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Evidentiality and focus in Colombian Spanish: a comparative analysis of *dizque* and *como que*

Gabriel Martínez Vera, Newcastle University, Universidad Espíritu Santo, Samborondón, Ecuador, gabriel.martinez-vera@newcastle.ac.uk

José Camacho, University of Illinois at Chicago, jcamach@uic.edu

This paper addresses matrix declarative sentences with the evidential markers *dizque* and *como que* in Colombian Spanish. We concentrate on cases where these evidentials combine with both clausal- and subclausal constituents, and provide a unified analysis that likens them to focus-sensitive items, such as Spanish *solo* ‘only’. We thus argue that *dizque* and *como que* are mixed elements combining evidentiality and focus marking. We further discuss question-answer congruence in connection to these markers, and show that sentences with them must be congruent with prior discourse. We provide a syntactic analysis that accounts for the distribution of *dizque* and *como que*. We further provide a semantic analysis of *dizque* and *como que* that captures their evidential meaning in combination with focus, which is tied to the implication of lack of certainty that sentences with these markers have.

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1 Introduction

This paper investigates the evidential markers *dizque* and *como que* in the American Spanish varieties spoken in Bogotá and Medellín, Colombia. Evidentiality is a grammatical category whose core meaning encodes the source of information an individual draws on regarding that piece of information (see Willett 1988; Izvorski 1997; Van der Auwera & Plungian 1998; Dendale & Tasmowski 2001; Plungian 2001; Faller 2002; 2012; 2019; Aikhenvald 2004; 2006; 2018; Matthewson et al. 2007; McCready 2015; Rooryck 2019). Evidentiality in Spanish specifically has been studied as well (see Kany 1994; Magaña 2005; Olbertz 2005; 2007; López Izquierdo 2006; Travis 2006; Cruschina & Remberger 2008; Babel 2009; Demonte & Fernández-Soriano 2013; 2020; 2022; Alcázar 2014; 2018; De la Mora & Maldonado 2015; Grajales 2017; Saito 2019; 2021; Martínez Vera 2020a; 2023; Sanromán Vilas 2020). Across varieties, the markers that have been studied more extensively are *que*, which appears to be very widespread, and *dizque*, which is widely attested in American Spanish.

Focusing on American Spanish, work over the past years has addressed evidentiality concentrating on different varieties. For instance, it has been reported that *dizque* is widely attested (see Sanromán Vilas 2020 for a recent corpus study). In some varieties, such as Mexican Spanish, *dizque* appears to covary with another element, i.e., *quesque* (De la Mora & Maldonado 2015). Recent work has further pointed out the extensive variation there is across varieties, including extensive speaker variation within a single variety (Martínez Vera 2023). To explore the extent of the variation further, this paper examines evidentiality in Colombian Spanish, in particular, it concentrates on two evidential markers that are attested in the varieties of Bogotá and Medellín, namely, *dizque* and *como que*, in matrix declarative clauses (see Grajales 2017; see also Camacho 2011). These are exemplified in (1).¹ In the examples, *dizque* (1a) and *como que* (1b) appear at the beginning of the clause; the scope propositions is that it is going to rain tonight—the free translations attempt to capture the intuitive meaning of these sentences.²

- (1) a. *Dizque* va a llover esta noche.
dizque is.going.to rain this night
 ‘Allegedly, it is going to rain tonight.’

¹ The data that are reported in this paper are the result of a combination of published sources, with an emphasis on Grajales (2017), who reports data from semi-directed interviews from the PRESEEA-Medellín corpus (see Grajales 2017 for further discussion with regard to methodology); the CREA corpus also documents various cases. We have also found examples with these markers in social media. Additional grammaticality judgements and examples come from one of the co-authors, originally from Bogotá, Colombia. The tests that are reported throughout follow Martínez Vera’s (2023) elicitation practices, as well as his examples. Expressions with *dizque* and *como que* are usually used in an informal, oral register, but they are not socially stigmatized or associated with rural speech.

² While English translations do not always convey the evidential or inferential meaning of *dizque* and *como que*, they are very much present, so the reader should not conclude that these evidentials are simply hedges based on the translations of the examples.

- b. *Como que* va a llover esta noche.
como que is.going.to rain this night
 ‘It looks like it is going to rain tonight.’

The sentences in (1) differ with regard to the evidential meaning associated with them: (1a) is felicitously uttered in the presence of reportative evidence (e.g., the speaker was told about the rain), while (1b) requires inferential evidence (e.g., the speaker drew an inference about it raining based on the weather conditions). Furthermore, these sentences have an epistemic implication of lack of certainty (see De la Mora & Maldonado 2015). Thus, both sentences convey the meaning that the speaker expresses reservation (intuitively, the speaker expresses doubt) towards the proposition that is conveyed.

As indicated, the examples in (1) illustrate cases with *dizque* and *como que* in sentence-initial position. Although evidential marking occupies a fixed position in the clause in many languages, *dizque* and *como que* can appear in different positions in the sentence, as in the examples in (2). With regard to *dizque*, this has been referred to as the labeling function (Travis 2006), but it extends to *como que*. In addition to incorporating specific evidential requirements (see (1)), these sentences intuitively mean that the epistemic implication is closely tied to the constituent following the evidential. Thus, the speaker expresses lack of certainty in that she is unsure as to whether the relevant object is in fact a sea compass (this can be further seen by means of the proposed correction in parentheses).

- (2) a. Juan trajo *dizque* un compás marino (que resultó ser un visor de fotos).
 Juan brought *dizque* a compass sea that resulted be a viewer of photos
 ‘Juan brought a kind of a sea compass (that ended up being a photo viewer).’
 b. Juan trajo *como que* un compás marino (que resultó ser un visor de fotos).
 Juan brought *como que* a compass sea that resulted be a viewer of photos
 ‘Juan brought a kind of a sea compass (that ended up being a photo viewer).’

(see Grajales 2017)

This paper provides a unified account of cases where *dizque* and *como que* in Colombian Spanish take clausal scope and of cases involving the so-called labeling function (Travis 2006). We take into consideration (i) their evidential contribution and (ii) the epistemic implication of lack of certainty associated with these markers, in combination with (iii) their distribution as tied to the different positions they may occupy in the clause. We propose that *dizque* and *como que* are evidential markers that are also involved in focus marking (see Rooth 1985; 1992), i.e., *dizque* and *como que* are hybrid evidential and focus markers. To the best of our knowledge, the claim that (some) evidentials can simultaneously be focus markers has been made only to a limited extent. Specifically, such a claim has been made for the Andean languages Quechua and Aymara. Thus, Faller (2002) (following Muysken 1995), indicates that the Cuzco Quechua evidentials

are also focus markers; only the evidential component is analyzed in this work. Sánchez (2010) proposes a syntactic analysis of the Cuzco Quechua evidentials that attempts to integrate the two functions. Similarly, Martínez Vera (2020a; 2024) proposes that the direct evidential =*wa* in Southern Aymara is also a focus marker (see also Proulx 1987) and proposes a semantic analysis.

This paper provides an analysis that concentrates on syntactic and semantic aspects of *dizque* and *como que* as hybrid evidential and focus markers. To this end, in addition to addressing the evidential contribution of cases with these markers, we liken them to focus-sensitive items (e.g., *only*; see Hirsch 2017; Rochemont 2018; Greenberg 2022 for recent work) and provide an initial comparison of the distribution of *dizque* and *como que* vs. *solo* ‘only’, a better-known focus-sensitive adverb in Spanish (Kovacci 1999; Sánchez López 1999). We also examine cases of question-answer congruence (Hamblin 1973; Karttunen 1977; Groenendijk & Stokhof 1984; Rooth 1985; 1992; Krifka 1992; Ginzburg 1996; Roberts 1996), to which sentences with *dizque* and *como que* are sensitive. Specifically, these markers have to be adjacent to the focused constituent in question-answer pairs where the question manipulates the focus. We further make the novel claim that the epistemic implication of lack of certainty in the cases under consideration arises in connection to focus alternatives as determined by *dizque* and *como que* and the constituent in their scope.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 concentrates on the evidential contribution and the epistemic implication of lack of certainty of sentences with *dizque* and *como que*. Section 3 turns to the distribution of these markers with regard to their scope possibilities; an initial comparison with *solo* ‘only’ is established. Section 4 turns to question-answer congruence. Sections 3–4 suggest that *dizque* and *como que* are involved in focus marking. Section 5 provides a unified analysis of the cases under consideration; the proposal captures the distribution of *dizque* and *como que*, including the consideration of locality restrictions, as well as their evidential contribution and focus alternatives, which are connected to the epistemic implication of lack of certainty that arises.

