continue to identify with the French discourse community. He further identifies with the category “Français” (French), using the indefinite pronoun “on”, which may be translated into English by the first person plural pronoun “we”, and which is a highly inclusive form of “nous”. Lafleur aims to persuade the New Caledonian audience to agree with his views, based on the fact that they are equally favoured towards the solution of a French New Caledonia.

In fact, Lafleur uses the more neutral indefinite pronoun “on” quite profusely, with a total count of 13 times, as a more informal way of expressing this inclusiveness, as shown in the examples below:

- (14) **9 On** peut être Kanak et Français.

*One/we can be Kanak and French.*

- (15) **10 On** peut être Calédonien et Français, la preuve, et je reviens à ce que disait Kotra Urégei: l’essentiel, ce sont les Accords de Nouméa.

*One/we can be Caledonian and French, the proof, and I go back to what Kotra Urégei said: the main thing is the Nouméa Agreement.*

Lafleur’s manifold selections of “on” seem to contribute to the overall vagueness of his discourse. It has become clear that the meanings of these pronouns are based on previously established shared knowledge within the two discourse communities.

## 9. Argumentative reconstruction and evaluation

The argumentative reconstruction constitutes an analytical overview of the premises that are included in the argumentative structure (Figures 1–3).

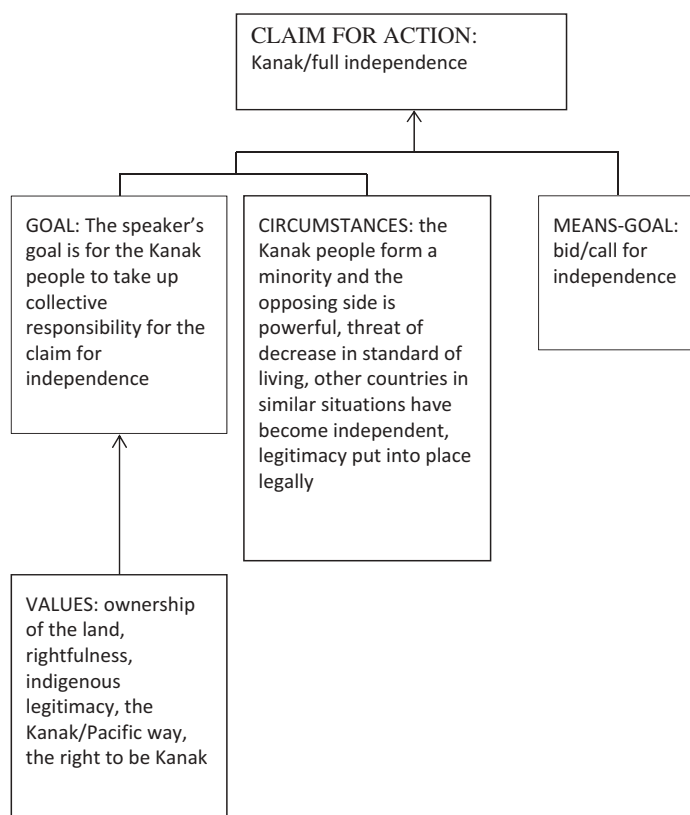


Figure 1. Tjibaou’s argument for full/Kanak independence.

