

(NON)-DETERMINING THE ORIGINAL SPEAKER: REPORTATIVE PARTICLES *VERSUS* VERBS¹

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Abstract

This work argues that the Basque reportative particle *omen* contributes to the propositional contents of the utterance, and it is not an illocutionary force indicator, contrary to what seems to be suggested by the standard view on *omen*. The results of the application of the assent/dissent test for the case of *omen* show that subjects not only accept a rejection of the reported content (*p*), but also a rejection of the evidential content (*p_{omen}*) itself. The results are similar to those of the verb *esan* 'to say'. It is, then, proposed that the difference between these two elements can be explained by distinguishing between the contents of the utterances (with Korta & Perry 2007, 2011), regarding the (non-)articulation of the original speaker.

Keywords: Basque, pragmatics, semantics, proposition

1. Introduction

The aim of this work is to provide a brief account of the main semantic and pragmatic properties of the Basque *reportative* particle *omen*,² by means of distinguishing and determining the meaning of *omen*-sentences and the contents of *omen*-utterances

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² I will use simple quotation marks ('...') to mention expressions and as scare quotes, whereas double quotation marks ("...") to mark utterances. I will give the examples of sentences without any quotation marks, but numbered. Finally, I will make use of SMALL CAPITAL LETTERS to represent propositions.

2. The standard view

Three claims can be taken to sum up what we call ‘the standard view’ on the particle *omen*:

- a. *Omen* signals that the proposition the speaker⁶ expresses was said by someone other than herself.
- b. The speaker expresses uncertainty on the truth (or falsity) of the proposition expressed.
- c. It is the equivalent of the Spanish *se dice (que)*, *parece (que)*, *dicen (que)*, and French *on dit (que)*, *il paraît (que)*, *semble-t-il*.

I think that (a), (b) and (c) point to some basic properties of the meaning and use of *omen*, but they are misleading in several respects. Concerning the claim (b), I propose that the content of uncertainty often related to *omen* is not part of the meaning of *omen*-sentences, as seems to be implied by the descriptions or definitions of many grammarians and lexicographers (Euskaltzaindia [the Royal Academy of the Basque language] 1987, among others), but a conversational implicature that can be generated by an *omen*-utterance. I conclude this by applying Grice’s (1967a, 1967b) cancellability test. When the speaker expresses her certainty about the truth or falsity of the reported proposition, no contradiction arises. The uncertainty would just disappear.

In the same way, the claim (c) needs to be revised, as not all of the mentioned constructions are equivalent to *omen*; some of them, rather, are synonymous with another particle: *bide* (an inferential evidential).

However, in the present work, I will focus on the first claim (a), leaving aside (b) and (c) (see Korta & Zubeldia (2014) and Zubeldia (2010) for arguments for the revision of the other two claims).

3. Contribution to the propositional content vs. being an illocutionary force indicator⁷

The description in (a), which summarizes the definitions given by two renowned Basque linguists and philologists, Mitxelena (1987) and Sarasola (1996), seems to claim that the proposition expressed by the speaker of an *omen*-utterance corresponds just to what the speaker of the reported utterance (or the original speaker) stated. They both would express the same proposition *p*. In speech-act theoretic terms (Searle 1969), this would imply that *omen* does not contribute to the propositional content of the utterance, but it is rather an illocutionary force indicator. That is, for example, the position taken by Faller (2002) on the analysis of the Cuzco Quechua reportative enclitic *-si*, which is very comparable to *omen* in some aspects. Following her proposal, an illocutionary force indicator like this will affect the illocutionary force of the utterance; in other words, when an utterance that without the enclitic would count as a statement includes the enclitic, this new utterance has some other illocutionary force, associated with reporting

⁶ I will use ‘speaker’ meaning speaker, writer, narrator, etc.

⁷ The ideas presented in this section are originally (and more extensively) presented in Korta and Zubeldia (2014).

speech acts. She originates a new illocutionary force, called ‘presentation’, to explain the behaviour of *-si*, and represents the sentence ‘It is raining’ with *-si* as follows:

Para-sha-n-si.
rain-PROG-3-si

p = ‘It is raining.’

ILL = PRESENT(p)

SINC = $\{\exists s_2 [Assert(s_2, p) \wedge s_2 \notin \{h, s\}]\}$

The illocutionary force (ILL) is that of PRESENT, and it indicates that the current speaker’s speech act is a *presentation* of another speaker’s assertion p . The sincerity condition (SINC) related to PRESENT states that there is some speaker s_2 who asserted p , and that s_2 is neither the hearer h nor the current speaker s . There is no condition that s believes p .

Nevertheless, we find two problems with this proposal. First of all, in Faller’s proposal it is not very clear how exactly this new illocutionary force, ‘present’, would fit in the framework of speech act theory: what are its illocutionary point, its conditions of satisfaction and success, etc. that distinguish it from *assert*? And second, it looks like the sincerity condition provided for ‘present’ is not correct, for it does not include a mental state of the speaker (as speech act theory requests for the sincerity condition), but instead the existence of a state of affairs that there is a speech act of presenting another speaker’s assertion. Furthermore, the assent/dissent test Faller uses for *-si* gives different results in the case of *omen*.

3.1 Assent/dissent test

We will, see, first, what the assent/dissent test consists on (see, for example, Faller 2006): that if an element can be directly questioned, doubted, rejected or accepted, it contributes to the propositional content of the speech act; otherwise, it should be taken as an illocutionary force indicator. If we apply the test to a simple utterance such as (1) above (“*Euria ari omen du*” [‘It is said that it is raining’]), it involves answers like the following:

- (a) “*egia al da hori?*”
true.DET.SG Q 3SG.ABS.PRS.be that
‘is that true?’; or
- (b) “*ez da egia hori?*”
no 3SG.ABS.PRS.be true.DET.SG that
‘that’s not true?’; or
- (c) “*egia*”
true.DET.SG
‘true’.

- b: “*Ez* *da* *egia* *hori.* *Ez*
 no 3SG.ABS.PRS.be true.DET.SG that no
 di-zu *inor-k* *esan,* *zu-k*
 3SG.ABS.PRS.have-2SG.DAT someone-ERG say.PFV you-ERG
 asma-tu *d-u-zu*”
 make.up-PFV 3SG.ABS.PRS.have-2SG.ERG
 ‘That’s not true. Nobody told you that, you’ve made it up.’
- c: “*Egia.* *Ni-ri* *ere* *esan* *di-da-te*”
 true.DET.SG I-DAT also tell-PFV 3SG.ABS.PRS.have-1SG.DAT 1PL.ERG
 ‘True. I was also told that.’

