

# A comparative analysis of *dizque* and *como que*

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## 1. Introduction

- This talk discusses the evidentials *dizque* / *como que* in Colombian (Medellin) Spanish.
    - As is well-known, evidentiality encodes information about the speaker's relationship to the source of a statement (Aikhenvald 2004, 2006, 2018).
    - Here is a non-exhaustive list of references that have discussed evidentiality in Spanish: 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 and Maldonado (2015), Grajales (2017), Saito (2019, 2021), Martínez Vera (2020), Sanromán Vilas (2020).
    - The evidentials *que* and *dizque* are the ones that have been studied more extensively.
  - Although evidential marking occupies a fixed position in the clause in many languages, *dizque* / *como que* can appear in different positions, as in (1).
    - The latter has been referred to as the labeling function (Travis 2004).
- (1) a. *Dizque* va a llover esta noche.  
'Allegedly, it is going to rain tonight.'
- b. Juan trajo *como que* un compás marino, que resultó ser un visor de fotos.  
'Juan brought a kind of a sea compass, that ended up being a photo viewer.'
- Our discussion concentrates on the following issues:
    - We provide an overview of *dizque* / *como que*, focusing on their general distribution.
    - We further establish parallels between these markers and Spanish *solo* 'only,' and discuss cases involving question-answer congruence.
    - We provide a unified account of the clausal- and constituent-scope of these markers.
    - Our approach likens them to focus-sensitive elements, such as English *even*.

## 2. Overview of *dizque* and *como que*

- *Dizque* and *como que* can take clausal- and constituent-scope, as in (2)-(3).
  - In both cases, the speaker must have relevant evidence for the scope proposition, i.e., reportative evidence with *dizque* and inferential evidence with *como que*.
  - In the absence of relevant evidence, (2)-(3) cannot be felicitously uttered.

- (2a) further expresses disbelief or uncertainty towards the scope proposition (2a), i.e., it is uncertain that it is going to rain.
- In (1b-3b), it is uncertain that what Juan brought was a sea compass.
- The extent to which the speaker expresses uncertainty differs in cases with *dizque* / *como que*:
  - The speaker may distance herself more from the information that is communicated in an expression with *dizque* than from what is communicated in an expression with *como que*.

- (2) a. *Dizque* va a llover esta noche. (see Grajales 2017)  
‘Allegedly, it is going to rain tonight.’
- b. *Como que* va a llover esta noche.  
‘It looks like it is going to rain tonight.’
- (3) a. Juan trajo *dizque* un compás marino, que resultó ser un visor de fotos. (after Grajales 2017)  
‘Juan brought an alleged 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 a kind of a sea compass, that ended up being a photo viewer.’

- Constituent *como que* / *dizque* can appear naturally with a variety of constituents such as DPs, and PPs (4a-d).

- (4) a. Va a llover *dizque* esta noche.  
‘It is going to rain allegedly tonight.’
- b. Va a llover *como que* esta noche.  
‘It is going to rain it looks like tonight.’
- c. Van a llegar *dizque* a las nueve  
‘They are going to arrive allegedly at nine.’
- d. Van a llegar *como que* a las nueve.  
‘They are going to arrive it looks like at nine.’

- Constituent *como que* / *dizque* are marginal inside PPs (5a-b)

- (5) a. ??Van a llegar a *dizque* las nueve  
‘They are going to arrive at allegedly nine.’
- ??Van a llegar a *como que* las nueve.  
‘They are going to arrive at it looks like nine.’

- Constituent *como que* / *dizque* are attested inside DPs (6).

- (6) a. Mira güey, desde secundaria teníamos un grupo *dizque* de beneficencia y esas jaladas  
‘Look, man, since highschool, we had an allegedly charity group, and such.’ (Grajales 2017)

- b. Mira güey, desde secundaria teníamos un grupo *como que* de beneficencia y esas jaladas  
‘Look, man, since highschool, we had it looks like a charity group, and such.’
- c. Trajo un *dizque* compás marino, que resultó ser un visor de fotos. (Grajales 2017)  
‘S/he brought an alleged sea compass, that turned out to be a photo viewer’
- d. Trajo un *como que* compás marino, que resultó ser un visor de fotos.  
‘S/he brought it looks like a sea compass, that turned out to be a photo viewer’

- *Como que / dizque* are partially similar to focus-sensitive markers such as *solo* ‘only’ illustrated in (7), which associates with a focused constituent (see an overview in Beaver & Clark 2008; Greenberg 2017).
- In (7a), that constituent can be the full TP [completó la primera vuelta] or the direct object [la primera vuelta]. Unlike *como que / dizque*, *solo* cannot modify NPs inside a DPs, as seen in (7d) compared to (6d).
- We assume that this difference derives from the different subcategorization properties of *como que / dizque* and *solo*.
- Since *solo* is an adverb, it does not subcategorize for NPs, but it can subcategorize for adjectives, as shown in (7e).