2 Evidential contribution and epistemic implication

This section concentrates on the evidential contribution and the epistemic implication of lack of certainty of sentences with *dizque* and *como que*.³ Sentences with *dizque* are felicitously uttered when the speaker has reportative evidence for the relevant scope proposition (in the absence of such evidence, they are infelicitous). The reportative evidence can be varied in that it can be second- or third-hand (see Cruschina & Remberger 2008; see Martínez Vera 2023 for additional

³ As indicated, we focus on Colombian Spanish. An anonymous reviewer notes that *como que* is possibly attested as well in Iberian Spanish in cases in which it modifies the whole clause, but not in cases in which it modifies subclausal constituents. If true, the discussion that follows would apply to that variety as well (in particular, for cases where this element modifies the clause).

contexts). Thus, the sentences in (3) ((3b) repeats (1a)) are felicitously uttered when the speaker was told (by a known source) that it is raining now (3a) or that it would rain tonight (e.g., a work colleague of the speaker told her that it is going to rain tonight) (3b), but they are also felicitously uttered when the source is unknown (e.g., rumor has it that it is raining now or that it is going to rain tonight). Sentences with *dizque* are infelicitous in the presence of direct and inferential evidence. With regard to direct evidence, consider a scenario where the speaker sees that it is raining by looking outside; (3a) cannot be felicitously uttered in this scenario. With regard to inferential evidence, the sentences in (3) are infelicitous in scenarios such as the following: (3a) cannot be felicitously uttered if the speaker draws the inference that it is raining by seeing the wet coat of somebody that has just come in; (3b) cannot be felicitously uttered either if the speaker draws the inference that it would rain tonight because it is very cloudy, which normally means that it would rain in Medellín; (3b) is also infelicitous if uttered based on general knowledge, e.g., that it is the rainy season in Medellín.^{4,5}

- (3) a. *Dizque* llueve (ahora).
dizque rains now
 ‘Allegedly, it is raining (now).’
- b. *Dizque* va a llover esta noche.
dizque is.going.to rain this night
 ‘Allegedly, it is going to rain tonight.’

While similar to cases with *dizque* in that cases with *como que* are not compatible with direct evidence, *dizque* and *como que* behave differently in that only *como que* requires the presence of inferential evidence (in the absence of such evidence, they are infelicitous). Thus, the examples in (4) ((4b) repeats (1b)) can be felicitously uttered in a context in which the speaker draws the inference that it is raining now because someone came in with a wet coat (4a) or that it would rain

⁴ There are a few instances of direct evidence where sentences with *dizque* appear to be felicitous, as in (ia). Key here is that the speaker establishes distance with regard to what is uttered. Thus, (ia) is felicitously uttered if the speaker distances herself from what she did, e.g., the speaker went to the gym but did not do the things that are usually done there (such as working out); instead, she just hung out. Interestingly, *como que* is also felicitous in cases like this one (ib). These examples are set aside in this paper.

- (i) a. *Dizque* fui al gimnasio esta mañana.
dizque went to.the gym this morning
 ‘Allegedly, I went to the gym this morning.’
- b. *Como que* fui al gimnasio esta mañana.
como que went to.the gym this morning
 ‘It looks like I went to the gym this morning.’

⁵ We do not discuss quotation and (free) indirect speech in this paper (as indicated, we only focus on matrix sentences) (see Demonte & Fernández-Soriano 2022; Martínez Vera 2023 for recent discussion). To the best of our knowledge, these markers cannot be used to quote other people’s speech in the varieties under consideration.

tonight because it is very cloudy, which normally means that it would rain in Bogotá (4b). The sentences in (4) can also be uttered in a scenario in which, based on common knowledge about Bogotá's weather (e.g., the speaker's experience through the years, which is shared across the population), the speaker infers that it is raining now or that it would rain that night. In contrast, the sentences in (4) are infelicitous against the reportative scenarios indicated above for (3) in which *dizque* is felicitous; (4a) in particular is also infelicitous in the presence of direct evidence, as in the scenario indicated above where the speaker sees that it is raining by looking outside.

- (4) a. *Como que* llueve (ahora).
como que rains now
 'It looks like it is raining (now).'
- b. *Como que* va a llover esta noche.
como que is.going.to rain this night
 'It looks like it rains/is going to rain tonight.'

The examples in (3)–(4) further involve an epistemic implication of lack of certainty (see Travis 2006; Alcázar 2018), i.e., the speaker expresses that she is unsure as to whether the scope proposition is true—intuitively, this means that the speaker distances herself with respect to what is uttered (see footnote 4). Thus, (3)–(4) are infelicitous if the speaker knows for sure that the scope proposition is true. In this regard, imagine a context where the speaker has no doubts whatsoever about the scope proposition. For *dizque*, suppose that the source is very reliable; the speaker has no reason to doubt the source's report (see Martínez Vera 2023). For *como que*, suppose that the relevant state of affairs in Medellín with regard to the weather indicates that it is certain that it is already raining or that it will start to rain soon (e.g., with the clouds as they are, there is no other possible outcome). (3)–(4) are infelicitous in these scenarios. In contrast, if the speaker does not believe the source of the report (for *dizque*) or if the cloudy state of affairs in Medellín is not as conclusive as one would like (for *como que*), (3)–(4) can be felicitously uttered.

The epistemic implication of lack of certainty has been explicitly targeted for *dizque* in recent work (Martínez Vera 2023) by means of a follow-up of the form *(yo) no tengo dudas al respecto* 'I don't have any doubts about it,' which targets whether the speaker is sure or not about the scope proposition that is uttered. The test shows that the follow-up is marginal, thus confirming the speaker's lack of certainty with regard to the scope proposition when uttering it.⁶

⁶ It is worth pointing out that the counterpart of (5) without *dizque* and *como que* is felicitous, which indicates that the test does in fact target whether there is (lack of) certainty. We would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for bringing this to our attention.

- (i) Va a llover esta noche; (yo) no tengo dudas al respecto.
 is.going.to rain this night I no have doubts to.the respect
 'It is going to rain tonight; I don't have any doubts about it.'

- (5) a. *Dizque* va a llover esta noche; ??(yo) no tengo dudas al respecto.
dizque is.going.to rain this night I no have doubts to.the respect
 ‘Allegedly, it is going to rain tonight; I don’t have any doubts about it.’
- b. *Como que* va a llover esta noche; ??(yo) no tengo dudas al respecto.
como que is.going.to rain this night I no have doubts to.the respect
 ‘It looks like it is going to rain tonight; I don’t have any doubts about it.’

(see Grajales 2017)

While sentences with both *dizque* and *como que* involve lack of certainty, they differ with regard to whether they may further involve disbelief (see Stalnaker 1978; 2002; see also Faller 2002 for discussion about evidentials). Sentences with *dizque* are compatible with the speaker believing that the scope proposition is false. In contrast, in the case of *como que*, the speaker has to believe that the scope proposition is possible. To this end, we provide tests that involve continuations that indicate that the speaker does not believe the scope proposition or that the speaker is unsure about whether the state of affairs indicated by the scope proposition holds.⁷ In the presence of *dizque* (6a), the speaker may believe that the scope proposition is false; she may also remain undecided. In contrast, in the presence of *como que* (6b), the speaker may be undecided with respect to the scope proposition, but it is not possible for her to fully discard it—it is infelicitous for her to state that she does not believe the scope proposition. In section 5.2, we make a proposal that accounts for this distinction, which builds on AnderBois (2014) and Faller (2002; 2019) for *dizque*, and on Matthewson et al. (2007) and Faller (2002) for *como que*.

⁷ This discussion can be further expanded to the consideration of public commitments (Farkas & Bruce 2010; see Murray 2017; Faller 2019; 2023; Bhadra 2020; Martínez Vera 2024 for discussion about evidentials). This property may be tested by means of a continuation by which the speaker makes a(n overt) statement that questions the truth of the scope proposition. In the presence of *dizque* (ia), the continuation is possible; with *como que* (ib), it is not—the speaker must be committed to (the possibility of) the truth of the scope proposition here.

- (i) a. *Dizque* va a llover esta noche, pero no me parece que sea verdad.
dizque is.going.to rain this night but no CL seem that be truth
 ‘Allegedly, it is going to rain tonight, but it doesn’t seem true (to me).’
- b. *Como que* va a llover esta noche, pero #no me parece que sea verdad.
como que is.going.to rain this night but no CL seem that be truth
 ‘It looks like it is going to rain tonight, but it doesn’t seem true (to me).’

A detailed discussion of this property should ultimately be supplemented with detailed discussion of the illocutionary force of sentences with *dizque* and *como que*. There is extensive work on reportative evidentials and how they need not entail the commitment to the truth of the scope proposition (see Faller 2002; 2019; Anderbois 2014; among others). This is different from other evidentials, such as inferentials, where such a dissociation has not been documented. While we address these issues to an extent in section 5.2, we leave a more detailed discussion for future research.

- (6) a. *Dizque* va a llover esta noche, pero yo no lo creo / no estoy seguro
dizque is.going.to rain this night but I no CL believe no am sure
 de si así será.
 of if like.that will.be
 ‘Allegedly, it is going to rain tonight, but I don’t believe it/I’m not sure whether it’ll actually rain.’
- b. *Como que* va a llover esta noche, pero #yo no lo creo / no estoy
como que is.going.to rain this night but I no CL believe no am
 seguro de si así será.
 sure of if like.that will.be
 ‘It looks like it is going to rain tonight, but I don’t believe it/I’m not sure whether it’ll actually rain.’