I ran an experiment, based on the assent/dissent test, with the aim of checking those intuitions. It was restricted to the dissenting response (compare this with the truth value judgement task of Noveck (2001)).

The assent/dissent test is used, hence, as a proof to decide about the possible contribution of an element to the truth-conditions of the utterance. Some authors (Faller 2006; Matthewson et al. 2007; Murray 2010 and Matthewson 2013 among others) use this test as a proof for the case of evidential elements. Likewise, in the present work it is used to decide whether the particle *omen* contributes to the truth-conditions of the utterance containing it or not. I predicted that the participants would accept rejecting the evidential content of the *omen*-utterance, as they would accept rejecting the reported content *p*.

3.1.1 Method

Participants

Twenty-two native Basque speakers, between 22 and 64 years old (mean age: 40.2), participated in the experiment; 11 female and 11 male. They were speakers of different dialects of Basque: twelve from the Gipuzkoa dialect, five from the Navarre dialect and other five from the Northern dialects.

Materials and design

The experiment, based on the assent/dissent test, was restricted to the rejecting response. It was run on a laptop, making use of slides. The experiment had four scenarios or contexts along with conversations:⁸ two scenarios with *omen*-utterances, the real experimental scenarios; and other two scenarios for utterances with the verb *esan* ‘to say’, which were employed as a control. The reason for this was that there is a consensus that this verb contributes to the propositional content of the utterance, and is not an illocutionary force indicator. The same scenarios designed for *omen*-utterances were employed for *esan*-utterances, after changing the characters.

In each scenario, the participants first saw the context; that is to say, the situation and the characters were presented. After this, a conversation between two characters occurred, in which a character uttered an *omen*-sentence. Finally, two rejection

⁸ They were six scenarios originally. However, two were omitted from the analysis, because they show minor problems with the design, which could and did, in fact, hinder proper understanding.

utterances (target utterances) were displayed, which were responses given by the second character or conversational counterpart: one was the rejection of the evidential content (p_{omen}) and another one the rejection of the reported content (p). In each scenario the subject's task was to evaluate separately or independently these two items, according to a four-point scale of acceptance. So, it was a 2x2 design, with element (*omen vs. esan*) and rejection (of p vs. p_{omen}/p_{esan}) as within-subjects factors.

The scenarios, as well as the two items to be judged in each scenario, were presented randomly to the participants.

Both the conversations and responses were supplemented by audio recordings, namely, the participants heard them aloud while they were reading the conversations from the slides.

Let us see an example of a scenario in its original language, translated into English below (see Zubeldia 2010 for further details and examples):

<p>Unai eta Nora anai-arrebek amonarentzako oparia erostera joan behar dute.</p> <p>Unairi ez zaio gehiegi gustatzen erosketak egitea.</p> <p>Biharko hitzordua jartzen ari dira.</p>	
<p>Nora Izarorekin egon da aurretik.</p> <p>Unaik esandakoaren aurrean, Noraren zein erantzunek du aukera edo probabilitate handiagoa?</p> <p>Adierazi erantzun bakoitza emateko aukera 1etik 4ra.</p>	 <p>Aukerak:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Onartuko nuke, naturala da. 2. Ez da oso naturala, baina onartuko nuke. 3. Ez nuke erraz onartuko, ez da oso naturala. 4. Ez nuke onartuko inola ere.

English translation:

Slide 1. The siblings Unai and Nora have to buy a present for their grandmother. Unai doesn't like going shopping at all. They are making an appointment for tomorrow.

Slide 2.

- Nora: Are you free tomorrow?
- Unai: No, Izaro has to finish [*omen*] a work for the day after tomorrow, and she has asked me for help. (It is said that Izaro has to finish an assignment for the day after tomorrow, and she has asked me for help.)

Slide 3. Nora talked to Izaro before. Taking into account what Unai said, which of the following of Nora's answers is more likely probable? Rate each answer from 1 to 4.

Slide 4.

- a. That's not true, I know that you haven't talked to her.
- b. That's not true, she's already finished her work.

Choices:

1. I'd accept it, it's natural.
2. It's not so natural, but I'd accept it.
3. I wouldn't accept it so easily, it's not so natural.
4. I wouldn't accept it at all.

Procedure

Before starting the experiment, the task was presented to the participants, along with instructions, and they had the opportunity to ask questions to clarify possible doubts they might have. When they were ready, the experiment started. The participants were permitted to go back and forth through the slides of the same scenario, whenever they considered necessary. A black slide at the end of the scenario was the signal that a new scenario would start. The participants were asked to give their responses aloud, so that the experimenter wrote them down.

The post-experiment interview showed that none of the participants noticed the objective of the experiment.

3.1.2 Results and discussion

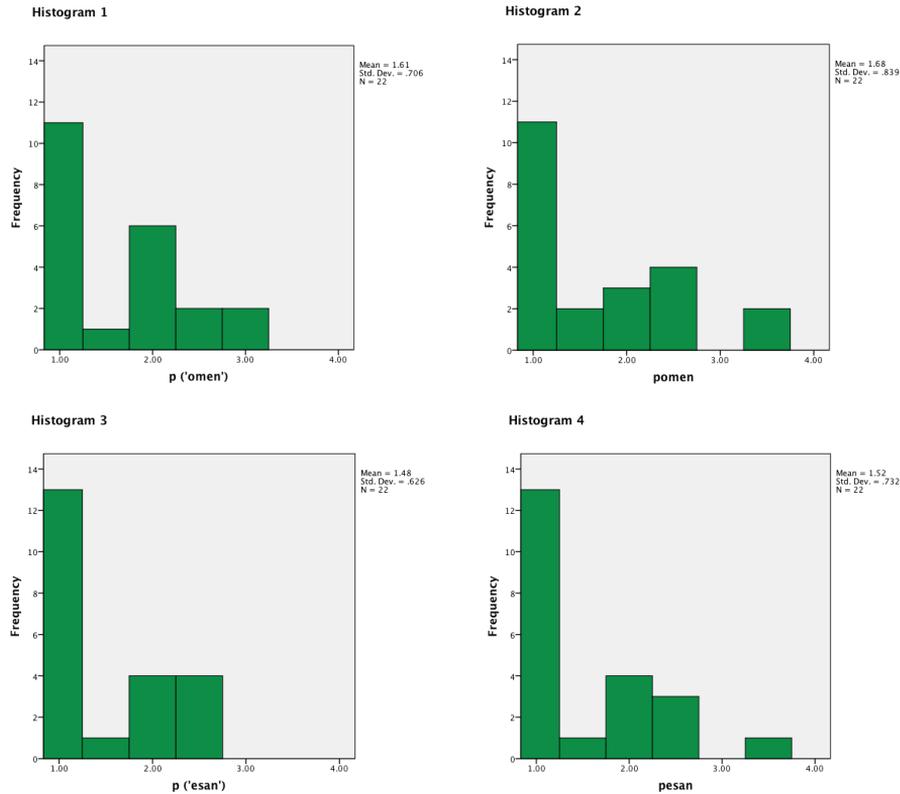
The results of the descriptive statistics (see table 1) are reported below, along with the histograms 1-4.