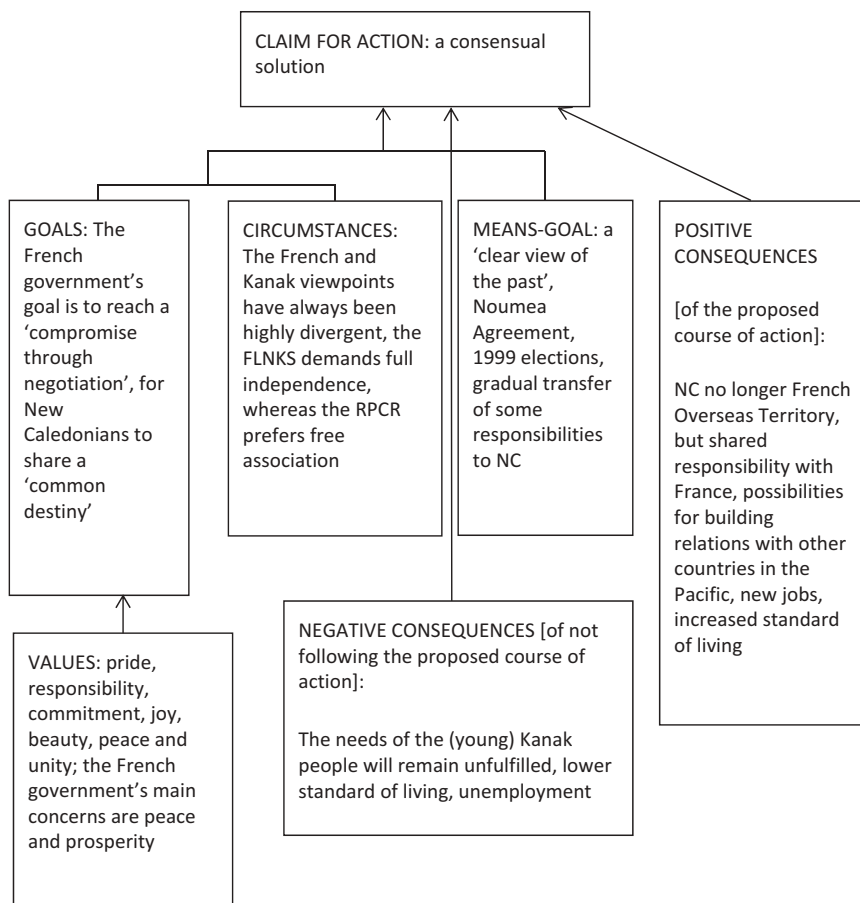


Figure 2. Former French Prime Minister Jospin's argument for free association.

## 10. Critical evaluation of the arguments

Both Jospin and Lafleur dexterously move their preferred outcome of the debate, for New Caledonia to remain within France, from the goal premise to the circumstantial premise, thus presenting peaceful co-existence between the two ethnicities as a *fait accompli*. Jospin starts his speech with a so-called "argumentum ad populum", "Everyone agrees that...", which is a type of fallacious argument or non-argumentation (Van Eemeren 1987). It constitutes a rhetorical strategy aimed at manipulating the audience by evoking the stereotypical image they already have of New Caledonia. Similarly, Lafleur argues that New Caledonia "is a vast number of men and women who live by quite clear rules", which is a "petitio principii" (begging the question), another fallacious move. By making this assertion, the status of the proposition is deceptively raised to that of a common viewpoint, thereby preventing the other party from defending an opposing depiction of reality.

After having considered some of the fallacies, any hidden premises in the arguments now need to be addressed. Following Toulmin's method of argument reconstruction, the general premise that is missing may be supplied in order to clarify the abbreviated syllogism (Toulmin 2003). Some examples, taken from the excerpts, may shed further

