

A multidimensional analysis of the Spanish reportative epistemic evidential *dizque*

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Abstract

This paper investigates the syntactic and semantic properties of American Spanish *dizque* (lit. 'it is said'). We claim that the not-at-issue meaning of this evidential is reportativity, while it also contributes epistemic modal semantics ranging from doubt/negative attitude, weak possibility to almost complete lack of commitment. This semantics can be derived from ways of updating the *common ground* and *origo ground*, and from the fact that evidentials may target evidence *strength*. We examine the types of speech report *dizque* introduces, and describe its syntactic behavior in terms of co-occurrence restrictions, scope, and Main Clause Phenomena. Evidential *dizque* follows patterns ascribable to both Speech Act operators and propositional modifiers. We analyze the semantic contribution of *dizque* along three tiers of meaning: a) speaker commitment to *p*, b) contribution to either Speech Act or Propositional level, and c) trustworthiness of the evidence, emerging from the ways *dizque* expresses presentational force, serving to update either only the *origo ground* or both the *common ground* and the *origo ground*.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This paper sets out a semantic and syntactic analysis of the American Spanish form *dizque* (lit. 'it is said') within the framework of generative linguistics and the semantics-syntax of reportativity (i.e., speech reporting), evidential modality, and ways of updating. The sentences in (1) exemplify the (prototypical) use of *dizque*.

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- (1) a. *Agregué un comentario plagado de malevolencia: **dizque** aprende álgebra y literatura al mismo tiempo.*
 'I added a comment full of malevolence: **they say** he is learning algebra and literature at the same time.'
 (Martínez Espinosa, Jorge: *El Loco Faruco. El final de los milagros*. Colombia. 2001. From [CORPES XXI](#))
- b. ***Dizque** muchos colombianos no saben qué son los colombianismos, ¿qué opinas?*
 '**It is claimed that** many Colombians don't know what Colombianisms are. What do you think?'
<https://twitter.com/CaroyCuervo/status/968917468071776256>
-

In (1a), some students are sharing what they have heard about a boy who has been newly accepted at their school and is seen as a rival. As indicated by the use of the word *malevolencia* 'malevolence', the speaker has a negative attitude to the content of the preajcent. In (1b), from a handbook for learners of Colombian Spanish, a widespread belief regarding the language variety is noted, but then questioned. In (1a) *dizque* appears to be an indirect speech marker, whereas in (1b) it introduces a second-hand indirect report whose reliability is uncertain.

Most previous studies of the form *dizque* have not been grounded within formal linguistics frameworks. They are usually constrained to specific dialectal varieties of Spanish. [Olbertz \(2005\)](#) describes Ecuadorian Spanish; [Olbertz \(2007\)](#), [Magaña \(2005\)](#) and [De la Mora and Maldonado \(2015\)](#), Mexican Spanish; [Travis \(2006\)](#), Colombian Spanish; [Babel \(2009\)](#), Valley Spanish in Bolivia; [Dankel \(2015\)](#), Ecuadorian, Peruvian, and Bolivian Spanish; [Grajales \(2017\)](#), Medellín (Colombian) Spanish; and [Chang \(2018\)](#), Northwestern Argentinian Spanish. Other authors have worked with Spanish crossdialectal corpora (e.g., [López Izquierdo, 2006](#); [Miglio, 2010](#); [Demonte and Fernández-Soriano, 2014](#)). Exceptionally, [Sanromán Vilas \(2020\)](#) compares Spanish usage with similar forms in Brazilian Portuguese and Galician. In a few cases it is claimed that the particular use of *dizque* described is specific to a given dialectal area.

Albeit from somewhat different theoretical perspectives, all of these studies examine the same (interacting) issues: (i) the evolution from *diz(e) + que* ('say that') to *dizque* as a grammaticalization/lexicalization process; (ii) the grammatical function of *dizque*, that is, whether it should be regarded as a 'discourse marker' ([Company, 2004](#)), an *evidentiality strategy*, a pragmatic marker or an adverb with reportative value to which an implicature of doubt, lack of certainty, or falsity can be added ([Magaña, 2005](#); [Travis, 2006](#); [Olbertz, 2007](#); [Miglio, 2010](#); [De la Mora and Maldonado, 2015](#); [Grajales, 2017](#)); (iii) the characterization of *dizque* as a reportativity/evidentiality marker that conversationally implies uncertainty ([Magaña, 2005](#)) or expresses an epistemic position of doubt which presupposes a reportative value ([Demonte and Fernández-Soriano, 2020](#); [Alcázar, 2018](#)); and (iv) the possibility that *dizque* is a polyfunctional element ([Grajales, 2017](#)). With the exception of [Olbertz \(2005; 2007\)](#), the above-mentioned studies do not deal with the syntax of this element.

It is important to point out that historically *dizque* derives from the union of a(n) apocopated form of the verb *decir* 'to say', *diz*, and the complementizer *que* 'that'. For this reason, in several of the above-mentioned studies, indirect evidence (reportativity, not inference) is considered the basic initial value of *dizque*, and epistemic modality is seen as an extension of that meaning. In both historical and dialect studies it has been claimed that the emergence of the epistemic value is related to the evolution of *dizque* into an evidential from an evidentiality strategy. Consequently, at least from a historical perspective, epistemic modality and evidentiality have been seen as separate categories. Though we are not adopting a diachronic view in this study,¹ in contemporary Latin American varieties different values for *dizque* apparently coexist. However, differences in these values do not necessarily follow the traditional boundaries of dialectal variation: all values appear in all varieties, with the exception of the direct speech marker, which is documented only in areas of language contact in Ecuador ([Olbertz, 2005](#). See 2.1.1, and also fn. 9).

The aim of this paper is to offer a new analysis of *dizque* supported by the most recent theoretical proposals. Detailed empirical material is provided to justify our view. We first describe the different values of *dizque* and the various sentence positions in which it occurs. We then focus specifically on the reportative epistemic evidential values, since this appears to be its most common use. Our intention is to provide an updated, truly comprehensive analysis of this form.

1.1. Methodology

The analytical methodology we adopt here builds on the fundamentals of theoretical linguistics, formal syntax, semantics and pragmatics. More explicitly, it combines the semantics of speech reporting and speaker commitment with

¹ Some authors ([Olbertz, 2007](#); [López Izquierdo, 2006](#)) argue that a 'lexicalization' (subjectivization) process is involved (see section 4), while the most widely accepted hypothesis is that the evolution of *dizque* is best described as a 'grammaticalization' process ([Magaña, 2005](#); [Miglio, 2010](#); [Demonte and Fernández-Soriano, 2013](#)).

Table 1
Types of evidence (from Willett 1988: 57).

Direct	Indirect	
attested	inferred	reportative
visual, auditory, sensory	result- or reasoning-based	second-hand, third-hand, folklore

an update semantics (the ways that speakers add or present elements to the ground of knowledge), in order to obtain the variable interpretation of sentences containing *dizque*. As noted, these interpretations are linked to the modal and illocutionary functional categories within CP.

Data for this study were collected from various sources. One consisted of a subcorpus of all instances of *dizque* found in searches of the *Corpus del español de siglo XXI* (CORPES XXI) and *Corpus de referencia del español actual* (CREA), both by the Real Academia Española, the *Corpus del Español: 100 million words, 1200s-1900s* (CdE; Davies, 2008), and several historical corpora of Spanish (Corpus Diacrónico del Español (CORDE)). We created a subcorpus of our results. We also conducted a general Google search for *dizque* on the internet, which yielded examples from tweets, blogs, and online newspapers. We also scrutinized examples of *dizque* from the scholarly literature. Finally, native speakers of different varieties of Spanish were consulted, especially concerning interpretations and grammaticality judgments.

1.2. Structure of the paper

The paper is organized as follows. In Section 2 we characterize *dizque* as an element conveying an implicit report and situate it among the various types of speech report (quotative, hearsay/neutral reportative, modal evaluative and reportative epistemic modal), following Bary and Maier (2019). In Section 3 we characterize the syntactic behavior of *dizque* and discuss its categorial nature, considering in particular whether it can co-occur with modal and sentential adverbs, as well as the scope relations it holds within the sentential domain. In Section 4, basing ourselves on a multidimensional approach to evidentiality, we propose an update semantics for *dizque*. Section 5 concludes.

2. TYPES OF DIZQUE

Dizque constructions can be situated within the system of evidentials (Aikhenvald, 2004; Willett, 1988, and others), evidentiality being the grammatical category denoting the source of information conveyed by a sentence. In languages where this category is present, evidentials mark the speaker's source of information for a proposition, i.e., the type of evidence behind it. Willett (1988) breaks down types of evidence as shown in Table 1.

The main distinction is between direct and indirect evidence. Direct evidence is anchored in (direct) sensory experience² whereas indirect evidence is not, reflecting instead either hearsay about an independent event or a rational inference about it.³

Dizque is not a direct evidential, since it cannot be used to introduce information whose source is the speaker's own experience or direct visual perception. This is illustrated by (2a) and (2b), which were judged ungrammatical by informants. Nor is *dizque* an indirect evidential of the prototypical inference type either, since it does not introduce information deriving exclusively from the speaker's inference (2c).

- (2) a. Situation: Someone is trying to melt wax and progressively raises the temperature. He has not succeeded yet:
 #*Dizque* esta cera no se derrite a 45°.
 'Dizque this wax doesn't melt at 45°.'
- b. Situation: Louise has seen María slip her hand into Cristina's purse, take a pencil and put it in her own purse.
 #*Dizque* María le robó el lápiz a Cristina.
 'Dizque María stole Cristina's pencil.'
- c. Situation: Locked in a room with no windows, someone hears noise.
 #*Dizque* está lloviendo.
 'Dizque it is raining.'

² But see McCready (2015), among others, for the view that there is direct evidence that does not encode perception or experience.

³ As an anonymous reviewer points out, *dizque* can be used for speaker positioning reasons in discourse, even if there is directly attested information. This will be clarified in the course of this paper.

In the literature, indirect evidentiality of the reportative type is the meaning usually attributed to *dizque*. In most cases, indirect evidence involves reporting what a third party has said. Bary and Maier (2019) classifies such speech reporting along two dimensions: at-issue vs. not-at-issue, and eventive vs. non-eventive. In general terms, a speech event is at-issue if its reportative meaning component addresses the *Question Under Discussion*, that is, it provides information relevant to the current discourse topic, while a speech event is not-at-issue if it introduces information that is merely supplementary. Bary and Maier provide various diagnostic tests for establishing at-issueness, namely, interpretation under embedding, challengeability, and question-answering (these will be illustrated in the context of *dizque* below.) As for the other dimension, eventive speech reports describe or presuppose a specific speech event, while non-eventive speech reports do not. For eventivity, the proposed diagnostics are possible modification of the manner of speaking, specifications of a concrete time and place for the reported speech act, and answers to questions that focus on or ask about a speech act. Bary and Maier also give a formal semantic analysis of the above-mentioned distinctions which we will not explore here, but the classes of speech reporting that emerge from that analysis shed light on the (speech) reportativity status of the various uses of *dizque* in Latin American Spanish.

As shown in Table 2, we use Bary and Maier's (2019) two dimensions to distinguish four uses or values of *dizque*: 1) 'quotative' *dizque* (at-issue, eventive), 2) 'indirect reportative' evidential *dizque* (not-at-issue, eventive), 3) (modal) 'evaluative' *dizque* (not-at-issue, non-eventive), and 4) (reportative) 'epistemic modal evidential' *dizque* ((not)-at issue, non-eventive).⁴ It should be noted that we will leave (modal) evaluative *dizque* (a type of *dizque* but not a type of speech report) outside our study for reasons that will be made clear below (see 2.3.). The three types of *dizque* to be analyzed here are shown (in boldface) in Table 2:

Table 2
Types of *dizque*.

	At-issue	Not-at-issue
Eventive	quotative <i>dizque</i>	indirect reportative <i>dizque</i>
Non-eventive		a) evaluative <i>dizque</i> b) reportative epistemic modal evidential <i>dizque</i>

2.1. Quotative *dizque*

As seen in example (3), from Travis (2006), *dizque* can introduce direct speech that literally reproduces the speech of an original known source (i.e., a verbatim quotation). (4), from Olbertz' (2005: 5) study of Andean Ecuadorian Spanish, shows that *dizque* co-occurs with the verb *decir* 'say' to introduce a direct quotation. Olbertz (2005: 10) observes that this is similar to a common construction in Quechua where the quotative marker (*nishpa*) precedes the communication verb (*ni-* 'say').

