REVIEW OF GIANOLLO (2018), *INDEFINITES BETWEEN LATIN AND ROMANCE*

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Gianollo's *Indefinites between Latin and Romance* is a perfect example of how theoretical hypotheses raise empirical questions whose answers, when pursued with rigorous methods, can ground more general and solid theoretical analyses. It is also an excellent case of how a multidisciplinary approach that brings together syntax, semantics and pragmatics on the theoretical side and corpus search, philology and the history of language on the empirical side can make breakthrough advances in our understanding of language.

The narrow focus on the development of very few items (*aliquis* together with its Romance continuations as a singular determiner/pronoun and the n-series) is not a limit of the work. On the contrary, it allows the reader to enjoy the affordable length of the discussion without missing the most in-depth aspects of the argumentation, grounded in a comparative methodology that always takes into due consideration the other items competing for the same functions and contexts. Thus, despite the object of study being very constrained, the perspective is broad and comprehensive of all one may want to know about possible approaches to the syntax and semantics of indefinites not just in Latin or Romance languages but also from a more general typological perspective.

Gianollo argues that change is triggered by the interaction of three different dimensions of language. The formal features associated with lexical items involve lexical-semantic and syntactic dimensions. The interaction of the formal features with clausal operators, such as sentence negation and focus, involve the internal syntax of indefinite nominal expressions and clausal

structure, as well as the syntactic modelling of information structure. The speaker's intention to be more or less informative on the possible referent and to place more or less emphasis on the indefinite expression involve the discourse pragmatic dimension that determines the choice for one out of two or more competing items. The proposed theory has the ambition to explain recurrent phenomena in language change, such as cycles and directionality in cycles, bleaching, and paradigmatic effects.

The aim of the enterprise is to give an answer to five general questions. In the synchronic perspective, two issues are at stake: constraints on possible systems of form-meaning mapping and the interaction of system-internal dynamics. In the diachronic perspective, the volume addresses three general issues: the interaction of changes in form and meaning; the role of contextual mechanisms in triggering or preventing change; and the real nature of optionality.

The latter issue is especially problematic in a minimalist framework that takes Economy and Full interpretation as its grounding principles. In fact, true optionality should not in principle be possible if the competing forms display a different degree of complexity. This is indeed confirmed by Gianollo's study. Equivalent alternatives do not really co-exist: new formations are created by lexical interaction with sentential operators and start having a specialized meaning, which serves expressiveness. When the old form is replaced by the new one and becomes less used, the new form starts losing its specialized meaning and becomes the most frequent choice. This is the case of the quantifier cycle proposed 'or *aliquis* and its Romance continuations and of the better known Jespersen's cycle for negation.

Gianollo departs from Haspelmath's (1997) semantic map of the functions of indefinites, showing that in the synchronic perspective it cannot capture the properties of *aliquis* in (late) Latin and that in the diachronic perspective it makes the wrong prediction with respect to the directionality of the change. She adopts a more formal analysis of indefinites following work by Giannakidou (e.g. 1998, 2001), Aloni and Port (e.g. 2013, 2015), and Alonso-Ovalle and Menéndez-Benito (e.g. 2010, 2013, who conceive indefinites as the combination of semantic features, which interact with clausal features and can be associated with pragmatic inferences and implicatures. Change may affect one or more features, deriving in a more precise way the functions that indefinites have in the synchronic perspective and the directionality of change displayed in the cycles.

Contra Haspelmath (1997), who treats *aliquis* as a specific known indefinite, Gianollo argues that *aliquis* is an epistemic indefinite. As such, it presupposes the existence of a referent (like specific indefinites) but, unlike

specific known indefinites, its referent cannot be unique. This is modelled by attributing to it the 'anti-singleton' interpretation, which in turn gives an 'ignorance' effect (cf. Aloni & Port 2013, Yatsushiro 2015). Epistemic indefinites are similar to free-choice items in that they share the ignorance effect with free-choice items (Jayez & Tovena 2006)); however, unlike free-choice indefinites, the discourse domain from which the referent can be picked is not maximally widened. Although *aliquis* must scope outside the clausal negation like a specific indefinite, it can combine with numerals producing scalar interpretations, as in (1), or it can produce a scalar qualitative interpretation with abstract nouns, as in (2) (cf. Bertocchi, Maraldi & Orlandini 2010):

(1) *Elleborum   potabis   faxo   **aliquos**   **viginti***
     hellebore:ACC drink:2SG make:1SG some:ACC twenty:ACC
     dies
     days:ACC
     'I will see to it that you will drink hellebore for some twenty days'
     (Plaut. *Men*. 950)

(2) *vincitque* **dolorem**   **aliquem**   **domesticum**   *patriae*
     win:3SG   pain:ACC   some:ACC   private:ACC   country:GEN
     caritatae
     love:GEN
     'and has overcome some private pain by his love of his country'
     (Cic. *Phil*. 14.4)