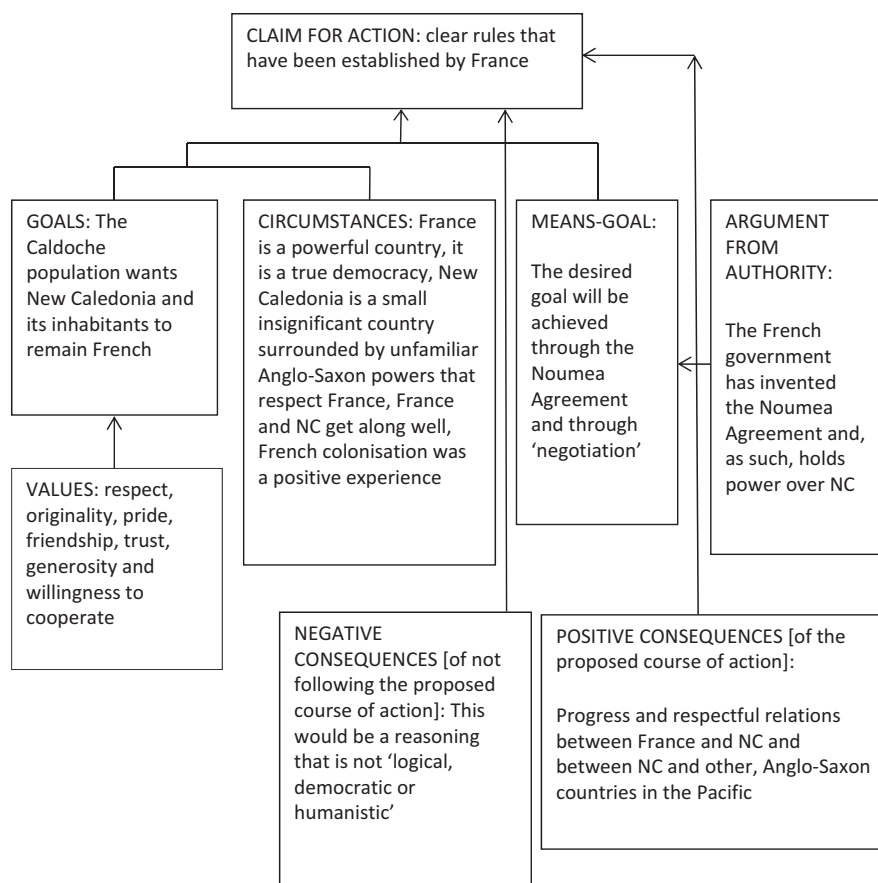


Figure 3. Lafleur's argument.

light on the use of these devices by the three speakers. A hidden premise is expressed in Lafleur's argument, using the contrastive conjunction "mais" (but):

- (16) **11** La France laisse dans son histoire tous les pays qui ont été colonisés par elle, et j'emploie le mot, je sais, volontairement, parce qu'il choque.  
*France leaves in its history all the countries that have been colonised by it, and I use the word, I know, deliberately, because it shocks.*
- (17) **12 Mais**, quand vous regardez l'Algérie aujourd'hui, c'est un exemple extraordinaire.  
*But if you look at Algeria today, it's an extraordinary example.*

The abbreviated syllogism mentioned above is part of a truncated argument, based on the following underlying presupposition: "Colonising other countries is good", which constitutes a form of knowledge that is not shared by all participants in the debate. By employing this enthymeme, Lafleur attempts to change the mindset of the audience by giving the example of Algeria, a country that, in his view, thrived, thanks to French colonisation. The hidden premise, as contained in Lafleur's argument, illuminates a

particular ideological view on the French colonisation process and reveals what seems a racist attitude.

Another example is found in Jospin's speech:

- (18) **13** Elle recevra progressivement toutes les compétences qu'exerce actuellement l'Etat, **à l'exception des** pouvoirs régaliens, comme la justice, la défense et l'ordre public et d'autres pouvoirs qui seront partagées avec l'Etat.

*It will gradually receive all of the competencies currently exercised by the State, **except for** sovereign powers, such as courts, defence and public order and other powers which will be shared with the State.*

This enthymeme contains an implicit premise expressed by an exception or restriction: "It will not receive all of the power now held by the French State". The force of the claim that "it will gradually receive all of the competencies currently exercised by the State" is purposefully limited by pointing to the excepted powers, which will remain unchanged. The hidden premise reveals strongly hegemonic intentions.

## 11. Cross-cultural comparison

The employed mapping process has disclosed that both Tjibaou and Lafleur employ mainly relational processes in an attempt to manipulate the audience and to describe an idealised reality, whereas Jospin tends to opt for material processes as an expression of a hypothetically anticipated form of agency on the part of New Caledonian society. The protagonists' use of deontic modals has proven to be especially revealing. In a truly neo-colonial fashion, Jospin expresses his perceived dominance through numerous commands and directives. The same feeling of superiority is found in Lafleur's use of deontic modals.

The pronominal choices made by the three politicians can also be said to be indicative of their social representations and the categories they associate themselves with. Consequently, the inclusive use of the first person plural pronoun by Tjibaou seems to reinforce the gap between Kanak and non-Kanak participants in the debate through associating himself with the inalienable right to indigeneity. Jospin and Lafleur, on the other hand, seem to strongly identify with France as a powerful nation holding rigid republican values. Lafleur's manipulative use of the highly inclusive "on" (we) especially attests to an underlying patriotic attitude while at the same time adding to the overall vagueness of his propositions. In sum, the discourse included in this study represents an intrinsic opposition. Seen from a Kanak perspective, the relational processes employed by Tjibaou appear to be based on categories such as identification and community membership, as opposed to Jospin's use of material processes, which reflect the French concern with responsibility, power and agency in the given conflict situation.

