

Emerging indefinites

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WS Indefinites in diachronic and comparative perspective
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Presentation

- ▶ Motivation & hypotheses
- ▶ Methodology
- ▶ Synchronic studies: what has been grammaticalised?
- ▶ Diachronic studies: how has it been grammaticalised?
 - ▶ Spanish: *cualquiera*
 - ▶ Dutch: *wie dan ook*
- ▶ Conclusions & discussion

Corpus studies on indefinites: Motivation

- ▶ **Formal pragmatics:** Use of plain indefinites (e.g. *somebody*) can give rise to different pragmatic effects:
 - ▶ *Free choice implicature:* each individual is a permissible option (E.g. 'You may invite somebody');
 - ▶ *Ignorance implicature:* speaker doesn't know who (E.g. 'Somebody called');
 - ▶ ...
- ▶ **Typology:** Many languages have developed specialised forms for such enriched meanings:
 - ▶ *Free choice indefinites:* Italian *-unque-*series, Czech *koli-*series;
 - ▶ *Epistemic indefinites:* Russian *to-*series, German *irgend-*series;
 - ▶ ...

Illustration motivation: epistemic indefinites

(1) *Plain indefinite* (German)

- a. **Jemand** hat angerufen.
somebody has called
- b. Semantic meaning: Someone called
- c. Pragmatic Ignorance implicature: The speaker does not know who

(2) *Epistemic indefinite pronoun* (German 'irgendjemand')

- a. **Irgendjemand** hat angerufen.
sombody:UNKNOWN has called
- b. Semantic meaning: Someone called and the speaker does not know who

In languages with epistemic indefinites, inference (1-c), pragmatic in origin, integrated into the semantic content of sentences like (2-a).

Illustration motivation: free choice indefinites

(3) *Plain indefinites* (Spanish)

- a. Puedes traer **un** libro.
can:2SG bring:INF a book
- b. Semantic meaning : You can bring me a book
- c. Pragmatic Free Choice implicature : Each book is a possible option

(4) *Free choice determiner* (Spanish 'cualquier')

- a. Puedes traer **cualquier** libro.
can:2SG bring:INF any book
- b. Semantic meaning : You can bring me a book and each book is a possible option

In languages with distinctive Free Choice forms, inference (3-c), pragmatic in origin, integrated into the semantic content of sentences like (4-a).

Corpus studies on indefinites: Hypothesis

- ▶ Main hypothesis: different indefinites result from different processes of grammaticalisation
- ▶ Grammaticalisation involves (co-)occurrences of semantic change ('bleaching'), morpho-syntactic reanalysis and phonological reduction
- ▶ Semantic change: 'lexicalising implicatures': a pragmatic inference of some expression is being reanalysed by language learners/speakers as part of the lexical semantics of that expression.

Corpus study on indefinites

- ▶ Main objective: Full understanding of
 - ▶ what is grammaticalised? (synchronic)
 - ▶ how has it been grammaticalised? (diachronic)

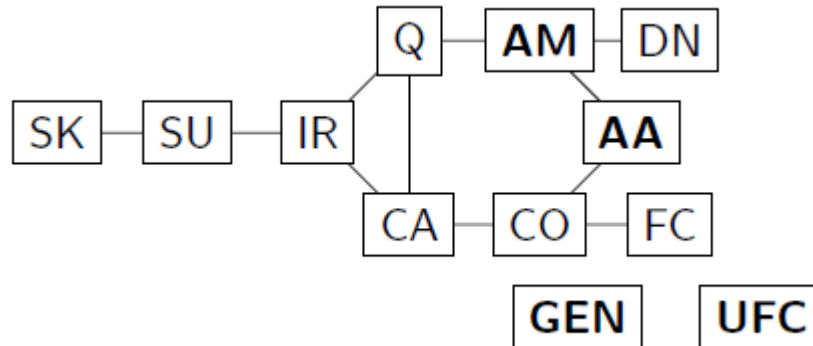
- ▶ Indefinite forms: Project (so far) involves investigation of:
 - German EI *irgendein* (synchronic)
 - Czech FC *kterýkoli*
 - Italian FC *(uno) qualunque*
 - Spanish FC *cualquiera*
 - Dutch FC *wie dan ook*

 - Spanish FC *cualquiera* (diachronic)
 - Dutch FC *wie dan ook*

Roadmap

- ▶ **Today:** *cualquiera* & *wie dan ook* (diachronic)
- ▶ *Cualquiera*: has been grammaticalised long ago and its meaning remained relatively constant;
- ▶ *Wie dan ook*: has emerged into an indefinite only recently.

