



MEANING AND USE OF EVIDENTIAL/MODAL PARTICLES IN BASQUE

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1. Introduction

- All languages have means to express the speaker's source of knowledge —evidential element— and/or her stance towards the truth of the proposition expressed —modal element, mainly epistemic or doxastic.
- Basque language has particles that express those both dimensions: especially *omen*, *bide*, *ote* and *al*.
- All grouped together syntactically: appear in the verbal complex, before the conjugated verb, in their canonical use.

(1) <i>Euri-a</i>	<i>ari</i>	<i>omen/bide</i>	<i>d-u</i>
<i>Euri-a</i>	<i>ari</i>	<i>ote/al</i>	<i>d-u?</i>
rain-DET.SG.ABS	PROG	PART	3SG.ABS.PRS-have
'It's <i>omen/bide</i> raining.'			
'Is it <i>ote/al</i> raining?'			

1. Introduction (II)

- Basque particles analysed theoretically mainly from the syntactical point of view (Mujika 1988, Haddican 2004, Etxepare 2010, and Monforte 2018, inter alia).
- Fewer works on their meaning and use (Carretero & Cid-Abasolo 2014, Garmendia 2014 and Korta & Zubeldia 2014, among others).
- We study especially *omen* and *bide* from the semantic and pragmatic point of view.

1. Introduction (III)

- We argue that:
 - 1. Both particles are related to both dimensions: the evidential and the doxastic.

	Evidential element	Doxastic element
<i>omen</i>	Encoded meaning	Pragmatic content (uncertainty)
<i>bide</i>	Encoded meaning	Encoded meaning (high though incomplete certainty)

- 2. Both particles are illocutionary modifiers, and, in addition, *omen* contributes to the truth-conditions of the utterance; *bide* does not.

Plan

- 2. *Omen* and *bide*: the evidential and doxastic dimensions
 - 2.1. *Omen*: evidential meaning, doxastic (pragmatic) content
 - 2.2. *Bide*: evidential and doxastic meaning
- 3. Propositional content vs. illocutionary force
 - 3.1. *Omen*
 - 3.2. *Bide*
- 4. Conclusions

2. *Omen* and *bide*: the evidential and doxastic dimensions

- Both doxastic and evidential dimensions have been associated to *omen* and *bide*.
- However, each dimension has a different status in the case of each particle.

2.1. *Omen*: evidential meaning, doxastic (pragmatic) content

- A wide assumption: the speaker using an *omen*-utterance like (2), in addition to indicating the source of information (namely, that she got it from another person), expresses **uncertainty** about whether it is raining or not.

(2) *Euri-a* *ari* ***omen*** *d-u*.
rain-DET.SG.ABS PROG REP 3SG.ABS.PRS-have
'It is stated that it's raining.'

- Our view: the uncertainty, if present, belongs to the **pragmatic content** of the utterance; and, more specifically, it is a generalized conversational implicature (**GCI**), and not part of the meaning of the *omen*-sentence. (Korta and Zubeldia 2014)

2.1. *Omen*: evidential meaning, doxastic (pragmatic) content (II)

- Conclusion based on the results of **various arguments** concerning
 - (a) data from various corpora;
 - (b) Grice's cancellability test;
 - (c) Grice's nondetachability test and
 - (d) the parallelism with the Gricean account of the ignorance associated with *believe*.

2.1. *Omen*: evidential meaning, doxastic (pragmatic) content (III)

- The uncertainty is a GCI
 - Inferred from the utterance of an *omen*-sentence, in general, without having a particular context in mind.
 - Assuming that the speaker is observing the Cooperative Principle and the second maxim of quality: “Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence”.
- The meaning of *omen* is just the evidential (reportative) element; namely, that the reported proposition was said by someone other than the speaker.
- *Omen* contributes this evidential meaning to the propositional content of the utterance.