Descriptive statistics				
	Mean	Median	Values	
			Minimum	Maximum
p_{omen}	4.6608	4.7857	3.57	5.00
$p(omen)$	4.6251	4.7143	3.71	5.00
p_{esan}	4.6429	4.6429	3.86	5.00
$p(esan)$	4.6696	4.7143	4.14	5.00

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the assent/dissent experiment

The mean and median shown in the table refer to the average and middle score of the scores of all subjects in each of the four conditions (p (in the case of *omen*), p_{omen} , p (in the case of *esan*) and p_{esan}). While the minimum and maximum values refer to the minimum and maximum values from the means of the scores of each subject in each condition. Regarding these results, most of the participants accept rejecting the evidential content and the *esan*-content, in the same way as they accept the rejection of the reported content (see, too, the histograms below).

Histograms



(The y-axis indicates the number of subjects, whereas the x-axis the scale of acceptability of rejection, from 1 totally accept to 4 not accept at all.)

The Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed Rank test signaled that there is a non-significant difference between the rejection of the reported content and the rejection of the evidential content, taking both the case of the particle *omen* ($Z=.000$, $n=16$, $p=1.000$, two-tailed) and the verb *esan* ($Z=-.212$, $n=16$, $p=.832$). Similarly, it indicated that the difference between the rejection of the reported content in the case of *omen* as compared with the case of *esan* ($Z=-.210$, $n=16$, $p=.833$) is no significant, and neither is the difference between the rejection of the evidential content compared in the two cases ($Z=-.268$, $n=16$, $p=.788$).

Then, considering these null results, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. But, nor can we accept it. Thus, there is no experimental support, there is no effect, in favor of the stated hypothesis that the subjects will accept both rejecting the reported content and the evidential content. Yet, a fact is quite clear: participants' intuitions agree with ours. And the results obtained point towards a fact: should you have a context, it is acceptable to

reject directly the evidential content of an *omen*-utterance, contrary to what it seems to be the case of evidential elements cross-linguistically.⁹ That is why I think these results, despite being non-significant, are still interesting. The subjects took that the rejection can target either the reported content (*p*) or the evidential content (*p_{omen}*). And what is more significant: the results are similar to those for the verb *esan* ‘to say’. And no author would take a reporting phrase like ‘they say that’ as not contributing to the propositional content of the utterance containing it, and being instead an illocutionary force indicator.

So, taking into account the results of this experiment, we cannot obtain a firm conclusion with statistical support about the possible contribution of *omen* to the propositional content. Nevertheless, these results show that other people’s intuitions coincide with and strengthen ours. And, if this fact was not a sufficient argument for the conclusion that *omen* does contribute to the truth-conditions of the utterance, there are still the results of another test, the scope test, which gives us strong evidence for that conclusion.

3.2. Scope test

Regarding the scope criterion (see, for example, Recanati 1989), if the meaning of an expression falls within the scope of a logical operator, then it contributes to the truth-conditions of the utterance. If we apply the test to the case of *omen*, we notice that it takes narrow scope within several scope-bearing operators, that its semantic contribution is, more precisely, within the following operator’s scope: sentential (external) negation, communication predicates (like *esan* ‘to say’, *erantzun* ‘to answer’) and knowledge and realization predicates (*konturatu* ‘to realise’, for instance).

It can be embedded under sentential (external) negation:

- (4) “*Ez da egia euri-a ari omen*
 no 3SG.ABS.PRS.be true.DET.SG rain-DET.SG.ABS PROG REP
d-u-ela”
 3SG.ABS.PRS-have-COMP
 ‘It is not true that it is said that it is raining.’

In this case, the utterance must be interpreted as

- (5) IT IS NOT TRUE THAT SOMEONE ELSE SAID THAT IT IS RAINING,

rather than as

- (6) SOMEONE ELSE SAID THAT IT IS NOT TRUE THAT IT IS RAINING.

So, *omen*’s semantic contribution falls within the scope of external negation.

⁹ It seems that *omen* is an exception regarding the fact of passing the assent/dissent test, apparently in addition to the evidentials in Nuu-chah-nulth. Waldie et al. (2009) say that with evidentials in Nuu-chah-nulth it looks like possible to disagree with the evidence type of the evidential element, but they acknowledge that more research is needed in order to have clearer results.

Let us see, now, an example using a knowledge and realization predicate; more precisely, *konturatu* ‘to realize’:

- (7) [When I recovered, I could not move a finger, but I could hear. And, as far as what they were saying,]

(...) *kontura-tu* *nintzen* *artean* *mina-ondo-an* *nen-go-e-la*,
 realize-PFV 1SG.PST yet mine.DET.SG-next-DET.SG.LOC 1SG-to.be-PST-COMP
eta aurpegi-a-n *ez* ***omen*** *n-euka-la*
 and face-DET.SG-LOC not REP 1SG-have.PST-COMP
odol-a eta haragi zirtzil-du-a baizik. (Quiroga 2009: 109)
 blood-DET.SG and meet scruffy-PFV-DET.SG but

‘I realized that I was yet next to the mine, and that it is said that I didn’t have but blood and scruffy meet in my face.’

The utterance should be interpreted as

- (8) I REALIZED THAT I WAS YET NEXT TO THE MINE, AND THAT SOMEONE ELSE SAID THAT I DIDN’T HAVE BUT BLOOD AND SCRUFFY MEET IN MY FACE,

and not as

- (9) SOMEONE ELSE SAID THAT I REALIZED THAT I WAS YET NEXT TO THE MINE, AND THAT I DIDN’T HAVE BUT BLOOD AND SCRUFFY MEET IN MY FACE.