An extended version of Haspelmath's map

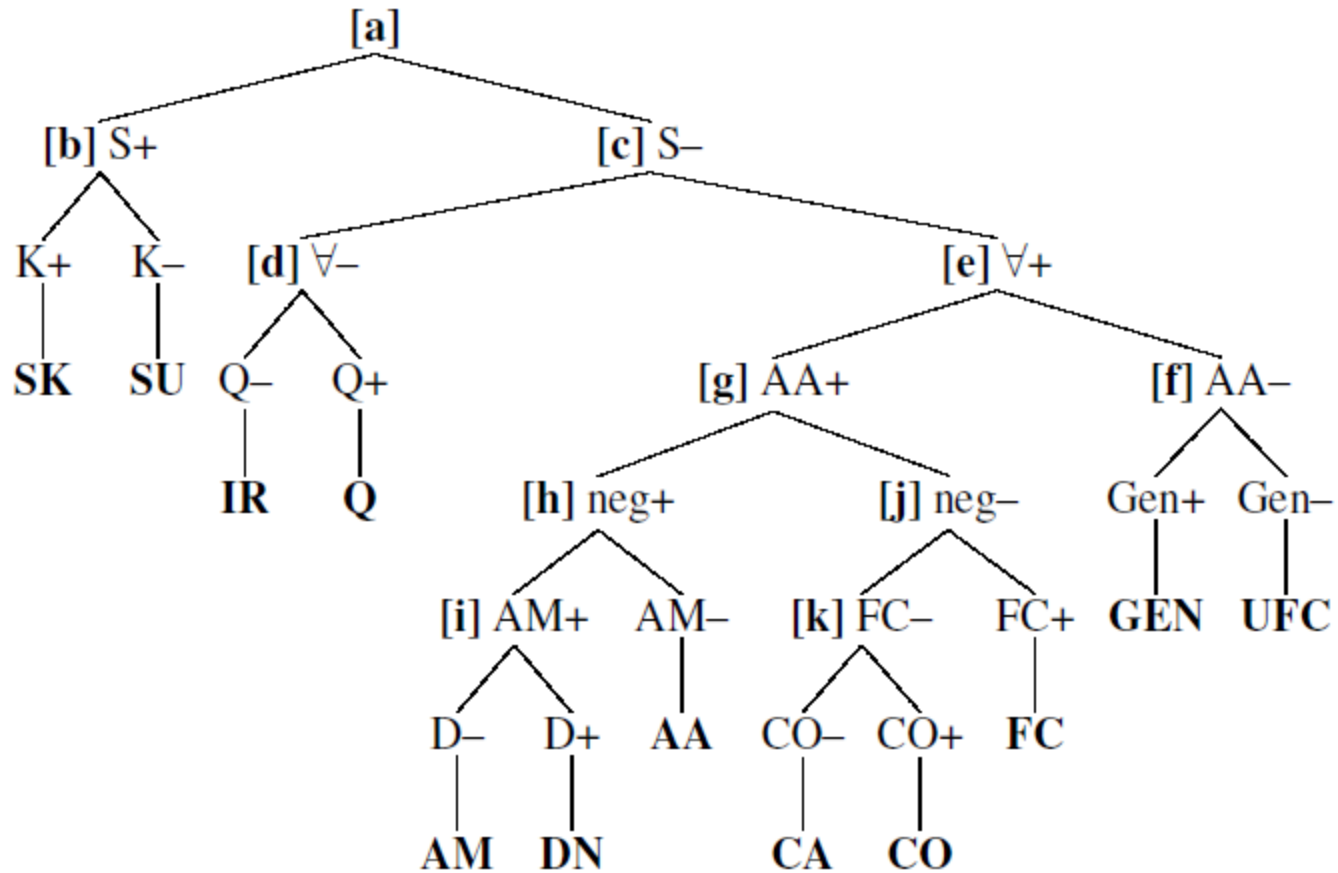


	Abbr	Label	Example
a.	SK	specific known	<i>Somebody</i> called. Guess who?
b.	SU	specific unknown	I heard <i>something</i> , but I couldn't tell what.
c.	IR	irrealis	You must try <i>somewhere</i> else.
d.	Q	question	Did <i>anybody</i> tell you anything about it?
e.	CA	conditional antec.	If you see <i>anybody</i> , tell me immediately.
f.	CO	comparative	John is taller than <i>anybody</i> .
g.	DN	direct negation	John didn't see <i>anybody</i> .
h.	FC	free choice	You may kiss <i>anybody</i> .
j.	AM	anti-morphic	I don't think that <i>anybody</i> knows the answer.
k.	AA	anti-additive	The bank avoided taking <i>any</i> decision.
l.	UFC	universal FC	John kissed <i>any</i> woman with red hair.
m.	GEN	generic	<i>Any</i> dog has four legs.