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- (3) A: *Pero qué te dicen [Qué te dicen]?*
S: [**Dizque**] *huy. Doña Carmen quiere bastante a Jaime.*
A: 'But what do they say. What do they say?'
S: '**They say** "Wow, Carmen really loves Jaime".' (Travis 2006: 1279)
- (4) **Dizque dice**, "vea usted, camine dos días, de noche, camina dos días. La primer noche usted duerma en cualquier parte. Pero la segunda noche va encontrar una, un hueco grande, que es una cueva grande..."
'**S/he says** says, "Walk for two days, by night, walk two days. The first night sleep just anywhere. But the second night you will find a, a big hole, which is a big cave..." (Spanish-Quechua bilingual 11b, 5. From Olbertz 2005).
-

(3) and (4) illustrate some of the diagnostics relevant for this construction. The eventive nature of (3) is established by the fact that *dizque* is used to answer a question that asks about the content of a speech act. In this case a specific

⁴ This question of not-at-issueness in epistemic evidentials is not simple, however. As we will see in 4, an analysis of epistemic modals à la Izvorski could imply that they are at-issue, since endorsement or contestation of the sentence containing the evidential can challenge the possibility of *p*. Moreover, there are cases of epistemic modals which are at-issue. Von Fintel and Gillies (2007: 83) give the following example:

- (i) A: There might be two red pigs.
B: That's right, there may be.

conversation in which the speech event took place is implied. In (4), indexicals of the reported speech act are maintained from the point of view of the original speaker as indicated by the presence of *usted* and the imperative form *duerma*, used by an original (source) speaker (see Munro et al. 2012). Thus, the eventive nature of this *dizque* is also clear. As to at-issueness, the fact that the report in (4) adopts a question–answer or backward-looking perspective situates the *Question Under Discussion* as the subject matter of the reported event. Additionally, *dizque* here (which might be considered an evidential—see 4.2) cannot be translated as an appositive sentence (which contributes not-at-issue meaning). In sum, quotative *dizque* is an eventive/at-issue speech report, as depicted in Table 2.

2.2. Indirect reportative *dizque*

Travis (2006) noted that *dizque* on occasions has a purely reportative use and only expresses a reportative evidentiality/second-hand report. That is, the speaker neutrally reports what she has heard either from an unspecified source or from a third party. However, as noted by various authors, even in apparently purely reportative contexts, there is always a nuance of uncertainty with regard to the reported utterance. This is illustrated in (5a) and (5b), where reportative *dizque* appears not to have a specific source and is thus a hearsay evidential. In example (5c), from Olbertz (2007), the source is identified, so this is strictly speaking a reported speech evidential use. It should be noted that *dizque* can coordinate with a full verb of communication followed by *que* ‘that’, as seen in (5b).

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- (5) a. **Dizque** cuando le metió la pistolita entre la peluca del toto, la poeta se quedó inmóvil.
 ‘They say that when he put the small pistol into her pubic hair the poetess stayed motionless.’
 (Valdez, Pedro Antonio: *Palomos*. Alfaguara, 2009. Dominican Republic. From CORPES XXI; translation from Sanromán Vilas ex. (35))
- b. **Dizque** ese día don Antonio estaba acomodado en un taburete. . . ; **y cuenta** misiá Hermelinda **que**. . . su marido había cogido la costumbre de moverse.
 ‘It is said that that day don Antonio was sitting on a stool; and Ms. Hermelinda tells us that . . . her husband had taken up the habit of moving.’
 (López, Alejandro José: *Nadie es eterno*. Sílabá Editores, 2012. Colombia. From CORPES XXI)
- c. [at work, a nanny talks about her own children]
Siempre tuvieron celos, dizque más me ocupaba de éstos que de ellos.
 ‘They have always been jealous, saying I cared more for these children than for them.’
 (Carballido 1984, from Olbertz 2007: ex (6). Author’s translation)
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Olbertz (2007) and Sanromán Vilas (2020) suggest that indirect reportative *dizque* seems to be restricted to initial, root position, as noted.

Two facts suggest that the reportative component in the sentences under discussion is not-at-issue. First, indexicals may change to the perspective of the speaker (for instance, to the narrative past tense, with the subject of the temporal sentence in third person), and second, in general, they are not appropriate to answer a question unless the question is *¿Qué dijo?* ‘What did he say?’ (see (5a’’) below). Moreover, the reportative component cannot be negotiated, challenged, or questioned. Bary and Maier (2019: 10) assert that “if the reportative component of a sentence cannot straightforwardly be challenged without thereby also challenging the reported content, the reportative component is not-at-issue”. Observe that (5a’) is a felicitous sentence only if the prejacent is also challenged.

-
- (5) a’. *Nadie dijo eso, #aunque en realidad se quedó inmóvil / se levantó como un rayo.*
 ‘Nobody said that, although in fact he stood still / he jumped to his feet as quick as a flash.’
-

Similar to quotative direct reports, indirect reportative *dizque* can be used in answers to questions that inquire about a speech act. If the answer is felicitous, the reported speech is eventive, as illustrated by (5a’).

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- (5) a’’. *¿Se atrevió alguien a decir semejante cosa?*
 ‘Did anybody dare to say such a thing?’
 Sí. **Dizque** cuando le metió la pistolita entre la peluca del toto, la poeta se quedó inmóvil.
-

In addition, this *dizque* can appear independently, in final position, as in (6a). It can also be a parenthetical, and can appear as a freestanding utterance (our informants accept a sentence like (6c) as an answer to a question). A marked pause appears before *dizque* in all these cases.

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- (6) a. *[L]o único que no se olvidan es de cobrar sus suculentos sueldos, sus emolumentos, **dizque**.*
 ‘The only thing they don’t forget is to get paid their juicy salaries, their emoluments, **they say**.’
 (2009. Peru. [CORPES XXI](#). From Sanromán Vilas 2020: 8)
- b. A: *Quisiste venir para acá, **dizque**, para encontrar una mejor vida.*
 B: *Sí, supuestamente aquí, **dizque**, nos lloverían los contratos como grupo musical.*
 B: ‘You wanted to come here, **supposedly** to find a better life.’
 B: ‘Yes, supposedly here, **so they say**, we would be showered with job offers as a music band.’
 (Notas: Primer Lugar del II Concurso Nacional de Dramaturgia y Creación Contemporánea José Martínez Queirolo, 2010. Ecuador. From [CORPES XXI](#))
- c. A: *¿Tiene mucho dinero ese tipo?*
 B: **Dizque**.
 A: ‘Does that guy have a lot of money?’
 B: ‘So they say.’ (spontaneous. 2018. Peru)
-

This *dizque* appears to be a kind of speech act operator indicating that the speaker is not asserting but only introducing second-hand speech.

2.3. Modal evaluative (subjective) *dizque*

Another type of *dizque* seems to lack any reference to the source of information and hence could be argued not to encode reportativity. Nevertheless, it conventionally encodes a notion of reportativity. This use is what, syntactically speaking, we may call a “constituent modifier” *dizque*. Travis and De la Mora and Maldonado (2015) name this use *labeling*⁵ and *disqualifying dizque*, respectively. In this case *dizque* modifies X° or X’ level categories such as adjectives, nouns (in most cases) (7a,b) or verbs, but it can also modify phrases (8).

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- (7) a. *don Tomás Gómez, “El Prole”, como lo conocían todos, **dizque** literato...*
 ‘Don Tomás Gómez, “El Prole”, as everybody knew him, **wannabe** man of letters ...’
 (Hernández Rodríguez, Rafael: *La muerte de un cardenal*. Editorial Ágata, 2001. Mexico. From [CORPES XXI](#))
- b. *En el de Morelia los niños preferían lo sabroso a lo **dizque** nutritivo.*
 ‘In the one at Morelia, children preferred tasty to **so-called** “nutritious” stuff.’
 (González, Enrique & María Leticia Pérez: *Colegios y universidades*. IISUE, 2001. Mexico. From [CORPES XXI](#))
- (8) *El chisme viene de las secretarías, **dizque** de confianza.*
 ‘The gossip comes from the secretaries, **supposedly** reliable sources.’
 (Olbertz 2007: 161)
-

In both (7) and (8), *dizque* makes no reference to second-hand information, but rather implies pretensions (*wannabe*) or popular assumptions (*so called, supposedly*) and a certain lack of commitment to the veracity of the content of the modified element.⁶ This *dizque* has a number of additional values which will not be discussed in detail here. Sticking to the broad distinction between modality and reportativity, here *dizque* could be said to have a modal value roughly equivalent to ‘supposedly’. However, in the examples in (7) *dizque* expresses an attitude adopted by the speaker, and very often this constituent modifier *dizque* is followed by a sentence introduced by the adversative *pero* ‘but’, such as ... *dizque para dotar de medios de expresión... pero...*, ‘supposedly to provide means of expression ... but ...’. All the examples

⁵ Travis (2006) states that *labeling dizque* indicates that the term it modifies “is not attributable to the speaker” (p. 1278) or “occurs with labels that are perceived to be false” (p. 1288).

⁶ Olbertz says that what is special about this case is that the speaker herself is the source of the proposition: “*dizque* is used here with first- rather than with second-hand information, and therefore an indirect evidential reading is logically excluded” (Olbertz, 2007: 159).

identified in the corpora not only convey lack of commitment but also imply a judgment that the object, person, or situation fails to qualify for the property with which it is ostensibly associated. This *dizque* can thus be characterized as a *stance marker* (Biber and Finegan, 1989) that expresses an attitude of negative evaluation by the speaker.

In Table 2 we situated this *dizque* at the intersection of not-eventivity and not-at-issueness. The constructions with *dizque* inside the sentences in (7) and (8) are a kind of not-at-issue parenthetical, and constructions like these are non-eventive since they do not imply a previous speech act. In addition, since this form introduces a combination of first person point of view and *dizque*, it would fall within those elements which include subjectivity⁷ as part of their conventional meaning. Because this use of *dizque* is syntactically different and semantically falls partly outside reportativity, we will exclude it from further discussion.

2.4. Reportative epistemic modal *dizque*

This is the most widespread and cross-dialectal use of *dizque* and, in our view, the one which requires the most careful scrutiny. It has specific semantic and syntactic properties and has undergone many different descriptive and pre-theoretical analyses. More importantly, its explanation unveils many interesting points within the theory of modality, evidentiality, trust, and commitment. It also allows us to clarify and properly settle the possibly uniform semantic contribution of *dizque*, which is related to commitment and ways of updating. Although we devote the entirety of Section 4 to epistemic modal *dizque*, we first address the syntactic characterization of *dizque* taking as the main question its scope and structural position within sentence structure. There are no antecedents in the literature, to our knowledge, for the structural analysis that we will now undertake.

3. DIZQUE WITHIN THE SENTENCE. CHARACTERIZATION AND SYNTACTIC DISTRIBUTION

In sentences like (1a) and (1b), repeated below, both the source of information and modality are encoded in *dizque*.

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- (1) a. *Agregué un comentario plagado de malevolencia: **dizque** aprende álgebra y literatura al mismo tiempo.*
 ‘I added a comment full of malevolence: **they say** he is learning algebra and literature at the same time.’
 b. ***Dizque** muchos colombianos no saben qué son los colombianismos, ¿qué opinas?*
 ‘**It is claimed that** many Colombians don't know what Colombianisms are. What do you think?’
-

In addition, the main syntactic property of *dizque* is that it has scope over the clause, whether finite or non-finite. Nevertheless, sentential *dizque*, as we will see, is not necessarily clause-initial but may occupy different (internal) positions. It adjoins to the proposition and assigns values such as reportativity and possibility.

3.1. Interaction of *dizque* with (sentential) modal and speaker-oriented adverbs

As mentioned, in the traditional literature *dizque* is generally considered an adverb (DRAE; Travis, 2006; Olbertz, 2007). Nevertheless, we are about to see that *dizque* co-occurs with most sentential adverbs generated in the left periphery (Cinque, 1999). We argue that *dizque* is not an adverb but rather a (sentential) modifier with relative scope (see Cruschina, 2010). Its relative position with respect to sentential adverbs further shows that *dizque* can appear in (the left periphery of) the clause it modifies.