Again, *omen* takes narrow scope within this kind of predicate.

We will see, lastly, an example where *omen* is embedded under a communicative predicate, more precisely under the verb *esan* ‘to say’:

- (10) “*Alegri-ko* *orr-ek*, *Donjose-k* *bai*
 Alegri-GEN this-ERG Donjose-ERG yes
esan-tzi-ake-n! (...) *Larraitz-en* *zeak* *bals-eko*
 say.PFV-3SG.PST.ERG-1SG.DAT-ALLOC-PST Larraitz-LOC like waltz-GEN
soñu-e jo-tzen as-i ***emen-tzie-la***”¹⁰ (Oral)
 tune-DET.SG play-IPFV start-PFV REP-3PL.PST-COMP

‘This person from Alegria, Don Jose, yes, told me (...) that it is said that they started to play a waltz tune in Larraitz.’

In this example, the speaker, an ex-mayor of the small village Abaltzisketa, in the Gipuzkoan region of the Basque Country, is telling his listeners what happened many years ago near their village. It seems that there was a party in Larraitz, a petite neighbourhood 1,5 km far from Abaltzisketa. The speaker is bringing the words of the original speaker, the priest Don Jose. Reportedly, some people played the accordion at that party. Having in mind that this story happened many years ago, in a little Catholic village, it can be thought that the priest would not have been at the party; even though, we cannot know it for sure. Who knows whether this was in fact the case or he attended

¹⁰ *Emen* is a dialectal variant of *omen*, which is used in some subdialects of the Central dialect. Many times *omen* and the predicate make a single phonetic element.

It appears to me that they are completely acceptable: no contradiction arises when saying, after the *omen*-utterance, the utterances that follow the discourse connective. But, in contrast, a contradiction does generate when uttering (15):

- (15) #*Euri-a* *ari* *omen* *d-u*, *baina* *inor-k*
rain-DET.SG.ABS PROG REP 3SG.ABS.PRS-have but someone-ERG
ez d-u *esan* *euri-a* *ari* *d-u-ela*¹⁴
no 3SG.ABS.PRS-have say.PFV rain-DET.SG.ABS PROG 3SG.ABS.PRS-have-COMP
‘It is said that it is raining, but nobody said that it is raining.’

Hence, my proposal is that an *omen*-utterance is an assertion. What adding *omen* affects is the propositional content of the utterance, rather than its illocutionary force. An *omen*-utterance reporting *p* does not assert that *p*, but that someone else stated that *p*.¹⁴

This conclusion is alike to the results found in, for example, the works of McCready & Ogata (2007) for Japanese evidentials, Ifantidou’s (2001) for Greek *taha* and Schenner’s (2008) for German *sollen*.

Therefore, taking into account these results, it can be concluded that the distinction implied by claim (a) from the standard view is not correct. In the case of an *omen*-utterance, we do not have to differentiate between the assertion and the nuance *omen* adds to it, but rather between two different propositions: the proposition *p* expressed by an utterance without *omen* and the proposition *p_{omen}* expressed by an *omen*-utterance. Both utterances are statements, but they state different things, not the same one.

Thus, I conclude that the speaker, with the use of *omen*, signals that the reported proposition was said (or written) by someone other than herself, and that the function of *omen* is best analysed as contributing to the truth-conditions of the utterance, and not to its illocutionary force. But, now, we should ask: what kind of contribution does the particle make?

4. Distinguishing *omen* from *esan*

With respect to the context-invariant (semantic) meaning of *omen*-sentences, my proposal is that, given a sentence *S*, the proposition *p* expressed by an utterance of *S*, and an utterance *u_{omen}* reporting *p*, the meaning of an *omen*-sentence (*M-S_{omen}*) can be stated as follows:

(*M-S_{omen}*) *p* WAS STATED BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN THE SPEAKER OF *u_{omen}*.

I use ‘stated’ because *omen* can only report statements, that is, utterances of declarative sentences, whatever their illocutionary point (assertive, commissive, or

¹⁴ I contend that we need to distinguish between two concepts: a *statement* and an *assertion*. I take the former, as usual, to refer to the utterance of a declarative sentence. Taking it this way, a statement can constitute an assertion within speech act theory (an utterance intending to represent a state of affairs as real; with a words-to-world direction of fit); but it need not. It can have either a commissive, declarative or expressive illocutionary point. This difference will be pertinent when making the meaning of *omen*-sentences precise (see the next section).

expressive). In contrast, *omen*-utterances themselves always have assertive illocutionary points, and, so, they cannot be utterances of interrogative, exclamative and imperative sentences.¹⁵ Thus, by using ‘stated’ instead of ‘said’, we exclude these other kinds of sentences and are left with only the declarative ones.¹⁶

So, we can precise the things a little bit more, and say that u_{omen} asserts that p was stated by someone other than the speaker. This is what we take to be the context invariant meaning of an *omen*-sentence, the type of content that all *omen*-utterances share.

Now we will compare *omen*-utterances with those utterances that contain the verb *esan* as in the following:

- (16) “*Eguraldi on-a egin-go omen d-u bihar*”
 weather good-DET.SG.ABS do-PROSP REP 3SG.ABS.PRS-have tomorrow
 ‘It is said that there will be good weather tomorrow.’

- (17) “*Esan d-u bihar eguraldi on-a*
 say.PFV 3SG.ABS.PRS-have tomorrow weather good-DET.SG.ABS
egin-go d-u-ela”
 do-PROSP 3SG.ABS.PRS-have-COMP
 ‘(S)he has said that there will be good weather tomorrow.’

It seems that *omen* and *esan* are used for the same purpose, namely, the speaker uses both to express that she is reporting what someone else said. Then, if, as I am proposing, *omen* contributes to the propositional contents of the utterance (as does the verb *esan*), the question is: how do they differ (if they do)?

In the syntactic structure of (17) there a silent third-person singular pronoun *pro* demanded by the verb *esan*, which corresponds to the speaker of the reported utterance, and the determination of the ‘explicit referential content’ of the *esan*-utterance asks to fits the reference of this pronoun.¹⁷ So, in the case of the verb, there exists the full range of grammatical persons articulated in the sentence as a noun phrase.

