

The imperative of free choice:

LOOK AND SEE WHAT can become an indefinite pronoun, too

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1. How to be familiarly indefinite

There are various ways and means of obtaining indefinite pronouns — if items of a distinct form class of pronouns are what a language wants for purposes of indefinite reference, rather than only noun phrases containing suitably “indefinite” nouns, quantifiers, or nothing overt at all. The general idea is for the speaker to provide a referential variable and to let it be known to the addressee that (s)he is not assumed to fill it by any of the referents that are contextually given, or that (s)he is indeed given free choice in filling it in. Whatever the expressive resources to be exploited in the creation of indefinite pronouns, they ought to suit that purpose.

Most suitably, indefinite pronouns can be gotten from non-pronominal words, turned pronominal through formal and semantic changes adapting them to this word class: in particular from nouns of very general meaning (such as ‘person’, ‘people’, ‘body’, ‘thing’, ‘place’) or of extreme meaning (e.g., ‘[not] a bit’, ‘[not] in eternity’), or from the numeral ‘one’. The other option is to put to indefinite uses words which are themselves pronouns, although of different kinds: in particular interrogative or relative pronouns on the one hand and personal pronouns on the other, especially 3rd person plural ones (as in ‘They burgled our house again’, meaning ‘Someone ...’), these being the least definite of the definite pronouns owing to their unmarkedness for all pronominal features. Especially when they derive from interrogatives or relatives, indefinite pronouns tend to be formally more elaborate than their source pronouns, more or less transparently pointing to constructional origins.¹ Frequently these source constructions involve focus particles (such as ‘also’ or ‘even’) being added to interrogatives, or they consist in entire interrogative or relative or concessive clauses added to a main clause. At least four such clausal constructions with interrogatives,

relatives, or concessives have been distinguished which may yield indefinite pronouns upon grammaticalisation:² ‘I don’t know who/what/where/when/why/how etc.’, ‘who/what etc. you want/please’, ‘who/what etc. it may be’, and ‘it does not matter who/what etc.’. Their shared rationale lies in explicitly acknowledging referential indeterminacy through suitable lexical means: namely predicates of ignorance, allowance, possibility of existence, or indifference.

2. A new way of being (conditionally) indefinite in old English

There is yet another kind of lexical expression in an intriguingly different kind of construction which is amenable to kinds of reanalysis not entirely unfamiliar from grammaticalisations of complex indefinite pronouns from more familiar sources. This source is easily overlooked in crosslinguistic surveys because it does not seem to be tapped commonly. It is attested, however, in a family as familiar as Germanic, albeit only in its older stages, which are less commonly represented in typological samples. Also, the indefinite pronouns sprung from that source did not become the most salient, best-entrenched, and most persistent ones in these languages. But it is not only the success stories, of indefinites and God knows what else, which are instructive.

A curious turn of phrase with generalising indefinite force had been noticed for Old English as early as by George Hickes (1711: 24):

- (1) hwæt praeposito verbo lôca i.e. vide-sis significat universaliter et indefinite ‘omne quod, quodcunque’: sôna swâ hî fram prîmsange gangen, wyrçen lôca-hwæt ðonne þearf sî ‘[as soon as they go away from prime-song, [they] do] omne opus necessarium’, wyrçen siððan on nôn lôca-hwæt him mon tæce ‘[[they] do since the ninth hour] opera quaecunque mandata’ Reg. Monach. 49.

¹ This is a problem when you see indefinite pronouns as basic and the other uses (interrogative, relative) as derived, as D. N. S. Bhat (2000) is inclined to.

² See Haspelmath (1997: Chapter 6.2), the most comprehensive survey of indefinite pronouns to date. Its only really glaring omission are definite pronouns (3rd person plural) used as indefinites. And of course indefinites from that source which the present paper seeks to rescue from non-specialist oblivion.

