

This paper puts forth a formal semantic and syntactic analysis of the descriptively/ functionally largely studied American Spanish operator *dizque* (Lit. 'they say that'). This element has been analyzed (Travis' (2006) and Mora & Maldonado's (2015) [M&M] works, a.o.) as an 'evidentiality strategy', a pragmatic marker with a dominant epistemic reading, which 'extends' to various 'overtones' like bragging, pretending or deceiving:

(1) *Agregué un comentario plagado de malevolencia, **dizque** aprende álgebra y literatura al mismo tiempo.*

∴ *it is said that **apparently** he learns algebra and literature at the same time...*

We will argue against such proposal and formally determine the nature and features of *dizque*.

**1. PROPOSAL:** As to its **semantics**, we provide an exploration of *dizque* through the standard tests (Faller 2006, Matthewson et al 2007, a.o) that distinguish 'epistemic modal evidentials' (EM) from 'illocutionary indirect evidential operators' (IO). This exploration shows that *dizque* is a true EM. We will present new data to sustain this idea and we will carefully analyze contexts. Regarding **syntax**, we will provide evidence that 'sentential *dizque*' (different from 'constituent modifier' *dizque* that we will not study) is a functional head generated at the leftmost periphery of both root and embedded clauses (Rizzi 2010), scoping over modal adverbs and negation. Building on Speas & Tenny 2003/ 2004 [S&T], we will adopt an approach to Sentience in grammar with a division of labor between the Speaker and the Reporter as holders of the "point of view" from which the event is reported (S&T 2003, Zubizarreta & Pancheva (2017).

## **2. ASSUMPTIONS AND ANALYSIS.**

**2.1. THE SEMANTICS OF DIZQUE.** In the line of Izvorski (1997) a.o, we claim that, *dizque* is an EM and, as such, has the following interpretation:

(2) EV p [EV= evidential operator]

assertion:  $\Box p$ , in view of the speaker's knowledge state

presupposition: the speaker has indirect evidence for p (Izvorski 1997:226)

In support of this claim, we take the **tests** regarding **truth value, scope and embeddability**, generally used to assess the status of evidentials. We thus examine **challengeability (or assent/dissent)** which establishes that it is possible to disagree with a modal (it contributes possibility) but not with a presupposed report. *Dizque* behaves as an EM in this respect, since it can be challenged/ disagreed with:

(3) ...que están diciendo que tú estás publicando en los periódicos, que tu tesis fue *Summa Cum Laude*, y resulta que *dizque* tu tesis no fue Summa Cum Laude....- *¿Pero esto cómo va a ser? Imposible, dijo...*

...that they are saying that you are publishing in newspapers that your thesis was *Summa Cum Laude* and it is the case that *dizque* your thesis was not *Summa Cum Laude*... - But, how may that be possible? No way, she said...

The second tests involves **negation**: we show that evidence requirements cannot be blocked by negation. Sentences with #*No dizque* are not found in the consulted corpora. However, **interrogative** sentences like (4), in which the speaker expects the answer to be positive and double checks whether p holds, are very frequent:

(4) *¿Y no dizque ibas a ir a la Embajada?*

And was it not the case/did you not say that you were going to the Embassy?

We will contend that these sentences are 'biased interrogatives' (Romero and Han 2004).

Interrogative negative sentences with EM *dizque* instantiate a case of 'mirative' conversational implicature as a result of its interaction with negation. The third test shows that, *dizque*, as EMs, and contrary to IOs, can be **embedded**: it can appear in subordinate clauses, preceded by the complementizer. In this context it is not a 'complex evidential' (as claimed by M&M) but either *que* embeds a regular subordinated report (5) or it is 'echoic' (Demonte and Fernández-Soriano 2013), (6). In (5) "the subject of the evidence acquisition event is referentially controlled by the Att-H" (Z&P, p. 32), which is identified with the speaker in the case of matrix *dizque* and with the matrix subject in the case of embedded *dizque*.

(5) *Pos ¿dónde andaba usted, patroncito? -dijo Cándido Cuéllar, ...-. Subí a buscarlo a su despacho y me dijeron que dizque se había ido a cenar a La Concordia*

Well, where were you, patroncito? –said Cándido Cuéllar, ...- I went up to look for him in his office and they told me that *dizque* he was gone to La Concordia for dinner

(6) *nadie me quería decir una palabra, que dizque nadie sabía nada.*

Nobody wanted to say a word, that *dizque* nobody knew nothing

The most relevant test for our purposes has to do with **Falsity**: 'FELICITY if p is known to be false' is ok for IO, unexpected for EM. We attest two possible situations: a) p is possible for the speaker (7), but also b) the prejacent is false or has low possibilities of being true (8):

(7) *...pueblito donde se emborrachaban los Scotts y las Ednas, los social drop-outs, los artistas y nuevos ricos que dizque no querían tener nada que ver con el sistema. (#pero querían tener que ver).*

... small village where all got drunk, Scotts and Ednas, social drop-outs artists and parvenus that *dizque* did not want to have any relation with the system (#but they did want to have a relation)

(8) *Carlos contaba con otro agente que le ayudaba en su cometido, que dizque se estaba confesando, pero la realidad era que los dos esperaban a Mario.*

Carlos had another agent to help him in his task, who *dizque* was confessing, but the truth was that they were both waiting for Mario.

This apparent counterexample for the EM analysis can be explained if we consider that EM evidentials can be read as *de dicto* reports (Smirnova 2013), i.e., a sentence with *dizque* may involve two epistemic agents: the Speaker and the Reporter and the proposition may be evaluated “with respect to the epistemic modal base relativized to the reporter, whose statement the speaker repeats” (*ibid.* p. 512). Prejacent in (8) would be false for the speaker but possible for the reporter.

**2.2. THE SYNTAX OF DIZQUE.** Morpho-syntactically Spanish *dizque* can be characterized as a (stressed) word (not a clitic or a morpheme, as is usual for EV) which can occupy many positions in the sentence. It usually appears before the informative focus, it scopes over modal adverbs (9), and it is preceded by focus adverbs (10):

(9) *... versiones que indican que: Odebrecht, dizque aparentemente ha sorprendido al Estado...*

... versions that indicate that Odebrechte, *dizque* apparently has surprised the State

(10) *... por...un capricho, un placer, ... un descuido e incluso dizque por una equivocación.*

...for...a whim, a pleasure,... a slip and even *dizque* for a mistake

Our hypothesis is that *dizque* is a functional category in the (leftmost) left periphery of the sentence. Evidence indicates that *dizque* is a functional head and not a specifier, in contrast with parenthetical and sentential adverbs. Along with S&T (2003/ 2004), a tentative representation for the Sentience projection where *dizque* merges would be (11):

(11) [<sub>SentienceP</sub> ... [<sub>EvidP</sub> matrix subject [[<sub>EvidP</sub> *dizque* [<sub>IP</sub>... ]]]]

As can be seen, *dizque* is a sentential operator generated in the Sentience area above IP where an EvidP projects. *Dizque* is bound to the SoK (=speaker/ reporter), and the matrix subject is in the SpecEvidP.

**3. CONCLUSION.** Our analysis presents four semantic tests that show that American Spanish *dizque* is an (indirect) true EM, as opposed to other analyses which treat *dizque* as an adverbial pragmatic marker. The distinction between epistemic agents is elaborated. Also we insert *dizque* as a functional node in the instantiation of a layered left periphery.

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