2.2. *Bide*: evidential and doxastic meaning

- *Bide* also associated to two dimensions:
 - to the **evidential dimension** (Novia de Salcedo 1887, Jendraschek 2003, de Rijk 2008, Alcázar 2009 and Boye 2012 among others):
 - by a *bide*-utterance the speaker asserts that she has indirect evidence for a proposition p .
 - to an **epistemic or doxastic dimension** (van Eys 1873, Euskaltzaindia 1987, Orpustan 1993, Elhuyar-Elkar 1994, inter alia):
 - using a *bide*-utterance the speaker expresses that she assigns high probability to p —that p is highly likely but not absolutely certain.

2.2. *Bide*: evidential and doxastic meaning (II)

- An example such as (3) can be glossed both as (4) and (5):

(3) *Asko* *mugi-tzen* ***bide*** *naiz* *lo-tan*
a.lot move-IPFV PART 1SG.ABS.PRS.be sleep-INS
na-go-ela.
1SG.ABS.PRS-be-COMP
'I *bide* move a lot while sleeping.'

- (4) I have indirect evidence that I move a lot while sleeping.
- (5) It is highly but not absolutely probable that I move a lot while sleeping.

2.2. *Bide*: evidential and doxastic meaning (III)

- Reasons of theoretical economy would favour taking one meaning as primary and the other as derived (= in the case of *omen*).
- Two options:

	Semantic meaning	Pragmatic content
Option I	indirect evidential aspect	expression of doxastic attitude
Option II	expression of doxastic attitude	indirect evidential aspect

2.2. *Bide*: evidential and doxastic meaning (IV)

- **Option I** (\approx *omen*)
 - The indirect evidential aspect of *bide* → the semantic meaning
 - The expression of the doxastic attitude → a GCI, inferred from *bide*-utterances in general without having a particular context in mind.
- However, the doxastic aspect does not seem explicitly cancellable.

(6) #*Asko* *mugi-tzen* ***bide*** *naiz* *lo-tan*
a.lot move-IPFV PART 1SG.ABS.PRS.be sleep-INS
na-go-ela. *Baina ez da posible.*
1SG.ABS.PRS-be-COMP but not 3SG.ABS.PRS.be possible
#‘I *bide* move a lot while sleeping. But it is not possible.’

2.2. *Bide*: evidential and doxastic meaning (v)

- **Option II**

- The expression of the doxastic attitude → the semantic meaning.
- The evidential aspect → a GCI.

- But it does not look like explicitly cancellable either.

(7) # <i>Asko</i>	<i>mugi-tzen</i>	<i>bide</i>	<i>naiz</i>	<i>lo-tan</i>
a.lot	move-IPFV	PART	1SG.ABS.PRS.be	sleep-INS
<i>na-go-ela.</i>	<i>Eta</i>	<i>asko</i>	<i>mugi-tzen</i>	<i>naiz.</i>
1SG.ABS.PRS-be-COMP	and	a.lot	move-IPFV	1SG.ABS.PRS.be

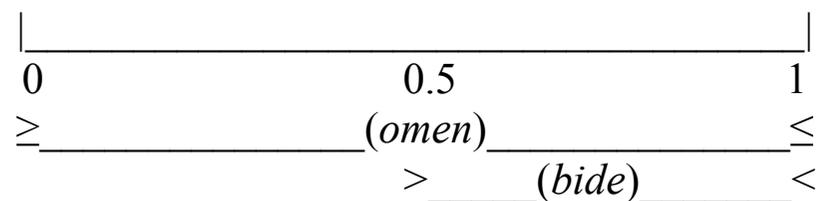
#‘I *bide* move a lot while sleeping. And I do move a lot.’

2.2. *Bide*: evidential and doxastic meaning (VI)

- The test of cancellability does not tell one way or the other, in this case.
- In the case of *bide*,
 - the indirectness of the evidence and
 - the degree of strength of our belief that pare semantically related and present in all utterances of *bide*-sentences.

