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LINGUISTICS

INDEFINITES BETWEEN LATIN AND ROMANCE

CHIARA GIANOLLO

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Indefinites between Latin and Romance

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Indefinites between Latin and Romance

CHIARA GIANOLLO

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Series preface

Modern diachronic linguistics has important contacts with other subdisciplines, notably first-language acquisition, learnability theory, computational linguistics, sociolinguistics and the traditional philological study of texts. It is now recognized in the wider field that diachronic linguistics can make a novel contribution to linguistic theory, to historical linguistics and arguably to cognitive science more widely.

This series provides a forum for work in both diachronic and historical linguistics, including work on change in grammar, sound, and meaning within and across languages; synchronic studies of languages in the past; and descriptive histories of one or more languages. It is intended to reflect and encourage the links between these subjects and fields such as those mentioned above.

The goal of the series is to publish high-quality monographs and collections of papers in diachronic linguistics generally, i.e. studies focussing on change in linguistic structure, and/or change in grammars, which are also intended to make a contribution to linguistic theory, by developing and adopting a current theoretical model, by raising wider questions concerning the nature of language change or by developing theoretical connections with other areas of linguistics and cognitive science as listed above. There is no bias towards a particular language or language family, or towards a particular theoretical framework; work in all theoretical frameworks, and work based on the descriptive tradition of language typology, as well as quantitatively based work using theoretical ideas, also feature in the series.

Adam Ledgeway and Ian Roberts

University of Cambridge

Preface

In this work I follow the development of some indefinite pronouns and determiners between Latin and Romance, with the aim of detecting the mechanisms of semantic and syntactic change leading to the Romance outcomes in this grammatical domain.

I survey the history of elements of the functional lexicon such as Latin *quidam* 'a certain', *aliquis* 'some', *nullus* 'no', *nemo* 'no one', *nihil* 'nothing', trying to detect which aspects of their meaning and of their form are responsible for the diachronic success of some of them, and for the disappearance of others, and how they are reanalyzed or replaced in the Romance languages.

My work shows that the system of indefinite pronouns and determiners changes profoundly from Latin to Romance, but also that the Romance languages maintain a certain degree of similarity in the way their various systems evolve. I argue that we can account for this similarity of outcomes if we consider the changes happening at the intermediate stage of Late Latin, as witnessed especially by texts of the third and fourth centuries CE. At this stage, the grammar of indefinites already shows a number of changes, which are homogeneously transmitted to the daughter languages, accounting for the parallelism among the various emerging Romance systems.

Chapter 1 will introduce the topic and the aims of this study, by preliminarily discussing the dimensions of variation observed in the realm of indefinite pronouns and determiners, as well as the goals and the methods of the historical investigation conducted in this work.

Chapter 2 and chapter 3 are dedicated to specific and epistemic indefinites. We will see that the history of Latin *aliquis* assumes particular relevance in this respect, owing to the large amount of variation observed among its Romance continuations (Italian *alcuno*, French *aucun*, Catalan *algun*, Spanish *alguno*, Portuguese *algum*). I will propose an explanation for this variation by looking more closely at the properties of Classical and Late Latin *aliquis* and by arguing that these properties are responsible for the expansion in further contexts observed in Romance.

Chapter 4 and chapter 5 deal with indefinites in the scope of negation, respectively in Latin and in some Early Romance varieties (Old French and Old Italian). I propose an explanation for the fundamental process of change leading from the one-to-one correspondence between expression and interpretation of negation seen in Latin (a Double Negation language) to the systems, found in Romance, where multiple expressions of negation correspond to just one negative operator (Negative Concord languages). Some indefinites are involved in this process, since they carry the expression of negation (be it contentful or just formal). I will propose that the trigger to this change is a crucial parametric resetting phenomenon concerning the syntax of negation in Late Latin, and I will show the influence that it has on the syntax and semantics of indefinites in the scope of negation. I will also discuss the importance of the Latin focus-sensitive negation particle *nec* for the origin of new Romance n-words, such as Old French *neuns*, Italian *nessuno*, Spanish *ninguno*. In view of my conclusions

on this point, I will propose a novel interpretation of the Negative Concord systems seen in Old French and Old Italian.

The conclusions of this study confirm the fruitfulness of applying methods and models developed within synchronic theoretical linguistics to the study of diachronic phenomena. In turn, they bear witness to the importance of diachronic research for understanding the nature of crosslinguistic variation. In particular, in the case at hand, the apparent heterogeneity of the Romance systems observed in the grammatical domain of indefinites can be reinterpreted in a new light and reduced to a few fundamental determinants. The latter can be shown to have already emerged in Late Latin, thanks to the threefold comparison of Classical Latin, Late Latin, and Early Romance carried out in this work. Moreover, the phenomena observed in the history of Latin and of the Romance languages are shown to follow crosslinguistically recurrent patterns and to proceed in a systematic fashion, shedding light on the nature of the semantic and syntactic categories involved, as well as on the mechanisms of change at the syntax–semantics interface.

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Finally, I could not have made it without my family, and especially my parents. This book is dedicated to them.

List of abbreviations

Abbreviations for descriptive and theoretical notions are introduced and explained in the text. Abbreviations for corpora are further listed in §1.6.1, where the full bibliographical record is provided. Abbreviations for Latin authors and texts are listed below only where they do not follow the standard ones used in the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (online version of the *Index librorum scriptorum inscriptionum*: <http://www.thesaurus.badw.de/en/user-tools/index>). Abbreviations used in the glosses conform as far as possible to the Leipzig Glossing Rules. I list them here for ease of reference.

#	pragmatically infelicitous
*	grammatically ill-formed (but before stems: reconstructed form)
ABL	ablative case
ACC	accusative case
BC	<i>Commentarii de bello civili</i> (Caesar)
BG	<i>Commentarii de bello Gallico</i> (Caesar)
BP	Brazilian Portuguese
Cat.	Catalan
CL	Classical Latin
COMP	comparative
CP	Complementizer Phrase
DAT	dative case
DIEC2	<i>Diccionari de la llengua catalana</i> . Segona edició
DN	Double Negation
DP	Determiner Phrase
EP	European Portuguese
EPP	Extended Projection Principle
FEW	<i>Französisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch</i>
Foc	Focus
Fr.	French
GEN	genitive case
GER	gerund or gerundive
i	interpretable
IE	Indo-European
IMP	imperative
INF	infinitive
Infl	position of the inflected finite verb
It.	Italian

