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# *Dizque* in Mexican Spanish: the subjectification of reportative meaning

Hella Olbertz

In a number of American dialects, among which Mexican Spanish, *dizque* (literally: 's/he says that') functions as an adverbial expression of reportative evidentiality, i.e. it expresses an objective distance between the speaker and the content she/he communicates. At the same time, the use of *dizque* tends to create an implicature of subjective distance between the speaker and the communicated content in the sense that marking a given content, or part of it, as being second-hand information, may be interpreted as an indication that the speaker doubts the reliability of this information. In other words, the use of the evidential lexical item tends to imply an epistemic modal meaning. As regards its syntax, *dizque* has a remarkable flexibility, since it functions at various levels of the utterance: it may modify a main or a subordinate clause, a nominal or an adverbial constituent and all kinds of predicates. The aim of the present paper is to show that there is a relation between the scope of *dizque* and the implicature of a negative speaker attitude, such that when the scope of *dizque* decreases, this implicature becomes increasingly prominent, even to such a degree that it may become part of the meaning of *dizque*. In other words, the degree of subjectification of the meaning of *dizque* is inversely proportional to its scope. As such, the case of *dizque* is a counterexample to the common view according to which subjectification is tied not to a decrease, but rather to an increase in scope.\*

## 1. Introduction

Although almost unknown in modern Peninsular Spanish, the adverb *dizque* (literally: 's/he says that') is used frequently in different Spanish American dialects, among which that of the Dominican Republic, Colombia (cf. Travis 2006) and Mexico. An example of *dizque* that could occur in any of these dialects is the following from a Mexican novel:

- (1) Los terrenos *dizque* eran de la esposa del superministro Ulises López. (Fuentes, 1987)  
'The land was *said to* belong to superminister Ulises López's wife.'

This is a typical example of *dizque* as an adverbial means to express that the source of the proposition is external to the speaker, which means that *dizque* is used as a lexical expression of reportative

evidentiality, a subtype of indirect evidentiality (Willet 1988:57). In addition, this example illustrates that, due to its reportative function, *dizque* often implicates that the speaker wishes not to commit him/herself to the truth of the proposition it modifies. What makes Mexican usage especially interesting is the fact that, in addition, *dizque* frequently modifies nominal predicates, where the speaker uses it as a means of dissociating him/herself from the propositional content:

- (2) esas encuestas eran amañadas por sus *dizque* amigos (Victoria 1995)  
'those opinion polls were falsified by his *so-called* friends'<sup>1</sup>

The relation between reportative evidentiality, i.e. information source marking, and epistemic modality, i.e. the expression of the speaker's commitment to the truth of a propositional content, either lexical or grammaticalized, has frequently been observed (cf. e.g. Willet 1988:84ff; Blakemore 1994; Plungian 2001:354ff; Aikhenvald 2004:3). One important feature that evidentiality and epistemic modality have in common is that they both form part of the interpersonal component of verbal interaction, which is concerned with the role of an utterance in the interaction between speaker and addressee.<sup>2</sup> It is the aim of this paper to document and analyse the functions fulfilled by Mexican *dizque*, from reported speech to the expression of the falseness of a given communicative content from a semantic and a syntactic point of view, and to demonstrate that these are the consequence of a process of subjectification and metonymic change, but not of grammaticalization.

The structure of this paper is as follows: in section 2, I will briefly present the historical development of *dizque* from its background as a speech act verb. In section 3, I will present the Mexican data classifying them along two parameters: (i) the syntactic level at which *dizque* operates and (ii) the source of the proposition modified by *dizque*. In section 4, I will discuss the data presented in section 3, paying special attention to the concepts of subjectification, scope, metonymic change and grammaticalization. Section 5 will be dedicated to my conclusions.

The data sources used for this paper are the diachronic and the modern online-corpora of the Royal Spanish Academy, CORDE and CREA, respectively. As the CREA corpus, which consists of more than 16 million words of Mexican data from 1976-2006, makes only very restricted use of oral material, and the oral corpora at my disposal<sup>3</sup> contain only a small number of instances, my article will rely on written sources, most of which however reflect informal speech.

## 2. Precolonial Spanish

By the end of the medieval period *dizque* developed out of the fusion of the apocopated 3rd person singular form *diz* (from *dize*) of the verb *dezir* ‘say’ with the subordinator *que*. In this section I will give a brief account of this development (cf. López Izquierdo 2006 for more details).