On the other hand, *omen* does not subcategorize any noun phrase for the role of the original speaker. Then, we do not need to determine the speaker of the reported utterance in order to gain the explicit referential content of the *omen*-utterance. In this sense, this original speaker can be left indeterminate. So, the particle is much more general, indeterminate than the verb in this respect: the only thing we know is that the speaker of the reported utterance is different from the current speaker. The formulation presented as the meaning of an *omen*-utterance would be the minimal type content of any utterance of any *omen*-sentence. It reads ‘someone other than the speaker of u_{omen} ’, alluding to the reported utterance. In fact, *omen* allows any options as far as the original speaker’s status is concerned: it can be between fully determinate original speaker and fully indeterminate or non-specific one. In other words, *omen*-sentences, out of context, are silent with respect to the determination of the original speaker. This is one of the

¹⁵ I am talking about sentences type here; that is to say, about syntax, and not about what can be done with those sentences.

¹⁶ See subsection 4.2 for some examples.

¹⁷ See footnote 21 for a description.

characteristics that differentiate the both elements; namely, *omen* and *esan* (see the table 2 below).

So, we do not need to determine the speaker of the reported utterance to obtain the explicit referential content of the *omen*-utterance. Yet, this content can be ‘enriched’, providing a specific source for the reported utterance, excluding the current speaker herself. The speaker cannot use *omen* to inform about something she herself said before. When the speaker uses *omen*, it is always understood that she is reporting what someone other than herself said. To give an example, Leire cannot utter

- (18) “*Txile-n izan omen nintzen*”
 Chile-LOC be.PFV REP 1SG.ABS.PST.be
 ‘It is said that I was in Chile.’

she being the original speaker. But, in contrast, she can utter

- (19) “*Esan d-u-t Txile-n izan nintze-la*”
 say.PFV 3SG.ABS.PRS-have-1SG.ERG Chile-LOC be.PFV 1SG.ABS.PST.be-COMP
 ‘I’ve said that I was in Chile.’

An observation has to be made with respect to the first person plural. There are cases where the very speaker can be part of the reference of ‘we’, given that she was not the person who spoke on behalf of the people gathered in ‘we’. Let us consider an example. While we, some friends, are looking for a place to have lunch, another friend calls me by phone, and invites us to go to have lunch to her place. I ask to my friends what they fancy do, and one of them, after discussing between them, answers:

- (20) “*Joan-go gara*”
 go-PROSP 1PL.ABS.PRS.be
 ‘We’ll go.’

If the friend on the phone asks me

- (21) “*Etorr-i-ko al zarete?*”
 come-PTCP-PROSP Q 2PL.ABS.PRS.be
 ‘Will you come?’,

can I answer

- (22) “*Joan-go omen gara*”
 go-PROSP REP 1PL.ABS.PRS.be
 ‘It is said we’ll go?’

My intuition says that I could, but only provided that it was not me who said (20). If it was me, then I would have to say to my friend on the phone the same utterance (20).

Person		<i>esan</i>	<i>omen</i>
sg.	1	<i>esan dut</i> ‘I have said’	—
	2	<i>esan duk/n</i> ‘You have said’ (alloc.) <i>esan duzu</i> ¹⁸ ‘You have said’	‘It was said by someone other than the speaker of <i>u_{omen}</i> ’
	(3)	<i>esan du</i> ¹⁹ ‘(S)he said’	‘It was said by someone other than the speaker of <i>u_{omen}</i> ’
pl.	1	<i>esan dugu</i> ‘We have said’	— ²⁰
	2	<i>esan duzue</i> ‘You have said’	‘It was said by someone other than the speaker of <i>u_{omen}</i> ’
	(3)	<i>esan dute</i> ‘They have said’	‘It was said by someone other than the speaker of <i>u_{omen}</i> ’

Table 2: The difference between the verb *esan* and the particle *omen*.

And I want to propose that there is way to explain this indeterminate nature of *omen*, by taking into consideration the idea that an utterance has a variety of contents (reflexive or utterance-bound, explicit referential and enriched contents, at least),²¹ rather than assuming just a content, THE content (in the singular) of the utterance, that is to say assuming the general idea that the utterance of a sentence is associated with one and only one content. I follow Korta & Perry’s theory of critical pragmatics (2007, 2011), distinguishing between different contents, by abandoning the traditional ‘monopositionalism’ position.

Then, *omen* does not subcategorize any noun phrase corresponding to the speaker of the reported utterance in the sentence. But, still, the original speaker can be determined,

¹⁸ Even though *zu* ‘you’ is plural morphologically, as it was a plural pronoun at a first stage, I have classified it with singular pronouns for the purposes here, as it is now a pronoun to refer to the second person singular.

¹⁹ Even though the third person is called ‘non-person’ (it is shown in Basque with the absence of a mark inside the verbal form), I have classified both the third person singular and plural along with the other persons for the purposes here.

²⁰ Remember, however, the remark made above.

²¹ The contents distinguished can be described as follows, in the sense they are used in this work:

- Reflexive or utterance-bound content: the content of the utterance given only facts about the meaning of the sentence used.
- Explicit referential content: the content that is determined given the above plus fixing the references of the referential expressions used and resolving possible ambiguities.
- Enriched content: the content determined by the facts above plus unarticulated constituents, elements of the content of the utterance that are not represented in the syntax and semantics of the sentence uttered.

See Perry (2001/2012) and Korta & Perry (2011, 2013) for a systematic theory of utterance-contents.

taking into account the contextual knowledge and speaker's communicative intention, that is to say, by a pragmatic process widely recognized as 'enrichment' of the content (Sperber & Wilson 1986/1995).

Then, if we take into account the (context-invariant) meaning of an *omen*-sentence in its context, we obtain various truth-conditions or contents, depending on the original speaker's nature.

If we know that the current speaker of a certain *omen*-utterance is X, we get that

(23) *p* WAS STATED BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN X.

The context, then, can help to clarify whether X is just thinking about an indeterminate source, or she has some particular source in mind. If the former is the case, the content can be roughly like

(24) THEY STATED THAT *p*,

with an 'impersonal' 'they' (or, 'it is said'). On the other hand, if the latter was the case, you would have something like

(25) Y STATED THAT *p*,

where Y can be an individual person or a group of people.