First of all, *dizque* co-appears with (epistemic) modal adverbs such as *posiblemente* ‘possibly,’ and it most frequently precedes these adverbs. It is important to note that we have not found in our corpora examples with the modal adverb *probablemente* ‘probably’, which is usually analyzed as a ‘necessity’ modal (and only one case was yielded by a general Google search). The presence of *dizque* suggests low commitment on the part of the speaker with respect to the content of the proposition (as the use of *nos engañaron* ‘they lied to us’ in (9) suggests). The modal adverb is a predicate over the truth of the proposition, thus there are meaning similarities as well as differences between the two elements. The non co-occurrence with *probablemente* hints at the ‘possibility’ interpretation of *dizque*.

⁷ Korotkova (2016:3) argues that “evidentials belong to the class of subjective expressions, along with first-person pain and attitude reports”.

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- (9) a. *En la escuela y colegio nos engañaron que un grupito de 160o 170 españoles, **dizque posiblemente** perteneciente a una raza “superior”.*
 ‘At school they lied to us that a group of 160 or 170 Spaniards, **claimed to possibly** belong to a “superior” race.’
 (Debate.com 26/07/2012. Peru)
- b. *Ya ni se angustie me entere que “posiblemente” **dizque** la re-abran en Diciembre ...*
 ‘Don’t panic, I found out that “possibly” **it is said** they will re-open it in December . . .’
 (<https://twitter.com/pachobragin/status/1030825092287217666>)
-

Epistemic/evidential/inferential adverbs such as *aparentemente* ‘apparently’ may also co-occur with *dizque*, either preceding or following it, as we see in (10a,b).

-
- (10) a. . . . *Hemos oído, visto y leído en la radio, la TV y en los periódicos, versiones que indican que: Odebrecht, **dizque** aparentemente ha sorprendido al Estado Dominicano con una reclamación de 708 Millones de dólares.*
 ‘. . . We have heard, seen and read on the radio, TV and newspapers versions that indicate that Odebrecht, **according to what they say/ what I have heard** apparently has surprised the Dominican State with its demand for a 708-million-dollar payment.’
 (www.rdvisionnoticiosa.com 2017/08/)
- b. . . . *Ay de aquellos en una sociedad que aparentemente **dizque** es una sociedad transparente. . .*
 ‘. . . Woe to those that in a society that apparently **is claimed to** be a transparent society . . .’
 (Senado Rep. Dominicana, Acta no. 00182. 2006)
-

So called ‘discourse/speaker-oriented’ adverbs do not seem to combine with *dizque*, nor do sequences of evaluative adverbs (expressing a judgment about a proposition) such as *afortunadamente* ‘fortunately’ or *desgraciadamente* ‘unfortunately’, according to our informants (see unacceptable (11a)). However, we have found acceptable sentences like (11b) (from an article in a law firm’s website), where *dizque* appears to have a meaning of possibility.

-
- (11) a. *#Desgraciadamente, **dizque** el ladrón consiguió escapar.*
 ‘Unfortunately, **dizque** the thief managed to escape.’
- b. *Trataré de hacer memoria—afortunadamente, **dizque** nos funciona mejor que para el presente—de la vida judicial de Caldas desde hace ya 48 años.*
 ‘I will try to recall memories—fortunately, **it seems** it works better for us than for the present—about judiciary life in Caldas starting 48 years ago.’
 (<https://mpapenalcorporativo.com/news/asi-es-el-mercado-de-los-bufetes-de-abogados-en-colombia/>)
-

Mayol and Castroviejo (2013) analyze these adverbs as propositional operators that modify the whole sentence. Semantically, they cannot be directly denied, do not change the truth conditions of the proposition they evaluate, and are not factive. We can provisionally assert that the difficulties for co-occurrence with *dizque* are due to meaning inconsistencies when it is a reportative evidential. In other words, this happens when *dizque* means that somebody has said something, but it does not happen when *dizque* has a modal reading, as in (11b).

Cases of co-occurrence of *dizque* with adverbs oriented to the truth condition of the proposition, such as *claramente* ‘clearly’, *evidentemente* ‘obviously’, or *misteriosamente* ‘mysteriously’ are not found, and are negatively judged by informants. This, together with the incompatibility with *probablemente*, suggests that if *dizque* has an epistemic interpretation it must be possibility and cannot be necessity.

In sum, *dizque* is not in complementary distribution with sentential adverbs and can precede or follow most of them, but it has restrictions with regard to evaluative adverbs, which basically can co-occur with *dizque* when it behaves as a propositional operator.⁸ In what follows, we go further into the position and scope of *dizque*.

3.2. The syntactic position of sentential *dizque*

Sentential *dizque* is frequently clause-initial, as in (12a,b).

- (12) a. ***Dizque*** ahora son seguidores del fútbol y yo me río . . . A esperar 4 años más para que retornen las emociones . . .

'**They say** now they are football followers and that makes me laugh. We'll have to wait four more years to get our emotions back . . .'

(*Listín Diario*. Santo Domingo. 2002–07-01. Dominican Republic. From [CORPES XXI](#))

- b. La organización de las mujeres en comités especiales y en el Partido Comunista tampoco satisfizo a muchos. ***Dizque*** la organización enfrentaba a las mujeres a sus familiares . . .

'The organization of women in special committees and in the communist party did not satisfy many people either. **It was said that** the organization pitted women against their families . . .'

(Alape, Arturo: *La paz, la violencia: testigos de excepción*. Planeta, 1985. Colombia. From CREA)

In these cases, *dizque* is dominantly reportative. (12a) is from a newspaper that is reporting a statement with sarcasm; (12b) is part of a quote from an author who describes the position of a more liberal group within a guerrilla band relative to the position of a communist subgroup. The writer is relaying alleged facts based on second-hand evidence he is not fully committed to. In both cases there is a previous speech event. In fact, in this use, *dizque* can even be discourse-initial when it introduces folktales, in which case its meaning is along the lines of 'Once upon a time, . . .'. Example (13) is from an informant recorded in Tucumán, Argentina, as reported in Chang (2010: 163).

- (13) ***Dizque*** era un hombre que estaba sembrando papas con arado de palo y con la yunta de bueyes . . .

'**Once upon a time** there was a man planting potatoes with a wooden plow and an oxen yoke . . .'

But *dizque* can appear in other *internal* positions in the sentence. Crucially, in the majority of cases, *dizque* precedes the verb. A typical structure is a (topicalized) subject followed by *dizque* and (informative focus) IP, like (14a) (where the topicalized subject is underlined). Very frequently the thematic part also undergoes ellipsis, as in (14b). In many examples, *dizque* seems to modify the VP or one element of a partially elided VP.

- (14) a. En este centenario de Rafael Pombo se ha puesto en duda su originalidad, porque sus Cuentos Pintados y sus Cuentos Morales para Niños Formales ***dizque*** proceden de Mother Goose Melodies. De los 160 poemas infantiles, ¿cuántos proceden de Mother Goose? He aquí una investigación urgente.

'In Rafael Pombo's centenary, doubt has been cast on his originality, because his *Cuentos Pintados* and *Cuentos Morales para Niños Formales* **are said** to be taken from Mother Goose Melodies. Out of his 160 poems for children, how many are taken from Mother Goose? Here is an urgent investigation.'

(EIMundo.com. 30/05/2012. Colombia)

- b. . . . Los controladores exigen aumento de salarios y una serie de prebendas laborales, entre otras ***dizque*** [(los controladores) exigen] un régimen especial para pensionarse . . .

' . . . The controllers are demanding a salary increase and a set of perks. Among other things, **it is said** [(the controllers) demand] a special retirement plan . . .'

(EIMundo.com. 02/18/2012. Colombia)

⁸ The same is true for speaker-oriented adverbs expressing attitude towards the proposition, like *honestamente* 'honestly' or *francamente* 'frankly', as in:

- (i) #*Francamente, dizque* Juan no es un buen candidato.
'Frankly, ***dizque*** Juan is not a good candidate.'

Very frequently *dizque* appears before the (informative) focus of the sentence, where canonical cases of ellipsis of non-focal material (see Merchant, 2004) have operated. This is illustrated in (15a,b).

-
- (15) a. ... *Iban comiendo mango y [ellos iban] **dizque** a bañarse -perfectamente igual a como me contó otro hermano-, y lo cogimos y le disparamos.*
 '... They were eating mango and [they were] **supposedly** taking a swim—exactly as another brother told me—and we caught him and shot him.'
 (González Uribe, Guillermo: *Los niños de la guerra*. Planeta, 2002. Colombia. From CORPES XXI)
- b. *La conferencia se efectuaba **dizque** sin el conocimiento de la policía; sin embargo, estaba presente un policía de civil, como observador.*
 'The conference was held **supposedly** without police knowledge; nevertheless, a policeman in civilian clothes was present, as an observer.'
 (Alonso, Francisco: *El imperio de las drogas*. Sholomo Ben Ami, 2003. Mexico. From CORPES XXI)
-

In these cases, as seen in (15b), *dizque* modifies the proposition which is reported (*la conferencia se efectuaba sin el conocimiento de la policía*) and, at the same time, calls it into question, as the use of *sin embargo* 'nevertheless' in the next sentence indicates.

So *dizque* has scope over the proposition. At the same time, it is significant that extraction across *dizque* is possible, as can be seen in (16), which contains a relative clause. This, in turn, indicates that *dizque* can appear below phasal CP. In this case, reportativity is weak and *dizque* clearly casts doubt on the truth of the proposition.

-
- (16) *No saben si se la echó su cliente o el que **dizque** la protegía.*
 'They do not know whether she was thrown out by her client or the man who was **supposedly** protecting her.'
 (Fonseca, G.: *Gloria*. 2008. Mexico. CORPES XXI)
-

Dizque may also appear between the modal auxiliary and the verb, as in (17a,b).

-
- (17) a. *Un pueblo esclavo como carajos **puede dizque** disfrutar de una independencia ficticia y distrayente. . .*
 'How the hell can a population of slaves **possibly/supposedly** bask in a fictitious and distracting independence . . .'
 (<https://kaosenlared.net/colombia-pueblo-por-su-independencia-vasallos-por-su-esclavitud/>)
- b. *Esto con el objeto de que los humanos **puedan dizque** entenderse.*
 'This with the aim that all human beings can **supposedly** understand each other.'
 (Chalavazis, Nicolás. "Dimensión moral del lenguaje para Nietzsche" *Comunicación*, 30, 85–102. 2013. Colombia.)
-

It is important to note that *dizque* only occurs with the deontic modal; we have not found any cases of *dizque* with epistemic *poder* ('might') (not even in general Google searches). The same holds for *deber* ('must'), as seen in (18).

-
- (18) *Ni mucho menos nadie consigna en cuenta bancaria el aporte que **debe dizque** hacerse . . ., todo se había ido quedando en el rumor . . .*
 'Nobody ever records in a bank account the amount that he or she must **supposedly** contribute. . . It all ended up as pure rumor.'
 (<https://caliescribe.com/es/columnistas/2015/03/03/7691-hace-varios-anos-ha-venido-hablandose-colombia-que-justicia-tiene-precio>)
-

The preceding examples suggest that *dizque* may generate inside the clause. So it seems plausible to propose that *dizque* may occupy a position inside TP, in particular in Aux/T position, where modals and other auxiliaries generate.⁹ If we look at examples like (19), from Colombian Spanish, where there is clitic climbing across *dizque*, it can be suggested that this element may form a complex verbal construction with the main verb of the clause (see [Olbertz, 2005: 90](#) for Ecuadorian Spanish *dizque*). Importantly, as indicated by the translations, *dizque* in all these examples has scope over the clause (i.e., it is not just modifying the verb).

-
- (19) ... *porque la justicia no los puede dizque tocar.*
 because the justice not CL_{3pl}AC can *dizque* touch
 '... because justice **supposedly** cannot touch them.'
 (<https://www.las2orillas.co/de-un-machetazo-le-quitan-la-mano-a-un-joven-solo-por-ser-gay/>)
-

Summarizing, we claim that *dizque* may be generated inside TP, where auxiliaries and modal modifiers are located. At the same time, *dizque* has clausal scope and, as we have been suggesting and will become clear below, it is related to the Speech Act Projection (in [Speas and Tenny's, 2003, 2006](#) sense), where elements denoting the speech participants appear. This view diverges from that taken in some literature on Spanish, where the fact that the scope of *dizque* is variable is taken to prove that this element behaves like a 'particle'. As noted by [Alcazar \(2018: 728\)](#), "associations are made between scope and interpretation ([Travis, 2006; Olbertz, 2007](#)), constituents and predicates readily associating with epistemic uses, while sentential scope is more likely interpreted as a true grammatical evidential." As opposed to this view, our approach is that, due to its relation to Speech Act Phrase (SAP), *dizque* is always reportative, usually with an epistemic value, sometimes with dominant illocutionary force. In what follows we will test the behavior of *dizque* with respect to phenomena associated with the presence of SA projections, such as so-called Main Clause Phenomena.