- (7) a. Milagros *solo* completó la primera vuelta.  
‘Milagros only completed the first round’
- b. Milagros completó *solo* la primera vuelta.  
‘Milagros completed only the first round’
- c. \*Milagros terminó a *solo* las nueve.  
‘Milagros finished at only nine.’
- d. #Trajo un *solo* compás marino, que resultó ser un visor de fotos.  
‘S/he brought an only sea compass, that ended up being a photo viewer.’
- e. Trajo un compás *solo* marino, no uno terrestre.  
‘S/he brought only a sea compass, not a land one.’

- The parallel distribution of *como que / dizque* and *solo* can be explained if the common property they share is associating with a focused constituent.

### 3. *Dizque, como que* and *solo*, and question-answer congruence

- Clausal and constituent *como que / dizque* presuppose an event, they are not felicitous in out-of-the-blue contexts unless the speaker can reconstruct such an event.

- (8) SPEAKER A: Hola, ¿qué hay?  
‘Hi, what’s up?’
- SPEAKER B: a. #*Como que / Dizque* Marta se ganó una beca.  
‘It seems like Marta got a fellowship.’
- b. Marta se ganó una beca.

‘Marta got a fellowship.’

- The question-answer congruence diagnostic used to assess focus patterns (v. Rooth 1985, 1992, 2016; Krifka 1992; Beaver & Clark 2008; Zimmermann 2011) suggests that *como que* / *dizque* associate with focus.

- (9) SPEAKER A: ¿Cuándo va a llover?  
‘When is it going to rain?’  
SPEAKER B: a. *Como que / Dizque* a las nueve.  
‘It seems at nine.’  
b. *Va a llover como que / dizque* a las nueve.  
‘It seems it’s going to rain at nine.’
- (10) SPEAKER A: ¿Qué pasó?  
‘What happened?’  
SPEAKER B: a. #*Como que / Dizque* a las nueve.  
‘It seems at nine.’  
b. #*Va a llover como que / dizque* a las nueve.  
‘It seems it’s going to rain at nine.’  
c. *Va a llover* a las nueve.  
‘It’s going to rain at nine.’

#### 4. Proposal

- We propose a unified account for *dizque* and *como que* in clausal- and constituent-scope cases.
- Our analysis focuses on three aspects:
  - the evidence that the speaker must have to utter the scope proposition;
  - a contextual set of alternatives, which differ depending on the evidentials’ scope; and
  - the status of the alternatives with respect to the scope proposition.
- *Dizque* and *como que* would be similar to focus sensitive elements (Demonte & Fernández Soriano 2022) such as *even* (Rooth 1985, 1992, 2016; Greenberg 2017).
  - Disbelief or uncertainty in cases with *dizque* and *como que* arises in the combination of these factors.
- As for the evidence that the speaker has, we assume that *dizque* and *como que* encode hearsay and inferential evidence respectively (see Murray 2017).
  - The evidential contribution of *dizque* is captured by means of relation *Rep* which takes speaker *sp* and proposition *p* as arguments, *Rep(sp, p)*, and holds iff *sp* has reportative evidence for *p*.

- *Como que*, in turn, differs from *dizque* in that it denotes the relation *Inf*, which takes speaker *sp* and proposition *p* as arguments,  $Inf(sp, p)$ , and holds iff *sp* has inferential evidence for *p*.
- As for the contextual set of alternatives, we assume that *dizque* and *como que* mark the element in their scope.
  - This determines the alternatives to be considered (this approach has been applied to evidentiality by Martínez Vera 2020).
  - If the evidentials take clausal-scope, the whole clause is marked.
  - If the evidentials take constituent-scope, the phrase in their scope is marked and the alternatives are directly tied to the marked phrase.
  - For example, if the marked phrase denotes an entity, the alternatives involve propositions where alternative entities are considered.
  - Alternatives are defined as usual.
    - $Alt(\llbracket \llbracket \text{It is going to rain tonight} \rrbracket_X \rrbracket) = \{q \mid q \in D_{st}\}$
    - $Alt(\llbracket \llbracket \text{Juan brought [the sea compass]}_X \rrbracket \rrbracket) = \{\lambda w[\text{Juan brought } x \text{ in } w] \mid x \in D_e\}$
- The syntax we assume appears (11)-(12) (*X* is used to indicate the marked constituent).
  - The evidentials combine with a proposition.
  - In (11a), the complement  $\alpha$  is already of type *st*.
  - In (11b), the evidentials move to a higher projection (e.g., EvidP) due to a type mismatch.
    - In this case,  $\beta$  does not denote a proposition, but, e.g., an individual (type *e*).
    - In the higher position, the evidentials can combine with  $\alpha$ , of type *st*.
    - The evidentials mark their complement and leave a vacuous trace (Wilkinson 1996).