<i>Itin. Eg.</i>	<i>Itinerarium Egeriae</i>
JC	Jespersen's Cycle
LF	Logical Form
LL	Late Latin
LLT-A and LLT-B	Brepols' Library of Latin Texts
LOC	locative
MCVF	<i>Corpus Modéliser le changement: les voies du français</i>
MI	Modern Italian
NC	Negative Concord
Neg	negative
NI	negative indefinite
NM	negative marker
n-word	element of Negative Concord
NOM	nominative case
NPI	negative-polarity item
NT	New Testament
O	object
OF	Old French
OI	Old Italian
OVI	<i>Corpus dell'Italiano Antico, Opera del Vocabolario Italiano</i>
PASS	passive
PIE	Proto-Indo-European
PF	Phonetic Form
PT	participle
Pt.	Portuguese
Pol	Polarity
REW	<i>Romanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch</i>
S	subject
Sp.	Spanish
SUP	superlative
TLL	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</i>
TP	Tense Phrase (corresponds to Infl/IP of earlier models)
u	uninterpretable
val	valued
V	verb
VOC	vocative

The grammar of indefinites

Functions, variation, and change

1.1 Aim and scope of this work

This work is a contribution to the multidimensional study of strategies by which speakers use nominal phrases for introducing and managing discourse entities, by linguistically encoding crucial properties such as (non-)identifiability for speaker and hearer, anaphoricity, degree of saliency in previous and forthcoming discourse, scope preferences and constraints. Taking Haspelmath's (1997) semantic map as my point of departure, I focus on two core areas in the semantic space of indefinite meanings there defined: specific indefinites, on the one hand, and indefinites occurring in the scope of a negative operator, on the other hand. These two classes have been considered to represent two opposite poles in view of a number of closely related criteria. Specific indefinites score higher than other indefinites on a scale of referentiality, since they can introduce persistent discourse entities that can become part of a referential chain. Indefinites within the scope of negation, in contrast, are particularly short-lived in a discourse perspective: their role consists in contributing to negate the existence of a state of affairs. Connected to this, specific indefinites have been argued to be independent of clausal operators for their licensing. Negative indefinites and n-words, instead, are crucially dependent on negation for their licensing.

In this work I subject these criteria to scrutiny in the empirical domain of Latin and Romance, with the aim of accounting for the conspicuous differences between the ancestor and the daughter languages in the grammar of specific indefinites and indefinites in the scope of negation.

My research on specific indefinites will focus on the properties of Latin *aliquis* 'some', which is characterized as a 'specific unknown' indefinite in Haspelmath's (1997) map, and on the properties of its Romance continuations (Italian *alcuno*, French *aucun*, Catalan *algun*, Spanish *alguno*, Portuguese *algum*). In its history, *aliquis* appears to expand from one pole to the other in the semantic space considered in Haspelmath (1997), since its Romance continuations consistently show narrow-scope uses under negation, unlike the Latin ancestor. I will show that, in order to understand the diachronic developments and the remarkable variation witnessed by Romance in this area, it is necessary to reconsider the semantic nature of Latin *aliquis*. In chapter 2 I compare it with a clearly specific indefinite existing in Latin, *quidam* 'a certain'; I conclude that *aliquis* is not a specific indefinite, and is best

characterized as an epistemic indefinite. This category is absent from Haspelmath's system but can subsume some of the distinctions he draws in a theoretically coherent way. Moreover, the fact that epistemic indefinites show a form of licensing dependence on clausal operators can account for the expansion of *aliquis* into further non-specific contexts, starting in Late Latin. In chapter 3 we then follow the development of the Romance continuations of *aliquis*, and uncover a complex and yet principled interplay of conservativeness and innovation.

With respect to indefinites in the scope of negation, in chapter 4 and chapter 5 I will analyze the interaction of semantic and syntactic factors in their behavior between Latin and Old Romance (in particular Old French and Old Italian, but many of the conclusions reached will have a broader impact). We will have to distinguish different subtypes of indefinites in this area (negative indefinites, n-words, negative polarity items) and to account for their interaction with clausal structure. Given their clear dependence on a negation operator, the study of these indefinites exceeds the boundaries of the nominal domain and can be very interesting in a diachronic perspective, since changes in their syntax are typically a symptom of far-reaching changes involving the whole system of negation and, in the case of Latin, also more general aspects of the syntax of the clause. For this reason, the study of negation systems will assume a relevant role in my work, as a paramount example of the dependence relations that indefinites may be subject to.

In this first chapter, I will introduce the general theoretical prerequisites for my research and I will situate it in the broader field of studies on the semantics of nominal phrases.

Denotation by means of nominal phrases (DPs) represents a foundational function of language, and an essential domain of linguistic competence. Its multidimensional nature makes it a central testing ground for linguistic theories and methods, since a proper treatment of the function and form of nominal phrases encompasses many levels. Most directly it concerns semantics and pragmatics, but morphology and syntax must also be taken into consideration: the form of nominal phrases obviously constrains interpretation, but crucially not in a univocal way. Even closely related languages show differences as to which interpretations or functions they allow for various morphosyntactic forms of referential and quantificational expressions, and as to which forms are chosen to introduce or reuse entities in discourse depending on various contextual factors.

The synchronic facts are well known and amply studied.¹ Crucially, however, the constraints governing form and interpretation of nominal phrases may change over time (the grammaticalization of definite and indefinite determiners representing a macroscopic development in this respect). While the relevant diachronic phenomena have been subject to investigation in a number of languages (see Lyons 1999: (322–40) for an overview, and Haspelmath 1997 for indefinites in particular), the general mechanisms affecting referential and quantificational categories in the diachronic

¹ Cf. Abbott (2010), Szabolcsi (2010), and the chapters on reference and quantification in von Stechow et al. (2011: 971–1185) for a survey of the main theoretical stances, as well as Alexiadou et al. (2007) and Stark et al. (2007) for two recent crosslinguistic overviews.

development of grammars, and especially their motivations and their dynamics, are far from clear.

One aim of my research is to uncover tendencies in the development of strategies for the coding and management of discourse entities by means of indefinite pronouns and determiners. Indefinites display an intriguing amount of variation with respect to their morphosyntactic and semantic-pragmatic properties. They create systems of interrelated series, which can differ profoundly even in closely related languages, like the Romance ones. A diachronic investigation is instrumental for understanding the factors that shape series and systems of indefinite pronouns and determiners in the Romance languages. In particular, and as we will see in the case studies presented here, their contemporary morphosyntactic behavior often retains vestiges of an original semantic-pragmatic motivation that may have been lost meanwhile.

In turn, this research has a broader theoretical impact: the domain of indefinite pronouns and determiners, given the numerous dimensions of variation, qualifies as a very promising area in which to observe the evolution of functional items of the lexicon, and to test theoretical models for syntactic and semantic change.

Indefinites show complex patterns of interdependencies with various operators in the clause. This turns out to be very interesting in a diachronic perspective as well, since changes in the conditions governing such interdependencies may be a signal for broader structural changes at the syntactic level. Another aim of this work is, thus, to investigate this aspect, by focusing in particular on the interaction between negation and indefinites, which has proved to be subject to recurrent evolutionary patterns, or 'cycles'. This dependence on the surrounding structural context poses interesting theoretical questions concerning the motor of change (the triggering evidence) and the chain reactions (implicational relations) among mutations. Sometimes the change affects a single lexical item; in the domain of indefinites, however, frequently the change has systemic effects, involving a whole class of items (a series), as well as the paradigmatic relation that the class entertains with others.