2.2. *Bide*: evidential and doxastic meaning (VII)

- *Bide* is only appropriate when the speaker attributes, in a scale of probability of 0 to 1, a probability higher than 0.5 and lower than 1 to the proposition p .



- Infelicitous utterances are created when making utterances that express speaker's complete certainty on the truth (or falsity) of the proposition as a continuation of a *bide*-utterance.

2.2. *Bide*: evidential and doxastic meaning (VIII)

(8) #*Euri-a* *egin* ***bide*** *d-u,* *eta/baina* *huri-a*
rain-DET.sg do.PFV PART 3SG.ABS.PRS-have and/but rain-DET.SG
egin *d-u.*
do.PFV 3SG.ABS.PRS-have
#‘It has *bide* rained, and/but it has rained’

(9) #*Euri-a* *egin* ***bide*** *d-u,* *baina* *ez*
rain-DET.sg do.PFV PART 3SG.ABS.PRS-have but no
d-u *huri-rik egin.*
3SG.ABS.PRS-have rain-PTV do.PFV
#‘It has *bide* rained, but it has not rained.’

2.2. *Bide*: evidential and doxastic meaning (IX)

- The lack of complete certainty assigned to *bide*
 - ✓ an invariant aspect of *bide*-sentences regardless of context — namely, it is part of their meaning—, and
 - ✗ not a pragmatic content, not a GCI of *bide*-utterances.
- *Bide* requires
 - lack of complete certainty (less than 1) and
 - high degree of certainty (over 0.5).

2.2. *Bide*: evidential and doxastic meaning (x)

- So, the speaker will not use a *bide*-sentence
 - when she neither believes nor disbelieves a certain proposition p (= 0.5 probability assignment),
 - nor in the cases below 0.5.

(10) #*Euri-a* *egin* ***bide*** *d-u,* *baina* *ez*
rain-DET.SG do.PFV PART 3SG.ABS.PRS-have but not
d-u-t *uste.*
3SG.ABS.PRS-have-1SG.ERG believe.IPFV
#‘It has *bide* rained, but I don’t believe that.’

- She would use a *bide*-sentence expressing *not-p* instead.

(11) *Ez* ***bide*** *d-u* *egin* *huri-rik.*
not PART 3SG.ABS.PRS-have do.PFV rain-PRTV
‘It has not *bide* rained.’

2.2. *Bide*: evidential and doxastic meaning (XI)

- Conclusion at this stage: *bide* encodes both an evidential and a doxastic meaning.
- However, the doxastic dimension has some priority over the evidential.

3. Propositional content vs. illocutionary force

- One of the main issues debated within the literature on evidentials: whether they contribute to the propositional content of the utterance or not.
- The fundamental distinction: between contributing to the propositional content vs. being an illocutionary force indicator.
- Some tests that help in that decision.

3. Propositional content vs. illocutionary force

Omen

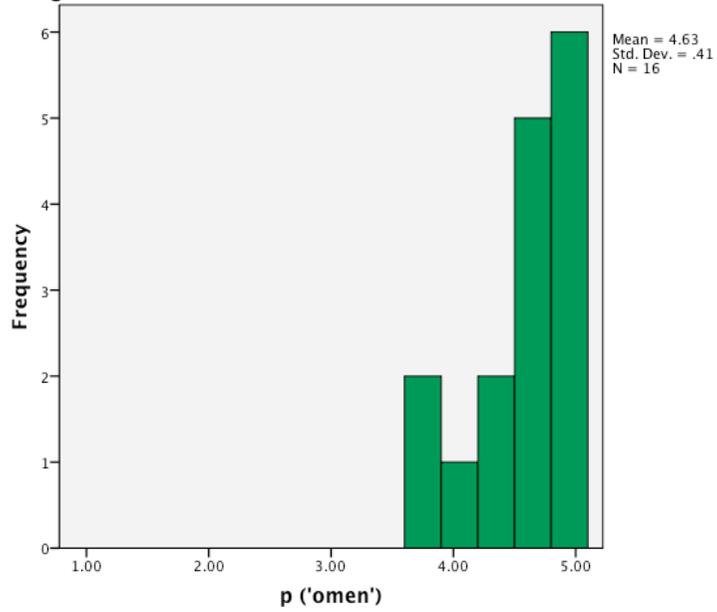
- *Omen* contributes to the propositional content of the utterance.
- Evidence
 - 1. The results of two tests
 - assent/dissent
 - scope
 - 2. Experimental research