- (11) a. *Clausal-scope*: *dizque* / *como que* [ $\alpha \dots$ ]<sub>X</sub>  
 b. *Constituent-scope*: *dizque* / *como que* [ $\alpha \dots$  [*t* [ $\beta$ ]<sub>X</sub>]  $\dots$  ]

- *Dizque* / *como que* and the associated constituent move to EvidP, possibly pied-piping additional material when *dizque* / *como que* appear inside a DP (see Erlewine & Kotek 2018 for focus-association through pied-piped movement)

- (12) *Constituent-scope*: [<sub>EvidP</sub> Evid [<sub>TP</sub> [ *dizque* / *como que* [ $\alpha \dots$  ]<sub>X</sub> ] ]
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- The difference between the grammaticality of DP-internal *como que* / *dizque* (6c-d) and *solo* (7c-d) may be due to the difference in category: as an adverb, *solo* cannot modify DP-internal constituents (v. Camacho 2011).
  
- As for status of the alternatives with respect to the scope proposition, we propose that the alternatives and the scope proposition are compared.
  - In the spirit of Greenberg (2017) and Martínez Vera (2018, 2020) (see also Guerzoni 2004, Crnič, Beck 2017), alternatives are compared in terms of degrees relative to a contextually supplied gradable property *G*.
    - In an example such as *A pesar de que necesitaban una secadora, compraron dizque una lavadora* ‘Even though they needed a dryer, they apparently bought a washing machine,’ *G* would stand for something like *need-of-an-appliance*.
  - *G* is a function from propositions to degrees to truth values.
  - We further adopt function *Max* which applies to  $G(d, p)$  (for degree *d* and proposition *p*) and gives as output that degree that entails any other degree to which *G* (in addition to *p*) applies (Heim 1999; Hackl 2009; Gajewski 2010).
  - The alternatives are compared such that the alternatives to the scope proposition are at least as good (relative to the relevant gradable property) as the scope proposition.
  
- We propose that disbelief or uncertainty in cases with *dizque* and *como que* arises due to a clash between what the speaker can utter based on relevant evidence and what alternative is to be preferred (see Villalta 2000, 2008; Yalcin 2007; Anand & Hacquard 2013).
  - On the one hand, based on the evidence, the speaker can only communicate that she has evidence for the scope proposition.
  - On the other hand, the speaker expresses that some alternative is at the very least as good as the scope proposition.
  - As a result, if some alternative is preferable, but the speaker does not have the (evidence) grounds to utter it, there is a clash between evidence and what is preferable.
  - The speaker is being as informative (see Horn 1984, 1989) as she can: she says what she can based on the available evidence, and she still expresses what is preferable.
  - These are incompatible pieces of information, which, we argue, gives rise to an inference of disbelief or uncertainty.
  
- The denotations of *dizque* and *como que* appear below.
  - *Dizque* applies to a proposition and such an expression is true iff the speaker has reportative evidence for that proposition and some alternative to that proposition is to be preferred.

- *Como que* applies to a proposition and such an expression is true iff the speaker has inferential evidence for that proposition and some alternative to that proposition is to be preferred.
- A small note: we use  $\geq$  (instead of  $>$ ), because, as the literature reports, there are cases where the disbelief or uncertainty inference does not arise.
  - We argue that if  $q = \llbracket \alpha \rrbracket$  in (13)-(14), there is no clash, so no inference arises.

$$(13) \quad \llbracket \text{dizque} \rrbracket(\llbracket \alpha \rrbracket) = \text{Rep}(sp, \llbracket \alpha \rrbracket) \ \& \\ \forall q \neq \llbracket \alpha \rrbracket \in \text{Alt}(\llbracket \alpha \rrbracket)[\text{Max}(\lambda d[G(d, q)]) \geq \text{Max}(\lambda d'[G(d', \llbracket \alpha \rrbracket)])]$$

$$(14) \quad \llbracket \text{como que} \rrbracket(\llbracket \alpha \rrbracket) = \text{Inf}(sp, \llbracket \alpha \rrbracket) \\ \forall q \neq \llbracket \alpha \rrbracket \in \text{Alt}(\llbracket \alpha \rrbracket)[\text{Max}(\lambda d[G(d, q)]) \geq \text{Max}(\lambda d'[G(d', \llbracket \alpha \rrbracket)])]$$

- Consider the following examples for illustration.