I address these issues in the empirical domain of Latin and Romance, which, thanks to the uninterrupted written tradition and the rich differentiation, qualifies as an ideal testing ground. I do not aim at a comprehensive overview, but rather focus on phenomena that I singled out as particularly significant in connection with the current theoretical discussion, both in synchronic and diachronic perspective.

The synchronic discussion on indefinites centers on their semantic-pragmatic status and on how to model their behavior at the syntax-semantics interface, on the one hand, and in discourse, on the other hand.

Diachronic research, in turn, has been interested in the fact that changes affecting indefinites, in terms both of their sources of grammaticalization and of their semantic development, are quite frequent and remarkably similar across languages; they may, thus, disclose important insights into the semantic categories involved, as well as into the general principles of language change.

The synchronic and diachronic lines of research are obviously interconnected: restrictions on variation (what can vary across languages; what remains constant; how values for variation points cluster) are restrictions on change as well. That is,

conclusions reached by means of the theoretical analysis of crosslinguistic data are expected to allow for the formulation of restrictive theories of change.

The general questions I pursue are the following:

- (1) a. Functions and Variation:
 - (i) What are the synchronic constraints on possible systems of form-meaning mapping, i.e. on variation in function, in the realm of indefinites, as evidenced by typological and theoretical research?
 - (ii) How do system-internal dynamics (competition, blocking) work, from a synchronic and from a diachronic perspective?
- b. Change:
 - (iii) How do form and meaning of indefinites evolve in time? To what extent are the changes to which they are subject caused, respectively, by meaning-related and by morphosyntactic factors?
 - (iv) What are the contextual parameters triggering or preventing certain interpretations, and what is their role in diachronic reanalysis?
 - (v) How to deal with historical stages or with individual texts displaying apparent optionality in the distribution of certain indefinites?

As mentioned, the classes of indefinites which will be of primary interest in my case studies are those that manifest a semantic and syntactic dependence, i.e. that need licensing by a DP-external operator and, thus, establish formal relations with other elements in the clause: epistemic indefinites, negative polarity items, n-words, and negative indefinites. The reason for this choice is that, exactly because these elements show a dependence, the description of their behavior can rest not only on interpretation judgments, but also on additional structural cues, which allow us to reconstruct their function more safely in the case of historical varieties. In addition to these classes, the operator-independent class of specific indefinites will also be discussed. This is motivated by two main requirements. On the one hand, the expression of specificity in Latin will have to be considered in chapter 2 in order to reach a more precise description of the point of departure for my investigation. On the other hand, the analysis of specificity that I will choose allows the modeling of the space of variation represented by Haspelmath's semantic map as a continuum of varying restrictions on domains of quantifications (as we will see in §1.5.3).

1.2 Overview of the chapters

In this chapter I preliminarily discuss the central theoretical issues introduced in (1), which are then addressed by means of case studies in the following chapters, and I describe the methods and the material adopted. I first present Haspelmath's (1997) semantic map for indefinite meanings, and I then look for correspondences with and differences from the dimensions of variation assumed in current formal treatments. This way, I also provide an overview of the main grammatical categories investigated in this work. I further motivate the diachronic investigation of these issues by

arguing that the study of indefinites is very relevant for our general understanding of systematicity in change at the syntax-semantics interface.

In the rest of the work, I consider a number of concrete questions of language transmission that arise when considering differences between Latin and Romance. Why is it, for instance, that some Latin indefinites are historically very successful and are transmitted to the daughter languages, while others, like *quidam* ‘a certain’, disappear? How could it happen that the continuations of *aliquis* ‘some(one)’, a ‘positive’ indefinite classed by Haspelmath (1997) as ‘specific unknown’, came to be used as negative polarity items and even n-words or negative indefinites in the Romance descendants? And how can we explain that, while Latin is a so-called Double Negation language, where each negatively marked indefinite receives a semantically negative interpretation, the Early Romance daughters systematically display Negative Concord, where multiple negatively marked expressions co-occur conveying a single-negation meaning?

Chapter 2 is dedicated to specific and epistemic indefinites in Classical and Late Latin, i.e. to the leftward extreme of Haspelmath’s (1997) map. Early and contemporary Romance data are analyzed in **chapter 3**, which is dedicated to the comparative study of the continuations of Latin *aliquis* ‘some(one)’ in Italian, French, Catalan, Spanish, and Portuguese: these span from the retention of the epistemic uses in some varieties to the development of polarity-sensitive dependencies in all varieties and sometimes to the grammaticalization of a syntactic licensing relation with negation.

I then move to the rightward extreme of Haspelmath’s map, represented by indefinites in ‘direct negation’ contexts, in **chapter 4**. I discuss at some length the system of Early and Classical Latin negation, since it is a prerequisite for investigating the subsequent stages, first of all Late Latin. The latter is also treated in this chapter: I argue that the conditions triggering the development of Romance Negative Concord already emerge in Late Latin and involve the syntax of negative indefinites.

Chapter 5 deals with the development of Romance indefinites specialized into ‘direct negation’ contexts, the so-called ‘n-words’. I concentrate on those n-words that morphologically contain a negation marker, and I investigate its Latin origin, showing the importance of the interaction between focus and negation for the development of Romance Negative Concord.

In **Chapter 6** I summarize the results of my work.

1.3 Indefinites: working definitions

In this section I provide some working definitions for the objects of my analysis and the adopted categories. I take Haspelmath’s (1997) groundbreaking typological study as my point of departure for the definition of some synchronic and diachronic problems that will be treated more at length subsequently. In the rest of the book, the working definitions introduced here will be subject to further scrutiny and sometimes substantially modified according to the theoretical analysis adopted.

Every comprehensive grammatical description of a language contains a section on indefinites. Following the classical tradition, they are usually treated in the

part-of-speech section, under the heading 'indefinite pronouns'. But what are indefinites exactly? Haspelmath's discussion in introducing his typological study is illuminating with respect to the difficulties of reaching a proper definition (Haspelmath 1997: 9–13).

First of all, both functional and formal criteria are intertwined in the definition. As for the formal criteria, Haspelmath uses the term 'pronoun' to indicate that indefinites are 'grammatical elements', i.e., part of the functional lexicon. In fact, indefinites may occur both with the value of a full nominal phrase (pronominal use proper) and as part of a complex nominal expression, in the role of determiners (in traditional treatments of Latin and Romance they are considered 'adjectival' in view of their agreeing morphology). Often the same lexical items can occur in both uses (with the appropriate morphophonological adjustments), e.g. Italian *nessuno* 'nobody / no'. In some cases, however, languages have different items for the pronominal and the determiner use, e.g., English pronominal *nobody* versus determiner *no*. In other cases it is not clear at all whether we have to assume one morphosyntactically 'flexible' lexical item or rather two different items, cf. French pronominal *quelqu'un* 'someone' versus determiner *quelque* 'some'.