The examples in (3)–(6) have focused on cases where *dizque* and *como que* modify the whole clause. It is worth pointing out that the evidential contribution and epistemic implication of lack of certainty are also present when *dizque* and *como que* appear next to (and modify) a subclausal constituent. Here we illustrate this with an example concentrating on this aspect (see section 3 for more in-depth discussion). Thus, the examples in (7) (= (2)) are felicitously uttered if the speaker has reportative evidence for the proposition that Juan brought a sea compass (e.g., the speaker was told about it) (7a) and if the speaker infers that Juan brought a sea compass (e.g., the speaker infers that Juan brought a sea compass, because Juan is a sailing aficionado, and the speaker knows that he was missing a sea compass and was going to get things related to sailing soon) (7b).⁸

- (7) a. Juan trajo *dizque* un compás marino (que resultó ser un visor de fotos).
 Juan brought *dizque* a compass sea that resulted be a viewer of photos
 ‘Juan brought a kind of a sea compass (that ended up being a photo viewer).’
- b. Juan trajo *como que* un compás marino (que resultó ser un visor de fotos).
 Juan brought *como que* a compass sea that resulted be a viewer of photos
 ‘Juan brought a kind of a sea compass (that ended up being a photo viewer).’

(see Grajales 2017)

Furthermore, the epistemic implication of lack of certainty is also present in (7). It is tied to the constituent following *dizque* and *como que*, i.e., the speaker’s intended implication suggests that what is denoted by the expression adjacent to *dizque* and *como que* may come under scrutiny.

⁸ An anonymous reviewer points out to us that (7b) appears to not require commitment to the possibility of the scope proposition. They suggest that (7b) can be accommodated if “the modal claim in (7b) has past temporal perspective (see[,] e.g., Rullmann & Matthewson 2018 on epistemic modals with past temporal perspective). In this case, the reference time for the modal claim would be in the past and so the speaker would be required to be committed to the possibility of the truth of the prejacent at that past time but wouldn’t need to be committed to the possibility the prejacent at the utterance time.” We would like to thank the reviewer for this suggestion. We leave the issue of temporal anchoring for further research.

Intuitively, this means in (7) that there is lack of certainty in the speaker as to whether the object that Juan brought is in fact a sea compass. That this is the case is targeted by means of the continuation that appears in parentheses in the examples: the speaker corrects herself by indicating the a posteriori finding or realization that the object was a different one. That this is the case can be further supported by an explicit continuation that involves lack of certainty concentrating on the element following *dizque* and *como que*. We target this below by means of a continuation that indicates that the speaker has no doubt that Juan brought something, but she is not sure if it really was a sea compass.

- (8) a. Juan trajo *dizque* un compás marino; Juan trajo algo, no hay duda,
 Juan brought *dizque* a compass sea Juan brought something no is doubt
 pero no estoy seguro de si fue un compás marino.
 but no am sure of if was a compass sea
 ‘Juan brought a kind of a sea compass; Juan brought something, there’s no doubt
 about it, but I’m not sure whether it was a sea compass.’
- b. Juan trajo *como que* un compás marino; Juan trajo algo, no hay duda,
 Juan brought *como que* a compass sea Juan brought something no is doubt
 pero no estoy seguro de si fue un compás marino.
 but no am sure of if was a compass sea
 ‘Juan brought a kind of a sea compass; Juan brought something, there’s no doubt
 about it, but I’m not sure whether it was a sea compass.’

If lack of certainty arises in connection to a (subclausal) constituent as discussed, a natural question to entertain is whether the evidential contribution behaves similarly. In this regard, some evidentials have been argued to provide evidence for a constituent cross-linguistically, e.g., an evidential in a DP may provide the source of evidence the speaker has for the existence of the entity that such a DP denotes (Hanks 2009; Gutiérrez & Matthewson 2012; Reisinger et al. 2021). The cases under consideration, however, do not seem to behave this way with regard to the evidential contribution, which has to be of the whole proposition. Focusing on (7a), with *dizque*, suppose that the speaker has seen Juan bringing something, although she could not see what. Someone else then tells the speaker that they saw Juan carrying (what looked like) a sea compass. Thus, the speaker would have direct evidence that Juan is carrying something, but would only have reportative evidence for what that item might be. In such a case, (7a) is infelicitous. As for (7b), with *como que*, suppose again that the speaker has seen Juan bringing something, although she could not see what. Previously (e.g., a couple of days before), the speaker had heard that Juan was gathering things that are used to go sailing, and she further knows that sea compasses are things that Juan really likes, so she infers that Juan must have a sea compass with him. Thus, the speaker would have direct evidence that Juan is carrying something, but would only have inferential evidence for what that item might be. (7b), however, is infelicitous against this scenario. The discussion thus suggests that *dizque* and *como que* are

feliculously uttered with regard to evidence when the speaker has reportative and inferential evidence respectively for the whole proposition.

This section has shown that sentences with *dizque* and *como que* are felicitously uttered in the presence of relevant evidence for the scope proposition, namely, reportative evidence in the case of *dizque* and inferential evidence in the case of *como que*. In addition, sentences with these evidentials further convey lack of certainty in the speaker towards the scope proposition—lack of certainty is tied to the constituent following the evidential. These two aspects, namely, the evidential contribution and the epistemic implication of lack of certainty must be present in cases in which both clauses and subclausal constituents appear next to the evidentials.

3 Positions in the clause and comparison with *solo* ‘only’

As indicated, *dizque* and *como que* may appear in different positions in the clause, specifically, they can combine with and thus modify different kinds of constituents (e.g., clauses, but also subclausal constituents), as illustrated in (1)–(2) respectively (see Assmann et al. 2023 for extensive discussion of this issue for several focus markers cross-linguistically; see section 4 for additional discussion). Furthermore, the evidential contribution and the epistemic implication of lack of certainty must also be present. This section provides additional examples of the different positions that these evidentials can occupy in the clause. While this section concentrates on the syntactic distribution of *dizque* and *como que*, it must be kept in mind that, in all the examples that follow, the relevant evidence must also be present (see section 2). In addition, there is an epistemic implication of lack of certainty, which is closely tied to the constituent that appears adjacent to the evidentials (see (7) above).

The evidentials *dizque* and *como que* frequently appear in sentence-initial position (1); in fact, they may precede the subject if it is overt, as shown in (9). In these cases, the evidentials combine with and modify the whole clause (including the subject) (see Martínez Vera 2023; see also López 2009). The markers may also appear between an overt subject and the verb (10), which are instances in which what is modified is a smaller constituent, e.g., the TP *completó la primera vuelta* in this case.⁹

- (9) a. *Dizque* Milagros completó la primera vuelta.
dizque Milagros completed the first round
 ‘Allegedly, Milagros completed the first round.’
- b. *Como que* Milagros completó la primera vuelta.
como que Milagros completed the first round
 ‘It looks like Milagros completed the first round.’

⁹ A reviewer suggests that the markers may modify a *vP* or *VP* rather than *TP*. For examples like (9), this would involve the verb not raising to *T*, contrary to what is generally assumed for Spanish (see Suñer 1994; Ordóñez 1997; Zagana 2002; Camacho & Sánchez 2017). Demonte and Fernández-Soriano (2022) explicitly propose that *dizque* occupies the same position where auxiliaries are generated inside *TP*.

- (10) a. Milagros *dizque* completó la primera vuelta.
 Milagros *dizque* completed the first round
 ‘Milagros allegedly completed the first round.’
- b. Milagros *como que* completó la primera vuelta.
 Milagros *como que* completed the first round
 ‘Milagros appears to have completed the first round.’

Furthermore, *dizque* and *como que* frequently appear between an auxiliary and the verb (11) but can appear naturally preceding a variety of constituents such as DPs (12),¹⁰ PPs (13), and less frequently, adverbs (14).

- (11) a. La lluvia sigue *dizque* cayendo.
 the rain keeps *dizque* falling
 ‘The rain keeps allegedly falling.’
- b. La lluvia sigue *como que* cayendo.
 the rain keeps *como que* falling
 ‘The rain keeps it looks like falling.’
- (12) a. Va a llover *dizque* esta noche.
 it.is.going.to rain *dizque* this night
 ‘It is going to rain allegedly tonight.’
- b. Va a llover *como que* esta noche.
 it.is.going.to rain *como que* this night
 ‘It is going to rain it looks like tonight.’
- (13) a. Van a llegar *dizque* a las nueve.
 are.going.to arrive *dizque* at the nine
 ‘They are going to arrive allegedly at nine.’
- b. Van a llegar *como que* a las nueve.
 are.going.to arrive *como que* at the nine
 ‘They are going to arrive it looks like at nine.’
- (14) a. El joven escribió *dizque* siempre Gucci, nunca “in-Gucci”.
 the youth wrote *dizque* always Gucci, never “in-Gucci”
 ‘The young man allegedly always wrote Gucci, never “in-Gucci”.’
- (Facebook 3/15/2020)
- b. El joven escribió *como que* siempre Gucci, nunca “in-Gucci”.
 the youth wrote *como que* always Gucci, never “in-Gucci”
 ‘The young man it looks like always wrote Gucci, never “in-Gucci”.’

¹⁰ Thus, *dizque* and *como que* may also modify the subject (9) as well, and the object (see (21)).