This would be unexpected even of a specific unknown indefinite in Haspelmath's sense. The first step towards weak polarity status precisely resides in the possibility for *aliquis* to also combine with numeral *unus*, ultimately giving rise to Romance **alicunus*, which is not attested but has been safely reconstructed (Gianollo p. 85). Interestingly, *unus* by itself only has the specific known function, which makes it scope outside negation, parallel to *aliquis*. However, the combination of the cardinal value of *unus* with the anti-singleton interpretation of *aliquis* creates a new item that can appear, with or without *unus*, in the scope of negation. Of particular interest in this respect is the passage by Augustine observed by Molinelli (1989: 622–623) and reported in (3), which criticizes the newly formed double negation structure represented in (3a) and proposes to substitute the n-word *nihil* in the scope of negation with *aliquis* in (3c):

(3)   a. *'**Non** est   relictum viride   **nihil**   in*
            not   be:3sɢ left:ᴘᴛ   green:ɴᴏᴍ nothing:ɴᴏᴍ in
            lignis'
            trees:ᴀʙʟ
            '"there isn't nothing (*nihil*) green left on the trees"'

       b. *dicendum fuit   more   locutionis   nostrae*
            say:ɢᴇʀ   be:3sɢ use:ᴀʙʟ language:ɢᴇɴ our:ɢᴇɴ
            'should rather be according to our way of speaking:'

       c. *'**non** est   relictum viride   **aliquid**   in*
            not   be:3sɢ left:ᴘᴛ   green:ɴᴏᴍ anyhing:ɴᴏᴍ in
            lignis'
            trees:ᴀʙʟ
            '"there isn't anything (*aliquid*) green left on the trees"'
            (Aug. *Loc Hept* 2 de Ex. 54.239)

The scalar interpretation is the starting point of the cline towards negative polarity and ultimately negative value. Notably, the combination with the cardinal value of *unus* is crucial to capture the divergent development of singular and plural forms. Only the singular is subject to the cline while the plural remains a plain epistemic that scopes outside negation, as in Italian (4), parallel to Spanish, Catalan and Portuguese, and French (with the only exception of *pluralia tantum*):

(4)   a. ***Non** sono   venuti   **alcuni**   studenti.*
            not   be:3sɢ come:ᴘᴛ some.ᴘʟ students
            'Some students did not come.'

       b. ***Alcuni**   studenti **non** sono   venuti.*
            some.ᴘʟ students not be:3sɢ come:ᴘᴛ
            'Some students did not come.'

Gianollo witnesses the status of the singular and plural continuations of *aliquis* with a questionnaire administered to native-speaker experts. The results take her to claim that the development has followed the quantifier cycle proposed by Willis (2011) and collaborators, which progressively restricts the contexts in which the indefinite picks a referent to reach the point when the negative operator becomes necessary, as is the case of Italian *alcuno* in (5). Thus, Italian represents the most advanced case of context restriction. Spanish *alguno* and Portuguese *algum*, all of which also allow for the equivalent of Italian (5a), also display the strong negative polarity status which is incompatible with Italian *alcuno*, as shown in (5b):

(5)   a. ***Non*** *è*   *venuto*   ***alcuno*** *studente.*
             not   be:3sG   arrived:PT   any   student

        b. ****Alcuno*** *studente* ***non*** *è*   *venuto.*
             any   student   not   be:3sG   arrived:PT
             'No student arrived.'

In Catalan, *algun* remains an epistemic indefinite even in the singular, as shown by the possible wide scope interpretation in (6a). In French, it acts as an n-word and a negative item, as shown by (6b):

(6)   a. ***No*** *he*   *saludad* ***algun*** *estudiant.*
             not   have:1sG   met:PT   some   student
             'There is some student I did not meet.'

        b. ***Aucun*** *étudiant* ***n'*** *est*   *venu.*
             any   student   not   be:3sG   arrived:PT
             'No student arrived.'

In Spanish, the condition for *algun* to assume the negative polarity function is to be postnominal and in the scope of clausal negation, as in (7a) and unlike (7b). In Portuguese, the reversed order has gone one step further and has turned algum into a negative word, as shown by the contrast in (8):

(7)   a. ***No*** *vive*   *aquí* ***persona*** ***alguna****.*
             not   lives:3sG   here   person   any

        b. ****Persona*** ***alguna*** *(no)*   *vive*   *aquí.*
             person   any   (not)   lives:3sG   here
             'Nobody lives here.'

(8)   a. ***Algum*** ***animal*** *vive*   *aquí.*
             ALGUM   animal   lives:3sG   here
             'Some animal lives here.'

             Animal ***algum*** *vive*   *aquí.*
             animal   ALGUM   lives:3sG   here
             'No animal lives here.'

The quantifier cycle clearly interacts with the better-studied Jespersen cycle. In European Portuguese, the inverted position of *algum* makes it equivalent to the n-word *nenhum*, with an interesting parallel (the possibility

to invert N *nenhum*) and an interesting difference (inversion only occurs in object position, which is the position where negative *algum* must invert; in subject position only *nenhum* N is possible).

