

American Spanish *dizque* from a Functional Discourse Grammar perspective

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1. Introduction

American Spanish *dizque* is a reportative adverb, which arose in medieval Spanish from the contraction of an apocopated 3rd person singular form of *decir* ‘say’, *diz* (the full form was *dize*) with the complementizer *que*, highly frequent in medieval juridical and historical documents, in which *diz que* ‘it says that’ concerns (part of) a document (cf. also López Izquierdo 2006: 484-485).

In the following 16th century example, *dizque* has already acquired an adverbial function. However, its scope is not yet unambiguous:

- (1) *[Envía el capitán susodicho a un grande y señalado tirano [...] con cierta gente de españoles] para que castigase dizque los indios alzados que huían de tan grande pestilencia y carnicería¹*
so that punish.PST.SBJ.3SG *dizque* the Indians rebellious who
flee.PST.IMPF.3PL from so big infectious.disease and men.slaughter
‘[The captain mentioned earlier sends an important and notorious tyrant [...] together with Spanish soldiers]
a. in order to punish as he puts it the rebellious Indians who were fleeing from so very diseases and massive death’
b. in order to punish the supposedly rebellious Indians who were fleeing from so very infectious diseases and massive death’
(Bartolomé de las Casas, *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*, 1552, CORDE)

Given the context, (1b) may be a bit more probable, but there is no way to be certain because in 16th century Spanish *dizque* could not yet precede specific parts of the noun phrase. Independently of how one interprets *dizque* in (1), this case exemplifies a general characteristic of reportativity, i.e. that it tends to go hand in hand with the speaker’s dissociating himself or herself from the reported content.

The use of *dizque* in present-day American Spanish,² differs from the case illustrated in (1), in that *dizque* systematically modifies the item which it precedes. In section 2 it will be shown how *dizque* scopes over different entities within the Discourse Act. Section 3 will be dedicated to a case that is more difficult to account for. Section 4 will conclude.

2. The variable scope of *dizque*

The hypothesis to be defended here is that *dizque* is a reportative adverb scoping over different entities at the Interpersonal Level. The presentation of the data will proceed from the highest toward the lowest layer of modification. Consider the following example:

¹ In order to simplify the glosses, both present tense and indicative mood are considered default markings and are therefore not mentioned. In addition, nominal agreement will be specified only when relevant.

² *Dizque* became obsolete in Spain during the 17th century. In present-day American Spanish, it occurs most frequently in Mexico and Colombia. All data are from *CORPES*, available at www.rae.es.

- (2) *Dizque se llevó sin permiso el Fiat y
dizque REFL.3 take.PST.PFV.3SG without permission the Fiat and
amaneció bailando en Piriápolis.
pass.the.dawn.PST.PFV.3SG dancing in Piriápolis*
'Reportedly, he took the Fiat without permission and at dawn he was dancing in Piriápolis.' (M. Méndez Camacho, *Malena*, 2003, Colombia).

In (2) the reportative adverb *dizque* modifies the entire Communicated Content.

In the following example, *dizque* takes a modifier of the Communicated Content in its scope:

- (3) *Mostraron la fosa donde lo habían encontrado, pero, dizque
show.PST.PFV.3PL the ditch where him AUX.PST.IMPF.3PL found but dizque
por respeto, no mostraron el cadáver.
for respect not show.PST.PFV.3SG the body*
'They showed the ditch where they had found him, but, reportedly / supposedly out of respect, they didn't show the body.' (J. Franco, *El cielo a tiros*, 2019, Colombia)

The way in which the reportative adverb operates here can best be shown by means of a representation in FDG, where (C_i) is the Communicated Content that corresponds to *no mostraron el cadáver*, which is modified by the evocation of *por respeto*, which in turn is modified by *dizque*:

- (3) a. (C_i: [] (C_i): [] (C_i): *dizque* (C_i))

It should be noted that (3), more clearly than (2), implicates a negative Speaker attitude with regard to the content modified by means of *dizque*. The same holds in the following example, where the reportative adverb modifies a Referential Subact:

- (4) *[Era don Chepe un erudito en historias de viejas revoluciones y a veces conversaba sobre la Comuna de París, el Octubre soviético, la Gran Marcha china, tal vez por estas inclinaciones fue como en un tiempo le allanaron la casa,]
venían soldados a requisar, a buscar dizque un arsenal
come.PST.IPFV.3PL soldiers to search.INF to look.for.INF dizque a arsenal
[y sólo hallaban al sonriente don Chepe y sus libros de ediciones Progreso, revistas Pekín Informa, bueno, todo más bien inofensivo,]
'[Don Chepe was knowledgeable about foregone revolutions and sometimes he spoke about the Paris Comuna, about the Soviet October Revolution, the Chinese Long March, and perhaps it was due to these leanings that at a certain moment his house was raided,] and soldiers entered in search of what they called an arsenal, [and they only found a smiling don Chepe and his books published by *Progreso* and issues of the Peking Review, well, all kinds of rather inoffensive stuff,]' (R. Spitaletta, "Las lides de don Chepe", 2011, Colombia)*

Particularly in Mexican Spanish, *dizque* frequently modifies Ascriptive Subacts within Referential Subacts. In (5) *dizque* modifies the second Ascriptive Subact corresponding to the adjective *estable* 'stable' at the Representational Level:

- (5) *Existen algunos casos casi exóticos de parejas dizque estables,
exist.3PL some cases almost exotic of couples dizque stable
[pero son matrimonios que tarde o temprano acaban porque siempre hay alguien encargado de meterse en la relación.]
'There are some almost exotic cases of supposedly stable couples [but those are marriages that sooner or later end, because there is always someone who takes care of intruding into the relationship.]' (A. Sánchez Baute, *Al diablo la maldita primavera*, 2004, Colombia)*

In (6), *dizque* modifies the only Ascriptive Subact inside the Referential Subact, realized as a noun at the Representational Level:

- (6) *Encanecí, y a pesar de las dizque dietas me era difícilísimo conservar el peso;*
 greyed.PFV.1SG and in spite of the.F.PL *dizque* diet.(F).PL me COP.IPFV.3SG very.difficult
 maintain.INF the weight
 ‘I went grey, and in spite of the so-called diets I found it extremely difficult to keep in shape’
 (J.A. Ramírez, *Vida con mi viuda*, 2004, Mexico)

As *dizque* immediately precedes the noun *dietas* in this example, it is used here as if it were an adjective, which it is not because it cannot be inflected. (6a) is evidence of the fact that true adjectives agree in gender and number with the nominal head:

- (6) a. *a pesar de las supuestas dietas*
 in spite of the.F.PL supposed.F.PL diet.(F).PL
 ‘in spite of the so-called diets’

An explanation for this situation may be the fact that the application of *dizque* has generalized from Communicated Contents to Referential Subacts and only later to Ascriptive Subacts. This view is supported by diachrony (cf. example (1)), and also by typology: the cognates of *dizque* in present-day Brazilian Portuguese (*diz que*, cf. Casseb-Galvão 2011) and Galician (*disque*, cf. Sousa 2012) cannot modify Ascriptive Subacts either (cf. also Sanromán Vilas 2020).

Both its origin from complementation and its invariability has motivated most linguists working on *dizque* to consider it a grammatical item. What seems to favour this view is the fact that *dizque* can neither be negated nor modified:

- (7) *A Fabio y a las dos chicas les alteró la vida el dizque fracaso;*
 DOM Fabio and DOM the two girls them changed.PFV.3SG the life
 the *dizque* failure
 ‘The supposed failure changed Fabio’s and the girls’ lives’
 (J. Dimayuga, *¿Y qué fue de Bonita Malacón?* 2007, Mexico)

a. * *el no dizque fracaso*
 the NEG *dizque* failure

b. * *el realmente/ felizmente/ lamentablemente dizque fracaso*
 the really fortunately unfortunately *dizque* failure

On the other hand, the –undoubtedly lexical– adjective *supuesto* ‘supposed’ behaves in exactly the same way with respect to negation and modifiability:

- (8) [On the overreaction in the media to an intended deal between Colombia and China]
A tal nivel ha llegado la obsesión con la supuesta amenaza china.
 to such level AUX.3SG arrived the obsession with the supposed
 menace Chinese
 ‘Such a level has been reached by the obsession with the supposed menace from China.’
 (M. Cárdenas, “¿Vencedor o visionario?” [press], 2011, Colombia)