Indefinite articles are usually treated under a separate heading in traditional grammars, and are left out of Haspelmath's survey. The reason for this is that articles are considered to be such when they are syntactically necessary to build a nominal phrase in argumental function, i.e., when they realize a functional category (D) that has to be present in the language. Indefinite 'pronouns', on the other hand, are considered to express 'optional' information, which is strongly context-dependent: e.g., whether the referent is known to the speaker, whether it is going to be picked up again in the following discourse, whether the speaker wants to leave the hearer free to choose any individual from the relevant domain, etc.

However, the 'optionality' criterion is by no means clear-cut: for instance, the interaction between negation and indefinites shows that sometimes the presence and the form of an indefinite are obligatorily determined by the surrounding morphosyntactic context in a way analogous to what happens with definite and indefinite articles. So, if I want to unambiguously say in English that it is not the case that there exist students who came to my office yesterday, I am forced to use (a) instead of (b), (c), or (d):

- (2) a. No student came to my office yesterday
b. A student did not come to my office yesterday
c. Students did not come to my office yesterday
d. *Any student came to my office yesterday

Moreover, part of the semantic contribution of indefinite pronouns and determiners derives from their paradigmatic relation with the indefinite article, i.e. from the implicit comparison that conversational agents draw between different possible meanings that could be expressed and inferred. In principle, then, it is necessary to consider also the indefinite article as part of the 'system of indefinites', and also to address the question of what happens when the language has no (indefinite) articles, as is the case in Latin.

In the course of the discussion, we will see that the process of grammaticalization of the indefinite article from Latin to Romance has important repercussions on the system of indefinites. However, I will not deal with it specifically here: that is, in the title and in the body of this work, I use the term ‘indefinites’ to refer to both pronouns and determiner-like elements expressing an indefinite meaning, to the exclusion of the indefinite article. As ‘determiner-like’ I understand elements realizing functional categories of the nominal phrase related to denotation, without assuming that they necessarily occupy one and the same projection (e.g., DP). I will follow much current literature in assuming a rich functional structure for the DP, where determiner-like elements can occupy different projections (see Alexiadou et al. 2007: part II for an overview of current assumptions). There is an ongoing debate as to whether quantifiers should be considered heads of a different, higher QP projection. Previous work has shown the difficulties of empirically assessing this aspect, especially for a language such as Latin, which is characterized by word-order flexibility (cf. Giusti et al. 2015). Since deciding on this matter was not immediately relevant for my case studies, and also in view of the controversy surrounding the quantificational status of indefinites (on which see further §1.5), I will remain agnostic and adopt the label ‘quantificational determiners’ for the subclass of determiner-like elements involved in quantification operations.

Concerning the functional criteria, the question naturally arising at this point is: ‘What is an indefinite meaning?’ Roughly, indefinite nominal phrases are expressions with existential quantificational import; they introduce new discourse entities and they are able to convey a series of side-messages that qualify the state of knowledge of the speaker and give instructions on how to update the conversational background (the Common Ground). Under certain conditions the introduced entities may be quite persistent discourse objects, which become part of a referential chain. Other discourse entities are, instead, short-lived and necessarily ‘closed off’ in the scope of higher operators.²

This definition covers only a subset of the functional items that are treated as ‘indefinites’ in traditional grammars. Mid-scalar or proportional quantifiers (e.g. *few*, *many*), universal quantifiers (e.g. *each*), generic pronouns (e.g. German *man*), identitives (e.g. *same*, *other*) are also often comprised under the traditional label, on the ground that they do not require the conversational agents to precisely identify the individuals denoted by the nominal expressions. However I will follow Haspelmath (1997) in leaving them out of the picture, and focus on the functional space that he considers. Consequently, by ‘system of indefinites’ I will mean the complex of forms that a language displays to cover the functional space considered in Haspelmath’s map. I introduce Haspelmath’s system in the next section.

² The label ‘discourse entity’ is meant to informally correspond to the notion of ‘discourse referent’ in Discourse Representation Theory. Discourse referents represent indexes connected to all sorts of nominal phrases—not just the referring ones—and subject to different binding procedures depending on their referential or quantificational properties.

1.4 The functional space of indefinites

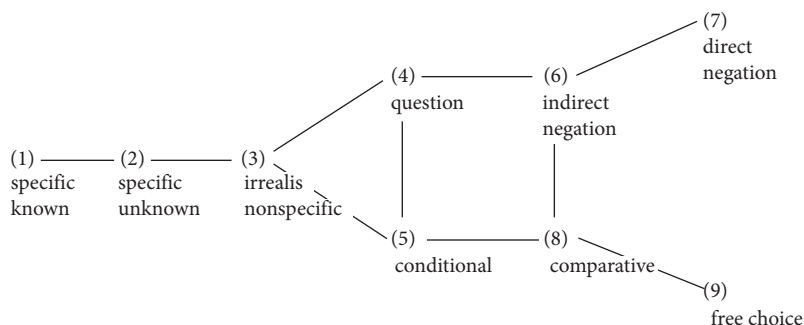
Haspelmath (1997) represents the overall functional space covered by the indefinites he considers by means of a ‘semantic map’. In Haspelmath (1997: 244–317) this semantic map format is used to describe the systems of indefinites in forty languages from various families.³ Among them are Latin, Portuguese, Catalan, French, Italian, and Romanian: basing my argument on a comparison among the maps for these languages, I will introduce the main developments that will be dealt with in the next chapters.

In §1.4.1 I provide an introduction to Haspelmath’s semantic map method and to the categories he uses.⁴ In §1.4.2 I exemplify its application by introducing Haspelmath’s treatment of Latin indefinites, so that we will also have a first overview of the series on which I will focus in the next chapters. In §1.4.3 I summarize the historical problems analyzed in the rest of the work.

1.4.1 Haspelmath’s (1997) semantic map

Haspelmath’s (1997) semantic map shows the distribution of indefinites according to functions or uses. The basic structure is represented in (3).

(3) Haspelmath (1997: 64): semantic map for indefinites



The map is based on a number of theoretical assumptions (definition of functions, definition of series, diachronic generalizations) that I review below.

1.4.1.1 Functions Functions are hybrids of form-context pairs and form-meaning pairs. Their aim is to capture the fact that languages use different indefinite forms depending on a number of semantic and syntactic factors, which are admittedly often difficult to disentangle. In some cases what is crucial is whether the form can express a given meaning (e.g., specific known, specific unknown, irrealis nonspecific, free choice in the map in (3)). In other cases the function rather indicates a syntactic context in which languages may employ specialized forms (e.g., question, conditional,

³ The typological study is also based on a broader database of 100 languages, investigated in less detail.