3.3. *Dizque* and SAP projections. A brief syntactic characterization

3.3.1. Main clause phenomena

According to most researchers, Main Clause Phenomena are indicative of the presence of a Speech Act Phrase and affect operators in this layered structure.¹⁰ They define environments restricted to root clauses. Operations like negative constituent preposing, focus fronting, topicalization, and others (involving some kind of emphasis) related to the left periphery of the clause are considered 'Root Transformations', triggering Main Clause Phenomena.

Spanish does not seem to show Main Clause Phenomena in cases of focus fronting or topicalization ([Camacho and Jiménez, 2014](#)), so we need to test other facts that suggest that *dizque* does not give rise to these effects (and thus appears inside the clause). At the same time, the behavior and meaning of *dizque* indicate that it may need SAP to be projected. Let us examine some contexts.

Dizque can appear after temporal particles in temporal clauses and frequency adverbs (20a), and it can also be parathetical (20b), with the same value.

⁹ As [Chang \(2018: 162\)](#) notes, "en el español bilingüe de las sierras de Ecuador [*dizque*] ha llegado a ocupar una posición casi fija delante del verbo" ['In the Spanish spoken by bilinguals in the mountains of Ecuador, *dizque* has ended up occupying an almost invariably preverbal position' (our translation)]. There are also cases where *dizque* appears between the auxiliary *haber* 'have' and the main verb. The following example is from Mexican Spanish:

- (i) *Felipe Calderón espetara que, "haiga sido como haiga sido", él había dizque ganado la elección.*
 'Felipe Calderón spat out that, "however it may have been", he had **supposedly** won the elections.' (<https://pulsoslp.com.mx/opinion/mesa-politica/1178684>).

It has been shown ([Alcázar 2014](#), based on data from [Olbertz 2005](#) and [Kany 1944](#)), that *dizque* in this variety has undergone a more advanced process of grammaticalization. We thank an anonymous reviewer for bringing this to our attention.

¹⁰ See [Aelbrecht et al. \(2012\)](#), [Miyagawa \(2012\)](#) and references therein.

-
- (20) a. *Cuando **dizque** te quieren pero not really.*
 ‘When **they say** they love you but not really.’
<https://twitter.com/velcromc/status/1184484705506344961>
- b. *Blac Chyna se ofrece a pagar el televisor que rompió cuando, **dizque**, quiso matar a Rob Kardashian.*
 ‘Blac Chyna is offering to pay for the TV set she broke when, **as has been said**, she tried to kill Rob Kardashian.’
<http://oyememagazine.com/blac-chyna-se-ofrece-a-pagar-el-televisor-que-rompio-cuando-dizque-quiso-matar-a-rob-kardashian/inicio52-26/>
-

Dizque can be embedded under factive nominals such as *el hecho de que*, ‘the fact that’, suggesting that it is clause-internal, since, as has been observed (Hooper and Thompson, 1973: 472), root transformations do not operate within presupposed clauses complement of a complex NP headed by *fact*:

-
- (21) ... sin acceso a la educación (el hecho de que **dizque** sea gratuita no garantiza que todos los mexicanos tengan un lugar en las aulas)
 ‘... without access to education (the fact that **allegedly** it is free does not guarantee that there is place for all Mexicans in schools).’
<https://www.informador.mx/ideas/Pobreza-cronica-20180505-0030.html>
-

In Section 4.5 we present other cases of *dizque* embedded under (semi)factive and attitudinal predicates, which are claimed not to show Main Clause Phenomena.

As for the interaction of *dizque* with other sentential operators, in general, it cannot be preceded by negation.¹¹ Nevertheless, we have found cases of a (preposed) negative constituent (such as *jamás*, ‘never’) followed by *dizque*. This phenomenon has been shown to be restricted to main clauses. *Dizque* can also precede the negative particle *jamás*, as seen in (22b).

-
- (22) a. *Natura las hizo para ser maestras, enfermeras, secretarias, madres, ... pero **jamás dizque** policías, militares, pilotos, soldados.*
 ‘Nature created them to be teachers, nurses, secretaries, mothers, ... but never **were they supposed to be** policemen, officers, pilots, soldiers.’
<http://anticritica.blogspot.com/2012/>
- b. ***Dizque jamás** tendremos un arquero como Otoniel.*
 ‘**It is said that** we will never have an archer like Otoniel.’
https://twitter.com/Negromar_/status/1188124742341058560
-

So it seems that *dizque* does not trigger Main Clause Phenomena, but requires the presence of some structure over CP such as SAP projections. We will now examine the behavior of *dizque* with respect to other sentential operators, such as interrogatives.

3.3.2. *Dizque* in (negative) interrogatives. Interrogative flip

Dizque does not occur in wh-interrogatives, but is compatible with yes/no (polar) interrogatives. We found sentences like (23).

¹¹ As a reviewer points out, Olbertz (2005) finds several cases in the Ecuadorian area mentioned above. This author explains these cases by arguing that a complex verbal construction is formed where *dizque* is interpreted as a sort of auxiliary:

- (i) *No **dizque** podían pagar nadie, nadie.*
 (lit.) Not **dizque** could they pay anybody, anybody. (Ex. (27) BE 12a, 3)

-
- (23) *Los dos senadores juegan al antihéroe de la ilegalidad contra Bolivia. Dizque les van a investigar?*
 ‘The two senators play the antihero of illegality against Bolivia. **Dizque** they are going to investigate them? / **According to what YOU know**, they are going to be investigated. Is this true?’ (Eldia.com, 2/5/2011. 2012. Bolivia.)
-

In (23) the speaker does not declare uncertainty about the status of the nuclear proposition by asking the addressee to update the common ground using a canonical question, but instead communicates preference for one of the options denoted by the interrogative. Bhadra (2018) characterizes the interpretation of what she calls “confirmation questions” as something like: ‘Given EVIDENCE, p holds. Is this true?/Confirm’. This is indicated in the translations provided. *Dizque* only occurs in these biased/confirming questions, which are always yes/no questions.

But what interests us most here is that, as opposed to declaratives, where the so-called ‘evidential perspective’ is normally anchored to the speaker, in interrogatives, evidentials can flip to the hearer’s perspective (Faller, 2006; Schwager, 2010; Eckardt, 2018). So-called *Interrogative Flip* with evidentials is very common cross-linguistically (see Garrett, 2001; Speas and Tenny, 2003; Murray, 2010; Lim and Lee, 2012; and many others). Evidentials in these contexts are not part of the content being questioned and they are either anchored to the hearer/addressee or make reference to shared/common knowledge.¹² In short, as seen in the interpretation provided (based on Bhadra, 2018), examples like (23) would constitute not “reported questions”, but rather questions that appeal to the evidence the hearer may have.¹³ The behavior of *dizque* with respect to this phenomenon is very revealing.

It should be noted first that *Interrogative Flip* with evidentials is subject to variation. Bhadra (2018) studies Indo-Iranian Bangla, where interrogative flip is absent in polar questions with the evidential *naki* (the sentence is always speaker-oriented).¹⁴ According to this author, the interpretation of a non-flipped polar question (from Bangla) and a flipped one (from Cheyenne) would be (24) and (25), respectively.

-
- (24) *Mina naki amerika chol-e ja-cche?* (Bangla)
 Mina NAKI America GO-IMPV GO-3P.PRES.PROG
 ‘(Given what I heard), Mina is going away to America (is it true)?’
 (Bhadra, 2018: ex. (4))
- (25) *Mó=é-némene-sèste Floyd?* (Cheyenne)
 Y/N = 3-SING-REP-3SG Floyd
 ‘(Given what you heard), did Floyd sing?’
 (Bhadra, 2018: ex. (55))
-

Within that author’s approach, the special behavior of evidentials in this case depends on their ability to license “a special operator \uparrow that ... takes a proposition and returns a new context in which the tentative commitment set of the speaker ... is updated with that proposition” (Bhadra, 2018: 21).

Going back to *dizque*, as can be seen in the interpretation provided for (23), one can claim that this evidential may give rise to interrogative flip (and so the operator would reach *dizque* inside the clause). But this is just part of the picture.

An interesting property of *dizque* is that it can only be preceded by negation precisely in polar interrogative sentences (but see fn. 11). Negative interrogative *dizque* sentences are grammatical, and actually quite common. We provide some examples below in (26a,b).

¹² This may be the case in (23), where *dizque* seems to refer to knowledge assumed to be known in the context.

¹³ Schwager (2010) proposes the following rule for Tagalog reportative evidentials (which extends to modal evidentials) to account for the interrogative flip reading:

(i) To ‘evidential /?’ assign QUESTION’ (/) where QUESTION’ is QUESTION with the evidential basis shifted to what has been asserted by some speaker S3. (Adapted from Schwager 2010: (28)).

¹⁴ There are many languages with interrogatives containing evidentials which do not give rise to *Interrogative Flip*. Bhadra (2018: 21) mentions Bangla, Telugu, and others such as Shipibo-Konibo, Jarawara, Sochiapam Chinantec, Yukaghir, Macedonian, Eastern Pomo, etc.

-
- (26) a. ¿Y **no dizque** ibas a ir a la Embajada?
 ‘And **according to what I heard** you were going to the Embassy, weren’t you?’
 (Franco, Jorge: *Paraíso Travel*. Mondadori, 2001. Colombia. From [CORPES XXI](#))
- b. A: ¡Cómo me saboreo! Porque a mí Cristoboro a los treinta y tres mi *dispiace*. Detesto a los viejos.
 B: ¿**No dizque** agarra parejo?
 A: ¡Qué va, es un decir! Lo digo para soltarle la lengua a usted.
 A: ‘I’m really enjoying this! Because Cristoboro being 33 *mi dispiace*. I hate old fogies.
 B: **According to what I heard**, he likes all women, isn’t it so?
 A: Don’t you believe it. It’s just a manner of speaking! I only say it to make you keep on talking.’
 (Vallejo, Fernando: *El don de la vida*. Alfaguara, 2010. Colombia. From [CORPES XXI](#))
-

We would like to note that, interestingly enough, what distinguishes between the two types (non-negative and negative) of polar questions with *dizque* (like (23) and (26), respectively) is the possibility of reportative flip.¹⁵ In other words, in contrast with (23), where the flipped interpretation obtains (‘According to what **YOU** know/heard, they are going to investigate them. Is this so?/Confirm.’), in interrogative *dizque* sentences with negation, interrogative flip is not obtained and the evidential is clearly oriented to the speaker. Actually, the hearer is in many cases precisely the source of the information heard by the speaker; the interpretation of (26a,b), for instance, would be (26)’.

(26)’ **According to what I heard from you**, you wanted a kiss/he likes all women. Is this so?/Confirm.

So the data show that negation in polar questions with *dizque* bans reportative flip. In other words, it seems that *dizque* is not reached by the operator proposed by Bhadra. At the same time, the interpretation of *dizque* in negative interrogatives seems to be mainly reportative; the epistemic interpretation is weak, suggesting that *dizque* may be in SAP.

3.3.3. About the syntactic representation

Given the behavior of *dizque* with respect to the phenomena analyzed, it seems plausible to propose that, as has been shown for (some) reportative evidentials (see [Bhadra, 2018](#) and references therein), *dizque* is generated inside the clause. But *dizque* is also reportative, and this means that it is linked to participants in the Speech Act (Speaker [SPK], Hearer [HR], and Seat of Knowledge [SOK]). This makes it similar to markers and discourse particles involving discourse participants that have been shown to appear in embedded clauses and at the same time require the projection of the SA structure. In particular, [Haegeman and Hill \(2013\)](#) argue that this is the case for discourse ‘pragmatic markers of direct address’ in Romanian and West Flemish. These authors propose a revision of Speas and Tenny’s structure as a shell with SAP and (small) saP and claim that these markers, directly related to the speech participants, are generated in that projection. [Miyagawa \(2012\)](#) also shows that allocutives and politeness markers in Japanese, which appear as agreement elements (referring to discourse participants) in the verbal domain, are to be analyzed in terms of MOVE and AGREE within the SAP domain.