3. Propositional content vs. illocutionary force

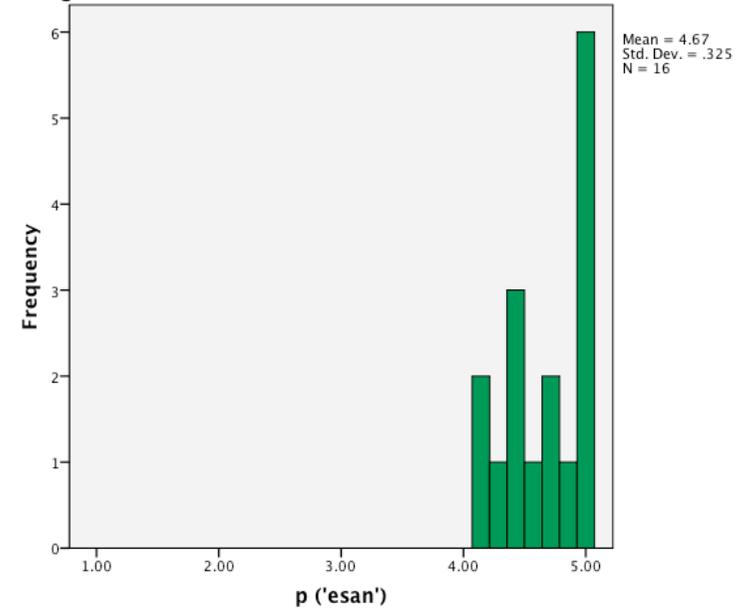
Omen (II)

- Experiment based on the assent/dissent test
 - Tested what content is targeted when an utterance containing *omen* is rejected:
 - the reported content (p) or
 - the evidential content (p_{omen}).
 - Hypothesis: the participants will accept both rejecting the reported content and the evidential content.
 - Results: participants found it acceptable to reject the evidential content (in addition to the reported proposition).
- The results point to the conclusion that *omen* contributes to the proposition.

