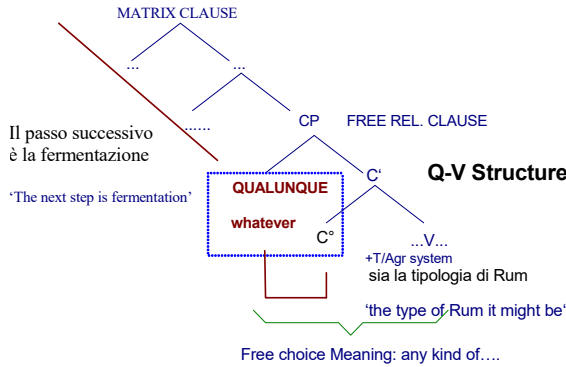


Diachrony of *qualunque* in Italian

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General introduction



Qualunque (Q) is a Free Choice Indefinite (engl. *whatever*) (i. e. every possibility is an option) (see Aloni et al 2010)

- In Old Italian, it appears almost only as a head in free relatives (concessive conditionals) in preverbal position (Q-V) (see Stark 2006)
- In Modern Italian, *qualunque* can also appear as a nominal modifier in postnominal position with evaluative meaning, e.g. *un uomo qualunque* 'a common/ordinary man' or with indiscriminative meaning, e.g. *dammi un libro qualunque* 'give me a book and I don't care which one' (Aloni et al 2010)

Aims/research questions:

- Can we observe some syntactic and/or semantic change in the distribution of Q? How do we get from Q with Free Choice Meaning to Q with Evaluative or Indiscriminative Meaning?

Methodology:

- annotation of ca. 260 occ. per period of the corpus M.I.DIA.
- quantitative/statistical analysis (linear models)

Results V-Q increases (Table 1); decrease of free relatives, increase of declaratives and other sentence types (infinitives) (Table 2); N-Q increases (Tab. 3), N-Q and V-Q correlate (Tab.4)

Table 1: V-Q increases

period	Total	V-Q		Q-V	
1200-1375	278	24	8.63%	254	91.37%
1376-1532	255	60	23.53%	195	76.47%
1533-1691	260	103	39.62%	157	60.38%
1692-1840	260	124	47.69%	136	52.31%
1841-1947	259	118	45.56%	141	54.44%
Total	1312	429	32.70%	883	67.30%

Table 2: decl. increase, free rel. decrease

period	decl. clause		headed rel. Clause		free rel. clause		cond. Clause		other	
1200-1375	36	13.04%	18	6.52%	209	79.47%	0	0.00%	13	4.71%
1376-1532	53	22.55%	14	5.45%	168	71.49%	3	1.17%	19	7.39%
1533-1691	68	31.05%	31	11.92%	120	54.79%	11	4.23%	30	11.54%
1692-1840	91	46.67%	19	7.31%	85	43.59%	13	5.00%	52	20.00%
1841-1947	84	41.18%	27	10.38%	93	45.59%	6	2.31%	50	19.23%
Total	332	29.75%	109	8.30%	675	60.48%	33	2.51%	164	12.49%

Table 3: N-Q increases

Table 3	N-Q		Q-N	
1200-1375	7	2.90%	234	97.10%
1376-1532	1	0.51%	195	99.49%
1533-1691	2	0.90%	219	99.10%
1692-1840	42	18.18%	189	81.82%
1841-1947	54	25.35%	159	74.65%
Total	106	9.62%	996	90.38%

Period	N-Q	V-Q out of N-Q	Ratio between N-Q and V-Q
1200-1375	7	2	28.57%
1376-1532	1	1	100.00%
1533-1691	2	2	100.00%
1692-1840	42	32	76.19%
1841-1947	54	37	68.52%
Total	106	74	69.81%

Evaluation and Discussion of the data

- **General idea:** *Less restrictions on the syntactic distribution give more semantic interpretations and make semantic change more probable*
 - Use in declaratives, V-Q, postnominal modification → adjective-like status → evaluative meaning

Outlook

- Study of lexical/aspectual/modal properties of the verbs used with *qualunque* (change in the use of predicative status). With evaluative meaning, predicative use should rise: *è un uomo qualunque* 'he is a common man'
- Comparison with Spanish free choice indefinite *cualquiera*

References: Aloni et al (2010) Free choice items as fossils. Workshop on Indefiniteness Crosslinguistically. Ms.