Constituent *dizque* and *como que* are also attested inside DPs and PPs. As shown in (15), *dizque* and *como que* modify the constituent to their right. Thus, these constituents are the PP (15a, b) and the NP (15c, d). Similarly, in the case of PPs, *dizque* and *como que* can modify the P's complement, as exemplified in (16).^{11,12}

- (15) a. Mira, desde secundaria teníamos un grupo *dizque* de beneficencia y esas cosas.
look since highschool had a group *dizque* of charity and those things
'Look, since highschool, we had an alleged charity group, and such.'
(adapted from Olbertz 2007; see Grajales 2017)
- b. Mira, desde secundaria teníamos un grupo *como que* de beneficencia y esas cosas.
look since highschool had a group *como que* of charity and those things
'Look, since highschool, we had it looks like a charity group, and such.'
- c. Juan trajo un *dizque* compás marino (que resultó ser un visor de fotos).
Juan brought a *dizque* compass sea that resulted be a viewer of photos
'Juan brought an alleged sea compass (that ended up being a photo viewer).'
- d. Juan trajo un *como que* compás marino (que resultó ser un visor de fotos).
Juan brought a *como que* compass sea that resulted be a viewer of photos
'Juan brought a kind of a sea compass (that ended up being a photo viewer).'
- (16) a. Van a llegar con *dizque* varios amigos.
are.going.to arrive with *dizque* several friends
'They are going to arrive allegedly with several friends.'
- b. Van a llegar con *como que* varios amigos.
are.going.to arrive with *como que* several friends
'They are going to arrive it looks like with several friends.'

¹¹ There is one exception with PPs, as shown in (i), where the preposition *a* is present. It seems that the presence of *dizque* and *como que* breaks the syntactic-prosodic requirements of the preposition *a*, namely, that *a* forms a prosodic unit with the DP complement; this requires further research.

- (i) a. ??Van a llegar a *dizque* las nueve.
are.going.to arrive at *dizque* the nine
'They are going to arrive allegedly at nine.'
- b. ??Van a llegar a *como que* las nueve.
are.going.to arrive at *como que* the nine
'They are going to arrive it looks like at nine.'

¹² To the best of our knowledge, the evidential contribution is still of the whole proposition (see section 2).

- c. El Líbano cuenta con un ejército de *dizque* 16 mil hombres.
the Lebanon counts with an army of *dizque* 16 thousand men
'Lebanon has an army of allegedly 16 thousand men.'
- d. El Líbano cuenta con un ejército de *como que* 16 mil hombres.
the Lebanon counts with an army of *como que* 16 thousand men
'Lebanon has an army of it looks like 16 thousand men.'

The flexible distribution of *dizque* and *como que* is reminiscent of that of focus-sensitive items in Spanish, such as *solo* 'only'. In particular, the distribution of *dizque* and *como que* is partially similar to that of *solo*. Cases with *solo* are illustrated in (17). Importantly, *solo* associates with a focused constituent (see Kovacci 1999; Sánchez López 1999; ASALE 2009: 2990–3002 for discussion about Spanish; see also Rooth 1985; Beaver & Clark 2008; Greenberg 2017; 2022; Hirsch 2017; Rochemont 2018). In (17), the constituent can be the full TP *completó la primera vuelta* (17a), the direct object *la primera vuelta* (17b) or a PP *a las nueve* (17c).

- (17) a. Milagros *solo* completó la primera vuelta.
Milagros only completed the first round
'Milagros only completed the first round'
- b. Milagros completó *solo* la primera vuelta.
Milagros completed only the first round
'Milagros completed only the first round.'
- c. Van a llegar *solo* a las nueve.
are.going.to arrive only at the nine
'They are going to arrive only at nine.'

As for cases with *solo* inside DPs and PPs, *solo* cannot appear DP-internally marking the NP (18) for focus.¹³ This contrasts with cases with *dizque* and *como que*, where this is possible (15c, d). As for cases inside PPs, *solo* can appear PP-internally in some cases (19b), but not in others

¹³ There are instances in which it is possible to have *solo* DP-internally. This is, however, a different kind of *solo*, which actually agrees with the noun, suggesting that it is an adjective; this item means 'mere, unique'. See Sánchez (1995) and ASALE (2009) for further discussion; see Bernstein (1993) for related discussion for Italian; see Coppock & Beaver (2014) for an analysis of English *mere* (and other exclusives).

- (i) a. Me sorprende la *sola* pregunta.
CL surprises the mere question
'The mere question surprises me.'
- b. Se presentó con la *sola* compañía de un escolta.
CL arrived with the mere company of a bodyguard
'S/he arrived with only the company of a bodyguard.'

(19a) (see Kayne 1998 for discussion of English *only*). This distribution contrasts with that of *dizque* and *como que*, as illustrated in (16), with the latter appearing inside PPs more broadly (see Riqueros 2013 and Martínez Vera 2020b for discussion of extraction possibilities with PPs in Spanish).

(18) *Trajo un *solo* compás marino.
brought a only compass sea
'Juan brought an only sea compass.'

- (19) a. *Van a llegar con *solo* varios amigos.
are.going.to arrive with only several friends
'They are going to arrive allegedly with several friends.'
- b. El Líbano cuenta con un ejército de *solo* 16 mil hombres.
the Lebanon counts with an army of only 16 thousand men
'Lebanon has an army of only 16 thousand men.'

(Real Academia Española)

To sum up, we suggest that the (partially) parallel distribution of *dizque* and *como que*, and *solo* (with *dizque* and *como que* displaying a more flexible distribution) is explained, because the common property that these elements share is the role they play in connection to focus. This issue will play a key role in our analysis for *dizque* and *como que* in section 5. The next section addresses this issue further with regard to presentational focus.

4 Question-answer congruence

The previous section has addressed the flexible distribution of *dizque* and *como que*, which is partially reminiscent of elements such as *solo*, which is focus-sensitive. Based on these parallels, we have suggested that *dizque* and *como que* are involved in signaling focus. In this section, we concentrate on presentational focus in particular. This section strengthens this suggestion by taking a closer look at cases of question-answer congruence (Halliday 1967; Hamblin 1973; Karttunen 1977; Groenendijk & Stokhof 1984; Rooth 1985; 1992; Krifka 1992; Ginzburg 1996; Roberts 1996). We show that *dizque* and *como que* are sensitive to previous discourse in that sentences with these elements must be congruent with the previously raised question (intuitively, the question under discussion), i.e., the distribution of *dizque* and *como que* is governed by information structure, since they must associate with a constituent that is focused in the discourse context.¹⁴ As standardly assumed, a sentence is congruent to a question if the Hamblin set for the question is a subset of the focus alternative set in the answer (for concreteness,

¹⁴ For simplicity, we only discuss cases involving complete answers. While partial answers are possible as long as they are relevant for the question under discussion, they are set aside in this paper.

we further understand the previous discourse, i.e., the relevant question, as the immediately preceding utterance to the ones under investigation). The discussion has further implications as to how association with the relevant constituent takes place, which builds on the discussion in the previous section. Interestingly, *dizque* and *como que* must precede the element that signals the relevant information. Building on the discussion in section 3, we propose that *dizque* and *como que*, in addition to being evidentials, are focus markers, which accounts for the question-answer congruence facts in a straightforward way.

We begin the discussion with a *What happened?* question that asks for Pedro's whereabouts. The exchange in (20) is congruent in that the answer provides a resolution for the question (if there is no obvious explicit or inferred discourse to which (20A) can be tied, the exchange below would not be felicitous; see (23) below). The elements *dizque* (20B) and *como que* (20B') mark the clause for focus.

- (20) A: ¿Qué pasó (ayer con Pedro)?
 what happened yesterday with Pedro
 'What happened (yesterday with Pedro)?'
- B: *Dizque* (Pedro) llegó de viaje.
dizque Pedro arrived from trip
 'Allegedly, he arrived from his trip.'
- B': *Como que* (Pedro) llegó de viaje.
como que Pedro arrived from trip
 'It looks like he arrived from his trip.'

Interestingly, *dizque* and *como que* must immediately precede the constituent that provides the information that answers the relevant question. If these elements appear in a different position, the answer is infelicitous. This is illustrated below with an object question (21) and an adjunct question (22)—in parentheses we indicate the elements of the answer that would be omitted when providing a short answer. In (21), *dizque* (21B) and *como que* (21B') must precede the object. Otherwise, the answers are infelicitous, as shown in (21B''), where *dizque* and *como que* are sentence-initial. (21B, B') are thus congruent with (21A); the position of *dizque* and *como que* is key. Something similar takes place in (22): *dizque* and *como que* must precede the time expression that provides the relevant information. If this is not the case, the answers are infelicitous. It is worth noting that it does not seem to be the case that prosody plays a role in connection to signaling the element that provides the relevant information; the prosody of (21B, B') is no different from declarative sentences in general in the language to the best of our knowledge (see Face 2003 for an overview; see Muñetón Ayala & Dorta 2015 for discussion of declarative sentences in Colombian Spanish in particular); the focused element does not appear to display any prosodic reflex.

