

### Diachrony of *qualunque* in Italian

We will look at the diachronic distribution of the indefinite *qualunque* (literally ‘whichever’) and investigate the question whether we can see some change in the data taken from M.I.DIA.<sup>1</sup>

The following table shows that *qualunque* was used with a higher frequency in free relatives in the preverbal (Q-V) and prenominal (Q-N) position until 16<sup>th</sup> c. (see row 1, col.(umns) 1-4, 13). After 16<sup>th</sup> c., there was an increase of *qualunque* in postverbal position (V-Q) in other sentence types (e.g. infinitives, see col. 8 and main clauses, see col. 5) and postnominal position (see col. 3):

		1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10		11		12		13	
		V-Q		Q-V		N-Q		Q-N		Main clause		Adjunct clause		Sub-ordinate		Infinitive		Sub-junctive		Indicative		decl. clause		headed rel. clause		Free relatives	
1	12 00- 15 32	3 6	8.72 %	3 7	91.2 8%	1 4	3.81 %	3 5	96.1 9%	2 8	6.88 %	1 3	44.9 6%	1 6	48.1 6%	2 5	6.16 %	2 5	55.4 2%	1 6	38.4 2%	2 1	6.03 %		0.00%	3 2	93.9 7%
2	15 33- 16 91	3 7	38.1 4%	6 0	61.8 6%	0	0.00 %	8 6	100. 00%	9	9.28 %	1 6	16.4 9%	7 2	74.2 3%	1 8	21.4 3%	4 2	50.0 0%	2 4	28.5 7%	8	14.5 5%	1 3	23.64 %	34	61.8 2%
3	16 92- 18 40	3 9	41.0 5%	5 6	58.9 5%	6	7.41 %	7 5	92.5 9%	1 9	20.0 0%	2 6	27.3 7%	5 0	52.6 3%	2 7	29.3 5%	3 6	39.1 3%	2 9	31.5 2%	4	8.51 %	2	4.26%	41	87.2 3%
4	18 41- 19 47	4 5	47.3 7%	5 0	52.6 3%	1 6	20.0 0%	6 4	80.0 0%	2 4	25.0 0%	2 7	28.1 3%	4 5	46.8 8%	1 8	19.1 5%	4 0	42.5 5%	3 6	38.3 0%	3	6.98 %	1 0	23.26 %	30	69.7 7%
5	To tal	1 5 7	22.4 3%	5 4 3	77.5 7%	3 6	5.86 %	5 7 8	94.1 4%	8 0	11.5 1%	2 5 2	36.2 6%	3 6 3	52.2 3%	8 8	13.0 2%	3 4 3	50.7 4%	2 4 5	36.2 4%	3 6	7.30 %	2 5	5.07 %	43 2	87.6 3%

#### Summary of the data

(1) Period 1 (until 16<sup>th</sup> c.):

*Qualunque* most frequent in Q-N and Q-V in free relatives

(2) Periods 2-4 (until 20th c.)

*Qualunque* in N-Q and Q-N in V-Q and Q-V in infinitives and main clauses

#### Analysis of the data

We will argue that the distribution in (1) and (2) correlates with the change of *qualunque* wrt. its syntactic function and semantic meaning:

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.corpusmidia.unito.it/>.

- (3) Period 1 (until 16<sup>th</sup> c.):  
*qualunque*<sub>Q-N</sub> Quantifier with free choice function (similar to Engl. ‘whichever’)
- (4) Periods 2-4 (until 20th c.)  
*qualunque*<sub>N-Q</sub> Adjective with the meaning ‘random’ or ‘common’

We will report further results on *qualsiasi*, *qualsisia* and *qualsivoglia* which will also show an increase of their use in postverbal position, different clause types and postnominal position.

### Discussion and evaluation of the data

The change of *qualunque* to an adjective with the meaning ‘random’ or ‘common’ confirms the diachronic analysis of Company-Company & Pozas-Loyo 2009, Aloni & Port 2010 for Spanish *cualquiera* that extended its use from free choice to other functions (see also Alonso-Ovalle & Menendez-Benito 2017 for synchronic function of *cualquiera*).

The diachronic distribution of the indefinite *qualunque* shows that indefinites have a wide range of syntactic and semantic functions and may be reanalyzed as adjectives. It has been shown in previous diachronic research on indefinites that they can develop from adjectives (see Bergareche & Pérez-Saldanya 2011). Our data have shown that they can also develop (back) into adjectives. These two observations suggest that indefinites might undergo a cyclic change similar to negative words (see Jespersen's Cycle). This hypothesis should be tested in future research on other indefinites cross-linguistically.

**Aloni, Maria & Angelika Port 2010.** Epistemic indefinites crosslinguistically. In Proceedings of NELS 41.

**Alonso-Ovalle, Luis, & Paula, Menendez-Benito 2011.** ‘Expressing Indifference: Spanish Un NP Cualquiera, in Neil Ashton, Anca Chereches, and David Lutz (eds.), Proceedings of the 21st Semantics and Linguistic Theory Conference, 333–52.

**Company-Company, Concepcion & Julia Pozas-Loyo 2009.** Los indefinidos compuestos y los pronombres generico-impersonales omne y uno. In *Sintaxis historica de le lengua espanola (segunda parte: La frase nominal)*, ed. Concepcion Company-Company, 1073-1219. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Economica-Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico.

**Bruno Camus Bergareche & Manuel Pérez-Saldanya 2011.** From Adjectives to Quantifiers. Evidence from Old and Modern Catalan. *Catalan Journal of Linguistics*, Vol 10.

**Jespersen, O. 1917.** Negation in English and other languages. A.F Host, Copenhagen