Our suggestion is that *dizque* is generated clause-internally (not directly in SAP, like discourse markers described by Haegeman and Hill), but it is bound to projections containing the speech participants. Since *dizque* is not an agreement morpheme, an (overt) agreement account does not seem plausible, so we propose a covert operation bounding *dizque* to arguments in SAP. In Speas and Tenny’s structure for SAP, apart from SPK and HR, an SOK argument is also projected. This is, we would like to claim, the participant involved in *dizque* constructions. So we tentatively propose a structure like (27), where *dizque* covertly moves, thus establishing a relation with SOK in SAP and having scope over the sentence.

(27) [_{SAP} SPK SA [_{SAP} SOK SA [_{saP} HR sa [_{CP} TP [... *dizque*...]]]]]

¹⁵ As for the pragmatic contribution of *dizque*, as a reviewer points out, it could also serve as reinforcement for the biased interpretation, in comparison to sentences without *dizque*.

This would account for *dizque*'s behavior and the properties and meanings described: generation inside TP plus covert movement to the SAP projections gives rise to the most common use of *dizque*, as a reportative epistemic evidential. This idea is close to Bhadra's (2018) analysis of the evidential particle *naki* in Bangla. In this language *naki* occurs in two positions in the clause (final and internal) and this position determines the type of evidentiality encoded (see Bhadra, 2018 for details). Generation inside SAP, on the other hand, would account for its behavior as a pure reportative/quotative (see Table 2), as well as for its initial position. As noted, the question of the categorial nature of this quotative *dizque* remains unclear up to this point. We will briefly take up the matter again in 4.2. In what follows, we will undertake a semantic analysis of *dizque*. This analysis is compatible with the syntactic behavior we have just sketched out.

4. THE SEMANTIC-PRAGMATIC PROPERTIES OF EVIDENTIALS. THE CASE OF DIZQUE

We have so far introduced the idea that *dizque* is most generally a two-faceted not-at-issue item which may convey either a reportative meaning or an epistemic (modal) meaning. In this sense, this grammatical element encodes information about the speaker's degree of certainty or commitment to the proposition and about the 'integration' of this form either in the SAP or in the proposition. In this section we will depart from this two-faceted view and elaborate on the idea that its modal semantics is a matter of semantic-pragmatic ways of updating, while its reportative semantics is conventionally encoded in *dizque*. In order to achieve this goal, we first review previous empirical studies about the semantics of *dizque* and then take up the classical distinction between illocutionary evidentials and modal evidentials and the levels of meaning they affect. We show that other approaches, between semantics and pragmatics, provide a better account of the semantics of *dizque*.

4.1. Uses of *dizque* according to classical dialectal studies

Some previous proposals about types of *dizque* found in specific areas of Spanish are built on data obtained either from interviews or through corpus searches, or both. They are mostly grounded on the reasonable assumption that the types of *dizque* somehow mirror the different stages of the grammaticalization process from *dize que* 's/he says that' (verb + complementizer) to *dizque*. In the three milestones in dialectal corpus-based studies of *dizque* (Travis, 2006; Olbertz, 2007; De la Mora and Maldonado, 2015) there is relative consensus about two questions. The first is that we may distinguish mainly among three classes of *dizque*: 1) evidential (reported speech and hearsay), 2) marking of epistemic modality encoding various pragmatic extensions (with no encoding of source of information), and 3) *labeling dizque* (Travis, 2006: 1278, partly similar to the classification in De la Mora and Maldonado, 2015). The second point of consensus is that these classes are different and (categorially and semantically) independent from one another. Each class is related to the steps in the above-mentioned grammaticalization process *dize-que* → *dizque*.¹⁶

In sum, in the classical Spanish dialectal literature, in general, there is no unified semantic analysis of *dizque*, which is considered sometimes an evidentiality strategy (with a reportative weight) and sometimes an evidential modal without reportative value. Pragmatic effects are invoked to justify weak or lack of commitment meanings, but a detailed explanation is not provided.

4.2. The semantics of evidentials

In Section 2, we showed that *dizque* gives rise to four types of values/uses, which we define in terms of speech report (see Table 2). Our distinctions among them were uniformly based on diagnostics for at-issueness and eventivity. In what follows in this subsection we examine the semantic nature of *dizque* through a brief discussion of the meanings of evidentials cross-linguistically. We conclude that *dizque* is an evidential rather than a pragmatic marker—or a particle—even in the case of quotative *dizque* (2.1.1). We accept Korotkova's (2006) assumption that 'quotative' is a reading of evidentials when they are adjoined to the Speech Act projection. Of course, they are not amenable to a modal analysis, as we have indicated.

Cross-linguistically, elements which indicate the speaker's source of information for an assertion, in other words, evidentials, are assumed to have a uniform semantics. The discussion has centered on whether the particular type of semantics involved is illocutionary (Faller, 2002; 2006; Murray, 2010) or modal/propositional (Izvorski, 1997; Matthewson et al. 2007; Matthewson 2012). More precisely, a generally defended hypothesis is that in some languages evidentials contribute to the illocutionary or Speech Act level (Faller, 2002; 2007 for Cuzco Quechua), while in others

¹⁶ De la Mora and Maldonado (2015: 169), again based on the diachronic evolution of this form, claim that "the reportative meaning of *dizque* is dying out in Mexican Spanish in favor of an epistemic meaning wherever the veracity of the message being conferred is called into question by the speaker."

they contribute to the propositional level (Izvorski, 1997 for the Bulgarian perfect, Matthewson et al., 2007 for St'át'imcets). It is also accepted that in certain languages the two types of evidentials can coexist (Tan, 2020 for Tagalog). We briefly summarize these approaches in what follows.

In the **illocutionary analysis**, evidentials are illocutionary operators, elements that interact with the Speech Act structure in different ways: they operate at the pragmatic level, specify illocutionary force (assertion, presentation, etc.) and can modify the sincerity conditions. The relevant sincerity condition for an illocutionary evidential (IE) is that someone different from the speaker has claimed p (Faller, 2002; 2006). Evidentials are not-at-issue Speech Act operators, contributing an at-issue content: they cannot be denied or challenged, but the propositional content can be; the Speaker does not have any commitment to p since s/he just presents p .

In the **modal (epistemic) analysis**, evidentials are propositional modifiers and thus contribute to the propositional content (they take narrow scope with respect to propositional operators). Epistemic modal reportative evidentials (ME) are taken to encode speaker commitment to the propositional content relayed. Their modal base is defined in terms of the set of propositions the speaker considers to be indirect evidence for the prejacent proposition in the actual world. According to this, a ME should specify the speaker's degree of certainty, or the necessity/possibility of the truth of the propositional content. A problematic aspect of this proposal is that if modal evidentials are propositional modifiers, they can affect the meaning of p and possibly contribute at-issue content, which is not expected for evidentials. In general, we cannot negate or challenge evidentials.

Illocutionary evidentials are found in English, Cheyenne, and Cuzco Quechua, whereas epistemic evidentials are found in Turkish, Bulgarian, St'át'imcets, Tibetan, German, and Japanese. A taxonomy of attested reportative evidentials and the languages in which they are claimed to exist is given in Fig. 1, which is taken from Krawczyk (2012: 90).

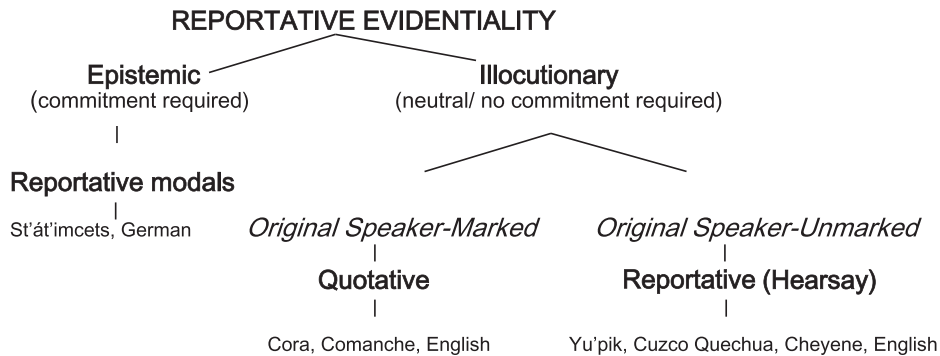


Fig. 1. Taxonomy of reportative evidentials (from Krawczyk, 2012).

This brings to mind once more the classical assumption that evidentials can typically make a speech act or a propositional contribution (Faller, 2002; 2007; Matthewson et al. 2007). As indicated, in this framing it is claimed that the contribution of an IE is not directly challengeable, subject to negotiation, and it is not the main point of the sentence (Papafragou, 2006). With modal evidentials this picture changes: the evidential contribution cannot be challenged, but the modal content can be, and the propositional contribution will always be that p is possible, uncertain, or doubtful, and will not be accessible for negotiation. So in languages with epistemic evidentials the speaker is committed at least to the possibility that p is true. This implies that illocutionary evidentials would operate on Speech Act while modal evidentials would operate below Speech Act.

Tests or diagnostics have been designed to tell apart the two types of evidentials (Izvorski, 1997; Faller, 2006; Matthewson et al., 2007; Murray, 2017; Smirnova, 2013). These tests consider assent/dissent possibilities (the content of a modal can and the content of an illocutionary operator cannot be challenged), the possibility of modals and impossibility of illocutionary operators to be embedded under certain predicates, scope in interrogatives and, crucially, the falsity test: the possibility of a structure with an evidential to be felicitous even if the content of the prejacent is known to be (true or) false. With the exception of this test, the results with *dizque* indicate that it behaves like a modal (Demonte and Fernández-Soriano, 2020).¹⁷

¹⁷ There are two other tests, regarding cancelability and negation, which do not distinguish between modals and illocutionary operators.

Nevertheless, many authors note that the tests mentioned do not suffice to establish a clear-cut line between types of evidentials, and are thus inconclusive. It has been shown that none of them (at least taken in isolation) can clearly determine the modal or illocutionary nature of an evidential (see Korotkova, 2016 and references therein). Moreover, as Faller (2007: 1) observes, even if it seems appropriate to claim that some evidentials contribute to the speech act and others to propositional content, it is not easy to tie the locus of evidentiality to a particular level of meaning. Regarding the genuine capacity of each test to show what it purports to show, Faller (2002), for instance, argued that the embeddability test—one of the most frequently used to separate propositional modification from Speech Act comment—only determines whether an element can be used descriptively, *m-performatively* (i.e., to express the idea that the speaker is making an epistemic evaluation, to which (s)he is fully committed at the time of speaking), or both, and not necessarily whether or not it contributes to propositional content. In the following subsections we try to determine the semantic nature of *dizque* using an update semantics approach.

A very relevant question is how the possibility meaning in epistemic reportative evidentials can be obtained: is this conventionally encoded in the evidential, that is, is the *epistemic distance* often attributed to modal evidentials (like *sollen* in German, and crucially to *dizque*) part of the meaning of the evidentials themselves? Another significant question is how to explain the shifted readings in embedded sentences, in the cases in which a reportative evidential is claimed to be epistemic. A parallel question is the number of dimensions of meanings an evidential can be associated with (two, three?). The answer to these questions will be crucial to understand our evidential *dizque*.

First, we would like to briefly address the question of encoding of modality: how do reportativity and modality/epistemicity interact?¹⁸ A classic work on the status of the modal meaning (propositional modification) in reportative evidentials is Izvorski (1997). This author, while analyzing the ‘perfect of evidentiality’ in Bulgarian, argues that indirect evidentials should be considered epistemic modals, within a Kratzerian semantics. Indirect evidentials are operators quantifying over possible worlds delimited by a *modal base* (containing the propositions compatible with what is known) and an *ordering source* of knowledge (which classifies as optimal the most stereotypical worlds), plus an additional meaning of indirect evidence which constitutes a *presupposition*. In other words, a modal evidential involves the probability of a proposition with respect to a *common ground* and presupposes that it has been acquired through second hand information (the likelihood of a scoped proposition in view of some body of knowledge). Her definition is given in (28).

-
- (28) The interpretation of EV p [EV = evidential operator]
 assertion: $\Box p$, in view of the speaker’s knowledge state
 presupposition: the speaker has indirect evidence for p
 (Izvorski, 1997: 226)
-

Under the indirect reportative interpretation, depending on the source, the proposition modified by an evidential can have a variable modal reading, from weak possibility (*possibly p (what X says) given some indirect evidence (what I heard, what X said, what it is said/known, etc.)*), to strong doubt or disbelief (extremely weak possibility).¹⁹ As to the presupposition, its contribution is that the speaker has indirect evidence for p .