Off map-functions

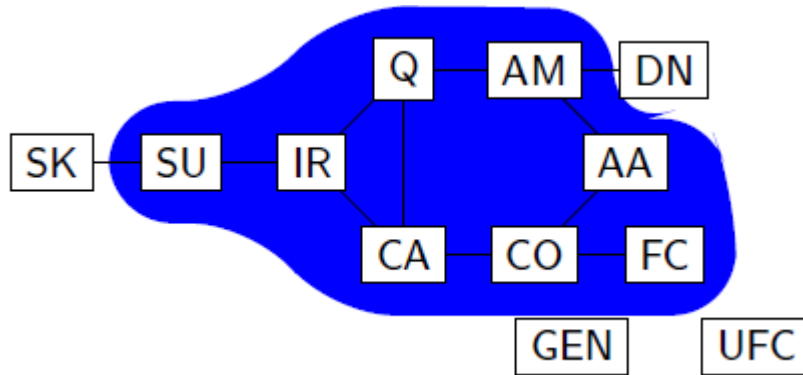
- ▶ Indiscriminacy (IND):
(5) I do not want to go to bed with *just anyone* anymore.
- ▶ *No matter*:
(6) *Whoever* comes to the party; I will be happy.
- ▶ Adposition:
(7) I hope someone, *anyone*, will come.
- ▶ Free Relative:
(8) *Whoever* comes to the party will be happy.
- ▶ Filler:
(9) He can get any woman or *whatever*.
- ▶ Unclear:
(10) Yes yes *anyone* yes.

Decision tree

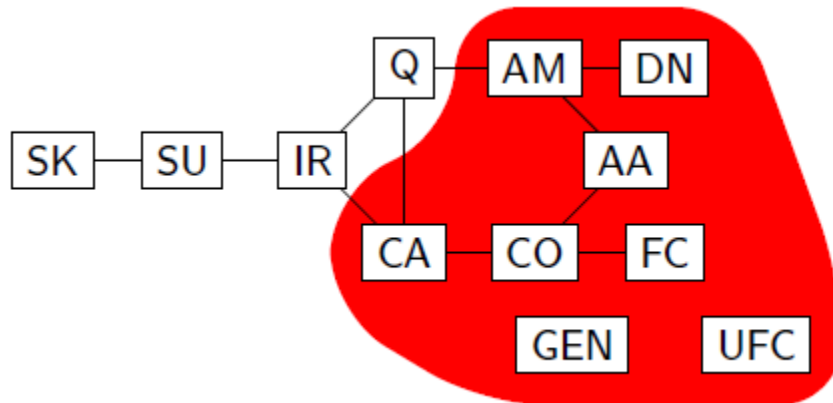


Synchronic study: attested distributions (I)

- ▶ German *irgendein*:

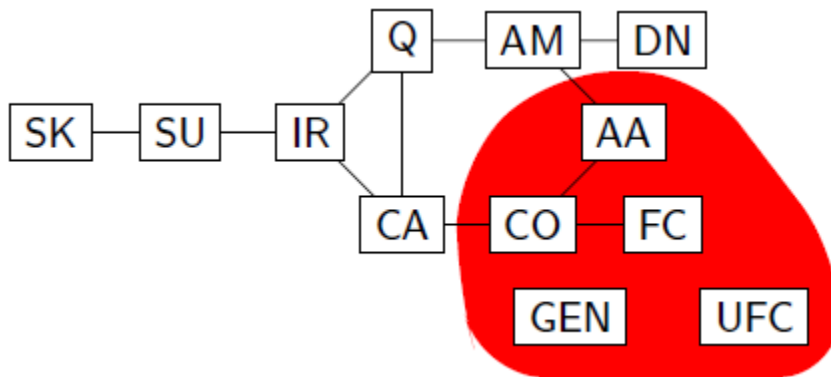


- ▶ Czech *kterýkoli*:

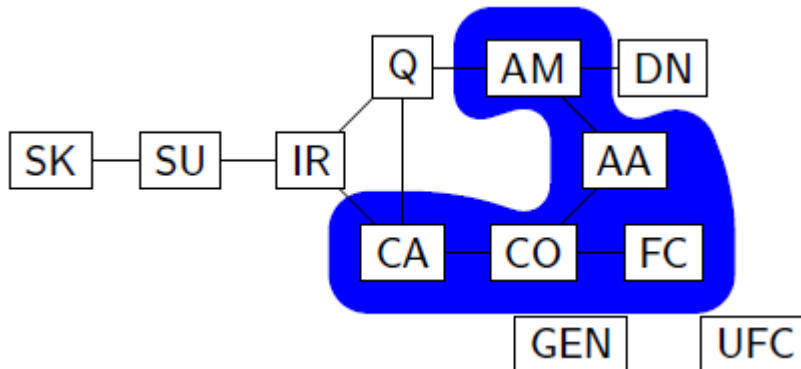


Synchronic study: attested distributions (II)

- ▶ Italian *qualunque*:

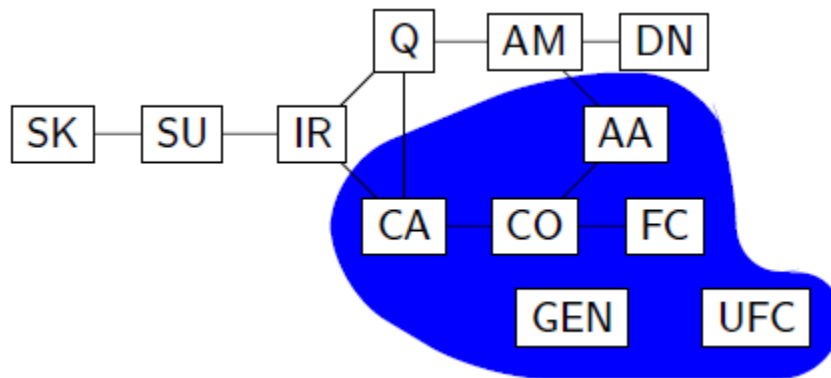


- ▶ Italian *uno qualunque*:

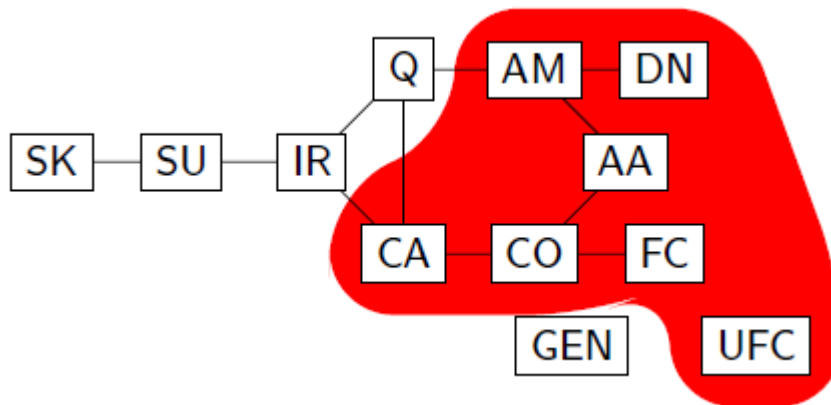


Synchronic study: attested distributions (III)

- ▶ Spanish *cualquiera*:



- ▶ Dutch *wie dan ook*:



Diachronic study: Spanish

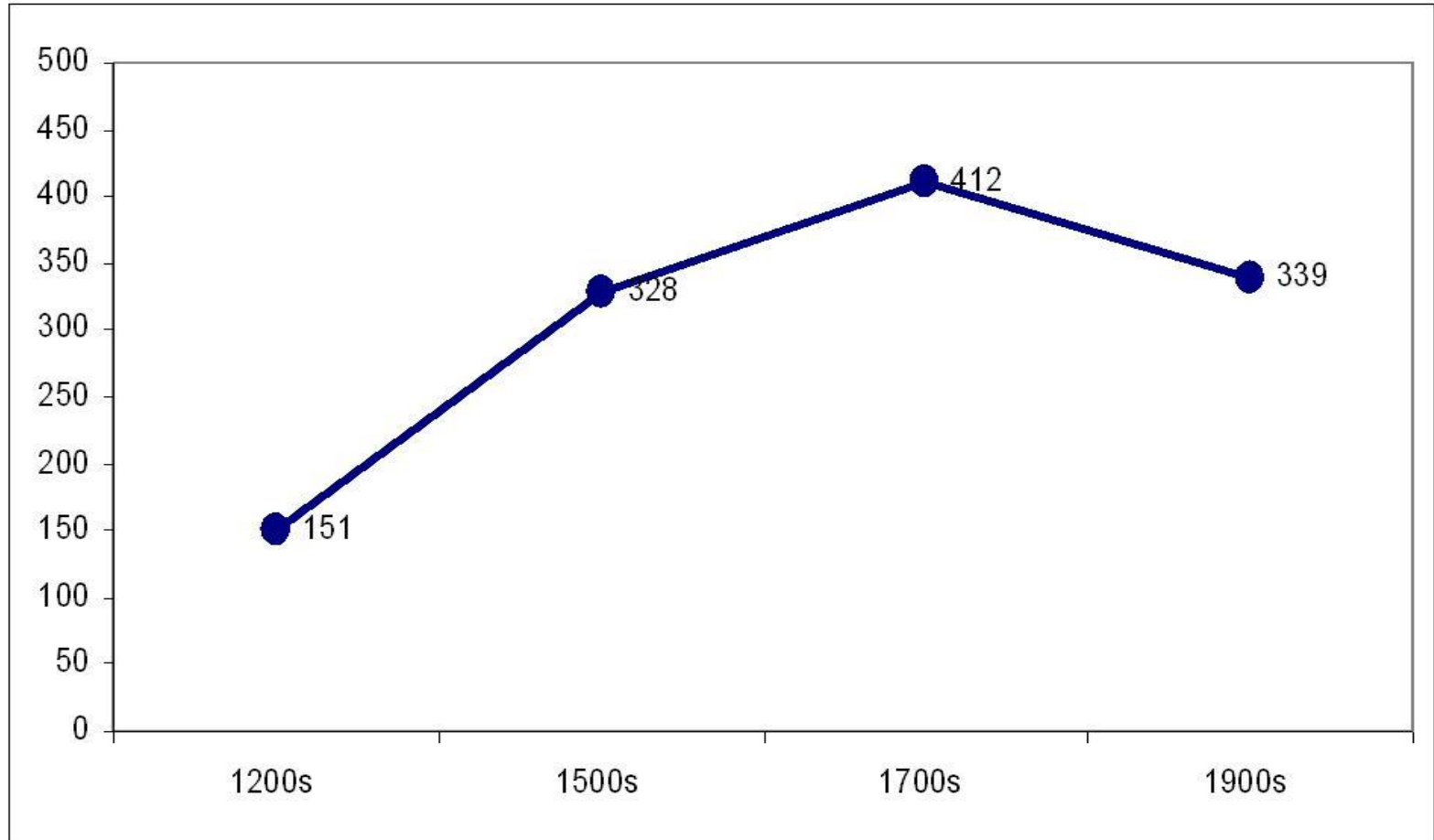
- ▶ Item: *Cualquiera* (pronoun), or *cualquier* (determiner), translated to English as *whatever*, *whichever*, *whoever* or *any*, and composed of:
 - cual* ('which/who') + *quier(a)* ('want:3.PERS.SUBJ')
- ▶ Corpus: Spanish historical corpus *El Corpus del Español* created by Mark Davies
- ▶ Query: *aulq*
- ▶ Labelled: 100 occurrences for each period

Hypothesized grammaticalisation process for *cualquiera* (cf. Company-Company & Pozas-Loyo 2009)