Friedrich Kluge (1882: 529-532) again drew attention to it a couple of centuries later, adding further exemplification, chronological observations, and a supposed Latin parallel. A few further brief mentions were to follow, including Bosworth & Toller (1898: 645, 1921: 619-620, s.v. *lôc, lôca*: “the word often occurs in connection with a pronominal form, and seems equivalent to a suffixed *-ever*”), Sievers (1898: 184, noting an Old High German parallel), Gutmacher (1914: 17), Cook (1916), Horn (1921/1923: 64-65), Lotspeich (1938), Eccles (1943), Penttilä (1956: 136-140), Mustanoja (1960: 476-477), Lindqvist (1961: 82-83), Prins (1962), and Mitchell (1985: II, 222; 1988: 274). The *Oxford English Dictionary* has it, too, s.v. LOOK (“4. Idiomatic uses of the imperative. †b. Prefixed to interrogative pronoun or adv., or relative conj., forming indefinite relatives = *whoever, whatever, however*, etc.”).

From late Old English times, then best represented in West Saxon, until at least the 17th century (though with major gaps in the record, suggesting non-continuity and perhaps independent re-innovation), composite expressions with an interrogative/relative pronoun as their second member and the imperative or bare verb form *look* or rarely also the particle *lo* (as in *lo and behold!*) as their first (*l ca, l c*, or *l* in Old English) are occasionally used in English as follows — to illustrate with what appears to be the last known instance in writing (Cook 1916):

- (2) At this said Cort Samuel King being held in examination about his deficiency in non payment of his due to ye ministry at Southold, it is determined by the Cort that *look what* is due from him, ... his accompt shall bee demanded, and if hee ... refuse to pay it shall then bee levied by the cunstable. (*The Second Book of Records of the Town of Southampton, Long Island*, minutes of a court held on Sept. 1, 1663)

The only plausible reading of *look what* here is not the literal one as an imperative of the verb of intentional visual perception governing a relative or complement clause introduced by an interrogative/relative pronoun. *Look what* here means ‘whatever’: it introduces a relative clause with no separate overt head (i.e., a “free” relative clause), although there is a correlative clause, functionally superordinate to the relative clause, with a noun phrase which referentially corresponds to the relative’s head;

referentially, it is a non-specific or generalising indefinite relative pronoun (3a), in contrast to a definite relative pronoun (3b) in such free relative clauses:

- (3) a. look what [=whatever] is due from him, his account [=that] shall be demanded
b. [precisely that] what is due from him, that shall be demanded

This is clearly the only appropriate meaning in typical late Old English and (rarer) Middle English occurrences like those in (4) and (5) as well, notwithstanding occasional editorial confusions over such examples:

- (4) a. and *lōca hwā* ūt gange, licge hē ofslagen (Ælfric, Joshua)
‘and whoever would leave, he would lay slain’
b. and *lōc-hwā* ðone flȳman fēde oððe feormie, gylde fif pund ðām cyninge (Canute’s Laws)
‘and whoever feeds or supports the outlaw, [he] shall pay the king five pounds’
c. and *lōca hwylc* crīsten man sȳ ungesibsum, man āh on þām dæge hine tō gesibsumianne (Wulfstan, Homilies)
‘and whichever Christian man be quarrelsome, one owns on the same day to reconcile oneself’
d. and *lōc hweðer* ðāra gebrōðra oðerne overbide, wære yrfeweard ealles Englalandes and eac Normandiges (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle an. 1101)
‘and whichever of the [two] brothers should survive the other, [he] should be the heir to the whole of England and also of Normandy’
e. tō gifanne and tō syllane *lōc-hwām* me leofost is (Codex Diplomaticus Aevi Saxonici)
‘to give and entrust [it] to whoever is dearest to me’
f. ac *lōce hwænne* mīn tīma beo and þīn willa sī þæt ic þis læne lif forlætān sceole, læt mē mid gedefnysse mīne dagas geendian (Oratio pro peccatis)
‘but whenever my time may be, and it be thy will that I should leave this transitory life, let me end my days with gentleness’
g. þrea hig *lōca hū* þū wille (Ælfric, Genesis)