Histogram 1



Histogram 3

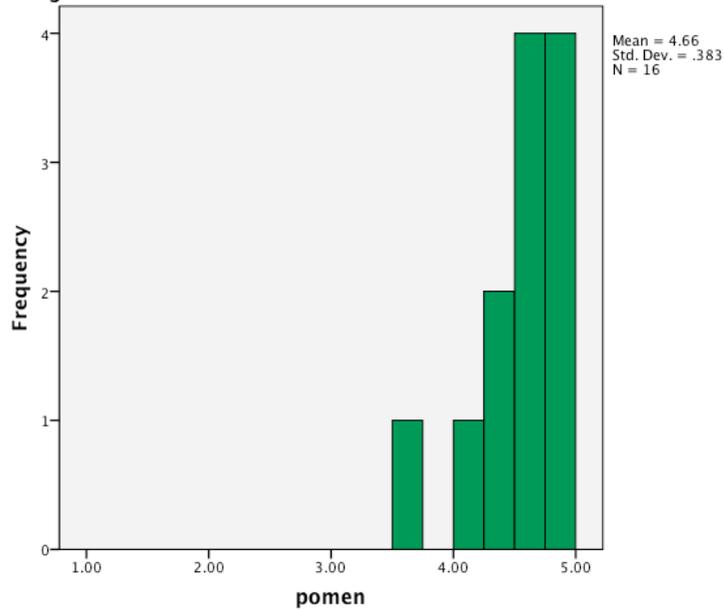


Reported content
Z = -.210, n=16, p=.833

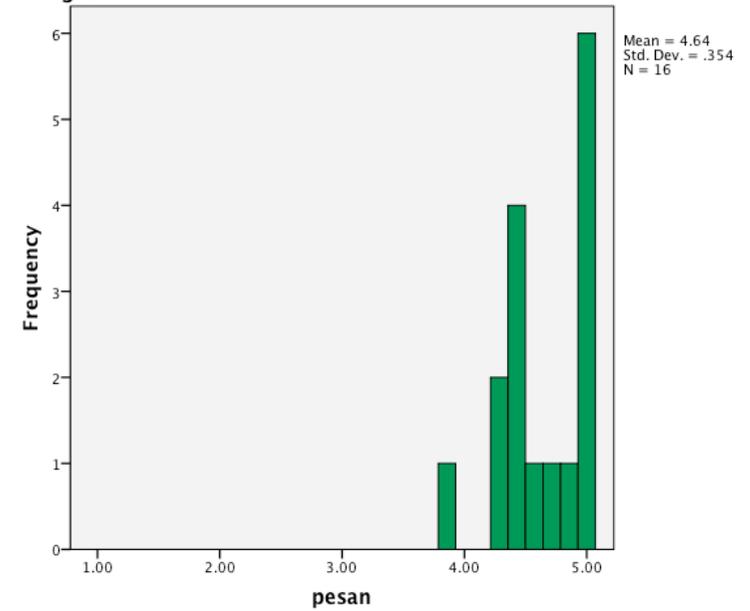
Z = -.000, n=16, p=1.000, two-tailed

Z = -.212, n=16, p=.832

Histogram 2



Histogram 4



Evidential content
Z = -.268, n=16, p=.788

3. Propositional content vs. illocutionary force

Omen (III)

- Null results; then, we cannot reject the null hypothesis. However, nor can we accept it.
- So, we do not have an experimental support (there is no effect) for our hypothesis.
- However:
 - Still interesting results: they point towards a fact, and participants' intuitions agree with our intuitions in this.
 - More importantly, the results are similar to those for the verb form *esan du(te) p* 'He/she(they) said that *p*', 'It is said that *p*'.

3. Propositional content vs. illocutionary force

Omen (IV)

- Scope criterion (for instance, Recanati 1989), if the meaning of an expression falls within the scope of a logical operator, then it contributes to the propositional content.
- *Omen*'s semantic contribution gets narrow scope under
 - sentential (external) negation,
 - communication predicates (such as *esan* 'to say', *erantzun* 'to answer') and
 - knowledge predicates (for instance, *kontuan hartu* 'to take into account').

3. Propositional content vs. illocutionary force

Omen (V)

(12) <i>Ez</i>	<i>z-u-en</i>		<i>kontuan</i>		<i>har-tu</i>	<i>36-ko</i>	<i>gerra</i>
not	3SG.ERG.PST-have-PST		into.account		take-PFV	36-GE	war.DET.SG
<i>has-i</i>	<i>zen-ean,</i>		<i>Lizardi-ren</i>		<i>alargun-ak</i>		<i>Oria</i>
start-PFV	3SG.ABS.PST-LOC		Lizardi-GEN		widow-DET.SG.ERG		Oria
<i>ibai-ra</i>	<i>bota</i>		<i>omen</i>	<i>z-it-u-ela</i>			
river-DET.SG.ADL	throw.PFV REP		3SG.ERG.PST-3PL.ABS-have-COMP				
<i>liburu</i>	<i>gehien-ak.</i>	(Lertxundi 2001:10)					
book	most-DET.PL						

‘(S)he did not take into account that it is stated that, when the war of ‘36 started, Lizardi’s widow threw most of the books into the Oria river.’