There are various problems with this approach if it is assumed that (28) defines all evidentials. First, if evidentials are supposed to be epistemic modals, they must be a subtype of epistemic necessity modals, and this requires p to be compatible with the speaker’s knowledge. But this is not applicable to reportatives, which do allow speaker knowledge about the falsity of p , as noted by Faller (2019: 13), except if one assumes that if falsity is claimed by a reportative, it is automatically an illocutionary operator. Second, as noted above, if modal evidentials are propositional modifiers, they affect the meaning of p and thus the modal operator would contribute at-issue content, which is not expected for evidentials (i.e., they can be challengeable together with p). Third, if we understand Izvorski correctly, her approach implies that if all evidentials are epistemic modals the reportative value would be a secondary, additional, meaning of these elements. Fourth, a uniform modal analysis assumes that necessity (not only possibility) is a putative meaning of modal evidentials, which is not the case in certain languages, as we are analyzing. Finally, although the thesis that evidentials are presuppositional (i.e., propositions that are taken by the speaker as part of the common ground, which convey old backgrounded information) is tenable as well as debatable (see Faller, 2014), it is also the case that languages exist in which

¹⁸ See Squartini (2009) for an analysis of the directionality in the diachronic relationship between evidentiality and epistemicity.

¹⁹ Actually, Izvorski (1997) claims that the modality meaning ranges from possibility to necessity. This is expected, since her definition covers also direct and inferential evidentials where p is under a necessity operator.

evidentials can be answers to the *Question Under Discussion*. For instance, the Quechua reportative *si* can convey new information (Faller, 2014), or Spanish *dizque*, as in the case we illustrated through (5a’).

There are other semantic or pragmatic approaches to evidentiality based on not-at-issue contribution. Roughly speaking, these approaches contend that there are other levels of meaning relevant to the understanding of evidentiality. Murray (2010) implements an update semantics which allows for a compositional account of the roles of declarative/interrogative mood and evidentials by producing a particular series of updates. Her approach builds on Faller’s idea that an indirect reportative evidential ‘presents’ but does not ‘assert’ *p*. In Murray’s theory, the reportative’s conventional contribution is not to add the at-issue proposition to the common ground (as is the case for direct evidentials), but rather to create an update proposing “to take note of the at-issue proposition *p* . . . , but for the common ground to remain unchanged” (Murray, 2010: 98). Based on Faller, Murray develops an analysis of evidentials where at-issue and not-at-issue content are part of the same meaning dimension. The difference lies in the way they contribute to updating the common ground. A not-at-issue assertion ‘adds’ a proposition to the common ground, while an at-issue assertion (introduced by reportative evidentials) proposes the addition of a proposition to the common ground, that is, ‘presents’ it. Not-at-issue assertions are thus unchallengeable, while at-issue assertions are challengeable (Murray, 2010; AnderBois et al., 2013).

Dechaine et al. (2017) provide another analysis which shares goals and theoretical tools with Murray’s (2010) approach. Their intention is to develop a general, crosslinguistic syntax and semantics for evidentials of all types, without having to appeal to special mechanisms for the reportative. Similar to Faller, they take the reports to instantiate the difference between assertion and presentation. In their words:

In asserting *p*, a speaker introduces *p* into the common ground and commits to a truth-claim. But it is also possible for a speaker to present *p* without committing to a truth-claim. To allow for this possibility, we distinguish the **common ground** (cg) from the **origo ground** (og). The cg is the set of *p*’s—both uttered *p*’s and background *p*’s—to which participants make commitments. The origo is the individual from whose perspective *p* is evaluated, and the og is the set of uttered *p*’s for which the origo has experientially mediated information. (Dechaine et al. 2017: 25).

These authors follow Murray (2010) in taking challengeability/cancelation as a test, but now their aim is to determine the commitment of the speaker to the proposition (Dechaine et al. 2017: 24): assertions cannot be felicitously canceled or denied since the speaker is committed to *p*, while a presented *p* of a reportative (illocutionary) evidential sentence can be denied since the speaker is not committed to *p*. What about epistemic evidentials? The problem of deniability of *p* with epistemic evidentials (falsity) can be solved by claiming that *p* in these cases is in fact an ‘assertion of a presentation’, thus blurring in a certain way the distinction between reportativity and modality. To be more precise, Faller’s (2002; 2006) distinction between assertion and presentation correctly covers reportative evidential sentences, but not epistemic modal sentences, which remain in the shadow in her analysis. Dechaine et al.’s (2017, Section 7) broader set of tools can instead regulate both presentations and epistemic modal evidential sentences. The ME sentences are those in which both the cg and the og are simultaneously updated. Thus the presented *p*, or the experiential basis, or both, can be denied.

We will elaborate on some of the ideas of this last proposal in the next subsection. A common property of these approaches is that they propose a multidimensional analysis of evidentials and so “deconstruct evidentiality”. They also establish differences between the *reliability* and the *source* of knowledge about the situation described. This is what Matthewson (2012) does by distinguishing among *evidence type*, *evidence location* and *evidence strength* (see below).²⁰ The author notes that this distinction makes it possible to separate evaluative particles (which encode only reliability) from evidential particles (which include source). Incidentally, we observe that this distinction separates two of the types of *dizque* we have described, namely evaluative constituent modifier *dizque* (see 2.1.3 above) and sentential evidential *dizque*. Matthewson (2015: 89) proposes that there are items that encode both dimensions simultaneously. We will come back to these conceptual distinctions in 4.4. The important point at this moment is that it is not obvious that the semantics of evidentials should be based on the strict distinction between contribution to the speech act level and contribution to the propositional level.

4.3. The semantics of epistemic *dizque*. Speaker commitment

To start with, we would like to recall a claim made by Murray (2010: 53): “With evidentials . . . , the level of speaker commitment to the scope proposition can vary depending on the kind of evidential and the language. There is crosslinguistic variation with the reportative.” As we have noted, in languages with illocutionary evidentials, such as Quechua,

²⁰ Izvorski (1997) makes a similar distinction. However, as Matthewson (2015: 88) observes, “Izvorski argues that the two dimensions are treated as coinciding by natural languages.”

the speaker is not committed to the truth or even the possibility of the reportative's scope. In languages with epistemic evidentials, such as St'átim'cets, the speaker is committed at least to the possibility of the reportative's scope. Example (29) is from Cuzco Quechuan IE; corresponding unacceptable (30) is from St'átim'cets ME.

(29) Illocutionary: Cuzco Quechua

Para-sha-n = si, ichaqa mana crei-ni-chu.

rain-PROG-3 = SI but not believe-1-NEG

'It's raining, but I don't believe it.'

ev = speaker is/was told that it is raining (Faller 2002: 194. Ex (158))

(30) Epistemic Reportative Evidential (Reportative Modal): St'átim'cets

#um'-en-tsal-itás ku7 i án'was-a xetpqiqen'kst táola,

give-DIR-1SG.OBJ-3PL.ERG REPORT DET.PL two-EXIS hundred dollar

f'u7 aoz kw s-7um'-en-tsal-itás ku stam'

but NEG DET NOM-give-DIR-1S.OBJ-3PL.ERG DET what

'[reportedly] They gave me \$200, but they didn't give me anything.'

(Matthewson, et al., 2007: 224)

In (30), the speaker is committed to the propositional content marked by the reportative and the sentence under its scope cannot be denied.

4.3.1. Not-at-issueness. Contribution to truth conditionality

Matthewson et al. (2007: 223) claim that if a meaning can be questioned, doubted, rejected, or disagreed with, then it forms part of the propositional content. One can disagree with the possibility or necessity content of a modal proposition. For example (31), with a modal verb, can have a second part negating not *p* but the modal (*must*).

(31) A: Jo must be the thief.

B: That is not true. There are some other plausible suspects. Jo may be entirely innocent.

(Matthewson et al. 2007, from Faller, 2002: 113, apud Waldi et al., 2009: 3)

With reported speech reportative *dizque*, non-commitment with regard to the scoped sentence *p* is thus expected, as seen in (5c) repeated below, with a possible follow-up in which the sentence under *dizque* is called into question.

(5c) Siempre tuvieron celos, **dizque** más me ocupaba de éstos que de ellos, *pero yo creo que no es así*.

Observe that in the previous sentence the speaker can express low commitment or lack of commitment with *p*, because the 'strongest possible evidence' for the prejacent proposition is accessible given that she is the authority who knows exactly that she was taking care of the children. It appears that commitment to *p* is based not only on the *type* of evidence (a report) but also on the *strength* of that evidence, as defined in the previous section. Matthewson (2015: 103) explains that Quechua = *mi* (direct evidential) requires the strongest possible evidence for the prejacent proposition, thus it encodes *type* of evidence and *strength* of trustworthiness.

What happens in sentences in which the epistemic meaning seems dominant and the sentence implies a weak degree of certainty but not total absence of commitment, as in (5c)? We have found various cases of *dizque* whose context (together with native interpretations) suggests the possibility of analyzing it as an epistemic reportative, a propositional modifier in terms of the two-tier approach. This is illustrated in (32).

(32) ... no le permitían a uno libremente mirar hacia los lados con mucha facilidad, **dizque** había cosas que uno no debía ver. Jamás de los jamases recuerdo haber visto nada que uno no debiera ver. Pero no sé qué experiencia tengas tú, y te suelto este tema simplemente para oír opiniones.

‘... One was not allowed to look around as freely as one might hope, **supposedly** there were things one should not see. Never in my life do I remember having seen anything one should not see. But I don’t know if that is your experience, and I raise the issue simply to hear some opinions.’

(Oral. Colombian source M29. From CdE)

In terms of the classical evidential modal analysis one would think that what is called into question in (32) is the ‘possibility of *p*’ (*supposedly there were things one should not see*), rather than *p* itself. In the line of [Matthewson et al. \(2007\)](#) and mainly [Papafragou \(2006: Section 3\)](#), it could be assumed, thus, that (reportative) epistemic modal evidentials contribute to the propositional content and are in this sense truth-conditional, as expected. In other words, in (32) *jamás de los jamases* could be replaced by *eso no es posible* ‘that is not possible’. This characterization would imply that *dizque* is part of the meaning of *p*, and in that sense it does contribute to its truth conditions.²¹ The picture is a little more complicated, though, as we will see below.

It must be noted first that informants claim that in (32) the statement (*no*) *recuerdo haber visto nada que uno no debiera ver* ought to be interpreted as rejecting only *p* (and not the possibility of *p*), the proposition embedded under the evidential operator EV. This would indicate that *dizque* is non-truth-conditional and the epistemic meaning would be derived not from the modal or the illocutionary nature of EV, as suggested in the analysis mentioned, but rather from the experiential distance between the source of the information and the speaker. More strictly, the reason for doubt in these cases appears to be found in the contradiction between what the report says and the speaker’s experience. So it is the distance between the speaker’s experience and what the origo (the (sentient) individual from whose perspective *p* is evaluated) claims that underlies the epistemic value. It is this contradiction that leads to the *weak strength* of the evidence. In this view, the possibility reading is deduced from other levels of the analysis of evidentials and not from the distinction between speech act modification and propositional modification.

The example in (33) makes a relatively similar point, what is at play this time being disagreement with the source of a proposition.

(33) *Sobre Matos Berrido, dizque que sería designado para que, entre otras cosas, trabaje en la remodelación del estadio Quisqueya. Hay más, pero todo es pura especulación, el plumazo final lo dará Leonel. . .*

‘Regarding Matos Berrido, **dizque** (*it seems*) that he would be chosen, among other things, to work in the refurbishing of the Quisqueya stadium. There is more, but it is all pure speculation, the final decision will be taken by Leonel. . .’

(*Listín diario*. Santo Domingo, 2004–08–24. From [CORPES XXI](#))

As the use of the word *speculation* suggests, the speaker is presenting something as unreliable/untrustworthy. In (33), it seems that the speaker considers the assertion a matter of believing and rejects the trustworthiness of the source of *p* (the origo ground) introduced through *dizque*.

It might be useful to recall now example (14a), repeated below, where the assertion prior to *dizque* (*se ha puesto en duda*, ‘doubt has been cast’) indicates a doubtful distance of the speaker from what is being reported, which is then qualified as doubt about the number of tales coming from *Mother Goose*. (34) is another example of the same use.

²¹ The question of the truth conditionality of modal operators is not central to our analysis. As noted by [Papafragou \(2006\)](#), contradictory positions are held by many semanticists. However, what is crucial is to determine whether EV contributes to the proposition, as part of its meaning (see [Papafragou, 2006](#) for a thorough review of the literature on this debate).