- (21) A: ¿Qué compró Pedro?
 what bought Pedro
 ‘What did Pedro buy?’
- B: (Pedro compró) *dizque* unos zapatos.
 Pedro bought *dizque* some shoes
 ‘Pedro bought some alleged shoes.’
- B’: (Pedro compró) *como que* unos zapatos.
 Pedro bought *como que* some shoes
 ‘Pedro bought some kind of shoes.’
- B’’:#*Dizque* / *Como que* Pedro compró unos zapatos.
dizque como que Pedro bought some shoes
- (22) A: ¿Cuándo viene Pedro?
 when comes Pedro
 ‘When will Pedro come?’
- B: (Pedro viene) *dizque* a las nueve.
 Pedro comes *dizque* at the nine
 ‘Pedro comes allegedly at nine.’
- B’: (Pedro viene) *como que* a las nueve.
 Pedro comes *como que* at the nine
 ‘Pedro comes it looks like at nine.’
- B’’:#*Dizque* / *Como que* Pedro viene a las nueve.
dizque como que Pedro comes at the nine

Note that these examples are interesting with regard to *dizque* and *como que* having to appear adjacent to the constituent that brings in the relevant information. This suggests that the elements under investigation are like those studied in Assmann et al. (2023) in that they show that different focus markers cross-linguistically require that their associate be adjacent to them. This is different from markers such as *only* in English, where prosody may play a role in that it signals the placement of focus, e.g., in long distance association (Hirsch 2017)—prosody plays no apparent role in the markers studied by Assmann et al. (2023); there may be morphological markers which have to appear next to the focused constituent (this is a strategy than some languages display, which runs in parallel with another strategy where prosody plays a role). Thus, when considering the English sentence *Pedro only bought shoes* as answer to the question *What did Pedro buy?*, the direct object in the answer, i.e., *shoes*, would display a prosodic reflex and long distance association with *only* is possible. This is not the case for sentences with *dizque* and *como que*, as in (21)–(22): they play a crucial role in question-answer congruence by marking the

constituent that provides the information that answers the question for focus, which is adjacent to them; prosody does not appear to play a role.¹⁵

It is worth noting as well that sentences with *dizque* and *como que* must actually be congruent with the previously raised question, i.e., in the absence of such a question (or if the relevant question cannot be reconstructed or inferred), sentences with these elements cannot be felicitously uttered. This is illustrated in (23). Here there is a generic question, which we assume is uttered in a scenario in which it does not raise (or allows the speaker to infer) a particular issue—its purpose is simply to act as a conversation opener. Suppose that the interlocutors have not seen each other in a very long time, and they did not really know much about each other; suppose further that Marta is a common acquaintance, but this is only a piece of shared information among potentially many other pieces of shared information—it is thus not obvious why information about Marta in particular would be communicated in the first place. The contrast in judgment between (23B, B') vs. (23B'') shows that a simple declarative sentence, i.e., (23B''), can be uttered providing such a piece of information in the exchange (even though there is no obvious prior discourse to which such an utterance contributes). This contrasts with sentences with *dizque* and *como que* in that these cannot be uttered. The reason for this is that there is no obvious explicit or inferred discourse to which (23B, B') contribute, in contrast to (20), where a *What happened?* question was tied to Pedro's whereabouts.¹⁶

- (23) A: Hola, ¿qué hay?
 hi what is
 'Hi, what's up?'
- B: #*Dizque* Marta se ganó una beca.
 dizque Marta CL won a fellowship
 'Allegedly, Marta got a fellowship.'

¹⁵ The element *solo* in Spanish (see section 3) appears to behave like *only* in this regard in that long distance association can take place. This is exemplified in (i), where *zapatos* 'shoes' is prosodically prominent. This is different from cases with *dizque* and *como que*, as shown in the main text, where prosodic factors do not appear to play a role and long distance association does not take place (see Assmann et al. 2023). A detailed discussion and analysis of the contrasts among different focus-sensitive items in Spanish is left for future research.

- (i) A: ¿Qué compró Pedro?
 what bought Pedro
 'What did Pedro buy?'
- B: Pedro *solo* compró zapatos.
 Pedro only bought shoes
 'Pedro only bought shoes.'

¹⁶ In the absence of (23A), it is also infelicitous to utter (23B, B'), i.e., sentences with *dizque* and *como que* cannot be felicitously uttered out of the blue. In contrast, (23B'') is in principle possible.

- B':#*Como que* Marta se ganó una beca.
como que Marta CL won a fellowship
 'It looks like Marta got a fellowship.'
- B'': Marta se ganó una beca.
 Marta CL won a fellowship
 'Marta got a fellowship.'

Note that the evidential contribution must still be present in the cases discussed in this section. Recall in this regard the exchanges in (22), which are repeated in (24). These are only felicitous if B and B' have the relevant evidence. Thus, (24B) is felicitously uttered if B has reportative evidence, e.g., B heard from someone else that Pedro would come at nine. Similarly, (24B') is felicitously uttered if B' has inferential evidence, e.g., B' knows about Pedro's whereabouts, in particular, B' knows that Pedro usually tries to arrive at nine, although he is usually delayed. In the presence of direct, reliable evidence, uttering (24B, B') is infelicitous. In this regard, suppose that B and B' are with Pedro, and they are on their way to their destination. It is 8:50 and they are about 10 minutes away from their destination. Somebody calls B and B' and asks about Pedro's arrival time. In this scenario, uttering (24B, B') is infelicitous, which suggests that the evidential contribution is still present in these cases.

- (24) A: ¿Cuándo viene Pedro?
 when comes Pedro
 'When will Pedro come?'
- B: #(Pedro viene) *dizque* a las nueve.
 Pedro comes *dizque* at the nine
 'Pedro comes allegedly at nine.'
- B': #(Pedro viene) *como que* a las nueve.
 Pedro comes *como que* at the nine
 'Pedro comes it looks like at nine.'

Based on the partially overlapping distribution of *dizque* and *como que*, and *solo* (see section 3), in addition to the congruence facts discussed in this section, we propose that *dizque* and *como que* are focus markers. They are thus mixed markers that convey evidentiality and focus.

5 Proposal

This section provides an analysis of sentences with *dizque* and *como que*. In section 5.1, we discuss the syntactic aspects of constructions with these markers. In section 5.2, we turn to the semantic aspects of our discussion. Our approach provides a unified account for sentences with *dizque* and *como que* modifying both clausal and subclausal constituents.

5.1 The syntax of *dizque* and *como que*

When *dizque* and *como que* modify the clause, we assume that they combine with a proposition denoting expression (i.e., an expression of type *st*; see section 5.2). Syntactically, we assume that these evidentials are located in C or in some extended version of CP (in, e.g., EvidP or FocP; see Rizzi 1997 and much subsequent work). Demonte & Fernández-Soriano (2022) propose that *dizque* merges inside TP but is covertly bound by an argument in the Speech Act Phrase (see Speas & Tenny 2003). We depart from this view, suggesting that when *dizque* and *como que* modify the clause, they are generated in the higher positions of the sentence where evidential heads are located, i.e., in the CP (see Cruschina & Remberger 2008). In the structure in (25), *X* marks the evidential's sister, the TP, for focus; *dizque* and *como que* sit higher up in the structure, which we assume is in the CP (Rizzi 1997)—note that *dizque* and *como que* would still be taking a proposition denoting complement, the TP here, which is what matters from a semantic point of view (see section 5.2).

(25) *Clausal-scope*: [_{CP} *dizque* / *como que* [_{TP} ...]_X]

When *dizque* and *como que* modify a constituent smaller than the clause, we assume that the evidential moves covertly to the left periphery due to a type mismatch, as shown schematically in (26) (see section 5.2 for additional details).¹⁷ In that structure, *dizque* and *como que* are initially merged with constituent α , which does not denote a proposition, but, e.g., an individual (type *e*), a property of eventualities (type *vt*, with *v* the type of eventualities), etc. (see section 3). This type mismatch triggers merger with the clausal category TP that has the appropriate semantic type (i.e., *st*).

(26) *Constituent-scope*: [_{CP} *dizque* / *como que* [_{TP} ... [*t* [α]_X] ...]]

Our general setup is thus similar to analyses of focus-sensitive items, e.g., *only*, which is to be expected, since we claim that *dizque* and *como que* are mixed markers that make a focus contribution (see Quek & Hirsch 2017 for discussion of approaches along these lines). For instance, Rochemont (2018) proposes a movement analysis of *only* to an adverbial position above *vP*. In this sense, *only* in (27a) would raise to the position that it occupies overtly in (27b) (from Rochemont 2018: 264; adopting the above mentioned convention, *X* indicates focus). As expected, this movement is locally constrained to the same domain, i.e., the same phase.

¹⁷ Following Coppock & Beaver (2014), an analysis for *dizque* and *como que* in which they stay in situ is conceivable. We have not taken this route, because we think that it makes it perhaps more transparent, within an approach that highlights the syntax-semantics interface, how these elements make a dual contribution, with the evidential meaning always taking scope over the whole proposition (in contrast to the focus contribution, where a subclausal constituent may be marked). See section 5.2 for the semantic details of our analysis. We would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for discussion in this regard.

- (27) a. John likes *only* Bill_x.
 b. John *only* likes Bill_x.