So, considering the difference between subcategorizing or not a noun phrase concerning the speaker of the reported utterance, I propose that even though an *omen*-utterance and its *esan*-utterance counterpart would have the same enriched content, they will, in contrast, differ both in their reflexive or utterance-bound content and in their explicit referential content. In the case of an *esan*-utterance, the proposition in which the speaker of the reported utterance is determined would count as a referential explicit content, whereas, in the case of an *omen*-utterance, as an enriched content. And even though they would have the same enriched content, they could well differ in the enriched elements, for an *omen*-utterance would have more enriched contents than an *esan*-utterance, because the determination of the original speaker would be an enrichment. See the table 3 below for a summary:

Content	<i>Omen</i>-utterance	<i>Esan</i>-utterance
Reflexive/utterance-bound	Not articulated	Articulated
Explicit referential	Not determined	Determined
Enriched	Enriched	Inherited (from above)

Table 3: The original speaker

4.1 An illustration

We will consider, again, the utterances (16) and (17) mentioned in the previous section. Let us imagine the following scenario: Unai and Izaro are going skiing on Sunday, to Aralar (a well-known mountain range in the Basque Country), if it is good weather. Izaro listens to the weather forecast of Pello Zabala (a well-known weatherman in the Basque Country) every single Saturday. Unai knows that she is keen on following his predictions, and that she thinks they always have credibility. Today is Saturday, 21st of December, and Izaro, after listening to the weather forecast, has talked to Unai on the phone, saying (16), repeated here as (26):

(26) “*Eguraldi ona egingo omen du bihar*” [‘It is said that there will be good weather tomorrow’]

Unai, knowing how keen Izaro is on Zabala’s weather forecasts, can infer that it was Zabala the speaker of the reported utterance, and he can grasp the following content of the *omen*-utterance:

(27) IT WAS STATED BY PELLO ZABALA THAT THERE WILL BE GOOD WEATHER ON THE 21ST OF DECEMBER IN ARALAR.

This is a proposition in which the original speaker’s reference is enriched (as is the reference corresponding to the place). And the counterpart *esan*-utterance (17), repeated here as (28)

(28) “*Bihar eguraldi ona egingo duela esan du*” [‘(S)he has said that there will be good weather tomorrow’],

would have a similar enriched content:

(29) PELLO ZABALA SAID THAT THERE WILL BE GOOD WEATHER ON THE 21ST OF DECEMBER IN ARALAR,

even though both utterances would differ in the amount of enriched contents. In the case of the *esan*-utterance, there is just an enrichment, that corresponding to the reference of the place.

Nevertheless, the *omen*-utterance (26) and the *esan*-utterance (28) would differ in their explicit referential contents, (30) and (31), respectively:

(30) IT WAS STATED BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN IZARO THAT THERE WILL BE GOOD WEATHER ON THE 21ST OF DECEMBER.²²

²² The unarticulated constituent corresponding to the place should be indicated, as well, both in the explicit referential contents (30) and (31) and in the reflexive or utterance-bound contents (32) and (33), giving something like ‘THE PLACE THE SPEAKER OF THE UTTERANCE X HAS IN MIND’. But I am leaving aside it here for simplicity.

- (31) PELLO ZABALA SAID THAT THERE WILL BE GOOD WEATHER ON THE 21ST OF DECEMBER.

In the case of the *omen*-utterance, the reference of the speaker of the reported utterance need not to be determined, but we have to fix the reference of the current speaker, at least; Izaro, in this case. In contrast, in the case of the *esan*-utterance, we do have to fix the original speaker's reference; namely, Pello Zabala. Besides, the reference of the time is fixed in both cases.

Finally, the *omen*-utterance and its counterpart *esan*-utterance will also diverge in their reflexive or utterance-bound content, (32) and (33) respectively, because the *omen*-utterance does not have a linguistically articulated constituent concerning the original speaker, while the *esan*-utterance does.

- (32) IT WAS STATED BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN THE SPEAKER OF (26) THAT THERE WILL BE GOOD WEATHER THE DAY AFTER (26) WAS UTTERED.

- (33) IT WAS SAID BY THE REFERENCE OF 'pro' THAT THERE WILL BE GOOD WEATHER THE DAY AFTER (28) WAS UTTERED.

So, although an *omen*- and an *esan*-sentence have a comparable meaning and I make the proposal to analyse *omen* as contributing to the propositional content of the utterance, they can be differentiated in the contents of their utterances, taking into account the proposal of critical pragmatics, as the result of their difference regarding the articulation of the original speaker.

Furthermore, in addition to this principal difference, they have some other.

4.2 Additional differences

1. *Omen* always takes wide scope over simple negation,

- (34) *Ez* *omen* *d-u* *huri-rik ari*
 no REP 3SG.ABS.PRS-have rain-PRTV PROG
 'It is said that it is not raining.'

Any content of any utterance of the sentence (34) has the following form:

- (35) *OMEN* [EZ (EURIA ARI DU)]
 (IT IS SAID [NO (IT IS RAINING)]),

and never the following one:

- (36) *EZ [*OMEN* (EURIA ARI DU)]
 (NO [IT IS SAID (IT IS RAINING)]).

In contrast, *esan* does not have this kind of restriction, it can get both narrow and wide scope with respect to negation:

(37) *ESAN* [EZ (EURIA ARI DU)]
(SAY [NO (IT IS RAINING)])

(38) EZ [*ESAN* (EURIA ARI DU)]
(NO [SAY (IT IS RAINING)])

2. *Omen* is attached to declarative sentences (see (39)). It cannot appear in interrogative, exclamative and imperative sentences (see, for instance, the interrogative sentence (40)).

(39) *Bihar-ko buka-tu-ko omen d-u lan-a.*
tomorrow-by finish-PTCP-PROSP REP 3SG.ABS.PRS-have work-DET.SG.ABS
'It is said that she will finish her work by tomorrow.'

(40) **Bihar-ko buka-tu-ko omen d-u lan-a?*
tomorrow-by finish-PTCP-PROSP REP 3SG.ABS.PRS-have work-DET.SG.ABS
'It is said that she will finish her work by tomorrow?'

Esan, on the contrary, can appear in any sentence type, as it is expected. See, for example, the declarative sentence (41) and the interrogative (42):

(41) *Esan d-u bihar-ko buka-tu-ko*
say.PFV 3SG.ABS.PRS-have tomorrow-by finish-PTCP-PROSP
d-u-ela lan-a.
3SG.ABS.PRS-have-COMP work-DET.SG.ABS
'She has said that she will finish her work by tomorrow.'