⁴ For a broader overview of the issues surrounding the method and other examples of semantic maps, see van der Auwera (2008); Narrog and van der Auwera (2011).

comparative, indirect negation, direct negation). What is relevant in this latter case is the ability of the indefinite to occur in the scope of a certain operator, and not the meaning contribution of the indefinite *per se*.

For a given form (usually belonging to a series, on which see §1.4.1.2) the map indicates whether it can occur with a certain function. An indefinite series can be found—and actually is typically found—in more than one function: in this case a line circles the multiple functions covered by the series (we will see an example in (5)). Haspelmath (1997: 58) encounters ‘massive multifunctionality’ in the languages he examines. An advantage of the notion of ‘function’, according to Haspelmath, is that it makes possible to avoid taking a stance on whether multifunctionality results from polysemy or is rather to be reduced to the combination of a general meaning (*Gesamtbedeutung*) with contextual effects. Another frequent pattern is represented by the overlap of different indefinite series in a given function. In this case, however, the map does not provide information as to whether there is a meaning difference in a given context when using the one or the other indefinite.

Functions are arranged geometrically in the map space. Their disposition is meant to represent implicational relations (hence the label ‘implicational map’ used by Haspelmath): adjacent functions are considered to be related in a systematic and semantically motivated way. The arrangement is, thus, motivated on theoretical and empirical grounds. It is expected that, if an indefinite item is used in more than one function, the involved functions should be adjacent on the map. This expectation is empirically confirmed in Haspelmath’s sample, where the rare exceptions can be explained as due to homonymy, language contact, or loss of intermediate categories.

From a theoretical point of view, the geometrical arrangement is intended to represent the semantic distance or closeness, i.e., the degree of similarity, of the meaning categories involved. The two extremes of the map, specific indefinites on the one hand and free choice indefinites and direct negation indefinites on the other hand, represent in many respects the two opposite sides of what can be considered a referentiality scale.⁵ The referent of a specific known indefinite (e.g., *a certain N*) is a highly identifiable individual (by the speaker), while in the case of a free-choice indefinite (e.g., *whichever N*) the identification of the individual is explicitly left entirely open. The function of a free-choice indefinite is, in this respect, exactly the opposite of that of a specific known indefinite: it signals to the hearer that it is not necessary and not possible to identify an individual in the considered domain. Also, indefinites occurring under the direct scope of negation (direct negation function, e.g., *nobody*) can be considered the opposite of specific indefinites, since they convey that the existence of a referent is negated.

The specific unknown function is used by Haspelmath for pronouns and determiners which, like specific known indefinites, convey the presupposition of existence of an entity fulfilling the denotation, but differ from specific known indefinites in that the speaker explicitly indicates that s/he cannot or does not want to identify such an

⁵ This scale, variously assumed in typological work (cf. Croft 2003: 130 a.o.), does not refer to the logical type of the nominal expression (referential versus quantificational), but rather to the degree to which the intended denotation is identifiable for the speaker.

entity. In English the specific unknown function can be expressed by the indefinite *some*. I will discuss the specific unknown function extensively in chapter 2.

The ‘middle field’ of the map represents a number of environments where polarity-sensitive items (e.g., *any*) are used. We will see more in detail later on that the semantic property these ‘weak polarity’ contexts have in common has been argued to be (Strawson) downward-entailingness; it is a fact that a single indefinite series typically covers several of these environments. Haspelmath considers in particular questions, the antecedents of conditionals, the standard of comparison, but similar effects are observed e.g. in the restriction of universal quantifiers and in the context of *before*.

Another polarity-sensitive context treated by Haspelmath is the indirect negation function: under this heading he considers, on the one hand, the presence of negation in a superordinate clause, and on the other hand, contexts of ‘implicit negation’. The latter comprise cases where the negative contribution comes not from the standard marker of sentential negation (e.g., *not*), but rather from a preposition such as *without*, or a verb such as *lack* or *deny*. In some languages the indefinites used here are different from those employed in the context of same-clause sentential negation.

Under the label ‘irrealis non-specific’ a number of quite heterogeneous modalized contexts are included (e.g., those where the imperative mood or the future tense appear). I will come back to them in chapter 2.

1.4.1.2 Series Series are morphologically and semantically related classes, comprising pronominal, determiner-like, as well as adverbial items (cf. Haspelmath 1997: 21–2).

Series comprise dedicated pro-forms for a number of ontological categories (sortal restrictions), e.g., person / animate, thing, place, time, manner, as well as the corresponding determiner: see the example of the English *some*-series in (4):

- (4) English *some*-series (cf. Haspelmath 1997: 248)
- a. ‘person’: *somebody, someone*
 - b. ‘thing’: *something*
 - c. ‘place’: *somewhere*
 - d. ‘time’: *sometime*
 - e. ‘manner’: *somehow*
 - f. determiner: *some*

Series can, thus, be understood as a sort of paradigm, in which the same core semantic function (e.g., specific known, free choice, negation) or cluster of semantic functions is expressed by forms derivationally adapted to their syntactic role (argumental pronoun, adverb, determiner).

Elements belonging to a series share the same behavior across contexts. They are thus characterized by the same syntactic and semantic properties along the relevant dimensions. Often this homogeneity is reflected by their form: for instance, the same suffix is morphologically combined with various lexical-functional bases, as we saw with English *some*-. In other cases elements belonging to a series are ‘suppletive’:

they do not undergo a parallel morphological derivation, and are related only functionally. For instance, the German direct-negation series (Haspelmath 1997: 244–5) has etymologically negative elements formed with the same negative suffix for the categories ‘person’ (*niemand*), ‘thing’ (*nichts*), ‘place’ and ‘direction’ (*nirgends*, *nirgendwo*, *nirgendher*), ‘time’ (*nie*), but not for the determiner element, which is etymologically distinct (*kein*).

Diachronically, elements of a series may be lost, or new ones may join in. During language change, elements belonging to a series may change at different paces, but they tend ultimately to converge.

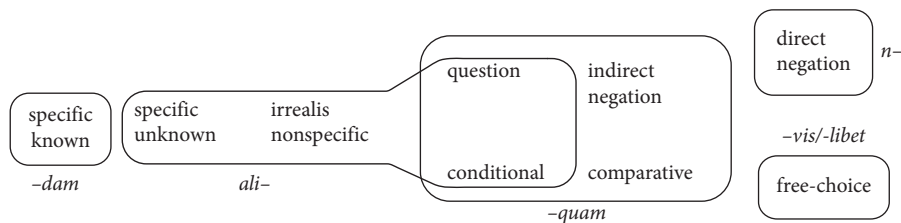
1.4.1.3 Diachronic generalizations Haspelmath’s map is designed also to make predictions with respect to the directionality of the diachronic developments affecting indefinites. First, the expansion of indefinites into new functions is expected to reflect the semantic similarity of environments adjacent on the map: ‘where markers gradually acquire new functions, they will first be extended to those functions that are adjacent to the original functions on the map, and only later to functions that are further away’ (Haspelmath 1997: 63).