That movement is locally constrained to the same domain is unproblematic in many cases with *dizque* and *como que*. Thus, the movement illustrated in (26) applies without a problem in the examples in (11)–(13), which are repeated as (28a–30a), since the constituents to which *dizque* and *como que* attach can be left-dislocated independently, as seen in (28b)–(30b).

- (28) a. La lluvia sigue *dizque* / *como que* cayendo.
 the rain keeps *dizque* *como que* falling
 ‘The rain keeps allegedly/it looks like falling.’
 b. Cayendo, sigue la lluvia.
 falling keeps the rain
 ‘The rain keeps falling.’
- (29) a. Va a llover *dizque* / *como que* esta noche.
 it.is.going.to rain *dizque* *como que* this night
 ‘It is going to rain allegedly/it looks like tonight.’
 b. Esta noche va a llover.
 this night it.is.going.to rain
 ‘It is going to rain tonight.’
- (30) a. Van a llegar *dizque* / *como que* a las nueve.
 are.going.to arrive *dizque* *como que* at the nine
 ‘They are going to arrive allegedly/it looks like at nine.’
 b. A las nueve, van a llegar.
 at the nine are.going.to arrive
 ‘They are going to arrive at nine.’

However, as Rochemont (2018: 272) indicates, *only* cannot raise outside of a prenominal DP position, which means that (31a) does not derive from (31b).

- (31) a. Mary *only* approached the student_x at the party.
 b. *Mary approached the *only* student_x at the party.

Rochemont’s (2018) approach thus raises a question with regard to (26) as to how cases where *dizque* and *como que* appear DP- and PP-internally are to be accounted for (see Uriagereka 1988; Corver 1992; Bošković 2005; 2013; Rochemont 2018; Oda 2022 for extensive discussion of extraction out of DPs; see Riqueros 2013 and Martínez Vera 2020b for discussion of extraction possibilities with PPs in Spanish). Recall in this regard examples such as those in (32), which

repeat (15c, d). Here, *dizque* and *como que* appear inside the DP, between the indefinite determiner *un* ‘a’ and the NP *compás marino* ‘sea compass’.

- (32) a. Juan trajo un *dizque* compás marino (que resultó ser un visor de fotos).
 Juan brought a *dizque* compass sea that resulted be a viewer of photos
 ‘Juan brought an alleged sea compass (that ended up being a photo viewer).’
 b. Juan trajo un *como que* compás marino (que resultó ser un visor de fotos).
 Juan brought a *como que* compass sea that resulted be a viewer of photos
 ‘Juan brought a kind of a sea compass (that ended up being a photo viewer).’

In order to account for these cases, we extend Cable’s (2007; 2010) analysis of *wh*-questions in languages such as Tlingit, Sinhala, Japanese and Korean that appear with an overt Q-particle (*sa*, *da*, *ka* and *ka* respectively). These particles mark focus in addition to licensing a question, according to Cable, who proposes that Q-particles establish an agreement relation with C (as is well-known, Q-particles and focus elements are tightly knit, as in Cable’s proposal; see Hirsch 2017; Quek & Hirsch 2017; Wu 2022; Branam & Erlewine 2023). In some languages, such as Tlingit and Sinhala, overt *wh*-movement to Spec, CP follows, whereas in others, such as Japanese and Korean, overt movement does not happen. This difference stems from distinct structural configurations for each language. In *wh*-movement languages like Tlingit, Q takes an XP containing the *wh*-word as a complement, as in (33a), while in languages like Japanese and Korean Q is adjoined to XP, as in (33b).^{18,19}

- (33) a. [_{QP} Q [_{XP} ... *wh* ...]]
 b. [_{XP} Q [_{XP} ... *wh* ...]]

Q agrees with C in both types of languages, but in languages with the complement structure in (33a) (Tlingit and Sinhala), QP moves to Spec, CP pied-piping XP. This is illustrated in (34), which schematically exemplifies the fronting of a *wh*-word in Tlingit in a *wh*-question after Q-movement (Cable 2007: 86). In (34), there is agreement between C_Q and QP, and QP moves

¹⁸ An anonymous reviewer suggests that it may be possible to maintain an agreement analysis in which there is a silent operator with which *dizque* and *como que* agree. In the cases in which *dizque* and *como que* surface in a low position, it would be indicated that these markers can only spell out the low position, in contrast to, e.g., *only* in Hirsch’s (2017) analysis, where such an element can optionally spell out both high and low positions. We leave a detailed exploration of such an alternative, as well as the comparison of the analyses, for a future occasion.

¹⁹ A separate question is whether the proposed analysis violates locality restrictions on extraction from subjects, for example, as a reviewer asks (Ross 1967; Huang 1982). Note that in-situ *wh*-questions are much more acceptable in those contexts (i)—*wh*-in-situ in cases like this shows that there is no violation of the CED, which suggests that no violation should arise for other cases as well, such as those with *dizque* and *como que*. Reglero & Ticio (2013) have proposed an analysis of in-situ *wh*-questions based on Cable’s (2010) proposal.

(i) ¿[Que el gato arañe a quién] te molesta tanto?
 that the cat scratches who CL bothers so much

overtly to the CP—the QP pied-pipes XP, as made explicit in (34b); (34b) disentangles the relevant components of the QP.

- (34) a. $[_{CP} C_Q [_{IP} \dots QP \dots]]$
 b. $[_{CP} [_{QP} [_{XP} \dots wh\text{-word} \dots] Q] [_{CP} C_Q [_{IP} \dots \emptyset P \dots]]]$

In Q-adjointing languages (see (33b)), Q can either overtly move to CP (as in Japanese and Korean) or move covertly, without pied-piping XP. Movement is possible in this case, because Q is adjoined to XP. This is illustrated in (35), which involves Q-movement (which may be overt or covert) in a Q-adjointing language (there is no pied-piping of XP in this case); there is agreement between C_Q and Q (Cable 2007: 169).

- (35) a. $[_{CP} [_{IP} \dots [_{XP} [_{XP} \dots wh\text{-word} \dots] Q] \dots] C_Q]$
 b. $[_{CP} [_{CP} [_{IP} \dots [_{XP} [_{XP} \dots wh\text{-word} \dots] Q] \dots] \emptyset] \dots] C_Q] Q]$

We propose that *dizque* and *como que* have the structure of Q-particles. This follows from the similarity between them and focus-sensitive elements such as *solo* ‘only’ (see section 3), as well as their role in presentational focus (see section 4). As in Cable’s analysis, *como que* and *dizque* move to the higher position in the CP, where they take wide scope over the proposition denoting TP. We assume the initial structure is (33b), which involves covert movement in our analysis—overt movement would yield a structure that is ultimately infelicitous, in particular, in cases with narrow focus, since long distance association in the surface syntax is not available.²⁰ Thus, we render the relevant structure in (33b) as (36).

- (36) $[_{CP} Q(dizque) / Q(como que) [_{TP} \dots [_{XP} \emptyset(dizque) / \emptyset(como que) XP] \dots]]$

The fact that *dizque* and *como que* can appear between D and NP also argues in favor of structure (36). Cable (2007: 122) proposes that a QP cannot intervene between a functional head and a phrase selected by that functional head. Since languages with the structure in (33a) project a QP, this QP has the potential to intervene between a functional head and its selected lexical complement. In languages with the structure in (33b), on the other hand, Q will not intervene between the functional head and its complement, because Q is adjoined and does not project. Therefore, the Q-particle *ka* in Korean does not block selection of FocP by Force in (37), which has the relevant Q feature (Cable 2007: 169).

- (37) $[_{ForceP} [_{FocP} [_{FocP} \dots wh\text{-word} \dots] Q(ka)] Force_Q]$

Similarly, when *dizque* or *como que* appear between D and N they will not block selection of NP by D, because they have the adjoined structure in (38). In this structure, NP is the sister head

²⁰ We do not maintain that all instances of *dizque* and *como que* originate in a low position (see sections 2 and 3 for discussion of cases where these elements appear in, e.g., sentence-initial position), contrary to Rochemont’s (2018) account for *only*, although nothing hinges on this. We leave this and other differences in the distribution of *dizque* and *como que*, and *solo* ‘only’ for future research (see sections 3–4).

to D and adjoined *dizque* and *como que* do not block selection. This is the relevant structure for cases such as (32), where there is an indefinite D, *un* ‘a’, and an NP, *compás marino* ‘sea compass’. Movement of *dizque* or *como que* can then proceed as represented in (36).

(38) $[_{DP} D [_{NP} Q(dizque) / Q(como que) NP]]$

5.2 The semantics of *dizque* and *como que*

In this section, we provide a semantic account of clausal- and constituent-scope cases with *dizque* and *como que*. Our analysis brings three aspects to the foreground. These are the evidence that the speaker must have upon utterance of the scope proposition; a contextual set of alternatives, which differ depending on the evidentials’ scope (i.e., clausal- or constituent-scope); and the status of the alternatives with respect to the scope proposition. We argue that the alternatives are key in connection to the implication of lack of certainty that is present in the cases under consideration. We further suggest that the difference with regard to disbelief, which may be present with *dizque* but not with *como que*, is linked to the evidential component in that the difference between reportative and inferential evidence has a consequence for the utterer’s stance with regard to the scope proposition. In what follows, we explain these components; these are brought together in (42) and (43), where the denotations of *dizque* and *como que* are given.