Based on the argumentative reconstruction, the goal premises, expressing specific imaginary constructs, as contained in the arguments of the three interactants, appear to be incongruent. Each of the representatives has formulated a particular desired course of action in the light of the independence issue. Tjibaou's aim is to encourage the Kanak people in the audience to take up collective responsibility for the claim for full independence. Jospin, however, aspires to reach a consensus through negotiation. This French solution identifies as its desired course of action the imaginary construct of a common destiny for all ethnicities that are present in the islands.

Lafleur seems to largely agree with the French proposal, even though he explicitly states his goal for New Caledonia to remain within France and, as such, for the island

agglomeration and all of its inhabitants to maintain or adopt a French-inspired identity. The solution of free association, favoured by the French side, inevitably jars with the Kanak solution, proposed by the opposing party, as it sharpens the already existing dichotomy between a Western way of living and an opposing Pacific way.

Similarly, the values' premises testify to highly divergent social representations, held by each of the two social groups, which, at first glance, appear to be irreconcilable. Tjibaou's highly revered Kanak values of rightfulness, indigenous legitimacy, ownership of the land and the right to be Kanak are in apparent discordance with the French values commonly shared by Jospin and Lafleur. Jospin's specific concerns are responsibility, commitment, peace and prosperity, whereas Lafleur emphasises respect, pride, trust, generosity and a general "bonne volonté" (willingness) to realise the French common destiny ideal. These libertarian principles, loosely based on the republican values of "liberté, égalité et fraternité" (liberty, equality and fraternity), seem to inspire the French construal of a homogeneous space, in which Kanak identity increasingly merges with French citizenship.

Jospin may be categorised as a mainstream politician for whom it seems perfectly logical to speak of France in terms of a coherent nation that is both powerful and independent, whereas both Lafleur and Tjibaou appear to be only marginal New Caledonian politicians who are defending a newly emerging nation in the Pacific. Seen from this particular angle, Lafleur's apparent loyalty to the French republican values could be considered a mere shadow act. The difference between French civic nationalism and Kanak ethnic nationalism, then, may be seen as actively sustaining the unequal power relation between the two nations. Also, using this power to dominate does not necessarily seem to flow from a French nationalistic belief system, but rather from a neo-colonial attitude.

The reasonableness of the debate has been established by evaluating the total of the interactants' discursive acts, based on shared knowledge about what is deemed to be valid reasoning. Within the scope of this project, the discourse uttered by Tjibaou, Jospin and Lafleur has been reconstructed and evaluated against a set of rules for sound deliberation, as proposed by Pragma-Dialectic theory. Through this process, it has become evident that both Jospin and Lafleur use various fallacious moves in their argumentation in an attempt to manipulate the audience and the final outcome of the debate. The discourse of the speakers also comprises quite a few enthymemes that contain implicit premises, revealing significant underlying attitudes and ideologies, which appear to be highly contentious in the wider context, such as Lafleur's presupposition that colonisation is an inherently positive process or Jospin's assumption that France will only grant limited powers to New Caledonia, which exposes a strong neo-colonial attitude.

This critical discourse analysis of an ongoing conflict situation in the Pacific has been intended as a clarification of the negotiation process that arose from the direct confrontation between France and New Caledonia in the 1980s. The main objective of this pilot study was to enhance the hearers' understanding of significant underlying ideologies behind the propositions uttered by some of the proponents involved in the process. However, any interdisciplinary project has its limitations. The conclusions drawn from the analysis are based on a small corpus of data. Consequently, it is not possible to generalise the findings by applying them to the whole of French or Kanak society, since the cultural boundaries of these two apparent social groups are inevitably porous. Also, the main focus of this study on grammatical patterns and argumentative structure may seem limited. Nevertheless, it proves to be a useful research strategy, since politicians undeniably use language to negotiate meanings and logically employ rhetorical strategies to obtain a preferred course of action.

### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

### Notes

1. The New Rhetoric is another form of argumentation theory, in which discursive strategies are studied that aim to persuade a universal audience to adhere to a particular thesis (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1976).
2. This and all subsequent translations are my own.
3. FLNKS: Front de Libération Nationale Kanak et Socialiste (Kanak and Socialist National Liberation Front).
4. RPCR: Rassemblement pour la Calédonie dans la République (Rally for Caledonia in the Republic).

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## Appendices

### Excerpt One: parts of a speech made by Jean-Marie Tjibaou (Nouméa, Place des Cocotiers, 18 May 1983)

- (1) Vous êtes peut-être seulement deux mille, mais vous êtes le peuple!  
*There may only be two thousands of you, but you are the people!*
- (2) Nos généalogies chantent des pierres, chantent des arbres, des sapins, des cocotiers qui sont enracinés dans ce pays.  
*Our genealogies sing of rocks, sing of trees, of fir trees, of coconut trees that are deeply rooted in this land.*
- (3) Des défilés comme celui d'en face, il y en a eu d'autres.  
*Parades, such as this one here, have been organised before.*
- (4) En Papouasie-Nouvelle-Guinée, avant 1975, avant l'indépendance, on disait:  
*In Papua-New-Guinea, before 1975, before independence, it was said:*
- (5) "Vous n'aurez plus de sucre, vous n'aurez plus de riz",  
*"You will no longer have any sugar, you will no longer have any rice",*
- (6) et ce genre de connerie s'est répété aux Salomons, puis au Vanuatu.  
*and this sort of crap was repeated in the Solomons and then in Vanuatu.*
- (7) On les a aussi fait valoir avec des défilés de ce genre au Vietnam.  
*This was also asserted during parades such as these in Vietnam.*
- (8) Et également en Algérie.  
*And also in Algeria.*
- (9) Aujourd'hui, ces pays sont indépendants, parce que ceux qui défilaient en disant que l'indépendance n'est pas possible, face aux peuples indigènes, sont partis ailleurs.  
*Today, these countries are independent, because those who were marching, saying independence is not possible, when confronted by indigenous peoples, have gone elsewhere.*
- (10) Parce qu'ils se battent pour une légitimité nouvellement installée.

- Because they are fighting for a newly established legitimacy.*
- (11) Il y a une légitimité qui est défendue par tous ces drapeaux qui défilent;  
*There exists a legitimacy that is being defended by all these flags that are coming past;*
- (12) cette légitimité a été installée par Febvrier-Despointes;  
*this legitimacy was put in place by Febvrier-Despointes;*
- (13) ce sont ces gens qui défilent qui pérennisent cette légitimité, qui écrase et qui aliène la légitimité indigène.  
*it is these people who march who perpetuate this legitimacy that crushes and denies indigenous legitimacy.*
- (14) Mais la légitimité indigène, elle est en nous, elle est en vous.  
*But indigenous legitimacy is in us, it is in you.*
- (15) Elle n'a été installée par personne!  
*It has never been put in place by anyone!*
- (16) Elle est dans le ventre de la terre kanak!  
*It is in the womb of the Kanak land!*
- (17) Elle ne partira pas de la terre kanak!  
*It will not leave the Kanak land!*
- (18) Elle s'exprimera, elle sortira dans l'indépendance.  
*It will express itself, it will manifest itself in independence.*
- (19) Et l'indépendance, c'est le peuple, c'est vous qui l'affirmez aujourd'hui.  
*And independence, that's the people, that's you who are calling for it today.*
- (20) Ils auront beau être des millions en face, ils auront beau envoyer tous les gardes mobiles qu'ils voudront, avoir la bombe atomique, les hélicoptères et autres...  
*There could well be millions of them here, they could well send all of the riot police they want, and they could well have the atomic bomb, helicopters and other things...*
- (21) tout cela n'enrayera pas la revendication d'indépendance kanak.  
*all of that will not stop the demand for Kanak independence.*
- (22) Beaucoup disent que l'indépendance kanak est raciste.  
*Many say that Kanak independence is racist.*
- (23) Nous revendiquons l'indépendance kanak parce que nous revendiquons d'être ce que nous sommes!  
*We claim Kanak independence because we claim to be who we are!*
- (24) Nous revendiquons notre droit à une part de soleil, comme n'importe quel peuple indépendant du monde.  
*We claim our right to a share of the sun, just like any other independent people in the world.*
- (25) On a dit qu'il fallait "faire du Blanc" pour éliminer la revendication kanak.  
*It was said it was necessary to "act white" to silence Kanak demands.*
- (26) Les Australiens ont réussi en Tasmanie: il n'y a plus de revendication, parce que le peuple tasmanien a été détruit définitivement!  
*The Australians were successful in Tasmania: The claim no longer exists, because the Tasmanian people have been eradicated forever!*
- (27) Ici, tant qu'il y aura un Kanak, la revendication restera.  
*Here, as long as a Kanak remains, the claim will remain.*
- (28) Et la revendication n'est pas la propriété de Mitterrand, de Lemoine ou de quelque autre président, elle appartient au peuple kanak.