The inverted position is witnessed in the other modern Romance languages as expressing emphasis and therefore supporting the proposal that it interacts with Focus. For example, the equivalent of (7) in Italian is only possible with particular emphasis on negating existence. This observation is crucial for Gianollo to derive the parallels between the quantifier and negation cycles. In all stages of the language, there is a plain and an emphatic way to express negation or indefiniteness. The emphatic way has an element that interacts with a clausal operator (Negation or Focus). If the emphatic form becomes very frequent, it gets subjected to an 'inflationary effect' (Dahl 2001), which weakens and ultimately deletes the emphatic interpretation, leaving the negative interpretation as the only possible one. The element thus turns into a negative polarity item (like Italian *alcuno*), or an n-word (like Spanish/Portuguese prenominal *algun*), or even a negative item (like Portuguese inverted *algun*).

At this point of my necessarily brief overview of the advances arrived at in Gianollo's work, the reader may already be overwhelmed by the technical terms needed to talk about such a complex semantic environment. Also in this respect, Gianollo's volume is a must for anybody, student or scholar, beginner or advanced linguist, who wants to have a sound, in-depth presentation of the many cross-theoretical and interdisciplinary facets of indefiniteness. Gianollo adopts a motivated terminology, which helps the reader understand the complex, sometimes idiosyncratic terminology found in the literature on indefinites. Gianollo critically observes that Haspelmath's categorization predicts that if the same lexical item has more than one function, these should be adjacent in the map. In the same spirit, change in meaning is predicted to occur unidirectionally from the more restricted to the less restricted. The predictions are not borne out: *aliquis* turns out to develop from a specific function to the direct negation function. Moreover, Gianollo shows that some of the features that allow the direct negation function are present in Classical Latin *aliquis*. For this reason, she dismisses the functional notion of known or unknown specific for the semantic notion of epistemic indefinite, which conveys the so-called 'ignorance effect'. In other words, while a specific indefinite introduces a referent that is directly identifiable by the reader (and new to the hearer), an epistemic indefinite conveys that more than one referent can correspond to the indefinite expression. Notably, Jayez & Tovena (2006) have considered epistemic indefinites as a subclass of free choice items (e.g. *whoever*), that is indefinites that (almost) maximally widen

the domain of identification of the referent. The advantage of this move is the fact that epistemic indefinites are expected to interact with external operators, as is the case for the Romance developments of *aliquis* dealt with in chapters 2 and 4 and the newly formed n-words dealt with in chapters 4 and 5, unlike specific known and specific unknown indefinites.

Another side of complexity that presents itself in this endeavour is the interdisciplinary approach, which is necessary to treat a phenomenon that concerns morpho-syntax and lexical semantics, their interaction with discourse intensions, the semantic modelling of clausal operators and the syntactic analysis of these phenomena. Gianollo follows Condoravdi & Deo (2015) in articulating her explanatory account of semantic change in two general steps and one language-specific step. The first step is to single out the logical relation between the ingredients of meaning in a synchronic perspective and, only then, to address the issue of the cognitive motivation that leads to a change in this relation. Once the general framework is set, one can investigate the language-specific trigger of the change mechanism at a given stage of a given language. As regards indefinites, the ingredients of meaning appear cross-linguistically to be quite complex, if one considers that fact that in many languages, indefinites may even include verbal chunks, and Latin and Romance are no exceptions to this, cf. Lat. *qui-vis*, Italian *qual-si-voglia*, Catalan *qual-se-vol* ('whoever', lit. who [you] want.SUBJ). The second general property of indefinites is the instability they display across languages, as already observed by Haspelmath (1997: 235). From a generative perspective, this can be either due the low frequency that may affect the acquisition of the contexts requiring negative polarity items (Willis, Lucas & Breitbarth 2013: 39) or to the featural richness of polarity items (Martins 2000: 192), which may cause incomplete acquisition. These two cases suggest that change involves a reduction of contexts. This is, however, not always the case. Widening of the contexts is found for Latin *aliquis*, which enriches its featural composition from positive to negative polarity (Italian *alcuno*), or even negative value (French *aucun*). Thus, both bleaching (loss of feature specification and contextual constraints) and enrichment (conventionalization of pragmatic implicatures and lexicalization of previously cancellable inferences) are the two main mechanisms driving change (in accordance with Jäger 2010).

I conclude my presentation with a final appreciation of the methodology in the search and use of the data. Gianollo presents the empirical generalizations and theoretical advances reached by previous literature in an original and insightful fashion that supports her general proposal. For Latin and old Romance, she also carries out well-focussed mostly qualitative corpus

search, without completely disregarding the quantitative dimension. This allows her to fill in the gaps in our knowledge and convincingly support or contradict previous assumptions. For modern Romance, she provides a complete overview of indefinites in Western Romance creating an *ad hoc* questionnaire administered to native-speaker expert linguists paving the way for a cross-Romance investigation. Also in this respect, a mixed method that brings together different approaches turns out to be the trump card for an advance in our knowledge of human language. Well done!

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