Given the fact that the apocope of unstressed final /e/ was a very common phenomenon in Medieval Spanish,<sup>4</sup> *diz* can be found frequently in the earliest texts as an unmarked form, introducing direct or indirect speech acts. In the following example *diz* introduces an indirect speech act, in which both the speaker (*el acusador* ‘prosecutor’) and the addressee (*le* ‘him’) are explicitly mentioned:

- (3) si el acusador le *diz que* no es muerto el ladrón (Anónimo, 1300-1330)  
‘if the prosecutor *tells* him *that* the thief has not died’

In the same period, *diz* begins to be used as an impersonal verb form, quoting speech acts without specifying their source. This use of *diz* soon becomes more frequent than its use as a personal verb form, for which the full form *dize* / *dice* becomes standard. The following example is representative:

- (4) E fueron muertos çinco cristianos, e muchos feridos; e de los moros *diz que* se fallaron luego muertos veinte e seis e fueron presos quinze moros. (Anónimo, 1406-1411)  
‘And five Christians were killed and many wounded, and of the Arabs *they say that* twenty-six were found dead afterwards and fifteen were arrested.’

The following example illustrates an innovative use of *dizque*, which is comparable to example (1) and, as such, typical of modern usage:

- (5) Pues como ellos viniesen cansados una mañana de acompañar a su amo toda la noche muy airados de no sé qué cuestiones que *dizque* habían tenido (Rojas, 1499-1502)  
‘So when they came one morning, tired from having been with their master all night, annoyed about I don’t know which troubles they *apparently* have had’  
(lit.: “[...] I don’t know which arguments that *dizque* they have had”)

Note that in this example *dizque* is highly backgrounded: it occurs in a relative clause (*que... habían tenido*) that modifies a noun (*cuestiones*) which in turn is part of a modifier (*de... qué cuestiones*) of a predicative adjunct (*muy airados*). As a consequence, it is difficult to read *dizque* as a verbal expression, because in that case it would form a further layer of embedding within the relative clause, which would result in an unnatural use of language.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the conclusion must be that *dizque* is used in this case as an adverb, which is in line with its low pragmatic prominence.

In sum, in precolonial Spanish, *diz que* / *dizque* develops from a normal speech act verb plus subordinator into an impersonal verb plus subordinator and further into an adverb. The syntactic correlate of the adverbial status of *dizque* is that its use no longer leads to a biclausal construction, i.e. it has lost its subordinating function. This means that *dizque* has undergone a process of lexicalization. Following Lehmann (2002), I define lexicalization as the loss of the inner structure of a complex construction, in such a way that it can no longer be accessed analytically, and, as a consequence, can only be dealt with as one linguistic item.<sup>6</sup> I will return to this matter in section 3. below.

### 3. Modern Mexican Spanish

In the only descriptive overview of *dizque* I am aware of, Kany (1944:174-175) claims that in Mexican Spanish there are quite a few phonologically eroded variants of *dizque*, such as *izque*, *i que*, as well as *quisque* and *quesque*, the latter two resulting from the fusion of *dizque* with preceding *que*. Of these four variants, only *quesque* appears more than once in the CREA corpus (30 instances). Apart from being an innovative form, the difference between the two variants is mainly one of register, *quesque* being more informal than *dizque* (Vázquez Laslop, p.c.). Therefore, I will use *dizque* as a cover term, whenever discussing general properties common to both variants.

In this section, I will present the Mexican data along two lines, a syntactic and a semantic one, and I will show how the two are related. The semantic line concerns the identity of the source of the proposition: I will distinguish between those cases in which the context allows for the source of the proposition to be identified, and those in which this is not the case, using the labels ‘reported’ and ‘hearsay’ as shorthand forms to refer to these uses, respectively. The syntactic

line concerns the scope of *dizque*, i.e. the size of the linguistic element which *dizque* modifies. In my presentation I will deal with the higher levels of modification, that of the clause and the constituent in one section (3.1.), and discuss the lowest level (3.2.) separately, because at the level of the predicate the syntax and semantics of *dizque* clearly deviates from the other cases.

### 3.1. Modification at clause and constituent level

Out of the 170 cases of *dizque* / *quesque* in CREA,<sup>7</sup> 115 concern the modification of main or subordinate clauses, adverbial expressions or noun phrases. I will deal with each of these separately and end with a short summary.

#### 3.1.1. Main clauses

The main clause instances amount to a total of 36 cases, 28 with *dizque* and 8 with *quesque*. This category contains maximally 11 reported instances, some of which are doubtful, however. The following two examples belong to the unambiguously reported cases in a main clause:

- (6) [at work, a nanny talks about her own children] (Carballido 1984)  
Siempre tuvieron celos, *dizque* más me ocupaba de éstos que de ellos  
'They have always been jealous, *saying* I cared more for these children than for them'
- (7) Me ofreció el general enviarnos víveres al rato y hasta un periódico para usted, *quesque* hay algo que le va a interesar señor... (Victoria 1995)  
'The general offered me to send us food within short and even a newspaper for you, *saying* there is something you will be interested in, sir...'

In example (8) it is not entirely clear if the propositional content modified by *dizque* has a specific source or not:

- (8) [in a discussion of how to crush an uprising]  
Es que el que más insiste es don George, *dizque* trae algo respecto a los guerrilleros del sureste – mencionó tímido el mayor. (Victoria 1995)  
'In fact the one who insists most of all is don George, *they say* / *he says* he is bringing something concerning the guerrillas of the Southeast –the major mentioned timidly.'