*And the claim is not owned by Mitterand, by Lemoine or by any other president, it belongs to the Kanak people.*

- (29) Nous ne sommes pas responsables de l'indépendance de la France.  
*We are not responsible for the independence of France.*
- (30) Les Français sont indépendants, à ce que je sache ?  
*The French are independent, as far as I know?*
- (31) Nous ne sommes pas responsables de l'indépendance ou du destin des Antilles, du destin de Wallis et de Futuna, du destin de Tahiti!  
*We are not responsible for the independence or the fate of the West Indies, of the fate of Wallis and Futuna, of the fate of Tahiti!*
- (32) Le destin de ces peuples-là leur appartient.  
*The fate of these people belongs to them.*
- (33) Il appartient à leur pays.  
*It belongs to their country.*

**Excerpt Two: parts of a speech made by Lionel Jospin (Nouméa, 5 May 1998)**

- (1) Chacun admet que pour continuer à construire ensemble la Nouvelle-Calédonie de demain, mieux vaut une consultation qui rassemble qu'une consultation qui divise.  
*Everyone agrees that, in order to continue building the New Caledonia of tomorrow, it is better to have a consultation that brings people together than a consultation that divides.*
- (2) Il reste à trouver cette solution consensuelle, à partir de positions qui sont au départ sensiblement éloignées.  
*This consensual solution still needs to be found, based on positions that are noticeably far apart from the outset.*
- (3) Le FLNKS reste porteur d'une revendication d'indépendance, fondée sur la légitimité particulière du peuple autochtone, pour laquelle beaucoup d'hommes et de femmes ont mené un combat difficile.  
*The FLNKS<sup>3</sup> is still the bearer of a demand for independence, based upon the special legitimacy of the indigenous people, for which many men and women have conducted a difficult battle.*
- (4) Le RPCR voit dans le maintien de liens suffisamment forts avec la France une garantie de paix et de prospérité.  
*The RPCR<sup>4</sup> sees the maintenance of sufficiently strong ties with France as a guarantee of peace and prosperity.*
- (5) La volonté de trouver par la négociation une solution de compromis, dans laquelle personne ne renierait ses idéaux, restait forte chez ceux qui demeuraient les partenaires des accords de Matignon.  
*The desire to find a solution of compromise through negotiation, in which nobody denies their ideals, has stayed strong for those who remained partners in the Matignon agreements.*
- (6) La confiance dans l'avenir suppose un regard lucide sur le passé.  
*Trust in the future calls for a clear view of the past.*
- (7) D'autres pays, notamment dans le Pacifique, l'ont porté sur leur propre histoire.  
*Other countries, in particular in the Pacific, had such a view of their own history.*