As for the evidence that the speaker has, following previous literature, we assume that *dizque* and *como que* encode hearsay and inferential evidence respectively (see Murray 2010; 2017 for an overview of evidentials encoding these kinds of evidence). As discussed in section 2, *dizque* is compatible with second- and third-hand evidence, i.e., it is compatible with a wide array of possibilities in connection to reports (e.g., the source may or may not be known, etc.). Here we capture the evidential contribution of *dizque* by means of the relation *Rep*, which takes speaker *sp* and proposition *p* as arguments, *Rep(sp, p)*, and holds iff *sp* has reportative evidence for *p*, where the reportative evidence is understood in a general, underspecified manner (see Demonte & Fernández-Soriano 2022; Martínez Vera 2023 for recent discussion). In addition, we assume that the scope proposition is presented (in an exchange to e.g., address the question under discussion; see Simons et al. 2010; see section 4); this follows Faller (2002; 2019). Importantly, as Faller (2019) notes, presentation basically removes the inference of sincerity that the speaker believes the scope proposition (Vanderveken 1990). To make this explicit, we adopt a *Present* relation that takes speaker *sp* and proposition *p*, *Present(sp, p)*, and holds iff *sp* presents *p*, which is to say that *p* is put out there (to address the question under discussion in an exchange), and crucially means that that *sp* remains silent as to whether she believes *p*.²¹

²¹ Our approach is static and has not adopted any machinery that makes reference to a table (Farkas & Bruce 2010), or even the Common Ground (Stalnaker 1978; 2002). Our proposal to have a *Present* relation tries to capture the fact that the scope proposition is put out there to address the question under discussion, but it is not asserted (Faller 2002; 2019). See Bhadra (2020) and Martínez Vera (2024) for discussion of compositionality in connection to illocutionary force and evidentiality.

This captures that, while the speaker may present some proposition based on reportative evidence, she may not believe such a proposition or may remain undecided with respect to it (see AnderBois 2014; Murray 2017; Faller 2019; Pancheva & Rudin 2019 for discussion of reportative evidentials, in particular, with regard to the absence of necessary commitment to the truth of the scope proposition). Adopting this position accounts for the felicitous continuations in (6a) (the example is repeated in (39)), which indicates that the speaker does not believe the scope proposition or is uncertain in this regard.

- (39) *Dizque* va a llover esta noche, pero yo no lo creo / no estoy seguro de si
dizque is.going.to rain this night but I no CL believe no am sure of if
 así será.
 like.that will.be
 ‘Allegedly, it is going to rain tonight, but I don’t believe it/I’m not sure whether it’ll actually rain.’

In turn, *como que* differs from *dizque* in that it requires inferential evidence. As discussed in section 2, *como que* is compatible with inferences that are drawn from relevant cues (e.g., results), as well as common knowledge—the speaker thus makes a conjecture with regard to a state of affairs (Faller 2002; 2023). Here we capture the evidential contribution of *como que* by means of the relation *Inf*, which takes speaker *sp* and proposition *p* as arguments, *Inf(sp, p)*, and holds iff *sp* has inferential evidence for *p*, which intends to capture different possibilities in terms of inferences that can be drawn based on relevant evidence (see Grajales 2017). In this case, the evidence relies on the speaker’s judgment, i.e., the speaker makes an inference or draws a conclusion based on some relevant evidence available to her. Following Faller (2002; 2023) (see also Izvorski 1997; Matthewson et al. 2007), we assume that in the presence of an inferential evidential, the speaker considers that the scope proposition is epistemically possible, which would be similar to English *might*.²² We incorporate this in connection to assertions (Faller 2002), in particular, sentences with *como que* involve assertions of possibly *p* (in an exchange to address the question under discussion). Importantly, asserting a proposition involves the sincerity conditions that the speaker believes such a proposition (Faller 2002), in this case, that she believes that such a proposition is possible. We capture this as *Assert(sp, ◇p)*, which holds iff *sp* asserts that *p* is possible, which importantly means that *sp* believes that *p* is possible.

Since the speaker considers that the scope proposition is possible, the facts in (6b) ((6b) is repeated in (40)) are accounted for. In this case, the speaker may indicate that she is uncertain

²² This can be captured in different ways. Here we mention, as an explicit example, Faller’s (2023) recent discussion which concentrates on inferential evidentials (this proposal is developed in a Kratzerian approach to modality). In particular, the scope proposition is supported by reasoning (of the speaker) such that there is a world *w*’ in the set of epistemically accessible worlds $\cap f(w)$ such that *p* is true in *w*’ (*f* is a contextual, non-empty epistemic modal base and *w* is the evaluation world).

with respect to the scope proposition, but she cannot say that she does not believe it (as she deems such a proposition possible).

- (40) *Como que* va a llover esta noche, pero #yo no lo creo / no estoy seguro
como que is.going.to rain this night but I no CL believe no am sure
 de si así será.
 of if like.that will.be
 ‘It looks like it is going to rain tonight, but I don’t believe it/I’m not sure whether it’ll actually rain.’

Turning to the consideration of alternatives, as discussed in sections 3–4, *dizque* and *como que* are similar to focus-sensitive elements (Demonte & Fernández Soriano 2022) such as *solo* ‘only’ (Rooth 1985; 1992; 2016; Greenberg 2017; 2022; Hirsch 2017). Recall the structures in (25)–(26), repeated in (41). As discussed in section 5.1, we assume that *dizque* and *como que* mark the element in their scope (i.e., its sister, which is adjacent to it; see Assmann et al. 2023), which we represent by means of X . In (41a), these elements are base-generated in the relevant position in the left periphery and the whole clause is marked (recall that we assume that TP is a proposition denoting element), whereas, in (41b), they are base-generated taking constituent-scope (and thus mark the relevant constituent) and will move covertly to the left periphery due to a type mismatch. We further assume that, in (41b), the evidentials leave a vacuous trace upon movement (Wilkinson 1996; Nakanishi 2012; see also Hirsch 2017).

- (41) a. *Clausal-scope*: $[_{CP} \text{ dizque / como que } [_{TP} \dots]_X]$
 b. *Constituent-scope*: $[_{CP} \text{ dizque / como que } [_{TP} \dots [t [\alpha]_X] \dots]]$

The contextual set of alternatives (i.e., the focus value of the sentences under consideration) that will be considered is determined by means of what element is marked by *dizque* and *como que* (a similar approach has been applied to evidentiality by Martínez Vera 2024; we do not explicitly represent context for simplicity; see Rooth 1985; 1992). Here we illustrate this with two cases, namely, a case where the clause is marked (e.g., (1)), and a case where the marked constituent denotes an entity (e.g., (2)). If the whole clause is marked (e.g., in (1)), then the set of alternatives to be considered includes alternative propositions (the denotation of the relevant clause is also in this set). Thus, if the relevant clause that is marked by *dizque* or *como que* denotes the scope proposition that it is going to rain tonight (i.e., this is the clause’s ordinary value), then $Alt(\llbracket [_{TP} \text{ It is going to rain tonight }]_X \rrbracket) = \{q \mid q \in D_{st}\}$ (English is used for readability). If, on the other hand, *dizque* and *como que* mark a (subclausal) constituent (e.g., in (2)), then the alternatives are propositions that vary in that element. For instance, if *dizque* and *como que* mark an expression that denotes the individual the sea compass in the relevant clause, then the alternatives vary with regard to this individual, e.g., $Alt(\llbracket [_{TP} \text{ Juan brought [the sea compass]}_X] \rrbracket) = \{\lambda w[\text{Juan brought } x \text{ in } w] \mid x \in D_e\}$.

What remains to be addressed is the status of the alternatives with respect to the scope proposition, which in our approach is fundamental in connection to the implication of lack of certainty. Adopting a suggestion made to us by an anonymous reviewer, we propose that there is an alternative q different from scope proposition p such that it is possible that only q is true.²³ We thus get that p is presented in the case of *dizque* or that $\diamond p$ is asserted in the case of *como que*, and that, simultaneously, q may possibly be the only true proposition among alternatives (we represent the latter as $\diamond[Only(q)]$). If this is the case, then, it would be possible that q by itself addresses (e.g., provides a complete answer to) the question under discussion. If *Only(q)* held, then p would be false, so $\diamond[Only(q)]$ would entail that it is possible that $\neg p$, which is equivalent to not believing p . By means of illustration, consider the sentences in (2), i.e., *Juan trajo dizque/como que un compás marino* ‘Juan brought a kind of a sea compass’. Here $\diamond[Only(q)]$ would say that it is possible that Juan brought something other than a sea compass and nothing else, which leads to the implication that it is not certain that Juan brought a sea compass.²⁴

The denotations of *dizque* and *como que* appear in (42) and (43) respectively. *Dizque* applies to a proposition; the meaning conveyed is that the speaker presents that proposition and has reportative evidence for it, and it is possible that some alternative to that proposition is the only true one. *Como que* applies to a proposition; the meaning conveyed is that the speaker asserts

²³ See Greenberg (2017; 2022) for discussion as to whether a scalar component may be needed in connection to focus-sensitive items (see also Beck 1997; Beaver & Clark 2008; Faller 2012; Coppock & Beaver 2014). See Yalcin (2007), Villalta (2008) and Anand & Hacquard (2013) for discussion as to how to capture the meaning of doubt in Spanish and cross-linguistically.