Both readings are equally plausible in this case, although perhaps the fact that don George is said to “insist” may make a reported reading a bit more likely.

In most cases of main clause modification, however, it is not possible to identify the source of *dizque*. Consider the following examples:

- (9) el segundo [programa], operado por los secuaces de Augusto Gómez Villanueva, *dizque* había organizado mil empresas, de las que ni una pudo pagar sus gastos. (*Diario de Yucatán*, 6 Nov. 1996)  
‘the second [program], executed by the followers of Augusto Gómez Villanueva, *is said to* have organized some thousand projects, none of which covered its costs.’
- (10) Decían las malas lenguas, que cuando sus tamales trajesen carne no había que comerlos, porque era de los niños que se le morían. Que *dizque* un día encontraron un dedito... Pero son puras habladas. (Hayen 1993)  
‘Wicked rumours had it that when her *tamales* contained meat, one should not eat them, because it was from her dead children. *They say that* one day a little finger was found... But it’s mere gossiping.’

In example (10), *dizque* is being preceded by *que*, which is not syntactically motivated, since there is no subordination. In these examples *que* functions as a reportative marker (cf. Travis 2006), which serves to ‘attribute the transmitted content to somebody else’ (Escandell 1999:3967). In combination with *dizque* it has the effect of reinforcing the speaker’s lack of responsibility for the truth of the propositional content.<sup>8</sup> Note that in examples (7) and (9) there is no implicature of doubt or disbelief.

### 3.1.2. Finite subordinate clauses

In the CREA corpus, 26 finite subordinate clauses are modified by *dizque* and 3 by *quesque*. These subordinate clauses are nominal, relative, and adverbial. The most obvious reported instances are the following two:

- (11) Acabamos de recibir una carta de la madre superiora. Ora nos salen, después de ocho años en el noviciado, *quesque* la condenada muchacha no tiene vocación. (González 1999)  
‘We have just received a letter from the Mother Superior. Now, after eight years of noviciate, they come up *with the story that* the god-damn girl lacks vocation.’

- (12) Pachita, la muy chabona, por más que le rogamos, se emperró en quedarse en el hotel, *dizque* porque uno de sus dientes de cera se estaba ablandando con el calor, pero yo creo que fue por miedo que no la dejaran entrar (González 1999)

'The very clumsy Pachita, however we urged her, insisted on staying at the hotel, *supposedly* because one of her wax teeth was getting soft through the heat, but I think it was for fear of not being admitted'

In spite of the fact that the source of the information is known to the speaker, there is an implicature of doubt or disbelief in both cases. In (11) the speaker expresses a general negative attitude towards the content he is quoting, while in (12) the speaker's disbelief in the argument quoted is made explicit. In this respect, there is little difference between these reported instances and the following case of hearsay:

- (13) Estar de pleito permanente con nuestra modernidad que *dizque* nos iba a hacer felices de un rayo y sólo nos trajo desgracias (Fuentes 1987)

'To be fighting with our modernness which *was supposed to* make us happy from one day to the next and only brought us distress'

In fact, none of the instances of *dizque* with subordinate clauses is entirely neutral with respect to the speaker's evaluation in terms of truth.

### 3.1.3. *Non-finite subordinate clauses*

The corpus contains 16 instances of *dizque* and 10 of *quesque* with non-finite subordinate clauses, of which all but one are infinitival adverbials. The following example is one of the six clearly reported cases:

- (14) Andrés no volvió a tocarme *dizque* para no lastimar al niño (Mastretta, 1990)

'Andrés didn't touch me any more *supposedly* not to harm the baby'

As is insinuated in the context, the speaker has her doubts about the truth of the content of the non-finite purpose clause. As such, this example is representative of both the reported and the hearsay instances of this category. Example (15) is an instance of hearsay:

- (15) sus dedos llenos de mezquinos, *dizque* por señalar el arcoiris. (Hayen 1993)

'their fingers with plenty of warts, *supposedly* from pointing at the rainbow.'

In this case, too, the speaker's disbelief of the proposition contained in the causal construction is implicated.

The following example is a particularly intriguing case, because it can be read in two different ways:

- (16) Marchanta: Oiga, marchante, ¿a qué habrá venido el gringo?  
Marchante: Dice don Toribio que *dizque* a comprar el pueblo.  
Marchanta: ¡Jesús! ¿Y nosotros, ónde nos van a meter? (Santander 1985)  
'Marchanta: Listen, *marchante*, what may this *gringo* have come for?  
Marchante: Don Toribio says to buy the village, *supposedly*.  
Marchanta: Jesus! And what about us, where are they going to put us?'