- (8) Le moment était venu, pour reprendre les expressions du préambule, de “reconnaître les ombres de la période coloniale”, afin de permettre au peuple d’origine de constituer avec les hommes et les femmes qui y vivent une communauté humaine affirmant son destin commun.  
*The time had come, to use the expressions of the preamble, to “recognise the shadows cast by the colonial period”, to allow the indigenous people to establish a human community with the men and women who live there, affirming their common destiny.*
- (9) Une nouvelle organisation institutionnelle est ensuite définie.  
*Next, a new institutional organisation was set up.*
- (10) La Nouvelle-Calédonie ne sera plus un territoire d’outre-mer, elle exercera une souveraineté partagée avec la République.  
*New Caledonia will no longer be an overseas territory; it will exercise shared sovereignty with the French Republic.*
- (11) Elle recevra progressivement toutes les compétences qu’exerce actuellement l’Etat, à l’exception des pouvoirs régaliens, comme la justice, la défense et l’ordre public et d’autres pouvoirs qui seront partagés avec l’Etat.  
*It will gradually receive all of the competencies currently exercised by the State, except for sovereign powers, such as courts, defence and public order and other powers which will be shared with the State.*
- (12) En matière internationale, la Nouvelle-Calédonie pourra nouer des relations avec des Gouvernements de la région et des organisations internationales, dans les domaines de ses compétences.  
*As far as international matters are concerned, New Caledonia will be able to develop relationships with the governments of the region and with international organisations, within the fields of its expertise.*
- (13) En 1999 devront être organisées les élections aux nouvelles institutions, pour que celles-ci puissent se mettre en place le plus tôt possible.  
*In 1999, elections will need to be organised for the new institutions, so these may be set up as soon as possible.*
- (14) Ensuite beaucoup nous restera à faire.  
*After that, a lot will remain to be done.*
- (15) Personne ne doit imaginer ces vingt années comme une période d’attente passive.  
*Nobody should think of these twenty years as a time of passive waiting.*
- (16) L’accord de Nouméa ne portera des fruits pendant vingt ans que si le Gouvernement, les partis politiques, les institutions de Nouvelle-Calédonie et aussi tous ceux qui sont concernés ici par le destin de ce pays, s’impliquent personnellement dans sa mise en oeuvre.  
*The Nouméa Agreement will only bear any fruit over twenty years if the government, the political parties, the institutions of New Caledonia and also everyone who cares about the future of this country get personally involved in its implementation.*
- (17) Les hommes politiques de Nouvelle-Calédonie qui l’ont signé peuvent en être légitimement fiers.  
*The New Caledonian politicians who signed it should be rightfully proud of it.*
- (18) Ils ont pris leurs responsabilités.  
*They have taken up their responsibility.*
- (19) Je salue leur engagement.

*I salute their commitment.*

- (20) L'accord de Nouméa doit permettre de répondre aux aspirations de la population.  
*The Nouméa Agreement should allow a response to the hopes and dreams of the population.*
- (21) Au-delà de l'attente identitaire et des aspirations politiques, il y a ici de nombreux besoins insatisfaits.  
*Above and beyond issues of identity and political aspirations, there are numerous unfulfilled needs here.*
- (22) Un trop grand nombre d'habitants ne disposent pas encore de conditions de vie décentes, beaucoup n'ont pas de travail.  
*A large number of inhabitants are not yet living in decent conditions; many do not have a job.*
- (23) Les jeunes sont ici nombreux.  
*There are many young people here.*
- (24) Ils s'interrogent, ils nous interrogeront avec une insistance croissante, ce que l'accord changera à leur vie quotidienne, quel avenir nous leur préparons.  
*They wonder, they ask us with increasing insistence, how the agreement will change their daily lives, which future we are preparing for them.*
- (25) La réussite de l'accord Nouméa sera aussi jugée à la qualité et à la force des réponses qui seront apportées à ces questions.  
*The success of the Nouméa Agreement will also be measured by the quality and the strength of the answers that will be given to these questions.*
- (26) Aujourd'hui, j'exprime ma joie d'apposer ma signature sur un accord qui constitue de nouveaux fondements pour votre maison commune.  
*Today, I express my joy to put my signature to an agreement that forms a new base for your "common house".*
- (27) Il vous faut la rendre plus belle pour tous ceux qui y vivent.  
*You need to make it more beautiful for all of those who live in it.*