- ✓ (13) (S)HE DID NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THAT SOMEONE ELSE STATED THAT LIZARDI’S WIDOW THREW MOST OF THE BOOKS INTO THE ORIA RIVER,
- ✗ (14) SOMEONE ELSE STATED THAT (S)HE DID NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THAT LIZARDI’S WIDOW THREW MOST OF THE BOOKS INTO THE ORIA RIVER.

3. Propositional content vs. illocutionary force

Omen (VI)

- A simpler test: a contradiction when trying to cancel the evidential content of the *omen*-utterance.

(15) #*Euri-a* *ari* ***omen*** *d-u,* *baina*
rain-DET.SG.ABS PROG REP 3SG.ABS.PRS-have but
inor-k *ez* *d-u* *esan* *huri-a*
someone-ERG not 3SG.ABS.PRS-have say.PFV rain-DET.SG.ABS
ari *d-u-ela.*
PROG 3SG.ABS.PRS-have-COMP

#‘It is stated that it is raining, but nobody said that it is raining.’

3. Propositional content vs. illocutionary force

Omen (VII)

- The evidential content is part of the propositional content of the *omen*-utterance.
 - The proposition p and the proposition p_{omen} are two different propositions.
 - Both are assertions, but they assert different things:
 - an utterance without *omen* asserts that p
 - an *omen*-utterance asserts that p was stated by someone other than the speaker.

3. Propositional content vs. illocutionary force

Omen (VIII)

- However, *omen* also affects some components of the illocutionary force.
 - 1. It signals the illocutionary point of the utterance.
 - 2. It modifies the sincerity conditions.

3. Propositional content vs. illocutionary force

Omen (IX)

1. *Omen* signals the illocutionary point of the utterance

- It can only be used to report statements; that is to say, utterances of declarative sentences —whatever their illocutionary point.
 - The utterance of the original speaker has to be a statement.
 - Nonliteral contents (PCIs and presuppositions, at least) cannot be reported by means of *omen* (results of the *reportability* experiment).
- In contrast, *omen*-utterances do have a restriction: they always have the assertive illocutionary point.
- Then, both the original utterance and the *omen*-utterance have to be utterances of declarative sentences, but they have a difference as for the illocutionary point: open vs. assertive.
 - The original speaker *states* the utterance ≠ the current speaker *asserts* it.

3. Propositional content vs. illocutionary force

Omen (X)

2. It modifies the sincerity conditions —what the speaker’s mental state has to be like for her utterance to be sincere.

(16) *Euri-a* *ari* *d-u.*
rain-DET.SG PROG 3SG.ABS.PRS-have
'It is raining.'

(17) *Euri-a* *ari* ***omen*** *d-u.*
rain-DET.SG PROG REP 3SG.ABS.PRS-have
'It is stated that it's raining.'

- ≠ sincerity conditions:
 - The sincerity conditions of (16) satisfied if the speaker believes that p (it is raining in Donostia today).
 - The sincerity conditions of (17) satisfied if the speaker believes that p (it is raining in Donostia today) was stated by someone other than herself.

3. Propositional content vs. illocutionary force

Omen (XI)

- *Omen*
 - contributes to the propositional content and
 - it is, concurrently, an illocutionary point indicator.
- Caudal (2009) reaches the same conclusion for discourse connectives and tense systems.
- A different conclusion from the literature on modals and evidential.
 - It is said that they crosslinguistically contribute to the propositional content of the utterance or are illocutionary force indicators, but not both (see, inter alia, Faller 2002; Matthewson et al. 2007; Matthewson 2012 and Murray 2010).

3. Propositional content vs. illocutionary force

Bide

- *Bide* is just an illocutionary force indicator with no contribution to the truth-conditional content of the utterance.
- The *bide*-utterance and its bare counterpart without *bide* both are assertions.