The speaker provides an indirect speech report of the information given by a certain Don Toribio. In the first interpretation, given by five of the seven informants I consulted, *dizque* forms part of the original utterance, i.e. it is attributed to Don Toribio. In the second interpretation, advocated by the other two informants, Don Toribio's utterance is neutral from the epistemic point of view, and it is the speaker who adds *dizque* within the quote in order to indicate his own evaluation. In such a reading *dizque* has the exclusive function of expressing doubt on the part of the speaker, since reportativity is expressed by *decir* 'say' and the subordinating conjunction. As regards the reaction of the interlocutor, the *marchanta*, it would be normal, albeit somewhat naive, in the first reading. In the second reading, it would be comical, since in that case the *marchanta* would fail to capture the *marchante's* indication of disbelief and take the truth of Don Toribio's quote for granted.

### 3.1.4. Non-verbal adverbial phrases

As regards constituent modification, I will first consider *dizque* with non-verbal adverbial phrases. In all, there are 20 instances. At the level of the constituent, reported speech is less prone to occur than at the level of the clause. Nevertheless, there are 4 cases of adverbial modification in which the proposition can be attributed with a high degree of probability to a specific source. In all of these cases there is a negative truth commitment on the part of the speaker:

- (17) Andrés estaba rojo *dizque* del coraje, pero era del brandy. (Mastretta 1990)  
'Andrés had turned red *supposedly* from anger, but it was from brandy.'

The following example illustrates the use of *dizque* of the hear-say-type:

- (18) [On the Mexican festival of All Saints Day]  
Claro que no faltó quien intentara llevar pulque o mezcal *dizque* para el difuntito (*Excélsior*, 1 Nov. 1996)  
'Of course there were also people who would try to bring pulque or mezcal, *supposedly* for the dear dead'

In this case, which is representative of the use of *dizque* with adverbial constructions, there obviously is an implicature of disbelief on the part of the speaker.

The following case of adverbial modification deserves special attention:

- (19) [speaker travels with guerillas to dissuade them from executing their plans]  
acompañamos a Chiapas *dizque* por entrenamiento, durante una semana, a un grupo de locos (Espinosa 1995)  
'we accompanied to Chiapas, *supposedly* for training, for a week, a group of nutcases'

What is special about this case is that the speaker himself is the source of the proposition, i.e. *dizque* is used here with first- rather than with second-hand information, and therefore an indirect evidential reading is logically excluded. The only possible way of interpreting *dizque* in these cases is reading it as a means of indicating the falseness of the proposition in question.<sup>9</sup>

### 3.1.5. Noun phrases

The five cases in the sample in which *dizque* modifies a noun phrase are of a quite disparate nature. Consider examples (20) and (21):

- (20) Yo me estaba enojando con Melesio, *dizque* el representante de la FEG. (López 1993)  
'I was getting annoyed at Melesio, *supposedly* the representative of the FEG.'
- (21) [shortly before moving in, the speaker shows her flat to some friends]  
Jorge quiere poner ahí *dizque* su oficina. Ésa es la nueva ocurrencia de mi esposito. (Leñero 1979)  
'Jorge wants to have here *what is supposed to become* his office. This is the new obsession of my dear husband.'

In the first example, the source of the modified content is unknown, in the second it is known. In example (20) there is an implicature of doubt with respect to the propositional content expressed by *el representante de la FEG*. (21) is of an entirely different nature: the source of the propositional content *su oficina* is the speaker's husband; the case is problematic since the claim implicit in *su oficina* does not concern a possible fact, but some future goal the husband wants to attain. The doubt which is obviously implicated by the speaker therefore does not concern any truth value, but rather the probability that the future goal can be attained.

### 3.1.6. Summary

I have shown in this section that, in addition to the reportative function, modification by means of *dizque* or *quesque* almost always carries an implicature of doubt or even outright rejection of the truth of the proposition by the speaker. This is a conversational implicature, i.e. it depends on the specific context and situation, rather than a conventional one, which is context independent (Grice 1975:50; cf. also Hopper & Traugott 1993:72-75). It will have become clear that this implicature is independent of the identity of the source of the communicated content: in examples (11), (12), (14) and (17) the source of the proposition is known, but nevertheless a negative evaluation of the truth value is implicated, while there is no such evaluation in example (9), which is an instance of hearsay. The only case in which the identity of the source of the propositional content is of crucial importance for the interpretation of *dizque* is the one in which the source is the speaker him/herself, since in such a case *dizque* can no longer have an indirect evidential reading.

### 3.2. Modification below constituent level

In this section, I will deal with the way in which *dizque* and *quesque* modify predicates. At this level *dizque* no longer modifies the communicative content as a whole, but the ascription of properties or relations within a given propositional content (Keizer & Van Staden forthc.), which, however, will affect the truth value assigned the proposition as a whole. Another crucial difference with modification by *dizque* at higher levels is that the source of predicates generally cannot be identified, with the notable exception of those cases in which the source is the speaker.