‘punish her however you will’

- (5) *looke who* that is moost vertuous ... Taak hym for the grettest gentil man
(Chaucer, Canterbury Tales)
‘whoever is most virtuous ... take him for the greatest gentleman’
(with the general complementiser *that* added, as was the rule in Chaucer’s
Middle English)

In the first attempt to make sense of this use of *look WH-* as a free-choice indefinite relative pronoun, rather than only to record and document it, Wilhelm Horn (1921/1923: 64-65) assumes a two-part source construction consisting of a question and an answer, with the question in turn introduced by the imperative of ‘to look’ or the equivalent particle ‘lo!’ used in an exclamatory function (6a); its grammaticalisation, yielding a bipartite construction along the lines of (6b), would then be a matter of combining the two clauses hypotactically rather than paratactically, with the first losing its interrogative force, and of closely associating the imperative of ‘look’ (in Old English then shortened from *lōca* to *lōc*, or rarely also in the shape of the particle *lā/lo*) with the ex-interrogative, now relative pronoun:³

- (6) a. [[look!] [who comes?]] [he is welcome]
b. [[[look who] comes] [(he) is welcome]]

Parts of a more plausible alternative story have been suggested by C. M. Lotspeich (1938) in response to Horn’s.⁴ Lotspeich interprets the imperative of ‘to look’ not as originally an extra-clausal exclamative, but as expressing a matter-of-fact request or permission to the addressee to choose a referent for a variable, itself expressed by the relative pronoun. He sees the idea of choosing as inherent in the Old English vision verb itself, whose meaning he paraphrases as ‘to look at, fix one’s eye

³ Indeed, crosslinguistically, the pronouns in non-specific free relative clauses are especially prone to be based on interrogatives (Lehmann 1984: 326). Mitchell (1988: 274) categorises *look WH-* in such uses as a “conjunction”, which does not do justice to its pronominal nature.

⁴ Unlike Hickeys, Kluge, and Horn, Claude Meek Lotspeich (1880-1966) of the University of Cincinnati was not a historical linguist of note. He held a doctorate from Leipzig, obtained with a thesis *Zur Vīga-Glúms- und Reykdælasaga* (Leipzig: Hesse & Becker, 45 pp., 1903), and apart from Germanic etymological notices had a booklet *Notes on the History of the German Language* (Cincinnati, Ohio: University Press, 31 pp., 1906) to his credit.

on, single out’, hence ‘to select, choose’ — which is about what *look* (used without object), *look at*, or *look and see* mean in Modern English (‘to make a visual or mental search, examine what is to be expected’). In support of his semantic explanation, Lotspeich mentions a verb from a domain other than vision though likewise implying the idea of choosing, *wealdan* ‘to have power/control over, to determine, decide’ (Modern English *wield*, German *walten*), which can also have free-choice indefinite force in the same kind of construction in Old English, as seen in (7).

- (7) wē ðē magon eaðe ... sēlre gelæran; ær ðū gegniga gūðe fremme, wiges
 woman, *weald hū ðē sære æt ðām gegnslege* (Andreas)
 ‘we may easily teach thee better; before thou directly doest battle, battle’s
 noise, decide [thou] how (i.e., however) it shall happen to thee at the counter-
 attack’

Further, in Middle English the French loanword *wayte* (Modern English *wait*) could be used analogously — which is no surprise on Lotspeich’s account because, meaning ‘to watch, await’, it was a near-synonym of *looke*:

- (8) *wayte what thyng* we may nat lightly have, Therafter wol we crie (Chaucer,
 Canterbury Tales)
 ‘whatever we can not have easily, after that we will cry’

Finally, in Northern English dialects, until the late 19th century and perhaps later, *choose WH-* likewise functioned as an indefinite relative pronoun in such constructions (Wright 1896: 595, s.v. CHOOSE), in the most literal instantiation of this theme of the imperative of choice conceivable:⁵

- (9) a. I’ll knock thi proud little heeod off, *chuz who* tha art
 b. They cannot mak it grow gooid crops, *choose what* manure they put it

⁵ This is also noted by Horn (1921/1923: 64), as part of his account of *look WH-*, glossing over the fact that it does not fit in with it at all.