- a. * *la no supuesta amenaza china*
 the NEG supposed menace Chinese
- b. * *la realmente/ felizmente/ lamentablemente supuesta amenaza china*
 the really fortunately unfortunately supposed menace Chinese

Positive evidence for the fact that *dizque* is not a grammatical item is the fact that it can occur parenthetically, thus forming a dependent Discourse Act (Keizer 2018: 76-79):

- (9) [*“Los tipos iban en una moto y armados. Los cogió la Policía y los dejó ir porque eran de las CONVIVIR, que tienen permiso de porte especial,] son de los que, dizque, cuidan el centro”, cuenta un vendedor de celulares del sector El Hueco.*
 COP.3PL of the who dizque look.after.3PL the centre tell.3SG a vendor
 of cellphones of.the district El Hueco
 [“Those guys drove a motorcycle and were armed. The police caught them and let them go because they were from the *CONVIVIR* who have a special permit,] they belong to those who, allegedly, look after the centre”, explains a cellphone vendor from the district *El Hueco*.’ (*El Mundo* [press], 2012, Colombia)

Summing up, we have seen that *dizque* is an interpersonal modifier with a reportative function. When *dizque* modifies an independent Communicated Content, it has a neutral reportative meaning, but when it modifies entities at lower layers its meaning is of a more attitudinal kind.

3. The Speaker as reportative source

Apart from the variation in scope, a complication arises when the Speaker is the source of the reported information marked by means of *dizque*:

- (10) *le mandé un e-mail excusándo=me por no haber ido*
 him send.PST.PFV.1SG a email apologizing=REFL.1SG for not AUX.INF gone
dizque *porque estaba enfermo,*
 dizque because COPLOC.PST.IPFV.1SG ill
 ‘I sent him an email apologizing for not having attended allegedly because I was ill.’
 (A. Sánchez Baute, *Al diablo la maldita primavera*, 2004, Colombia)

In this case the Communicated Content modified by *dizque* contains a lie, because the context that precedes the example clarifies that the Speaker had in fact attended the event, but had left without having been discovered by the other, i.e. the addressee of the email. The fact that *dizque* marks a lie in this and similar cases does not imply that the function of *dizque* then changes into a marker of falsity, as has been claimed by e.g. Travis (2006) and De la Mora & Maldonado (2015). Rather, the shared identity of the Speaker and the reportative source produces a conversational implicature of falsity. Therefore, I propose to account for *dizque* in this and similar examples as follows:

- (10) a. (C_i: [] (C_i): (T_i) (R_i: [+S, -A] (R_i)) (C_i): *dizque* (C_i))

By adding the specification of the Speaker to the first modifier in (C_i), evoking *porque estaba enfermo*, it is clear that there is something “atypical” here.

4. Conclusion and aims of the paper

The data presented here allow for two conclusions.

First, the use of *dizque* for the modification of Ascriptive Subacts is an innovation. This means that the diachronic development of interpersonal adverbs does not necessarily proceed in the same way as that of grammatical items: grammaticalization implies scope increase (Hengeveld 2017), whereas the change of *dizque* takes the opposite direction, that of scope decrease.

Secondly, it has been shown in (7) and (8) that one of the criteria used in FDG for the distinction of grammatical formatives from lexical items, the impossibility of modification, is not entirely reliable.

There are at least two theoretical problems that need to be discussed in some detail.

(i) It has been shown that *dizque* operates at different layers of the Communicated Content. In order to account for the meaning variation of *dizque* in different contexts, it is crucial to make distinguish between Communicated Contents and modifiers of Communicated Contents. It is one of the aims of this paper to further explore the theoretical implications of this distinction, particularly as all these variables are empty at the Interpersonal Level.

(ii) From a morphosyntactic point of view, it is important to distinguish between the modification of primary and secondary Ascriptive Subacts. Because there is a problem when *dizque* is used with a primary Ascriptive Subact, which generally has a nominal realization at the Representational Level. In such a case it can no longer be considered an adverb, but it is not an adjective either. The most obvious conclusion is that it is a particle. Does this mean that it then turns into a grammatical item, while it continues to be an adverb when it applies to secondary Ascriptive Subacts?

Uncommon abbreviations

COPLOC = copula with a locative / temporary meaning

DOM = differential object marking;

References

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