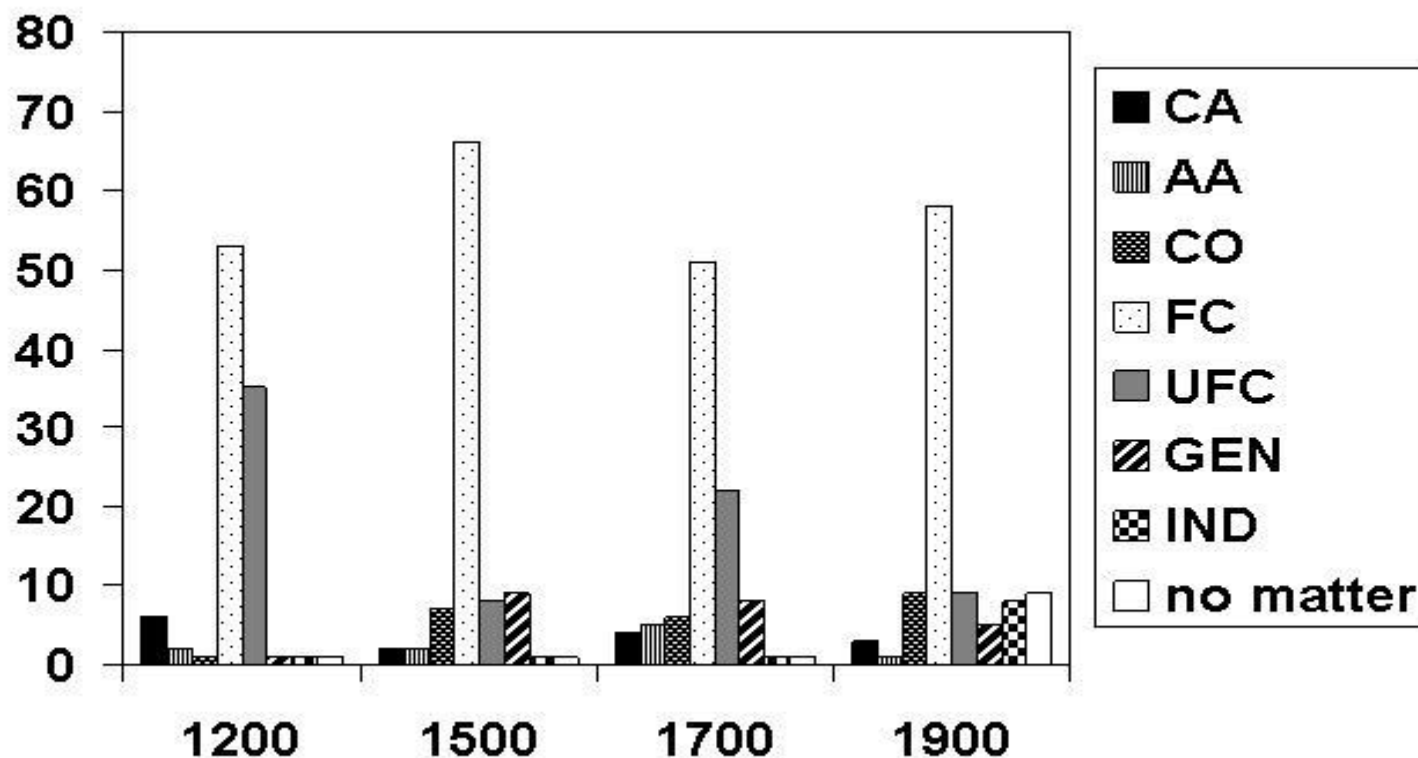
- (13) a. *Free relative clause*
Haga en él **cual** castigo **quiera**.
do on him which punishment want:3.PERS.SUBJ
'Carry out whatever punishment they see fit.'
- b. *Phrasal compound*
Haga en él **cual quiera** castigo.
do on him which want:3.PERS.SUBJ punishment
'Carry out whatever punishment.'
- c. *Indefinite*
Haga en él **cualquier(a)** castigo.
do on him whichever punishment
'Carry out whatever punishment.'

Presumably, this process has occurred in early stages of the history of Spanish and in consequence *cualquiera*, as a word, is already recurrently found in the first documentations of Spanish, which date back to the thirteenth century.

Number of occurrences of 'cualquiera' per millions of words



Functions covered by 'cualquiera' in 1200s, 1500s, 1700s and 1900s



Discussion

- ▶ Distribution of *cualquiera* stable throughout the four periods.
- ▶ The FC function is clearly the most dominant since the first period.
- ▶ Two more off-map functions, namely IND and *no-matter*, appear in the 1500s and gain presence by the 1900s.
- ▶ Given the early grammaticalisation of *cualquiera* and stable distribution of its functions, we could not really attest much of the process this compound went through in order to behave as it does nowadays.