What is missing from Lotspeich's account is syntax. Like in Horn's scenario, grammaticalisation crucially, though not very conspicuously, involves a syntactic reanalysis. In Lotspeich's conception of the source construction (10a), the variable which the addressee is licensed to fill freely forms part of the clause governed by the imperative verb:

(10) a. [look [who comes]!] [(he) is welcome]

But this non-specific free relative clause cannot remain governed by the imperative verb, or else the whole imperative sentence could not be combined further with a correlative clause superordinate to it (and frequently containing a noun phrase coreferential with that of the free relative: cf. (2), (4a/c), (5), (8), (9a/b)): to be appropriately recombinable, the construction as a whole must be a declarative non-specific free relative clause. This is achieved by a syntactic reanalysis of an intricate kind known as "amalgamation":⁶ the imperative verb gets integrated into its own subordinate clause, with the relationship of subordination not so much reversed as undone, and with the whole sentence deprived of the illocutionary force that came with its erstwhile main verb (10b).

(10) b. [[[look who] comes] [(he) is welcome]]

⁶ After Lakoff (1974), where its diachronic potential is neglected, though. To illustrate with German examples where the effect of amalgamation is more conspicuous, owing to the change in the order of the finite verb attendant on the reanalysis of a subordinate clause (verb-final) as main (verb-second), rather than only to changes of phrasing and intonation:

- (i) a. Gott weiss, wer gekommen ist
God knows who come is
- b. Gott weiss wer ist gekommen
God knows who is come
 'just about anybody has come'
- (ii) a. Es ist gleich, wer gekommen ist
it is immaterial who come is
- b. Gleich wer ist gekommen
immaterial who is come
 'someone or other has come'

For indefinites formed from predicates of ignorance (i) and indifference (ii), amalgamations have also been invoked by Haspelmath (1997: 132, 140-141). Another domain where amalgamation has a diachronic role to play is in the grammaticalisation of modality (Plank 1981).

Whether or not invariable, basic-form *look* ceases to be a verbal form entirely as a result of amalgamation, when it now directly combines with a relative pronoun (with nothing ever intervening between the two forms), it retains enough of its verbal semantics to add to it the idea of free referential choice.

3. Stuck with relatives — indefinitely?

Now, how do these indefinite relatives of late Old, whole Middle, and early Modern English compare to others grammaticalised from entire constructions in whichever languages have such complex indefinite pronouns?

The verb most prominently figuring in the original construction in English would seem to add a new theme to the possible lexical sources of indefinites, alongside predicates of ignorance ('dunno'), allowance ('want/please'), possibility of existence ('may be'), and indifference ('no matter'). But then, rather than being an entirely new theme, 'look and see' can probably be seen as but a variation on the theme of allowance: it is not the meaning of intentional visual perception as such but that of a choice from a range of alternatives before one's mind's eyes which predestines *look* — and *wealdan*, *wayte*, and *choose* — to get involved in performing the characteristic referential function of a free-choice indefinite.

What is also shared specifically with the allowance source is the centredness on the addressee, rather than the speaker or the circumstances as with the other sources: 'you look WH-', 'WH- you want/WH- pleases you'. What is unique for 'look WH-', however, is that the source construction is an imperative. Indicatives and subjunctives (optatives, etc.) prevail in other source constructions, although interrogatives are conceivable, too ('who knows WH-?'): but then the imperative in fact is an eminently appropriate mood for the purpose of imparting to the addressee that (s)he is free to take her/his referential choice.

In one further respect, indefinites derived from 'look and see' are parallel to those derived from 'want/please': as sketched in (11), in the source constructions these predicates all take non-specific free relative clauses.