(42) *Lan-a bihar-ko buka-tu-ko d-u-ela*
work-DET.SG.ABS tomorrow-by finish-PTCP-PROSP 3SG.ABS.PRS-have-COMP
esan d-u?
say 3SG.ABS.PRS-have
'Have she said that she will finish her work by tomorrow?'

3. *Omen* cannot be iterated, that is to say, it cannot appear more than once in the same simple sentence,²³

(43) **Eguraldi on-a egin-go omen d-u bihar omen*
weather good-DET.SG do-PROSP REP 3SG.ABS.PRS-have tomorrow REP
'It is said that it is said that there will be good weather tomorrow.'

in contrast, *esan* can:

²³ It is said that the particle *dizque* can be repeated more than once to indicate the degree of hearsay, in some varieties of Brazilian Portuguese spoken in Northwest Amazonia (Aikhenvald 2004: 179).

- (44) *Esan* *d-u-te* *esan* *du-te-la*
 say.PFV 3SG.ABS.PRS-have-3PL.ERG say.PFV 3SG.ABS.PRS-have-3PL.ERG-COMP
eguraldi *on-a* *egin-go* *d-u-ela* *bihar*
 weather good-DET.SG do-PROSP 3SG.ABS.PRS-have-COMP tomorrow
 ‘They said that they said that there will be good weather tomorrow.’

So, *esan* is recursive, whereas *omen* is not. What is aimed to be expressed by (43) can be given as

- (45) *Esan* *d-u-te* *eguraldi* *on-a*
 say.PFV 3SG.ABS.PRS-have-3PL.ERG weather good-DET.SG
egin-go *omen* *d-u-ela* *bihar*
 do-PROSP REP 3SG.ABS.PRS-have.COMP tomorrow
 ‘They have said that it is said that there will be good weather tomorrow’.

In this example, *omen* is combined with the verb *esan* in the same sentence, as in example (10) mentioned in section 3.2.

4. *Omen* has constraints to appear in some subordinate sentences (more precisely, it cannot appear in the antecedent of a conditional, purpose sentences and subjunctive completive sentences). Let us take, as an example, a conditional sentence:

- (46) **Eta* *berdin da,* *euskaldun-ek* *ber-ek*
 and same 3SG.ABS.PRS.be Basque-PL.DET.ERG themselves-DET.PL.ERG
ez omen *ba-d-u-te* *zuzen* *joka-tu.* (Azurmendi 2006: 12)
 no REP if-3SG.ABS.PRS-have-3PL.ERG correctly act-PFV
 ‘And it does not matter if it is said that the Basques themselves did not act correctly.’

On the contrary, it does not look like *esan* has such a restriction:

- (47) *Eta* *berdin da,* *esa-ten* *ba-d-u-te*
 and same 3SG.ABS.PRS.be say-IPFV if-3SG.ABS.PRS-have-3PL.ERG
euskaldun-ek *ber-ek* *ez* *d-u-te-la*
 Basque-DET.PL.ERG themselves-PL.DET.ERG no 3SG.ABS.PRS-have-3PL.ERG-COMP
zuzen *joka-tu.* (Azurmendi 2006: 12)
 correctly act-PFV
 ‘And it does not matter if they say that the Basques themselves did not act correctly.’

See the following table 4 for a summary of the differences.

	<i>omen</i>	<i>esan</i>
1. Scope: simple negation	Wide	Wide/narrow
2. In what kind of sentences?	Declaratives	Any
3. Iterated?	No	Yes
4. In subordinate sentences?	Restrictions	Not restrictions

Table 4: differences between *omen*- and *esan*-sentences.

4.3 Combination of *esan* and *omen*

As we saw, in subsection 3.2 and in the previous one, *omen* and *esan* can be combined in the very same utterance. The particle can be embedded under the verb *esan*, and it takes narrow scope within it, as we noticed by the example (10). But let us have a look to the following example:

- (48) “*Nafarroa-ko lekuizen kontu-e-tan aditu-a*
 Nafarroa-GEN place.name matter-DET.PL-LOC expert-DET.SG
d-en Mikel Belasko jaun-a-k esan
 3SG.ABS.PRS.be-COMP Mikel Belasko sir-DET.SG-ERG say.PFV
di-t, eskuizkribu zaharr-etan behin eta berriz
 3SG.ABS.PRS-1SG.DAT manuscript old-DET.PL.LOC time.and.time.again
ager-i omen d-ela²⁴ Arrias-Oranza hori
 appear-PFV REP 3SG.ABS.PRS.be-COMP Arrias-Oranza that
 (...)” (Perurena 2004: 161)
 ‘Sir Mikel Belasko, who is expert on issues about names of places, told me that that Arrias-Oranza appears time and time again in the old manuscripts’

In this example, the particle is embedded within the utterance of the declarative sentence under the verb *esan* (“*eskuizkribu zaharretan behin eta berriz ageri omen dela*”). If we took the utterance that contains both the communicative predicate *esan dit* ‘he has said to me’ and *omen* out of context, it would be understood that Sir Mikel Belasko was informed by some other person that the name Arrias-Oranza appears time and time again in the old manuscripts. Namely, the utterance must be interpreted as

- (49) SIR MIKEL BELASKO TOLD ME THAT THEY SAY THAT THAT ARRIAS-ORANZA APPEARS TIME AND TIME AGAIN IN THE OLD MANUSCRIPTS.

However, some signs guide one to consider that this utterance must be interpreted in a different way. It seems that the speaker’s intentions direct somewhere else. The speaker of the reported utterance, namely Mikel Belasko, is an expert, so it is natural to think that he himself would see the manuscripts. So, this conducts one to consider that nobody informed Belasko that that name appears repeatedly in old manuscripts, but rather it was, in fact, himself who said that to the current speaker. It looks like the contextual evidence guides us towards the following interpretation:

- (50) SIR MIKEL BELASKO SAID TO ME THAT THAT ARRIAS-ORANZA APPEARS TIME AND TIME AGAIN IN OLD MANUSCRIPTS.

In other words, it can be thought that the original speaker did not use the particle to report that, but rather he made an utterance similar to the following one:

- (51) “*Eskuizkribu zaharr-etan behin eta berriz ager-i*
 manuscript old-DET.PL.LOC time.and.time.again appear-PFV

²⁴ It is our underlining.

<i>da</i>	<i>Arrias-Oranza</i>	<i>hori (...)</i> "
3SG.ABS.PRS.be	Arrias-Oranza	that
‘That Arrias-Oranza appears time and time again in old manuscripts.’		