**Excerpt Three: extracts from a radio interview with Jacques Lafleur (OcéaneFM 16 December 2009)**

- (1) La Nouvelle-Calédonie, je le répète depuis 30 ans, c'est une multitude d'hommes et de femmes qui vivent sous des règles bien claires.  
*New Caledonia, I have been repeating this for 30 years, is a vast number of men and women who live by quite clear rules.*
- (2) Et ces règles ne seront claires que tant qu'elles seront définies et soutenues par une grande puissance.  
*And those rules will not be clear as long as they are not defined and supported by a large power.*
- (3) Et la France est le pays idéal, c'est la vraie démocratie, c'est son histoire et c'est des démonstrations, les unes après les autres.  
*And France is the ideal country, it is the one true democracy, it is its history and its demonstrations, one after the other.*
- (4) On connaît l'histoire de la France et on connaît son comportement à l'égard des hommes.  
*We know the history of France and we know its behaviour towards people.*
- (5) Il n'y a pas beaucoup de nations qui sont capables de faire ça.

- There aren't many nations that are capable of doing such a thing.*
- (6) La France et la Nouvelle-Calédonie s'entendent bien.  
*France and New Caledonia get along well.*
- (7) La France laisse dans son histoire tous les pays qui ont été colonisés par elle, et j'emploie le mot, je sais, volontairement, parce qu'il choque.  
*France leaves in its history all the countries that have been colonised by it, and I use the word, I know, deliberately, because it shocks.*
- (8) Mais, quand vous regardez l'Algérie aujourd'hui, c'est un exemple extraordinaire.  
*But if you look at Algeria today, it's an extraordinary example.*
- (9) Quand vous regardez les pays d'Afrique: pour eux, De Gaulle, c'était quelque chose d'important et ils l'ont combattu, et aujourd'hui, leurs progrès, ils les font parce que leur raisonnement est un raisonnement logique, démocratique, humaniste.  
*If you look at the African nations: for them, De Gaulle was something important and they fought him, and today, their progress, they are making progress because their reasoning is a logical reasoning, democratic, humanistic.*
- (10) Ça, c'est la France.  
*That's France.*
- (11) Donc, qu'est-ce que vous voulez que la petite Nouvelle-Calédonie fasse dans un monde comme on vit, dans un monde anglo-saxon, avec qui on a de bonnes relations maintenant.  
*So, what do you want a small nation like New Caledonia to do in the world we live in, in an Anglo-Saxon world, with whom we now have good relations.*
- (12) Mais, on est avec la Polynésie, on est 600 milles âmes françaises, dans un océan anglo-saxon de 25 millions, avec des règles qui sont pas les nôtres.  
*But, together with Polynesia, we number 600 thousand French souls, in an Anglo-Saxon ocean of 25 million, with rules that are not ours.*
- (13) Et ils nous respectent, et ils nous respecteront tant qu'on aura cette originalité, et il faut pas avoir peur de dire qu'on l'a, parce qu'on est Français.  
*And they respect us, and they will continue to respect us as long as we keep this originality, and we shouldn't be afraid of saying that we have it, because we are French.*
- (14) Il faut pas avoir honte d'être Français.  
*We shouldn't be ashamed of being French.*
- (15) On peut être Kanak et Français.  
*One can be Kanak and French.*
- (16) On peut être Calédonien et Français, la preuve, et je reviens à ce que disait Kotra Urégei: l'essentiel, ce sont les Accords de Nouméa.  
*One can be Caledonian and French, the proof, and I go back to what Kotra Urégei said: The main thing is the Nouméa Agreement.*
- (17) Ça a été inventé par qui les Accords de Nouméa?  
*Who invented the Nouméa Agreement?*
- (18) Et comment on peut s'en sortir mieux que dans le dialogue, l'amitié et la confiance, la générosité.  
*And how better to manage than through dialogue, friendship and trust, and generosity.*
- (19) Vous savez, moi, j'ai un discours que j'ai tout le temps tenu, depuis l'origine, qu'il faut que ceux qui ont quelque chose aillent vers ceux qui n'ont pas.

*You know, I have been saying this all along, since the start, that the ones who have something should go towards those who don't.*

- (20) Que, c'est comme ça qu'on démontre sa bonne volonté de vivre ensemble.  
*That, it's like that we can show our willingness to live together.*