

Abstract

I will address the question how the ‘Unremarkable Reading’ (UR) of *cualquiera* in Spanish in (1) came into existence (see Alonso-Ovalle & Menéndez-Benito 2011:29, Rivero 2011 for Spanish and Fălăuș 2015 for UR of *oarecare* in Romanian, Chierchia 2006: 543 for *qualunque* in Italian). The following example with UR expresses some attitude towards the man according to the speaker:

- (1) Es un hombre *cualquiera*. (sin nada en especial) (UR)
is a man *cualquiera* (nothing special)
‘He is an ordinary or unremarkable man.’

I will argue that UR in (1) has developed from a semantic and syntactic reanalysis of the Free Choice Indefinite (FCI) *cualquier* that is usually used in modal contexts such as (2):

- (2) Puedes traer *cualquier* libro. (FCI)
can bring *cualquier* book
‘You can bring any book.’

In order to explain the semantic change from FCI use in (2) to UR in (1), I will use an Alternative Semantics analysis of FCIs as a point of departure (Menéndez-Benito 2005, Aloni & Port 2010, among others). According to this analysis, a canonical FCI such as *cualquier* contains a covert universal quantifier that scopes over the alternatives triggered by *cualquier* in b. and generates the Free Choice Meaning in c):

(3) Canonical FCI

- a. Sentence: Puedes traerme cualquier libro. ‘You can bring me any book.’
- b. Logical form: \forall (can (you bring me any book))
- c. Free Choice Meaning: For each book it is possible that you bring me that book.

According to my analysis, UR in (1) arises by the interaction of FCIs with negation. In the following sentence, the negation scopes over the universal operator triggered by FCIs in (3b). The sentence in (4) says that this is not (just) every book ($\neg \forall$) and that this is a special book, namely Ana Karenina from Tolstoy (see Lee & Horn 1994, Horn 2000 for English *any*, Chierchia 2006: 543 for Italian *qualunque*):

- (4) Este libro no es un libro cualquiera, es el libro Ana Karenina de Tolstoy.
‘This book is not (just) any book. It is A.K. from Tolstoy.’

UR in (1) is derived by contrasting every possible individual of some set under consideration with a remarkable, notable or special individual as in (4). I will argue that UR in (1) passed through the following diachronic stages in (5):

- (5) Diachronic development of UR of *cualquiera*:

Stage 1 (Negation scopes over canonically interpreted FCI, expression of a contrast as in (4))
 $\neg \forall x [P(x)]. \lambda y. 'P \text{ \& remarkable'}(y). x \neq y$
 'The predicate P does not apply to all individuals x. It applies to y which is remarkable.'

Stage 2 (FCI alternatives are predicated as 'unremarkable')
 $\neg \forall x [P(x) \& \text{unremarkable}(x)]$.
 'It is not the case that this book is every unremarkable book'

Stage 3 (lexicalization of the 'unremarkable' reading as in (1), no overt negation present)
 $\llcorner \text{cualquiera} \llcorner = \lambda x. \text{'unremarkable'}(x)$

Indeed, the first occurrences we could find in the Corpus del Español (see Mark Davies) attest a contrastive reading (see stage 1 in (5)) according to which all alternatives that have the predicate of being an (ordinary) man are contrasted with some special man, namely the king:

(6) (...) Para pedir campo a un rey no basta un hombre cualquiera, que según la ley del duelo es menester que rey sea (16th c. Anónimo, Comedia de disparates del rey don Alfonso, el de la mano horada, Corpus del Español) "In order to ask a king for land, not just any man can ask him, it must a king according to the rules of duel (.....)." [<http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/FichaObra.html?Ref=693>]

I will present more corpus data that confirm our hypothesis, namely that UR developed from canonical FCI use. The corpus data show that the first frequent uses of UR occurred much later (in the 19th century) than the FCI use which was already attested in 14th century.

Moreover, we will discuss why we also find instances of *cualquiera* with a Depreciative Meaning (DM) (see 7 and 8) and how DM is related to UR:

(7) Diles que soy una cualquiera... alquilada por ti unas noches... (18th c., Corpus del Español)
 tell.them that am a CUALQUIERA rented by you some nights
 'Tell them that I'm a prostitute rented by you for some nights.'

(8) $\llcorner [D^\circ \text{ una } [N^\circ \text{ cualquiera}]] \llcorner = \exists x. [\text{prostitute}(x)]$

Finally, I will address the question why other languages that allow universal FCIs to be interpreted under the scope of negation as in (4), did not make the same step as Spanish speakers (and other Romance language speakers) did in lexicalizing UR or DM. I will suggest that this fact is due to the lack of syntactic and semantic reanalysis of FCIs as (post)nominal modifiers or predicates (a common process in (Old)Romance languages).

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