So, it looks as if, in this example, we are facing a crash or confusion between the two interpretations. Hence, it seems to me that an awkward or inappropriate utterance is generated; which I will call ‘redundant’ utterance.²⁵ In the utterance (48), the particle *omen* guides one towards another speaker; however, it looks like this is not the intention of the speaker. So, it seems that, in this kind of cases, the speaker has to make a decision between using the particle or the predicate. Why is this? Because if the utterance must be interpreted as if *omen* was not used, it is redundant to use both elements, since they have a similar meaning, to a great extent. In this case, there is an inappropriate redundancy, as the hearer is not led to the intended interpretation. In this kind of cases, the utterance of the subordinate sentence is not intended to express that whatever (let us say *p*) was said by someone other than the speaker, but rather that just that *p*. And why use, then, both elements, *esan* and *omen*, if this is what is just meant? It looks as if this kind of utterance is not appropriate, except if what is intended, in fact, is that the original speaker himself was told *p* by someone else.

4.4 Analysing the evidential content as a presupposition

We will consider, now, whether analysing the evidential content of the evidential element as a presupposition could be a possible way of distinguishing the particle from the verb.

It has to be mentioned that some authors (see, for instance, Izvorski 1997 and Matthewson et al. 2007) propose to analyse reportative evidentials like *omen* as epistemic modal elements with an evidential presupposition. According to their proposal, these evidential elements contribute a modal content to the proposition (that *p* is possibly or necessarily true), and the evidential content is a presupposition that restricts the modal base, following Kratzer’s (1981, 1991) possible world semantics. In their view, a different thing is asserted when uttering a sentence with the verb ‘say’ and when the same sentence but with an evidential instead is uttered:

A consequence of this analysis of reportatives is that a reportative sentence containing an embedded proposition *p* does not mean the same thing as “Someone / Mary said that *p*”. (Matthewson et al. 2007: 210).²⁶

Recall that the modal analysis clearly differentiates a reportative from a verb of saying. A verb of saying asserts that a certain report was made, and makes no claim about the truth or falsity of that report. A modal reportative presupposes that a report was made, and asserts that the report was at least possibly true. (Matthewson et al. 2007: 215)

²⁵ ‘Redundancy’ and ‘redundant’ are used, in this work, in the sense of emerging a pragmatic inappropriateness or anomaly.

²⁶ They analyse the evidential elements in St’át’imcets language; the reportative *ku7*, for instance.

Thus, following their proposal, in the case of the ‘say’-utterance, it is asserted that p was said by someone other than the speaker; in contrast, with the evidential-utterance, the evidential content is considered to be a presupposition, and what is asserted is that p is possibly or necessarily true, given that presupposition.

It can be thought that this analysis of evidential contents is proposed to avoid having the same kind of analysis for both elements; namely, the evidential element and the verb. Nevertheless, if I have understood this line of study correctly, it looks like we would have some problems in analysing *omen*-utterances this way. To start with, many authors argue that presuppositions are cancellable (see, for instance, Beaver 2001: 14-18; Green 2000: 459-465; Potts 2007: 484 and Soames 1989: 573-582). Nevertheless, the evidential component of an *omen*-utterance cannot be cancelled: a contradiction arises when trying to do that, as we have seen from example (15).

In addition, we would have a problem related to the facts about scope. It has been signaled that the embedding cases cannot be explained properly by the presuppositional analysis (see, for example, McCready & Ogata 2007: 179). Thus, if this claim is right, considering the evidential content as a presupposition, we would not be able to explain the cases where *omen* gets narrow scope within some kind of operators; more precisely within external negation, communication predicates, and knowledge and realization predicates (as seen by examples (4), (7) and (10) discussed in subsection 4.2 above).

Hence, these facts suggest that the evidential content of an *omen*-utterance cannot be analyzed as generating a presupposition. But it seems to me that, in the case of Basque, at least, it is not needed a different analysis for the verb and the evidential particle. The reason is that they differ in an important feature, namely in the (non-)articulation of the original speaker, as we have seen, and, as a consequence, in their utterance contents (in addition to other differences mentioned above). So, as for my understanding of these proposals, I do not see any problem in analysing both the particle and the verb as contributing to the propositional content of the utterance.

5. Conclusions

Three claims were highlighted at the beginning of this paper, as conforming the standard view on *omen*, and I focused on the first one. I argued that *omen* contributes to the truth-conditions of the utterance, and it is not an illocutionary force indicator. The current speaker and the original speaker express different propositions: p_{omen} and p , respectively, contrary to what the standard view seems to suggest. In order to argue this, I used results from two tests (the assent/dissent test and the scope test) and a controlled experiment. I, then, proposed what contribution *omen* makes to the utterance, by making a distinction between the meaning of *omen*-sentences and the contents of *omen*-utterances. I concluded that its behaviour is similar to that of the verb *esan*. But, they differ, among other things, in the (non-)articulation of the speaker of the reported utterance, and, so, in the contents of their utterances.

Hence, summing up, my proposal is a try to analyse the meaning and use of the particle *omen*, by comparing it with the verb *esan*, with the purpose of giving a theoretical basis to the standard view on it, making use, for that end, of some of the concepts and theories of semantics and pragmatics.

At the same time, this work combines several methodological tools (speakers' intuitions, corpora and experiments) with the intention of either strengthening some hypothesis and claims or changing and improving them.

Besides, it contributes another proposal to the existing works on evidentiality, adding an analysis of another language.

Of course, there remain still many issues to be analysed regarding this research object. In particular, I aim to go more deeply into the experimental approach to the assent/dissent test, by testing participants' reactions to utterances accepting and doubting or challenging the content of the *omen*-utterance, as I did with the case of rejection.

Furthermore, I find interesting to analyse, theoretically, among other things, whether there exists the possibility to study the difference between the particle *omen* and the verb *esan* based on the conceptual *vs.* procedural distinction proposed by relevance theory. Although both contribute to the truth-conditions of the utterance, *esan* would be analysed as a conceptual expression, whereas *omen* may be procedural, following the proposal of Wilson (2011) to differentiate between lexicalized and grammaticalised evidentials and epistemic modals, following the conceptual *vs.* procedural distinction. By the application of such an analysis to our case of study, *omen* would conduct the hearer in his inferential process, indicating that the speaker is asserting that she obtained the information from some other person.

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