- (15) is a case with *dizque*, where the alternatives that are considered are whole propositions (the scope proposition is marked with  $X$  in this case).
  - What is compared in this case is the degree of likelihood of the alternative propositions in contrast to the prejacent.

- (15) a. (Te cuento lo relevante:) *dizque* va a llover esta noche.  
 ‘(Let me tell you what is relevant:) allegedly, it is going to rain tonight.’
- b. *dizque* [ it is going to rain tonight ]<sub>X</sub>
- c.  $\llbracket (6a) \rrbracket = \text{Rep}(sp, \lambda w[\text{it is going to rain tonight in } w]) \ \& \\ \forall q \neq \llbracket [\text{It is going to rain tonight}]_X \rrbracket \in \text{Alt}(\llbracket [\text{It is going to rain tonight}]_X \rrbracket) \\ [\text{Max}(\lambda d[\text{likelihood}(d, q))] \geq \\ \text{Max}(\lambda d'[\text{likelihood}(d', \lambda w[\text{it is going to rain tonight in } w])]) \\ (\text{Alt}(\llbracket [\text{It is going to rain tonight}]_X \rrbracket) = \{q \mid q \in D_{st}\})]$

- (16) is a case with *como que*, where the alternatives vary with respect to the object (e.g., *sea compass, photo viewer*).
  - What is compared in this case is the degree of likelihood of bringing a given item.
  - There is a clash between what the speaker can utter based on the evidence she has and how that compares to relevant alternatives.
    - As a result, a disbelief or uncertainty inference arises.

- (16) a. Juan trajo *como que* un compás marino (, que resultó ser un visor de fotos).  
 ‘Juan brought a kind of a sea compass (, that ended up being a photo viewer).’
- b. *como que* [ Juan brought  $t$  [ a sea compass ]<sub>X</sub> ]
- c.  $\llbracket (7a) \rrbracket = \text{Rep}(sp, \lambda w[\text{Juan brought a sea compass in } w]) \ \& \\ \forall q \neq \llbracket [\text{Juan brought } t \text{ [ a sea compass ]}_X \rrbracket] \\ \in \text{Alt}(\llbracket [\text{Juan brought } t \text{ [ a sea compass ]}_X \rrbracket]) \\ [\text{Max}(\lambda d[\text{likelihood-of-bringing-}x(d, q)]) \geq$

$$\text{Max}(\lambda d'[\text{likelihood-of-bringing-}x(d', \lambda w[\text{Juan brought a sea compass in } w])]) \\ (\text{Alt}(\llbracket[\text{Juan brought [a sea compass]}_x]\rrbracket)) = \{\lambda w[\text{Juan brought } x \text{ in } w] \mid x \in D_e\}$$

- We further suggest that our account can accommodate differences in commitment to the truth of the scope proposition, as in the contrast below.
  - We argue that these differences arise in sentences with *dizque* and *como que* due to differences in evidence types.
    - Reportative evidence is based on what the speaker hears.
    - Inferential evidence depends on the speaker's reasoning.
  - While the speaker can remain agnostic regarding what other people say, this is not possible when drawing an inference based on one's reasoning.
  - The speaker may not believe the scope proposition in the presence of reportative evidence (i.e., with *dizque*)
  - This is not the case in the presence of inferential evidence (i.e., with *como que*).

- (17) a. *Dizque* va a llover esta noche, pero yo no lo creo / no me parece que sea verdad.  
 'Allegedly, it is going to rain tonight, but I don't believe it / it doesn't seem true to me.'
- b. *Como que* va a llover esta noche, #pero yo no lo creo / no me parece que sea verdad.  
 'It looks like it is going to rain tonight, but I don't believe it / it doesn't seem true to me.'

## 5. Conclusion

- We have proposed a unified account of *dizque* and *como que*'s clausal- and constituent-scope of these markers.
  - Our approach has likened these markers to focus-sensitive items, such as English *even* and Spanish *solo* 'only'.
  - We have further discussed question-answer congruence in connection to these makers.
  - By combining the evidential meaning and the consideration of focus alternatives in a gradability-based approach, we deduced the disbelief or uncertainty meaning tied to sentences with these markers.
- There are some open issues that need further investigation.
  - One of them concerns the analysis of cases with multiple focus-sensitive elements.

- (18) *Dizque* José compró *solo* una lavadora.  
 'Allegedly, José bought only a washing machine.'

- Another topic regards the notion of evidence itself in sentences with these markers.
  - There is a limited number of cases where it seems to be the case that there is direct evidence, but, crucially, the speaker distances herself from what is communicated.
  - This example is felicitous if the speaker distances herself from what she did, e.g., she went to the gym but didn't do the things that are usually done there (such as working out); instead she just hung out.

(19) *Como que* fui al gimnasio esta mañana.

'It looks like I went to the gym this morning.'

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