### 3.2.1. Adjectives

Of a total of 27 instances in which *dizque* and *quesque* modify an adjectival predicate, 25 concern attributive adjectives and equivalent prepositional constructions, illustrated in (22) and (23), respectively:

- (22) –Pues ¿qué oíste?  
–Una cosa que dijeron los del gobierno ese *dizque* provisional (Victoria 1995)  
‘–So, what did you hear?  
–Something that those people of that *supposedly* provisional government said’
- (23) el chisme viene de las secretarias, *dizque* de confianza (Victoria 1995)  
‘the gossip comes from the *supposedly* trustworthy secretaries’

Although the predicates modified in these examples may, in principle be related to explicit claims made previously, the primary function of *dizque* is to indicate that the property ascribed does not contribute to conveying a truthful picture of the reality as conceived of by the speaker.

Consider one more example:

- (24) Mira güey, desde secundaria teníamos un grupo *dizque* de beneficencia y esas jaladas. (Martín 1976)  
‘Look mate, from secondary school onwards we had a group *supposedly* of charity and that kind of bullshit.’

This example parallels example (19) above in that the first person speaker is the source of the propositional content, part of which is modified by means of *dizque*, such that *dizque* cannot be read as a marker of second-hand information source, but it is used to mark the falseness of the attribute *de beneficencia*.

### 2.2.2. Verbs and predicative adjuncts

There are three cases in which *dizque* modifies a verbal predicate rather than the entire verbal complex and two cases in which the scope of *dizque* is a predicative adjunct. The two predicative adjuncts are adjectives that modify simultaneously the verbs and the subject referents. What these five cases have in common, is the fact that they can hardly be related to any previous speech act, which implies that, here, the expression of epistemic modality has in fact become the exclusive function of *dizque*. Consider the following examples:

- (25) A los seis meses de andar *dizque* gobernando se puso enfermo.  
(Mastretta 1990)  
'After having gone about *pretending to rule* for six months he fell ill.'
- (26) Sin embargo se la pasó como tres meses diciendo que era una barbaridad lo que había pasado, que no sabía por qué las oportunidades que la vida le ponía enfrente, siempre se le escapaban, y dicho esto, rompía *dizque* a llorar en falsete (Alatrisme 1985)  
'But she went on for about three months saying that it was awful what she'd gone through and that she didn't know why the opportunities that she'd had in life had never borne out, and having said this, she started *pretending to cry* in falsetto'

In both examples *dizque* has been inserted into an analytic construction, modifying the lexical verb only.<sup>10</sup> The verbal predicates chosen in these examples, *gobernar* 'rule' and *llorar* 'cry', respectively, are probably descriptions the subject referents would think appropriate. However, this does not imply that these subject referents are the source either of these descriptions or of the communicative content of which they form part.

In the following example *dizque* modifies a predicative adjunct. In analogy to (19) and (24) the speaker himself is the source of the information contained in the modified item:

- (27) [a group of boys is being shown a box of valuable essences]  
En eso andamos *dizque* maravillados cuando ¡chíngale! nos robamos la caja de las esencias y echamos a correr. (Martín 1976)  
'Meanwhile we go about *supposedly* amazed when, whoosh!, we steal the box with the essences and hit the road.'

In this case, the exclusive function of *dizque* is to express the presence of the group's behaviour. It is obvious from the context that the predicate following *dizque* describes the crucial element of a hoax.

### 3.2.3. Nouns

To avoid misunderstandings I will first explain what I mean by nominal modification as opposed to modification of noun phrases. Noun phrases are complex expressions that include determiners and/or numerals, whereas nominal predicates<sup>11</sup> are 'bare'. More concretely, when *dizque* modifies a noun it is placed in between the determiner and the noun; when it modifies a noun phrase, it precedes the determiner.

Let us begin by considering a few examples.

- (28) Se henchía de rabia y desprecio cuando le restregaban en la cara una supuesta autoridad basada en el *dizque* conocimiento (Puga 1978)  
'He felt anger and disdain when they confronted him with some supposed authority based on some *so-called* knowledge'
- (29) la corrupción del magisterio que permite que sus líderes retiren del ejército docente a buenos maestros, para convertirlos en sus *dizque* comisionados sindicales. (*Excélsior*, 10 Sept. 2000)  
'the decay of the teaching profession, which permits its leaders to remove good teachers from their work in order to turn them into their *so-called* trade union commissioners'

These two examples illustrate two characteristics of this use of *dizque*. Firstly, *dizque* modifies the nominal predicate, i.e. the noun in its property ascribing function, while at the same time this noun forms the head of a noun phrase used to identify a potential referent; i.e. the predicative and the referential function of the noun have been separated from each other in a curious way. This becomes more obvious when the noun modified by *dizque* is the head of a subject (30) or an object noun phrase (31):

- (30) les juro, compañeros, que todos aquellos *dizque* catedráticos que se hayan visto involucrados en el bochornoso caso de Rogelio [...] serán destituidos de sus cargos. (Olivera 1991)  
'I swear to you, colleagues, that all those *so-called* professors who have been involved in the embarrassing Rogelio case [...] will be removed from their posts.'
- (31) Y tienen nuevas *quesque* "filosofías" en pro de los intereses sociales; pero en realidad son asesinos, gente de mal, muchachos. (María 1980)  
'And you have new *so-called* "philosophies" in favour of social benefit; but in fact you are murderers, bad people, my dear boys.'