²⁴ The account discussed above is compatible with cases in which the scope proposition and an alternative are mutually exclusive. This is the case if, e.g., the alternatives are the scope proposition and its negation (e.g., if the alternatives are based on a question such as whether it is raining for an example such as (1)), but also for cases in which, in principle, the alternatives are not mutually exclusive, as in a case such as the one involving a sea compass (2). Naturally, as in the setup for (2), alternatives are contextually mutually exclusive, and the proposal discussed in the main text can capture such a case. However, mutual exclusivity of alternatives is not necessary. Consider (i) below. Suppose that the alternatives vary in the object being brought, a sea compass or a photo viewer (logically, these alternatives are not mutually exclusive, in contrast to, e.g., the alternatives of a polar question, as in the rain case mentioned above). It is actually possible to follow (i) up with something like *En efecto, sí era un compás marino y además trajo un visor de fotos* ‘In fact, it actually was a sea compass and he also brought a photo viewer,’ where the possibility of the scope proposition is strengthened and the other alternative is overtly stated.

(i) Juan trajo *como que* un compás marino.
 Juan brought *como que* a compass sea
 ‘Juan brought a kind of a sea compass.’

The current proposal can accommodate these facts, since what is required is the mere possibility that an alternative distinct from the scope proposition be the only true one. We would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for making very useful and insightful suggestions with regard to how to capture the implication of lack of certainty.

that that proposition is possible and has inferential evidence for it, and it is possible that some alternative to that proposition is the only true one.²⁵

$$(42) \quad \llbracket \text{dizque} \rrbracket(p) = \text{Present}(sp, p) \ \& \ \text{Rep}(sp, p) \ \& \ \exists q \in \text{Alt}(p)[q \neq p \ \& \ \diamond[\text{Only}(q)]]$$

$$(43) \quad \llbracket \text{como que} \rrbracket(p) = \text{Assert}(sp, \diamond p) \ \& \ \text{Inf}(sp, p) \ \& \ \exists q \in \text{Alt}(p)[q \neq p \ \& \ \diamond[\text{Only}(q)]]$$

To illustrate our proposal, consider the following examples, where (44) (= (1a)) is a case of clausal-scope and (45) (= (2b)) is a case of constituent-scope. (44) is an example with *dizque*, where the speaker has reportative evidence for the scope proposition. In this case, the alternatives that are considered are whole propositions (44c, d), i.e., this is a case of clausal-scope (in this example, the scope proposition is marked with *X* (44b); we further include a short preamble based on the discussion about congruence in section 4). For illustration, suppose that the question under discussion is whether it is going to rain tonight, so the alternatives are the scope proposition and its negation. The implication of lack of certainty is to be understood in terms of such an alternative being the only true one. In this example, the speaker may remain agnostic with regard to the scope proposition or may even believe that it is false.

- (44) a. (Te cuento lo relevante:) *dizque* va a llover esta noche.
 (CL tell the relevant *dizque* is.going.to rain this night
 ‘(I’ll tell you what is relevant:) allegedly, it is going to rain tonight.’
- b. $[_{CP} \text{ dizque } [_{TP} \text{ it is going to rain tonight }]_X]$
- c. $\llbracket (44a) \rrbracket = \text{Present}(sp, \lambda w[\text{it is going to rain tonight in } w]) \ \& \ \text{Rep}(sp, \lambda w[\text{it is going to rain tonight in } w]) \ \& \ \exists q \in \text{Alt}(\llbracket [_{TP} \text{ it is going to rain tonight }]_X \rrbracket) [q \neq \lambda w[\text{it is going to rain tonight in } w]) \ \& \ \diamond[\text{Only}(q)]]$
- d. $\text{Alt}(\llbracket [_{TP} \text{ it is going to rain tonight }]_X \rrbracket) = \{q \mid q \in D_{st}\}$

The example in (45) illustrates a case of constituent-scope. This is a case with *como que*, where the speaker has inferential evidence for the scope proposition. The focused constituent is a DP—this phrase is thus marked with *X*. The alternatives that are considered are propositions that vary with regard to entities (45d) (we assume that the DP denotes an entity of type *e* for ease of

²⁵ While the denotations do not include a layered approach (e.g., we have not addressed the at-issue vs. not-at-issue distinction; see, e.g., Murray 2017 for an overview), here we provide some insights in this regard based on a suggestion by an anonymous reviewer. There is an illocutionary meaning involving the relations *Present* (in the case of *dizque*) and *Assert* (in the case of *como que*) which indicates what is at-issue, namely, proposition *p* and $\diamond p$, respectively. The latter has been explicitly addressed in connection to answerhood (Koev 2018; Korotkova 2020) in section 4. While we have not addressed the at-issueness status of the evidential contributions or the alternatives, following Martínez Vera (2023), we suggest that these meanings are not-at-issue.

exposition). The implication of lack of certainty arises, because it is possible that an alternative other than the scope proposition is the only true one—in this case, for instance, an alternative that indicates that a photo viewer was brought would be the only possible alternative that is true. In contrast to the previous example with *dizque*, in this case the speaker cannot remain agnostic with regard to the scope proposition; she believes that such a proposition is actually possible—as a result, disbelief with respect to the scope proposition will not arise.

- (45) a. Juan trajo *como que* un compás marino (que resultó ser un visor de fotos).
 Juan brought *como que* a compass sea that resulted be a viewer of photos
 ‘Juan brought a kind of a sea compass (that ended up being a photo viewer).’
- b. $[_{CP} \text{ como que } [_{TP} \text{ Juan brought } t \text{ [a sea compass]}_x]]$
- c. $[[[45a]]] = \text{Assert}(sp, \diamond \lambda w[\text{Juan brought a sea compass in } w]) \&$
 $\text{Inf}(sp, \lambda w[\text{Juan brought a sea compass in } w]) \&$
 $\exists q \in \text{Alt}([[_{TP} \text{ Juan brought [a sea compass]}_x]])$
 $[q \neq \lambda w[\text{Juan brought a sea compass in } w]) \& \diamond[\text{Only}(q)]]$
- d. $\text{Alt}([[_{TP} \text{ Juan brought [a sea compass]}_x]]) = \{\lambda w[\text{Juan brought } x \text{ in } w] \mid x \in D_e\}$

The discussion in this and the previous section has thus proposed a unified analysis of *dizque* and *como que* for cases with clausal- and constituent-scope, thus accounting for the so-called labeling function (Travis 2006). A key contrast between *dizque* and *como que*, in our approach, lies in the nature of the evidence associated with each marker, namely, reportative evidence for *dizque* and inferential evidence for *como que*. Furthermore, while in both cases an implication of lack of certainty does arise, we have suggested that there is difference with regard to the possibility of there being disbelief: what we find is that, in the case of sentences with *dizque*, the speaker may believe that the scope proposition is false; in contrast, in the case of sentences with *como que*, the speaker deems that the scope proposition is possible.

6 Conclusion

In this paper, we have proposed a unified account of matrix declarative sentences with *dizque* and *como que* in Colombian Spanish. Our focus has been on the fact that these evidentials can modify clausal and subclausal constituents (Travis 2006). In addition to providing discussion as to what evidence is required in the presence of *dizque* and *como que*, our approach has likened these evidentials to focus-sensitive items, such as Spanish *solo* ‘only’. In this regard, we have further discussed question-answer congruence in connection to these markers, and have shown that sentences with them must be congruent with prior discourse. We provided a syntactic analysis that accounted for the distribution of *dizque* and *como que*, including the consideration of (apparent) locality violations. We further provided a semantic analysis of these elements

that made explicit their evidential meaning, as well as the role that focus played. The latter was deemed key with regard to calculating the implication of lack of certainty that is tied to sentences with these evidentials.

Some issues are left open for further investigation. Here we mention three. The first one concerns seldom cases where *dizque* and *como que* appear in examples where the speaker appears to have direct evidence; what is key is that she distances herself from what is communicated (see footnote 4). The main question here is how to capture the notion of distance and how this is reconciled with the fact that, in most cases, *dizque* requires reportative evidence and *como que* requires inferential evidence. The second one concerns discussion of the different layers of meaning that are involved in the denotation of *dizque* and *como que*. We have only briefly discussed the issue of question-answer congruence with regard to the scope proposition, while the status of the evidential contribution and alternatives have been mentioned only in passing (see footnote 25). The third issue concerns the analysis of cases with multiple focus-sensitive elements. While here we have concentrated on sentences with one element only, cases such as (46) are possible. Examples like this one raise syntactic and semantic questions with regard to the interaction of the relevant elements that are yet to be addressed in detail.

- (46) *Dizque* José compró solo una lavadora.
dizque José bought only a washing machine
 ‘Allegedly, José bought only a washing machine.’
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Competing interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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