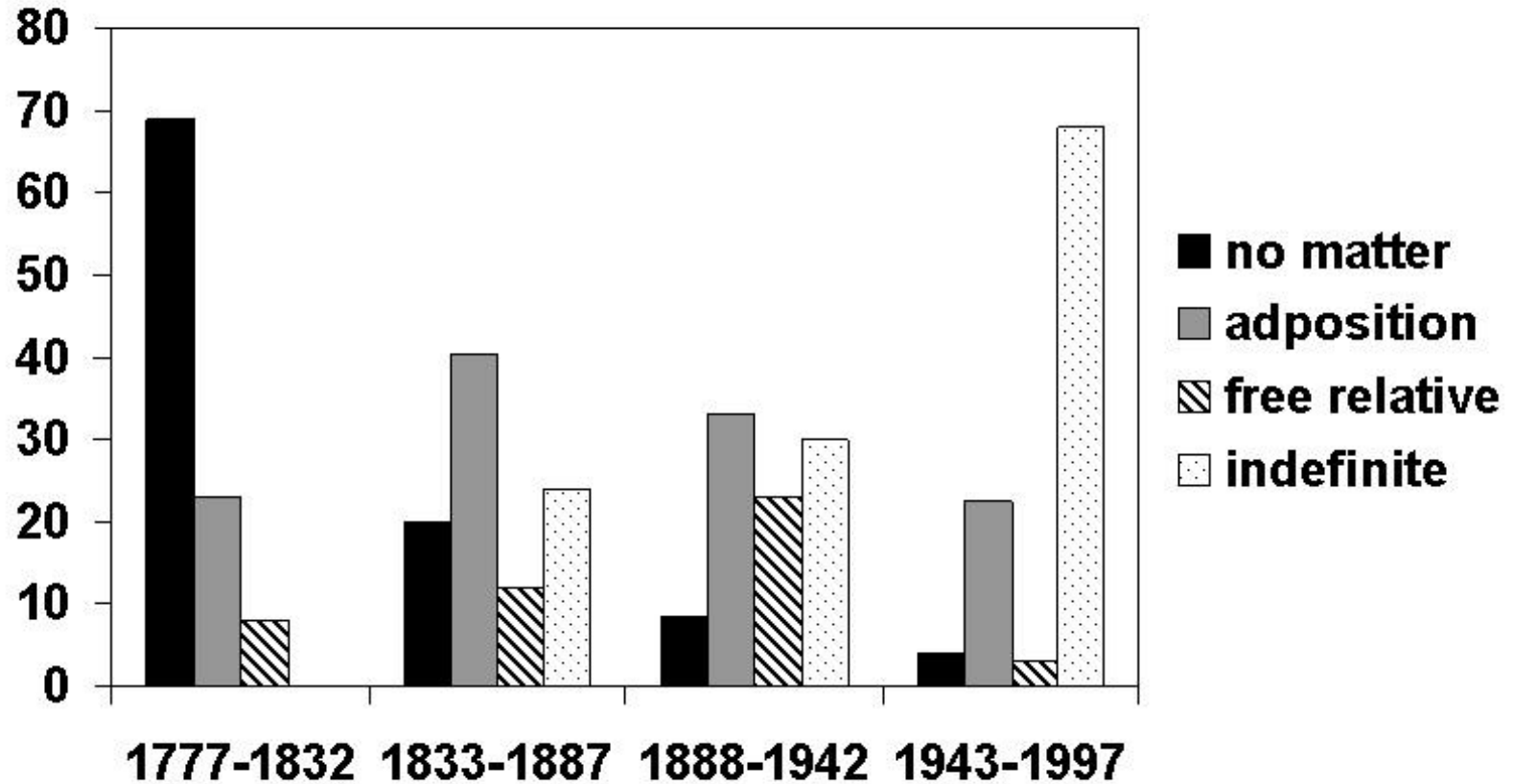
Diachronic study: Dutch

- ▶ Item: *wie dan ook* ('who then also'), from the 'WH dan ook'-series:

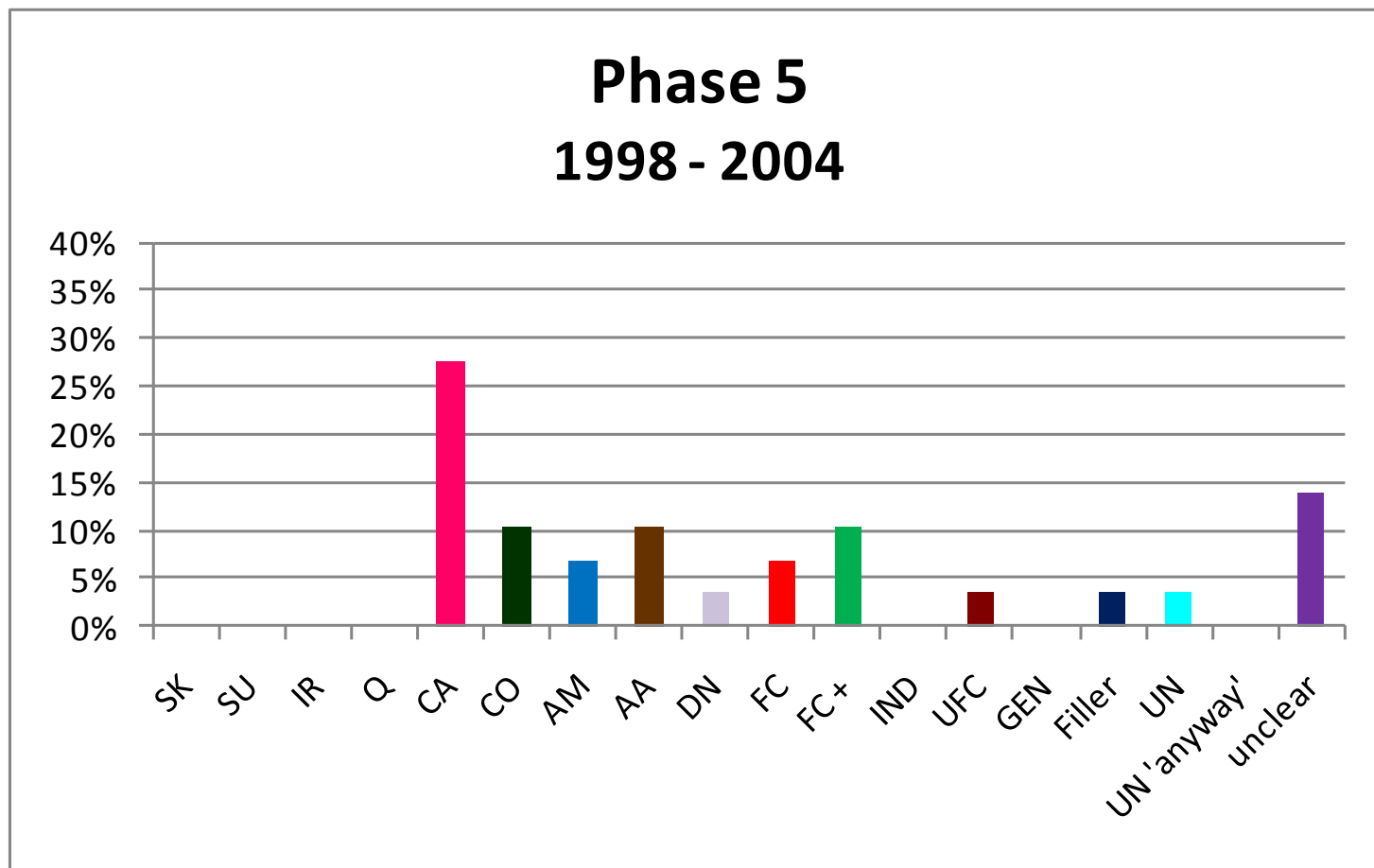
	<i>dan ook-series</i>
person	<u>wie</u> dan ook
thing	<u>wat</u> dan ook
place	<u>waar</u> dan ook
time	<u>wanneer</u> dan ook
manner	<u>hoe</u> dan ook
determiner	<u>welke</u> dan ook

- ▶ Corpus: written Dutch historical corpora
 - ▶ CD-ROM Middelnederlands (270 texts before 1300)
 - ▶ DBNL (Digitale Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren) (4458 texts from 1170-2010)
- ▶ Labelled: 349
- ▶ The first occurrence is from 1777.

Four stages in grammaticalisation of *wie dan ook* (I)



Functions covered by 'wie dan ook' in stage IV



Discussion

- ▶ Grammaticalisation process involved four subsequent stages, involving semantic, syntactic and phonological change;
- ▶ No clear function emerges in the final stage;
- ▶ Only in the final stage *wie dan ook* can be considered an indefinite;
- ▶ The development of Dutch *wie dan ook* shows how a complex *wh* expression evolves into an indefinite.

Conclusions (I)

- ▶ Report on cross-linguistic synchronic and diachronic corpus study on free choice and epistemic indefinites
- ▶ Motivating hypothesis: both Spanish *cualquiera* and Dutch *wie dan ook* emerge through multiple stages of grammaticalisation where an independent main clause with an indifference implicature, via intermediate appositive and free relative stages, turns into a new indefinite.
- ▶ Main results:
 - ▶ Synchronic study: confirms Haspelmath's contiguity hypothesis;
 - ▶ Diachronic hypothesis: confirmed by diachronic study.

Conclusions (II)

► Additional result:

The diachronic study shows that the acquisition of new functions is not unidirectional:

Dutch:	<i>no matter</i>	(– adp. –)	FR	– indef
Spanish:	FR	–	indef	– <i>no matter</i>