(11) a. look [who comes] (he) is welcome

That is, indefinite pronouns based on ‘want WH-/WH- please’, where they have genuinely attained that status, must have been able to get rid of the verb in the clause with which they were amalgamated. Prime candidates for omission are verbs which are inherently redundant or contextually recoverable.⁸ Presumably, with indefinites transparently based on predicates such as ‘to want’ or ‘to be pleased by’ in conjunction with a reasonably specific main clause verb (‘to be welcome’ in (12)), it should often be possible to infer with some degree of probability what a verb in the free relative clause could roughly be like; and that would suffice to license its omission. ‘Look WH-’, on the other hand, which merely instructs to make a free referential choice, probably lacks the semantic specificity in most cases that would permit the recoverability of the verb in the free relative clause if it were omitted. Even when the verb in the free relative clause happens to be a ‘want/please’ predicate itself, which would seem the easiest to infer in a free-choice context, as in (13a), there are apparently no examples attested from late Old through earlier Modern English where it would have been omitted (à la (13b)).

- (13) a. Bide mē *lōce hwæs* ðū wille (Ælfric, Homilies)
 ‘ask me for whatever you will’
 b. *Bide mē *lōce hwæs*
 ‘ask me for whatever/anything’

The only exceptions on record are dialectal examples like these, with the manner pronoun *how* as part of the free-choice indefinite (Wright 1896: 595):

- (14) a. Horses must be fed *choosehow*
 b. I shall go to Baslow, *choose-how*

⁸ For indefinites deriving from ignorance and irrelevance predicates, “sluicing” (Ross 1969) has been suggested as an appropriate mechanism by Haspelmath (1997: 134, 140-141):

- (i) a. She told him I don’t know [what she told him]
 b. She told him I don’t know what

It seems doubtful, though, whether circumstances will typically be such as to permit this kind of contextual omission.

Here the most plausible analysis is in terms of sluicing, with *choose how they are fed* (14a) and *choose how I shall go to Baslow* (14b) as the complete free relative clauses from which material identical to what is given in main clauses has been omitted. It is also worth underlining that the only kind of indefinite relative which was thus able to attain autonomy as non-relative indefinite is that of manner, and unlike person and thing indefinites, the manner indefinite typically lacks a corresponding pro form (*thus*) in the correlative main clause:

- (15) a. [horses must be fed (thus) [[choose how] they are fed]]
 > horses must be fed choose how
 ‘horses must be fed somehow’
- b. [we must ask for it [[choose what] we ask for]]
 > *we must ask for it choose what > *we must ask for choose what
 ‘we must ask for something’

On this criterion, place and time indefinites should be the next-best candidates for making it from free relative into independent clauses; but examples like *The horses must be fed choosewhere/choosewhen* seem unattested.

4. A simpler new way of being (unconditionally) indefinite in old Germanic

Taking the step from constructions like (13a) to (13b), by generally licensing verb omission in the non-specific free relative clause, would be one way of getting autonomous indefinite pronouns based on ‘look WH-’. But there is also a shorter path potentially leading to autonomous indefinite pronouns from that sort of source.

Although in Old English and later, ‘look WH-’ always came in a two-clause construction, consisting of the non-specific free relative clause with which the imperative of ‘look’ got amalgamated and its main clause, there is no logical necessity for such a correlation of two clauses. A simpler point of departure would be along the lines of (16a), with the imperative of a predicate of free choice, such as ‘look and see’, itself as the main clause, complemented by a free relative clause, and no further clause superordinate to it.