The second characteristic concerns the syntax of *dizque*: as already mentioned in the introduction to this paper, when modifying nouns, *dizque* occupies an adjectival slot, as a consequence of which the translation by means of the English adverb *supposedly* is no longer warranted, i.e. *dizque* can no longer be seen as an adverb (Van Baar 1994:278). On the other hand, it is not an adjective either, since it does not agree with the nominal plurals in examples (30-31). The conclusion is that it must be a particle, as "particles are understood as comprising all invariable elements which are not prepositions, conjunctions, or adverbs" (Hartmann 1994:2953).

3.2.3. Summary

It will have become apparent when considering all these examples that the properties and relations described by the predicates used here cannot be related to a specific source. Rather, the speaker uses predicates which he/she believes to coincide either with general usage or with the ideas and/or potential claims of the persons referred to in the discourse. Although in most cases a relation with a previous speech act cannot be excluded, the reportative function is of little relevance here. The modification by means of *dizque* serves the speaker above all to dissociate him/herself from the appropriateness of the property or relation described and, as a consequence, from the truth of the corresponding proposition.

4. Discussion

To begin with, let us consider a schematic representation of the results of section 2. It has turned out that the semantic impact of *dizque* largely depends on the size of the syntactic unit it takes within its scope. In Table 1, I present the effects of scope variation on three semantic parameters on the horizontal axis, (i) the role of the speech act, (ii) the possibility of identifying its source and (iii) the role of the speaker attitude. On the vertical axis, the linguistic items modified are grouped according to their size: (i) main clauses, (ii) subordinate clauses and constituents, (iii) predicates.

**Table 1.** Syntax and semantics of *dizque*.

	<i>speech act</i>	<i>specific source</i>	<i>speaker attitude</i>
<i>main clause</i>	necessary	possible	probably implicated
<i>subordinate clause / constituent</i>	necessary	possible	always implicated
<i>predicate</i>	possible	generally not	part of meaning

As we saw in section 3.1., the propositional content expressed in clauses and constituents modified by *dizque* is second-hand information, i.e. it is based on a speech act with either a specific or a non-specific source. Only in main clauses we find instances that are neutral with respect to the speaker attitude (cf. examples (7) and (9)). This difference between main clauses on the one hand and subordinate clauses and constituents on the other is reflected in Table 1 by means of “probably implicated” and “always implicated”, respectively. In sec-

tion 3.2., we saw that predicate modification by means of *dizque* has distinct semantic correlates: in general the predicates may but need not correspond to a previous speech act, and in any case, the source of such speech act cannot be recovered, except when the source is the speaker. While the reportative function of *dizque* has become less relevant, the modal function of *dizque* has been semanticized, i.e. it has become part of the meaning of *dizque*.

In this section, I will discuss several issues that have become apparent in the course of the presentation of the data in the previous section, such as summarized in Table 1. Sections 4.1. and 4.2. will be concerned with different aspects of the semantic variation we can observe in the use of *dizque*, and section 4.3. will deal with the question if *dizque* is undergoing a process of grammaticalization.

#### *4.1. Subjectification and scope*

As we have seen, the original meaning of *dizque* is reportative, i.e. the speaker uses *dizque* in order to indicate that he/she is not the source of the communicative content presented, but that another specific or non-specific person has provided him/her with the corresponding information. This relation between the speaker and the information he/she presents may be seen as an objective one, given that it is unrelated to the speaker's personal view on the content. In the reported cases this relation is even controllable, i.e. it is –at least theoretically– possible to check if the speaker is honest about the information source.

On the other hand, when there is no need to specify information source,<sup>12</sup> why would a speaker bother to indicate that a given communicative content is not first-hand? Indeed, it would not be communicatively relevant to indicate the information source to the interlocutor, if this had no additional function. Put differently, if a speaker does indicate the source, thus (in a Gricean sense) infringing the maxime of Quantity, the hearer necessarily infers that there must be some reason for this, i.e. that there must be some implicature. The only logically possible reason one could think of is that the speaker wishes not to be held responsible for the reliability of this content. This is the point at which the subjective element, i.e. the relation between the communicated content and the speaker's personal beliefs comes into play.

From the data summarized in Table 1, we can conclude that as the size of the linguistic expression modified by *dizque* decreases, the subjective relation between the communicated content and the

speaker (i.e. the parameter 'speaker attitude') becomes gradually more prominent, while the objective relation (i.e. the two parameters referring to information source) becomes increasingly irrelevant. More specifically: both the objective and the subjective relations play a role at the level of the main clause; the subjective relation becomes more prominent when *dizque* modifies subordinate clauses and constituents, and it becomes the central semantic value in the case of the modification of predicates.