Secondly, once diachronic data are projected onto the map, one observes that a number of recurrent paths of evolution (‘cycles’) show unidirectionality. Semantic maps are meant to capture these developmental tendencies, by finding a common denominator for the various historical phenomena. For indefinites, for instance, Haspelmath resorts to a notion of bleaching from ‘stronger’ to ‘weaker’ functions to describe the semantic changes leading to shifts or expansions in the map, which tend to have a right-to-left direction. We will come back to these issues in §1.5.4.1, where we will also see that some diachronic conclusions, especially concerning directionality, have not gone unchallenged. Unidirectional developments are relevant for linguistic theory because they point to recurrent mechanisms of change and to implicational relations between meaning ingredients.

1.4.2 Semantic map for Latin indefinites

Haspelmath’s (1997) map for Latin is reproduced in (5). As is clear from the examples he uses in the discussion, Haspelmath covers here the grammatical system of Classical and Late Latin (until the fourth century CE). As mentioned in §1.4.1.1, the lines circling multiple functions signal the functional space (in terms of meanings or contexts) where a given indefinite form may be used.

(5) Semantic map for Latin (Classical to Late) in Haspelmath (1997: 69)



The map represents a selection of the wealth of indefinite forms that Latin displays, based on frequency of use and functional load.⁶

The major series considered by Haspelmath (1997: 253–6) in his map are the following (according to his terminology):

- (6) (a) the ‘non-emphatic’ *ali*-series: e.g., *aliquis* ‘someone’
- (b) the free-choice series formed with *-vis*, and the free-choice series formed with *-libet*: e.g., *quivis* ‘whoever you want’, *quodlibet* ‘whatever you want’
- (c) the negative-polarity series marked by *-quam* (e.g. *quisquam*, ‘any’; Haspelmath includes also *ullus* ‘any’ in this series)
- (d) the negative *n*- series (e.g. *nemo* ‘nobody’)

In addition to full-fledged series, the map also shows the specific known indefinite *quidam* ‘a certain’, which does not form a series, since it occurs only as a determiner and in the pronominal use.

The Latin system of indefinites also comprises the pronoun *quis*, which is identical in form to the interrogative pronoun and is used as indefinite in the scope of a number of operators, i.e. in contexts like ‘irrealis non-specific’, ‘question’, ‘conditional’ in Haspelmath’s map (cf. chapter 2 and Bortolussi 2015). In these environments it systematically alternates with *aliquis*, therefore it is not displayed separately in the map by Haspelmath, who follows the traditional grammatical descriptions in considering it a kind of allomorph of *aliquis* showing up in a subset of the contexts covered by the latter.

Interestingly, except for the negative *n*- series, all the elements of the Latin system are based on the interrogative stem (*qu-*). The latter is a very frequent morphological component of indefinites crosslinguistically: in Haspelmath’s 100-language sample, sixty-three languages show a relation between interrogative and indefinite morphemes. In some languages—including Latin, as just seen—the bare indefinite pronoun is formally identical to the interrogative pronoun, cf. (7):⁷

⁶ Indefinites not considered in the map are the quite rare negative-polarity series suffixed with *-piam* and two series of free-choice indefinites, the *-cumque* series and the reduplicated series, e.g., *quisquis*. More comprehensive descriptions and analyses of the Latin system of indefinites can be found, a.o., in Orlandini (1981, 1983), Mellet (1992, 1994), Maraldi (2000, 2002), Bortolussi (2001, 2010, 2015), Bertocchi et al. (2010), Fruyt and Spevak (2011), Devine and Stephens (2013: ch. 5 and 8), Bortolussi and Sznajder (2014), Bertocchi and Maraldi (2015), Pinkster (2015: ch. 11).

⁷ For Indo-European, it is a matter of debate whether the interrogative and indefinite stems (**k^wo/e*, **k^wi*, accented when interrogative; enclitic when indefinite) are synonymous or diachronically derived. Haspelmath (1997: 24–5; cf. also 170–9) remarks that if there is a morphologically detectable basic-derived relation between interrogatives and indefinites, indefinites are always the morphologically derived form. This etymological matter has gained renewed relevance in the current theoretical debate on the format of indefinites, on the ground of the connection that has been proposed between the meaning of questions and the meaning of indefinites in Hamblin semantics (cf. Kratzer and Shimoyama 2002). The fact that many genealogically unrelated languages use wh-elements as components of indefinites may be considered evidence in favor of this hypothesis. However, Giannakidou and Quer (2013: 121) caution against jumping too fast to conclusions about synchronic systems on the basis of etymological parallels. Moreover, an adequate analysis should also consider the relation between the interrogative and the relative stem, since free relatives are another common source of indefinites.

- (7) Classical Greek *tís* / *tis* 'who' / 'some'
 Latin *quis* 'who' / 'some'
 German *wer* 'who' / 'some'
 Russian *kto* 'who' / 'some'
 Chinese *shéi* 'who' / 'some'

Latin series typically comprise pro-forms lexicalizing sortal restrictions such as person (e.g., *quisquam* 'anyone'), thing (*quidquam* 'anything'), place (*usquam* 'anywhere'), time (e.g., *umquam* 'ever'), as well as the corresponding determiner (*ullus* 'any'); for some series (the interrogative and the *-vis* free-choice series, as well as the negative series), there is a special determiner for the dual number (respectively, *uter*, *utervis*, *neuter*).

To exemplify, in the table below I provide the full series for those indefinites that will be more central to the discussion in the next chapters: the *ali*-series and the negative *n*-series.

- (8) Example of indefinite series in Latin:

SORTAL RESTRICTION	<i>ali</i> -series	<i>n</i> -series
PERSON	<i>aliquis</i> 'someone'	<i>nemo</i> 'nobody'
THING	<i>aliquid</i> 'something'	<i>nihil</i> 'nothing'
PLACE	<i>alicubi</i> 'somewhere'	<i>nusquam</i> 'nowhere'
TIME	<i>aliquando</i> 'sometime'	<i>numquam</i> 'never'
DETERMINER	<i>aliqui</i> 'some'	<i>nullus</i> / <i>neuter</i> 'no / neither'

The composition of Haspelmath's series shows that languages may have different forms for the pronominal indefinites for 'person' and 'thing', on the one hand, and for the determiner-like indefinites on the other hand. In Latin, we have some such cases: for instance the negative polarity indefinite *quisquam* 'anyone' is used only pronominally, and the corresponding determiner is *ullus*; the negative indefinites *nemo* 'no one' and *nihil* 'nothing' are pronouns and the corresponding determiner is *nullus*. But most Latin indefinites can be used either as pronouns or as determiners ('pronominal adjectives' in the traditional terminology), i.e., either by themselves or as elements of a complex nominal phrase containing a lexical noun.⁸

An example is given in (9), where (a) has *aliquis* in the pronominal use, and (b) shows the determiner-like use:

⁸ See §3.4.4 for tendencies in their positioning. In some cases the pronominal and determiner forms follow the same declension class (e.g., *quicumque* 'whoever'). Some other items follow partially different inflection classes in their pronominal and determiner uses: e.g., the indefinite pronoun *aliquis* (m. f.), *aliquid* (n.) corresponds to the determiner form *aliqui* (m.), *aliqua* (f.), *aliquod* (n.).