-
- (14) a. *En este centenario de Rafael Pombo se ha puesto en duda su originalidad, porque sus Cuentos Pintados y sus Cuentos Morales para Niños Formales **dizque** proceden de Mother Goose Melodies. De los 160 poemas infantiles, ¿cuántos proceden de Mother Goose? He aquí una investigación urgente.*
 ‘In Rafael Pombo’s centenary, doubt has been cast on his originality, because his *Cuentos Pintados* and *Cuentos Morales para Niños Formales* **are said** to be taken from Mother Goose Melodies. Out of his 160 poems for children, how many are taken from Mother Goose? Here is an urgent investigation.’
- (34) ... **dizque** se me iba a podrir la lengua porque lo había insultado, yo no creo en esas vainas, yo en los curas no creo...
 ‘...**supposedly** my tongue would go rotten because I had insulted him. I don’t believe in such things, I don’t believe in priests ...’
 (Valenzuela, Germán: *Crónicas de un pueblo muerto: Jordán Sube*. (Sic), 2008. Colombia. From [CORPES XXI](#))
-

In sum, integration of the evidential in the propositional content does not provide clear results for reportative epistemicity, since many examples clearly indicate that *dizque* modal values of possibility, doubt, or untrustworthiness of evidence come from other levels of semantics. On the other hand, in the preceding examples, *dizque* both contains the not-at-issue proposition ‘it is said/somebody said’ and assigns different degrees of certainty to the prejacent (reasonable doubt based on experience or uncertainty about the origo ground). Lastly, the interpretation of some sentences suggests that we can determine the *strength* of the evidence, as defined below (4.4), by paying attention to the common ground: whether the origo and the speaker share the same set of *p*, which leads to strong evidence, or alternatively do not, and thus the speaker (assuming a weak strength of evidence) is in fact updating the common ground. In (34), the final statement *yo no creo en esas vainas* makes this imbalance explicit. What these sentences appear to show is that we need to approach the epistemic values of *dizque* within a different conceptual framework, beyond the classical Speech Act vs. Proposition modification analysis. Before going into this proposal let us consider now epistemic modal sentences with *dizque* where *p* is considered to be false.

4.3.2. Falsity

One of the salient properties of *dizque* is that it can introduce propositions that the speaker knows to be false. The fact that *dizque* is felicitous in these contexts is problematic in the illocutionary evidential vs. modal evidential analysis because it would imply that *dizque* is not a modal evidential. The reason is that in a reportative epistemic sentence the meaning of possibility is part of the propositional content, so *p* should not be claimed to be false, since the speaker would be asserting at the same time that the embedded proposition is possibly true. But the fact is that questioning (or denying) the truth of the prejacent is a very common characterization of *dizque* (see below). This dissonance, which is not specific to Spanish *dizque* but arises in many other languages with reportative evidentials and has been dubbed the *Reportative Exceptionality*, will be our concern in this subsection.

In the first place, an important fact is that epistemic modal evidentials also have the property of being infelicitous if *p* is known to be true. This behavior is typical of modals in general, since they involve weaker commitment to the truth of *p* (Karttunen 1972; Kratzer 1991, and others). *Dizque* behaves like a modal in this respect, as shown by the impossibility of (35).

-
- (35) **Dizque** Juan robó un banco, #y yo sé que es cierto.
 ‘**Dizque** Juan robbed a bank, and I know it is true.’
-

The issue to be addressed is that *dizque* can be used in contexts where *p* is clearly false for the speaker, that is, cases in which the speaker seems to know (and sometimes overtly asserts) that the prejacent is false. In our corpora, we found many examples of this use, such as (36).

-
- (36) ... los soldados entran en los pueblos y sacan a los pocos hombres que se quedan, **dizque** los interrogan, pero los torturan, los matan y los desaparecen ...
 ‘... the soldiers go into the villages and take the few men that still remain there, **supposedly/allegedly** they interrogate them, but [actually] they torture them, kill them and make them disappear ...’
 (Rubio Rosell, Carlos.: *Los Ángeles-Sur*. Galaxia-Gutenberg, 2000. Mexico. From [CORPES XXI](#))
-

In the preceding sentence, the speaker knows that the proposition ‘they interrogate them’ is false; in fact, it is followed by an adversative *but*-clause stating that they are actually tortured and killed.²² In (36) the context suggests reported evidence and at the same time a lack of reliability about what the soldiers claim about how they treat the guerrilla.

It must be noted that many authors (Matthewson et al. 2007; Smirnova, 2013, as well as Travis, 2006; Olbertz, 2007; Miglio, 2010; De la Mora and Maldonado, 2015 and Sanromán Vilas, 2020 for Spanish *dizque*) show that the use of epistemic evidentials in contexts where the speaker knows the falsity of the prejacent is in fact very common. As pointed out, for those claiming that there are facts which indicate that *dizque* should instead be analyzed as a propositional modifier with a modal value, the described facts pose a problem since possibility would be part of the conventional meaning of the sentence scoped by the evidential. There is nevertheless an escape route. Recall that, as we explained above, the behavior of *dizque* regarding the falsity test is similar to other reportative evidentials that have been shown to be modal. Smirnova (2013), for instance, shows that the Bulgarian evidential morpheme has “different truth conditions, depending on whether it expresses a reportative or an inferential/direct evidential meaning. In reportative contexts, crucially, the evidential sentence can be used even if the speaker believes that the proposition she reports is false” (Smirnova, 2013: 482). The author provides the example in (37).

(37) Reportative context: you just came from a psychiatric clinic, where you visited your friend Eli. Eli was hospitalized because of severe hallucinations and other psychological problems. When your friend inquires about the things Eli told you, you say:

Izvānzemnite í predložili rabota v kosmičeska laboratorija.

Aliens her offer.PERF.PAST.PLE job in space laboratory

‘Aliens offered her a job in a space lab, [I heard].’

(Smirnova, 2013: ex. (4))

What is interesting about this case, according to the author, is that it is not the speaker but the *reporter* that is committed to the truth of the proposition (it is Eli who believes that aliens offered her a job in space). The main claim is that evidentials in these contexts express *de dicto* reports, where “the proposition is evaluated with respect to the epistemic modal base relativized to the reporter, whose statement the speaker repeats” (Smirnova, 2013: 512). So, although the speaker (the only agent in the context of direct and inferential evidentials) is saying something that she knows to be false, in the case of reportative evidentials, another epistemic agent is introduced: the *informer* or *reporter*. Given these facts, the falsity test does not seem to contradict the modal analysis of reportative evidentials, since the speaker may not be the relevant epistemic agent.

In the case of *dizque*, the examples where the speaker is certain about the falsity of the prejacent can be accounted for by this *de dicto* reading associated with reportativity, which allows truth evaluation by another epistemic agent. However, the *de dicto* explanation would be a way of saying that *dizque* in these cases is a pure reportative. This can be seen in the meaning of the corresponding sentences, where *dizque* is accurately translated as either *it is said* or *supposedly*.²³

In the next subsection, we would like to pursue two lines of explanation suggested above: one is lack of confidence in the source concerning the content of *p*, the other is ‘distance’ or ‘proximity’ of the speaker to the facts described in *p*.

4.4. A multidimensional analysis

In previous sections we have shown that the reason for the possibility of an epistemic evidential to be denied, which is unexpected in a proposition modification analysis, can be attributed to the strength (degree of reliability) the speaker assigns to the evidence. In this section we try to explain the genesis of the different ‘strengths’ associated with *dizque*. In the spirit of Olbertz (2007) and Sanromán Vilas (2020), who characterize *dizque* as encoding different degrees of

²² The number of examples where it is stated that *p* is false is noteworthy, and sometimes the following sentence explicitly stipulates that ‘this is not true/this is a lie’.

²³ One of our referees suggests another kind of explanation on the basis of examples like (i), where the content modified by *dizque* contains a lie. In this case, the speaker is explaining how he lied to a friend telling him that he had not been to a date, which is false:

(i) *Le mandé un e-mail excusándome por no haber ido dizque porque estaba enfermo ...*

‘I sent him an email excusing myself for not having been there, *dizque* because I was sick.’

(Sánchez Baute, Alonso: *Al diablo la maldita primavera*. Alfaguara, 2004. Colombia. From CORPES XXI)

The referee suggests that *dizque* in (i) is interpreted from the addressee’s point of view. The speaker would be asserting a presentation. This idea is very interesting. To pursue it would imply an analysis in terms of discourse participants, which unfortunately we cannot undertake here (see also 4.2 above).

reportativity/epistemicity/subjectification, as well as Smirnova's (2013) distinction between speaker and reporter in *de dicto* reports, but following the lines of the formal semantic/pragmatic analyses deployed by Matthewson (2015) and Dechaine et al. (2017), we propose that the variable semantics of reportative epistemic *dizque* is due to the fact that "many evidentials require reference to more than one dimension [of meaning], so that a multi-dimensional analysis is useful not just cross-linguistically but within the same language, and even within the same morpheme" (Matthewson, 2015: 89).

We do not intend to model these various meaning dimensions but we will try to informally schematize the semantic contributions of *dizque* as based on two pillars: Matthewson (2015) and Dechaine et al. (2017). We will call this analysis *multidimensional* in the sense that it incorporates both elements of Matthewson's typological view and aspects of the semantic-pragmatic characterization by Dechaine et al. Let us start with the former, from which we will specially take up again the strength dimension by trying to correlate this with the ways of updating. As we noted in 4.2, Matthewson (2015: 87) assumes that there are three different dimensions of meaning evidentials may encode, listed in (38).

-
- (38) Matthewson (2015 (2)):
1. Evidence **type**: whether the evidence is visual, sensory, reported, etc.
 2. Evidence **location**: whether the speaker witnessed the event itself or merely some of its results
 3. Evidence **strength**: the trustworthiness/reliability of the evidence
-

The author argues that "particular evidential morphemes may be semantically complex, encoding information about one, two or all three of the dimensions" (Matthewson, 2015: 88). There do not appear to be any hierarchical or dependency relations among the three dimensions. We will claim that the *strength* dimension together with information about ways of updating introduced by *dizque* accounts for the main differences between strongly reportative and strongly modal *dizque*.

If, as noted by most of the analysts, *dizque* always contributes an epistemic meaning (from weak possibility, equivalent to reportativity, to almost complete lack of confidence), and it is a reportative with a modal semantics, as we claim, its modal nuances regarding trustworthiness would follow from differences in strength, as noted. It is obvious that *dizque* is an evidential used when the speaker (and/or the origo) does not have the best possible evidence. This follows straightforwardly from the fact that *p* comes from second-hand information. As a side note, observe that if epistemic evidentials involve strength and, in accordance with standard analyses, they result in weaker propositions than mere assertions, the unacceptability of a sentence like (35), where the speaker appears to be committed to the truth of *p*, follows. It is also quite clear that if we build strength within the meaning components of evidentials, the *Reportative Exceptionality* (Faller, 2002; AnderBois, 2014) would not be an exclusive property of pure illocutionary modifiers but could also be expected in epistemic reportatives; hence, it would not be treated as a simple 'observed fact' (AnderBois, 2014) but as a significant part of their meaning. However, this is still an intuitive characterization and we would like to ground our analysis on a more perspicuous conceptual background.

We believe that Dechaine et al.'s (2017) deconstructive view of the multidimensional meaning of evidentials allows us to situate the previous observations in a more detailed theoretical explanation which does not contradict Matthewson's (2015) view but rather completes it. Dechaine et al.'s (2017) proposal is based on two crucial assumptions: 1) all evidentials are presentational, but 2) "the deniability test distinguishes propositions introduced into only the origo ground (reportatives, predicates of internal state and evidentials of internal state) from those introduced into the common ground (assertions) or both the common ground and the origo ground (direct and inferential evidentials)" (Dechaine et al. 2017: 25). We propose to include epistemic reportatives within this class.²⁴ We repeat in (39) below the definitions of common ground and origo ground.

-
- (39) The **common ground** is the set of *p*'s - both uttered *p*'s and background *p*'s - to which participants make commitments.
- The *origo* is the individual from whose perspective *p* is evaluated, and the **origo ground** is the set of uttered *p*'s for which the *origo* has experientially mediated information. (Dechaine et al. 2017: 25)
-

First, **asserted sentences** update the *common ground* (in the line of Murray, 2010) by adding *p*, so they can be endorsed or contested by the hearer, but not by the speaker:

²⁴ See Dechaine et al. (2017), where this possibility is suggested as a side note.