One could ask why it is so that the probability of a subjective reading increases when the scope of *dizque* decreases. The most obvious explanation is a pragmatic one: the smaller a linguistic element is, the less probable information source marking is. While speech reports of one or more complete utterances are common, the speaker makes a pragmatically marked choice when he/she reports smaller sections of utterances, which will make the hearer suspicious that there might be something beyond what is being literally expressed.

When the scope of *dizque* is relatively small, it tends to express irony, i.e. "the speaker's belief that the content of the ostensible message is not only false, but ridiculous" (Haiman 1995:330). Irony consists of 'the speaker's echoing an opinion, thought or utterance implicitly attributed to some person or to people in general, simultaneously dissociating him/herself from it' (Sperber & Wilson 1992:61). By employing *dizque* as a marker of irony, the speaker "strongly communicate[s]" (*ibid.*:72f) his or her communicative intention, thus minimizing the risk of being misunderstood.

What is curious about the case of *dizque* is that it is a counterexample to the way subjectification is generally conceived of: in most studies on this issue, subjectification is associated with the opposite development, i.e. with an increase in scope (e.g. Tabor & Traugott 1998 on English).<sup>13</sup> As regards Mexican Spanish, Company Company even claims in recent work on discourse markers that the increase of scope is a 'defining property of subjectification' (2004a:56). Her argument is indeed convincing as far as discourse markers are concerned, given the fact that discourse markers are by definition external to the syntactic structure of the clause (Martín Zorraquino & Portolés Lázaro 1999:4057; Hartmann 1994:2957). However, the problem of Company Company's analysis is that for some reason she includes *dizque* among the category of discourse markers and, consequently, attributes scope increase to *dizque* as well (Company Company 2004a:46, 2004b:16).

#### 4.2. Metonymic change

The way in which *dizque* gradually takes on a more subjective meaning in certain contexts can best be characterized as an instance of metonymic change. Departing from a definition of meaning that includes not only lexical semantics, but also pragmatic meanings which arise from the way in which a linguistic element is used in discourse, one may say that the change from reportative evidentiality to the expression of negative truth commitment is a semantic shift towards a meaning component that was already present, although only covertly (Hopper and Traugott 1993:87). When this covert part of meaning becomes the only meaning, then there has been a semantic shift from what was originally the semantic core to peripheral meaning components (cf. also Pérez Saldanya 2003:65ff).

Above I have shown that the mere usage of *dizque* as a reportative element tends to implicate the dissociation from the communicative content by the speaker. The smaller the scope of *dizque* becomes and, consequently, the more marked its usage, the more prominent the conversational implicature will become, until it ends up being the semantic core, as in the case of predicate modification.

It should be noted that what I have described in section 3 is in fact synchronic semantic variation as a consequence of a varying scope. Although it is probable that diachronically there has also been a certain degree of conventionalization of the conversational implicature and, therefore, a semantic change in the direction of epistemic values, I have no evidence for this due to the sparsity of diachronic data.<sup>14</sup>

#### 4.3. Grammaticalization

Although I have emphasized in section 1 of this paper that the development of *dizque* from the speech act verb + conjunction is not a proces of grammaticalization but of lexicalization, the problem of grammaticalization arises again when we consider the part of speech *dizque* belongs to in modern Mexican usage. All Mexican uses of *dizque* can be analysed as adverbial uses, except the cases of nominal modification, where it must be seen as a particle. Are particles more grammaticalized than adjectives? And, if so, should one classify *dizque* as a particle only when used with nouns, i.e. in contexts where there is no other option? The first question can be answered affirmatively: particles form a closed class, whereas adverbs form an open class (Hartmann 1994:2954); in this sense, it is appropriate to

speak of a certain degree of grammaticalization of *dizque*. The second question is more difficult to answer given the fact that the demarcation line between adverbs and particles is notoriously difficult to draw (*ibid.*:2953f). An alternative to the solution suggested above could be to consider *dizque* a particle when used below constituent level, because at this point the source of the communicated content is no longer identifiable. The disadvantage of this alternative is that it is based on a semantic criterion which lacks syntactic relevance. Therefore I prefer the option in which there is a clear syntactic boundary between the class of adverbs and particles, i.e. consider *dizque* a particle only when used to modify nouns.