- (9) a. cum te alicuius improbitas perversitasque
 when you:ACC someone:GEN dishonesty:NOM wickedness:NOM-and
 commoverit
 irritate:3SG
 ‘once you are irritated by the dishonesty or wickedness of someone’ (Cic.
Quint. 1.1.38)
- b. contra alicuius hominis nobilis voluntatem
 against some:GEN man:GEN noble:GEN will:ACC
 ‘against the will of some person of high rank’ (Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.5)

The classification of an element as pronoun or determiner in its actual textual occurrence is complicated by the fact that even determiner forms such as *nullus* can be ‘substantivized’ and appear with a null NP complement (cf. (10a)); conversely, pronominal forms such as *nemo* can be accompanied by a nominal phrase in apposition (cf. (10b)).

- (10) a. Cum constaret istum Syracusis a nullo visum
 when be.settled:3SG this:ACC Syracuse:ABL by any:ABL seen
 esse archipiratam
 be:INF captain.pirate:ACC
 ‘When it was established that this pirate captain had not been seen by anyone
 in Syracuse’ (Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.78)
- b. invenire neminem Siculum potuit qui pro
 find:INF nobody:ACC Sicilian:ACC can:3SG who:NOM for
 se cognitor fieret?
 himself:ABL attorney:NOM become:3SG
 ‘is it possible that he could find no Sicilian to stand attorney for him?’ (Cic.
Verr. 2.2.106)

We know from Poletto (2014: ch. 5–6) that sometimes the pronoun / determiner divide is relevant for the diachronic development of a certain item, in terms of its distribution. Therefore, in annotating my data for the studies presented in the following chapters, I always distinguished between determiner and pronominal uses. However, since I was interested in particular in the semantic-pragmatic properties of indefinites, I conflated into the category ‘determiner’ all instances where the item was accompanied by an overt lexical restriction, that is, also cases such as (10b) (where, syntactically, we are in fact dealing with an appositional structure).

1.4.3 From Latin to Romance: the case studies

Haspelmath’s survey allows us to draw a first comparison between Latin and the Romance languages, and to single out some diachronically relevant facts. Haspelmath (1997: 69–70, 253–65) provides maps for a number of Romance languages: Portuguese, Catalan, French, Italian, and Romanian. A comparison between the maps for Latin and for the Romance descendants preliminarily suggests that the following aspects are common to the history of Romance:

- (11) a. According to the maps, no variety retains the unambiguous lexical encoding of the specific known versus unknown distinction, i.e., of the epistemic status of the speaker, which Latin had in the *quidam* / *aliquis* opposition.

- b. There is no specialized indefinite unambiguously marking specificity. One single form is used in a cluster of functions comprising the specific indefinite one, as well as other nonspecific contexts, i.e., it is found in irrealis-nonspecific, interrogatives, and conditionals, and in some cases also in the indirect negation context. This form is the continuation of Latin *aliquis* in Portuguese and Catalan. French and Italian have a new indefinite (respectively, *quelque* and *qualche*); Romanian also has a new set of forms, the *-va* series.
- c. No Romance language has a form exclusively used in direct negation function, as the Latin series of negative indefinites was. Romance languages typically have new forms in this function, which expand to cover at least the indirect negation function (cf. Romanian *ni-* series, Italian *nessuno* series), and frequently also further functions in the polarity-sensitive part of the map.

These are the phenomena I focus on in this book: they have been chosen exactly because changes that apparently involve individual lexical items are in fact the manifestation of a more global reorganization of the system of indefinites.

This reorganization follows a similar path in various Romance languages: we are faced with a scenario where all daughter languages differ from the mother language in a similar way, a scenario that is in principle amenable to three different lines of explanation (cf. Roberts 2007: 351–76, Gianollo 2012, Longobardi 2012 for discussion): (i) language contact; (ii) chance convergence; (iii) (chain-effects of) an inherited change.

In many cases of language change, empirically distinguishing between the three is no trivial task; moreover, in the history of the Romance family, contact can practically never be excluded. Nonetheless, my aim for the cases analyzed here is to show that the motor of the change lies in phenomena taking place already in Late Latin and, thus, that the correct line of explanation is (iii): Romance languages may differ profoundly from the Classical Latin stage, but they ‘differentiate in parallel’ because they inherit from Late Latin the crucial seeds for later changes.

In order to account for (11a) and (11b), I will focus on the history of Latin *aliquis* (chapters 2 and 3). We will have to revise the picture emerging from Haspelmath’s maps in a number of ways. In particular, it will be necessary to distinguish between the singular and plural forms of the Romance continuations of *aliquis*. Only plural forms can occur in the specific known functions. The singular occurring in the specific unknown function, retained only in some varieties, will be reinterpreted as a nonspecific epistemic indefinite, and this use will be shown to already belong to Classical Latin. The expansion into downward-entailing contexts starts in Late Latin and is continued in different ways in the various daughter languages.⁹

⁹ The conclusion in (11a) should probably be revised also in view of the fact that Romance languages have developed new means to explicitly indicate the ‘specific known’ interpretation (as a reviewer points out). Important in this respect is the grammaticalization process involving the continuations of Latin *certus* ‘certain’, on which see §2.4.2.2 and Stark (2002, 2006); Garassino (2010). Haspelmath (1997: 10–11) disregards expressions such as *a certain* in his map, because he focuses on elements that have a clear pronominal or determiner status. As Zamparelli (2003) observes for Italian, *un certo* ‘a certain’ shows determiner-like properties, and has definitely a more grammaticalized status than analogous expressions like *uno specifico* ‘a specific’; in Spanish, where *cierto* does not cooccur with *un*, it appears fully grammaticalized as determiner (Eguren and Sánchez 2007). However, its interpretation is not always straightforwardly

In order to explain (11c), I will propose (chapters 4 and 5) that the substantial reorganization of indefinites in the scope of negation observed in Romance is ultimately due to far-reaching changes in the syntax of negation that take place in Late Latin. These changes are transmitted to Romance and represent the prerequisite for the development of Negative Concord, crucially involving indefinite pronouns and determiners.

Apart from their historical significance, the phenomena I selected are relevant also from a theoretical point of view, and relate to issues that have been extensively investigated in comparative perspective. In the next section, I introduce the main dimensions of variation and change that will be the object of my case studies.