(18) *Euri-a* *ari* *d-u.*
rain-DET.SG PROG 3SG.ABS.PRS-have
'It is raining.'

(19) *Euri-a* *ari* ***bide*** *d-u.*
rain-DET.SG PROG PART 3SG.ABS.PRS-have
'It is *bide* raining.'

3. Propositional content vs. illocutionary force

Bide (II)

- When adding *bide* to an utterance, it seems that there is no change in the direction of fit, sincerity conditions and conditions of satisfaction.

	S (Euria ari du)	S _{bide} (Euria ari <i>bide</i> du)
direction of fit	words to world	words to world
sincerity conditions	the speaker believes that p (it is raining in Donostia today)	the speaker believes that p (it is raining in Donostia today)
conditions of satisfaction	the speech act is satisfied if and only if p (it is raining in Donostia today) is true	the speech act is satisfied if and only if p (it is raining in Donostia today) is true

3. Propositional content vs. illocutionary force

Bide (III)

- It seems they differ in the degree of strength of the belief that constitutes the sincerity condition.
- The degree of strength is classified as a component of the illocutionary force of a speech act (Searle & Vanderveken 1985: 15; Vanderveken 1990: 119-121).
- *Bide* looks like just to constrain that the degree of strength has to be in the interval between 0.5 and 1.



3. Propositional content vs. illocutionary force

Bide (IV)

- Taking *bide* to contribute the doxastic dimension to the propositional content of the utterance would amount to the assumption that, when a speaker utters S_{bide} , what she asserts is something like

(20) believe_{>.5<}

I believe that it is highly but not absolutely probable that it is raining in Donostia today.

3. Propositional content vs. illocutionary force

Bide (V)

(21) *Euri-a egin bide d-u.*
rain-DET.SG do.PFV PART 3SG.ABS.PRS-have
'It has *bide* rained.'

(22) *Bai, asko egin d-u.*
yes a.lot do.PFV 3SG.ABS.PRS-have
'Yes, it has rained a lot!'

1. Results of the assent/dissent test.

(23) *Ez da egia, kale-a garbi-tzen*
no 3SG.ABS.PRS.BE true.DET.SG street-DET.SG clean-IPFV
d-u-en makina pasa-tu da.
3SG.ABS.PRS-have-REL machine.DET.SG pass-PFV 3SG.ABS.PRS.BE
'That's not true, the machine that cleans the street has passed through.'

(24) *Bai? Ez ote da kale-a garbi-tzen*
yes? no PART 3SG.ABS.PRS.BE street-DET.SG clean-IPFV
d-u-en makina pasa-tu?
3SG.ABS.PRS-have-REL machine.DET.SG pass-PFV
'Are you sure? Wouldn't it be the machine that cleans the street that passed through?'

3. Propositional content vs. illocutionary force

Bide (VI)

- 2. Scope test: *bide* takes wide scope over negation.

(25) *Ez bide du euririk egin.*

'It has *bide* not rained.'

BIDE [EZ (EURIA EGIN DU)]

BIDE [NO (IT HAS RAINED)]

*EZ [BIDE (EURIA EGIN DU)]

*NO [BIDE (IT HAS RAINED)]

Conclusions

- 1. *Omen* and *bide* both are associated to the evidential and doxastic dimension, but each dimension has a different status in the case of each particle.
- 2. Both are illocutionary modifiers, and *omen*, in addition, contributes to the propositional content of the utterance.
 - Question particles *ote* and *al* illocutionary modifiers.
- The particles share three properties:
 - they occupy the same syntactical slot in the sentence,
 - they are modal/evidential elements and
 - they modify some component of the illocutionary force.

Further work

- Experiments to test the exact relation of the two dimensions in the case of the particle *bide*.
- Questionnaires in the case of *bide*.
- The meaning and use of the question particles, and their illocutionary function.

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Many thanks
for your attention!