-
- (40) A_{SPEAKER}: #It rains, but it is not raining (contradiction) vs.
 B_{HEARER}: No, that's not true, a minute ago it stopped raining!
-

On the other hand, **sentences with reportatives**, which are presented but not asserted, update the origo (the participants are committed to the experiential grounding of p ; they introduce information about the perspective from which the sentence is uttered and add it to the origo ground), so the speaker can endorse or contest the presented p , which is not-at-issue (Murray, 2010; Tan, 2020).

Finally, **reportative epistemic sentences** update both the origo ground and the common ground (Dechaine et al. 2017: Section 7). They update the origo ground because they are reportatives, and they update the common ground because they introduce a meaning of weak reliability of the information, namely, the best possible grounds for the information are not available due to either doubtful distance or disagreement with the origo. Simultaneously, the notion of non-trustworthiness of p is added to the common ground. In other words, the speaker retracts p from the common ground. Dechaine et al. (2017) insightfully note that:

“the difference between c[ommon] g[round] and o[rigo] g[round] updates has consequences for how p and NOT- p are resolved. With assertion, p and NOT- p leads to contradiction: one (or both) propositions are retracted from the c[ommon] g[round]. With presentation, p and NOT- p leads to ‘faultless disagreement’, with p and NOT- p sustained in their respective origo grounds, since even if they share a common ground, one of the participants may have additional information about p .” (Dechaine et al. 2017: 30)

Moreover, with presentation the speaker presents her experience of p without committing to the truth of p . This is possibly the reason why reportative *dizque* has a weak epistemicity. With the epistemic reportative there is a ‘commitment contradiction’ in the resolution of p and NOT- p . This contradiction comes from the fact that in this case untrustworthiness is added to the common ground while p is presented as trustworthy in the origo ground, which is why in reportative epistemic sentences the contradiction is generally put on the table and non-endorsement is clearly expressed (see examples (32) to (36)).

What we have just explained, together with the proposal in section 2.1 (Table 2), yields Table 3, which classifies the differences between sentences with different types of *dizque* in terms of updating (following Dechaine et al. (2017)).

Table 3
 Different types of *dizque* updates.

Type	Updating To OG	Updating To CG
<i>Dizque</i> reportative/quotative	✓ (p is presented) (p is not presented)	
<i>Dizque</i> epistemic reportative	✓	✓
Assertions	–	✓

The fact that epistemic reportative *dizque* does not behave with respect to the falsity test (of the classical two-tier view) is now explained in terms of its ability to update the common ground and the origo ground, adding at the same time the notion of non-trustworthiness to the former.

Finally, a note should be added on the ‘quotative’ included in the first slot of the leftmost column in Table 3. It refers to cases of explicit direct discourse like those we saw in (3), repeated below for convenience.

-
- (3) A: *Pero qué te dicen [Qué te dicen]?*
 S: [*Dizque*] *huy. Doña Carmen quiere bastante a Jaime.*
 A: ‘But what do they say. What do they say?’
 S: ‘**They say** “Wow, Carmen really loves Jaime”.’ (Travis 2006: 1279)
-

In this example, neither weak commitment nor falsity can be claimed. A follow-up with ‘but this is false’ or ‘I’m not sure’ would be infelicitous. This question is not added to the common ground, which remains unchanged, as with direct reportatives. Probably this *dizque* adjoins above the CP/SAP domain, as noted, and is thus not c-commanded by these categories.

4.5. Interim conclusions

Thus far we have discussed a new semantic approach to *dizque*, a reportative evidential with a variable strength of epistemic meaning. This approach is an alternative to the one based on the distinction between illocutionary and epistemic reportative evidentials, which we have argued to be flawed. In a nutshell, the idea is that the flavors of *dizque* ranging from almost pure reportativity to (reportative) epistemic with total non-confidence in the truth of *p* are due to different ways of updating either the origo ground or the common ground (to which the speaker is not committed) or both. These differences in updating depend on the degree of speaker commitment with respect to the reporter (the origo). There is a wide distance with respect to the reporter origo, in other words, sharp disagreement with the origo in terms of his/her own experience, reflecting a clash between authoritative opinion and supposedly biased opinion. Is there a correlation between this semantic-pragmatic analysis and the provisional syntax proposed in 3.3.3? This is undoubtedly a question that deserves further research. Yet, taking up again our central idea that in most uses *dizque* is a reportative with different degrees of modal strength as well as the suggestion that this meaning generally stems from the interaction between arguments of the SAP and an evidential generated inside TP, we submit that the heads in SAP have a 'perspective sensitivity operator' which bounds the evidential. In the following subsection we will offer data coming from embedded sentences which provide support for both the reportative epistemic view of *dizque* and the multilevel analysis.

4.6. Embeddability and evidential shift

Authors approaching different exploratory lines coincide in paying attention to the behavior of evidentials in conditional and complement sentences. Data related to this issue bear on one aspect of the multidimensional analysis we have just proposed: it is the semantic status of *dizque* as an epistemic that triggers updating of the origo ground and the common ground.

Data regarding embeddability have emerged as being crucial since Faller's (2002) two-tier analysis mentioned above. The main idea is that illocutionary operators cannot be embedded (Matthewson et al. 2007), since they modify the speech act; in contrast, an element that contributes to the proposition should be able to be embedded. Epistemic evidentials can be interpreted in the scope of an embedding verb. This means that evidentials can be interpreted with respect to some participant other than the speaker. This holds for St'át'imcets and Tibetan (Matthewson et al. 2007; Matthewson, 2012; Garrett, 2001), as pointed out by Murray (2010: 68). However, in languages with illocutionary evidentials, syntactically embedded evidentials tend to remain semantically unembedded and speaker-oriented, and also tend to scope over the subordinate clause. Let us examine the behavior of *dizque* in this respect.

Dizque can appear in conditionals, where it is naturally interpreted as referring to a proposition, a TP, as we see in (41).

-
- (41) *O te mandan mensajes grabados, que todavía no entiendo a quién se le ocurre (sobre todo si **dizque** es urgente).*
 'Or they send you voice messages; I cannot understand why anyone would do that (especially if **supposedly** it is urgent).'
- (<https://soy.marketing/whatsapp-una-red-social/>)
-

Example (42) below shows that *dizque* can also appear in subordinate sentences, embedded under the verb *decir* 'to say'. Here *dizque* appears to be a case of a (syntactically and semantically) embedded evidential.²⁵

²⁵ There is another case of non(strictly) subordinate *dizque*, where *que dizque* appears after a comma, in a sort of comment or afterthought, also analyzed by De la Mora and Maldonado (2015) for Mexican Spanish.

- (i) *No supo nunca lo que había hecho; usted cree, **que dizque** el guey lo hizo para las señoras embarazadas.*
 'He never knew what he had done; can you believe it? **Que dizque (he said that he supposedly)** did that for the pregnant women.' (CREA Fiction, 1983. From De la Mora and Maldonado, 2015: ex. (22)).

The authors analyze the sequence *que dizque* as an illocutionary unit where *dizque* has blurred its traditional reportative sense and *que* reintroduces the old reportative meaning of *dizque* (in line with Treviño (2018) and Demonte and Fernández-Soriano (2013, 2014), who analyze some cases of sentence-initial 'insubordinated' *que* as a reportative evidential).

- (42) *A mí me dice Glenda que tarde o temprano van a hacer otra [amnistía], y me dice que dizque algo parecido tuvieron que hacer en España hace poquito, y que seguro de aquí a máximo cuatro años van a nacionalizar a todos . . .*

'Glenda tells me that sooner or later they will have another one [an amnesty], and she tells me that **it is said that** they had to do something similar in Spain recently, and that surely in four years at most they will give everyone citizenship . . .'

(García Ángel, Antonio: *Animales domésticos*. Norma, 2010. Colombia. From [CORPES XXI](#))

In (42) *dizque* is anchored to the verb of saying, that is, the subject of the main clause heard *p*, and this is the origo that acquires the reported evidence. This fact is crucial for the modal interpretation of *dizque*, since it indicates that, as in St'át'mcets, the predicate *say* has scope under the reportative evidential. In cases like this, it is said that the evidentials are shifted to the matrix subject. As asserted by Schenner (2008), evidentials that shift are similar to epistemic modals in English: in clausal complements of propositional attitude predicates, epistemic modals are always shifted (in a sentence like *John thinks it must be raining*, it is not the belief worlds of the speaker but the belief worlds of the subject, *John*, that are claimed to entail that it is raining).

In relation to this last observation, another relevant fact is that the possibility of embedding *dizque* is not restricted to verbs of communication (although they are the most frequent). (43a) shows that *dizque* can be embedded under a semi-factive predicate and (43b) is a case of embedding under an attitudinal predicate. Observe that in both cases the subject/external argument of the matrix clause binds the evidential; in (43b) *dizque* is in the scope of the 'BELIEF operator', a crucial property of modals.

- (43) a. *A veces me preocupa que dizque espíen correo electrónico.*

'Sometimes I'm concerned that **supposedly** they spy on our e-mail.'

<https://twitter.com/martharoldos/status/536893998548672512>

- b. . . . *por eso la gente piensa que dizque uno fue rico, pero mi papá no tenía dinero, era pobre como todo el mundo.*

'... that is why people think that **supposedly** I was rich, but my dad had no money, he was poor just like everyone else.'

(Cuero, Raúl: "La creatividad, un imperativo en la educación". Programa Prensa Escuela. *El Colombiano*. 2010)

To better qualify these facts it is important to note that Anand and Hacquard (2013, as presented by Korotkova, 2016: 88) classified attitude predicates into three groups depending on whether or not they accept epistemic modals:

A. REPRESENTATIONAL ATTITUDES license epistemic modals in their complements: doxastics ('think'); speech predicates ('say'); semi-factives ('realize').

B. NON-REPRESENTATIONAL ATTITUDES do not license epistemic modals in their complements: desideratives ('want', 'wish'); directives ('demand').

C. HYBRID ATTITUDES license possibility but not necessity epistemic modals:

emotive doxastics ('fear', 'hope'); dubitatives ('doubt').

This classification provides an argument for our analysis: *dizque* mainly embeds under verbs of class A.

Hence, we now have two arguments in favor of the epistemic meaning of *dizque*. First, *dizque*, like epistemic modals, operates at the propositional level since it does not scope over the embedding verb and its origo can be traced back (shifted) to the subject of the matrix sentence. Second, *dizque* appears to be embedded under the class A of attitude predicates, precisely those that license epistemic modals in their complements.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This paper offered a new analysis of the Latin American Spanish evidential *dizque*, which has been widely analyzed within descriptive and non-formal semantic-pragmatic frameworks. We depart from the more or less standard assumption that synchronic uses of this form mirror the diachronic steps in its evolution from *dize que* (*v* + *Comp*) to *dizque*, thus causing it to be regarded as a kind of pragmatic marker which, perhaps in oversimplified terms, can encode either a pure reportative or a pure modal meaning. We have characterized *dizque* as a uniform reportative evidential (not a pragmatic marker) that conveys conventional information about a second-hand source for the report but with a variable modal strength that derives from (pragmatic) degrees of speaker commitment to the scope of the evidential, thus transmitting

different types of reliability, possibility, or uncertainty. We have argued that the double faceted nature of this element derives both from the syntax (*dizque* merges in TP and can be bound by elements within SAP) and from ways of updating the common ground and the origo ground. This is a novel approach to the analysis of this form which, moreover, endeavors to root it in formal proposals, specifically the generative syntax idea that sentences have a left periphery where discourse-related constituents can merge, as well as the approaches to evidentials laid out by Murray, Dechaine et al., Faller, and others, which, diverging from the classical two-tier analysis of evidentials as either illocutionary or epistemic modifiers, propose other options to obtain a more perspicuous explanation of evidentials based on the distinction between at-issueness and not-at-issueness, and the distinction between common ground and origo ground.

Some new contributions of this work are as follows. First, this is the first time that *dizque* has been comprehensively characterized in syntactic terms (an exception is Olbertz, 2007) and new data and insights are offered in this regard. Second, this paper shows that *dizque* is an evidential and not a pragmatic marker; otherwise it would linguistically encode “clues which signal the speaker’s potential communicative intentions” (Fraser, 1996), and it would operate only on the proposition of the matrix clause rather than on its constituents. We have shown that this is not the case. Third and finally, while contributing to our understanding of contemporary Modern Spanish varieties as used in Latin America, this paper constitutes an important illustration of the interface between syntax and semantics-pragmatics.

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