1.5 Dimensions of variation and change

This section introduces the main dimensions of variation and change that will be addressed in this work in order to propose an account for the historical puzzles in §1.4.3. In §1.5.1 I formulate the broader theoretical questions that my case studies address. In §1.5.2 I motivate my choice of phenomena and I preliminarily introduce the categories and the dimensions of variation that will be involved. In §1.5.3 I discuss in particular the importance of conditions on quantificational domains to account for variation. In §1.5.4 I argue that my case studies can contribute to an improved understanding of systematic processes of semantic change.

1.5.1 *A research program*

The crosslinguistic picture and the generalizations emerging from Haspelmath's map have a clear appeal for formal models of semantic and morphosyntactic variation.

First, the map substantiates, for the realm of indefinites, what I call the Matthewson-Kratzer conjecture on semantic variation (cf. Matthewson 2001; Kratzer and Shimoyama 2002; Kratzer 2005): denotations expressed by indefinites distribute across a uniform semantic space language after language; crosslinguistic variation resides on the one hand on the selectivity that certain items show for certain contexts in virtue of semantic-pragmatic constraints they encode, and on the other hand in morphosyntactic properties of lexical items; both dimensions of variation are hopefully reducible to a restrictive format.

A number of theoretical challenges emerge from this far-reaching research hypothesis: how to define Haspelmath's functions in terms of formal meanings? how to reach a more fine-grained analysis of the compositional meaning blocks? what is the interplay of truth-conditional and pragmatic, contextually contributed meaning here? how does it reflect in the syntax? how to formally account for 'adjacency' of meanings in the map?

analyzable as 'specific known' (cf. Jayez and Toveni 2006 for French; Eguren and Sánchez 2007 for Spanish; Garassino 2010 for Italian): the role of this item in the various Romance systems should therefore be ascertained by means of dedicated studies.

The way the semantic map is structured overlaps in some important respects with implicational categories proposed in the formal semantic literature, like the hierarchy of negative contexts (Zwarts 1996, van der Wouden 1997), the continuum of downward-entailing contexts (cf. Hoeksema 2010), or the continuum of so-called ‘referentially deficient indefinites’ (cf. Giannakidou 1998, Giannakidou and Quer 2013), which correspond to the central and right-hand functions in Haspelmath’s map. However, the notion of function, owing to its hybrid nature, is insufficient for a rigorous descriptive and explanatory account: we need to more precisely distinguish between context and meaning, by providing lexical entries for indefinites that define the interpretations they may receive and the environments compatible with such interpretations.

Secondly, from a diachronic point of view, the map singles out developmental clines and suggests that it is possible to reach principled explanations for them, based on the logical relations among meaning components and on acquisition strategies guiding reanalysis. An answer to the theoretical questions listed above is, thus, inextricably connected to a problem set for historical linguistics: how to turn the map’s connecting lines into arrows? are change phenomena unidirectional? where do cycles start? can they involve the entire space of the map, or do they spread across only certain functions?

Many approaches to cyclicity and directionality in the domain of indefinites have been based on a tripartition into positive / nonassertive / negative contexts (cf. e.g., Martins 2000, Weiß 2002a, Jäger 2010, Ingham 2011a). This simplified representation of the space of variation is mainly motivated by the intrinsic difficulty of systematically investigating finer-grained distinctions in historical documents. However, some of the systematic patterns of change observed in the system of indefinites require a more elaborated model in order to capture the regularities underlying the shifts from one function to the other.

The case studies which I present in this book are also meant to address these broader questions and to provide some answers based on empirical observation of Latin and Romance facts.

While there is a persisting intuition that indefinites form a natural class at some level, the debate on their format is not settled. Many different analyses have been proposed in the literature, with the aim of accounting at the same time for quantificational, scopal, and discourse properties of indefinites, by means of a uniform approach. A line of analysis treats indefinites as existential quantifiers. According to another family of approaches indefinites do not have an intrinsic quantificational force, but receive it from operators in the surrounding structural context; indefinites just introduce variables (or, depending on the theory, choice functions or sets of individual alternatives). Some approaches do not provide a uniform treatment, but sharply distinguish classes of indefinites on the basis of their logical type, differentiating between quantificational and referential (entity-denoting) indefinites.¹⁰

¹⁰ Cf. Onea (2016: chapter 7) for a recent thorough discussion of the main proposals (as well as an original analysis in the framework of Inquisitive Semantics). Ihsane (2008) comprehensively discusses the syntactic consequences of the various semantic approaches.

For the aims of my investigation it will be sufficient, for simplicity, to uniformly adopt a quantificational analysis: I treat indefinites as quantificational determiners, forming together with the NP-restriction generalized quantifiers with existential force. Nothing substantial in my conclusions hinges on this choice. The only aspect of the analysis that, in its formulation, depends on the quantificational format is the fact that I describe a fundamental dimension of variation among indefinites as variation in the constraints on their quantificational domains (cf. §1.5.3). However, also non-quantificational analyses of indefinites involve conditions that are attached to them in the lexical representation, with analogous effects to constraints on quantification domain: in Discourse Representation Theory, for instance, variables come with constraints on the way they should be bound. I use conditions on domains to model one dimension of Haspelmath's semantic map as a continuum of domain-shifting operations. This way, it will be possible to explain some systematic diachronic processes involving indefinites as due to changes in such conditions.

1.5.2 *The classes investigated in this work*

As introduced in §1.1, a number of interrelated criteria led to the choice of the case studies presented here. First, the specific (known or unknown) function and the direct negation function represent two opposite poles in the functional space of Haspelmath's map, yet there exist diachronic processes that connect these two poles, such as the development of Latin *aliquis*.

Second, the chosen phenomena manifest systemic effects: the changes are not limited to a single lexical item, but affect an entire grammatical module (in the cases at hand, mainly the syntax of negation, but also the expression of specificity).

Third, the classes on which I will focus display patterns of interdependencies with operators in the surrounding structural context. Epistemic indefinites, negative polarity items, and indefinites with fixed narrow scope with respect to negation are all items that are subject to particular licensing requirements, at the semantic-pragmatic level or at the syntactic level. This provides, from a theoretical perspective, important information on the nature of the selectivity of quantificational determiners, which I will tie to the continuum of varying restrictions on domains of quantification. From the perspective of historical linguistics, we have clearer structural—not just interpretational—evidence for their diachronic analysis and we can better understand how these indefinites are sensitive to changes affecting the grammatical requirements of their licensors.

Before discussing these aspects in more detail, it is necessary to refine the terminology by indicating the overlaps and differences between Haspelmath's functions and the categories that I will adopt from the formal semantic literature. The next section is dedicated to this task, respectively for the left-hand and for the right-hand side of the semantic map.

1.5.2.1 *Epistemic indefinites* As announced in §1.4.3 for (11a), I will revise the categories on the left-hand side of Haspelmath's map by adopting a more restricted notion of specificity and by introducing the class of epistemic indefinites.

The theoretical status of 'side-messages' conveyed by indefinites with respect to the epistemic status of the speaker is a hotly debated topic in current formal semantic