The degree of grammaticalization of *dizque* should not be overestimated, however. In the following example, the particle *dizque* is modified by an adverb:

- (32) –La pieza debe quedar vacía y con candado–. Mandonea fanfarrón el *dizque* actuario [...] –Esta señora tiene que salirse, remacha el *también dizque* escribano (Hayen 1993)

‘–The room has to be evacuated and locked, the *so-called* clerk of the court bossed around loudmouthed [...] –This lady has to leave, the *also so-called* notary finishes off.’<sup>15</sup>

Given the fact that grammatical elements cannot normally be modified by adverbs, example (32) indicates that *dizque* does not belong to a highly grammaticalized category of particles.<sup>16</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

Basically, *dizque* is a lexical means to express reportative evidentiality. In modern Mexican Spanish, *dizque* generally is an adverb with the exception of a restricted syntactic context in which it is a particle. Depending on the size of the linguistic item it modifies, the meaning of *dizque* varies between its original reportative meaning and an epistemic meaning, which arises through the conventionalization of a conversational implicature of doubt. While the evidential meaning concerns the objective distance between the speaker and the communicated content, the epistemic meaning concerns the subjective distance between the speaker and the communicated content. The degree of subjectification in actual usage is inversely proportional to the scope of *dizque*.

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*Dizque in Mexican Spanish: the subjectification of reportative meaning*

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*Notes*

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<sup>1</sup> Note that in this example, in contrast to (1), *dizque* does not fulfil an adverbial function. Rather, it occupies an adjectival slot without exhibiting adjectival properties, since it fails to agree with the plural noun *amigos*. This point will be discussed in detail in section 3.2.3.

<sup>2</sup> For a recent functionalist approach to the interpersonal function of verbal interaction with a high degree of formalization cf. Hengeveld (2005) and Keizer & Van Staden (forthc.).

<sup>3</sup> The oral sources available to me are 30 interviews from *El habla de Monterrey* (Lidia Rodríguez Alfano 2003), large parts of *El habla de la ciudad de México* (Juan M. Lope Blanch 1971), and a prepublication of the *Corpus sociolingüístico de la Ciudad de México* (to be published by Pedro Martín Butragueño & Yolanda Lastra), totalling approx. 490,000 words, i.e. less than 8% of the size of the CREA corpus.

<sup>4</sup> In *Poema de Mío Cid* [1140-1180] we find, next to *diz*, *noch* from *noche* 'night', *part* from *parte* 'part', *por én* and *por end* from *por ende* 'consequently' and many others.

<sup>5</sup> In addition, it is not what would be expected given the otherwise relatively modern language use in *La Celestina*, from which the example has been quoted.

<sup>6</sup> Starting from a very broad definition of grammaticalization, Hopper and Traugott (1993:201-203) regard the ongoing development of parenthetical *I think* and *I guess* to an adverb in Present Day English as an instance of grammaticalization. In the same vein, Travis views *dizque* as a grammaticalized form (Travis 2006, section 4).

<sup>7</sup> In fact, the exact number of tokens in the corpus is 171, but one has been excluded, as this was a quote from a 16th century text.

<sup>8</sup> Reportative *que* is used frequently when *dizque* introduces a main clause (in 17 out of 28 cases). It is never used with *quesque* in my corpus, which indicates that speakers still regard *quesque* as a contraction of *que dizque*. Additional evidence comes from a search in Mexican websites, where I found 545 cases of *que dizque* against only 15 cases of *que quesque*.

<sup>9</sup> In Olbertz (2006) I mistakenly follow Travis (2006) in dealing with 1st person subjects as a whole as a special case. While such a procedure is warranted in the case of the grammaticalized expression of evidentiality, which obviously is much more constrained and in some languages is not even expressible with 1st person subjects (e.g. Curnow 2002:181; Leinonen & Vilkuna 2000:502), there is no reason to assume a systematic relationship between a 1st person subject proposition and a deviant use of *dizque*, since the source of the proposition may be elsewhere, as is the case in example (6) above.

<sup>10</sup> In (26) the scope of *dizque* seems to include more than the verb alone, given the fact that it does not immediately precede the non-finite verb. However *a* is not a content preposition but a grammatical formative the inclusion of which is a consequence of its bondedness to the infinitive within the construction.

<sup>11</sup> With the notable exception of proper nouns, nouns are predicates in the sense that in both predicative and referential expressions they serve to ascribe properties to entities (cf. Dik 1997 I:193-197, 202-206).

<sup>12</sup> Such obligation may be motivated through language structure when the expression of information source is grammaticalized to such a degree that specification is obligatory (cf. Aikhenvald 2004:12). Another possible cause of obligatory information source marking may be social conventions, such as those that apply in academic writing.

<sup>13</sup> However, Fischer (2007:Ch.6) shows that even with respect to the English data provided by Tabor & Traugott, the conclusion that subjectification necessarily implies the increase of scope is not always warranted.

<sup>14</sup> The Mexican historical corpora (CORDE) are considerably smaller than the modern corpus (CREA), and there are only few cases of *dizque* / *diz que*. The historical Mexican data from 1900-1980 (2.184.989 words) are an exception as they contain 33 instances. However, these are insufficiently different from the modern data to allow for far reaching conclusions.

<sup>15</sup> Suspecting this example to be a pun, I consulted two informants, who, however, found nothing remarkable here.

<sup>16</sup> Some randomly chosen examples of highly grammaticalized particles are *todavía* 'still' and *ya* 'already' in Spanish, and *yet* and *still* in English. None of these can be modified by an adverb.