- (16) a. [look [... WH- ... V ...]_{RelClause} !]_S
 b. [... [look PRO] ... V ...]_S

Lowering the imperative verb form into its own subordinate clause by amalgamation and associating it with the relative pronoun would then yield a simple main clause with a referential variable to be filled ad libitum (16b) — i.e., a free-choice indefinite pronoun. To illustrate this grammaticalisation path a little less schematically:

- (17) a. [look [who is welcome]_{RelClause} !]_S
 b. [[look who] is welcome]_S
 ‘anybody/everybody is welcome’

It is on this shorter path that predicates of ignorance and indifference frequently proceed to become the free-choice components of relative/interrogative pronouns, too (see Footnote 6 above for typical examples from German).

There are a number of indefinite pronouns at older stages of Germanic languages where such a grammaticalisation shortcut has in fact been suggested, notably by authors aware of ‘look WH-’ in English: Sievers (1898: 184), Gutmacher (1914: 17), Horn (1921/1923: 65), and Lotspeich (1938).

In Old High German, though only attested in the Tatian translation (East Franconian, though allegedly sharing several lexical and grammatical traits not found elsewhere in Old High German with Saxon, Frisian, and Anglo-Saxon), there is a set of complex indefinite pronouns consisting of interrogative pronouns, also serving as indefinites on their own, plus a prefixed element *sih-*. Their uses, free-choice or more commonly other, are illustrated in (18) (examples from Behaghel 1923: 392-393):

- (18) a. uer biruorta mih? — ... *sihuuer* biruorta mih
 ‘who touched me? — ... someone or other touched me’ (Latin *aliquis*)
 b. thie fon thir *sihuues* bite, gib imo
 ‘who of you something asks, give him (it)’ (Latin *qui petit a te*, i.e., with indefinite direct object overtly unexpressed)

- c. zuene sculdigon uuarun *sihuuelihemo* inlihere
 ‘two debtors were money-lenders to someone’ (Latin *cuidam*)

Also limited to Tatian in Old High German, but with later attestations in central Middle High German, *sih-* (or also an ablaut alternant *soh-*) further combines with the numeral-derived indefinite pronoun *ein*, yielding a free-choice indefinite pronoun (Behaghel 1923: 426-427):

- (19) a. zo deme allen truwestin man, den ie *sichein* kuninc gewan (König Rother)
 ‘to the most loyal man who any king ever won (for himself)’
 b. hete doch schaden mere, dan der anderin *sicheiner* (König Rother)
 ‘(he) yet had more harm than anyone of the others’

In Old Norse, there is a rare free-choice indefinite pronoun *velhverr* ‘whosoever, everyone’, which consists of interrogative *hverr* plus a prefixed element *vel-*. Old English has similar-looking indefinite forms in the series *wel-hwā*, *wel-hwæt*, *(ge-)wel-hwær*, *(ge-)wel-hwilc* ‘any/every-one, -thing, -where, any/every’, used as follows:

- (20) a. weodmōnað on tūn *welhwæt* bringeþ (Menologium)
 ‘weedmonth (i.e., August) in a garden brings anything/everything’
 b. unriht gewuna *welhwær* is arisen (Bede, Hist. Eccl.)
 ‘unlawful custom everywhere has arisen’

Lastly, Old (since Otfrid) and Middle High German has indefinite pronouns *deh(h)ein* ‘who/what-ever, any-one/thing’ and *deweder* ‘either one, any-one of two’ (presumably from *deh(h)weder*; later continued with generalising prefix *je-* as *jed(e)weder* ‘just about any’ without dual limitation), consisting of the numeral-derived indefinite *ein* or the dual interrogative *weder* and an element *deh(h)*, where the negative meaning, which used to be a contextually licensed possibility, eventually became the only reading, with *deh(h)ein* together with *nih(h)ein* (< **ni-uh-ein* ‘not-and-one’, i.e., ‘not even one’) as a source of modern *kein* ‘no(-one/thing)’ (Behaghel 1923: 422-425):

- (21) a. daz nesaget uns nehein puch, daz *deheiner* so riche ware (Pfaffe
Lamprecht, Alexanderlied)
‘that does not tell us any book that anyone would be so rich’
- b. daz der den iemer hazzen muost, deme *dehein* ere geschiht (Iwein)
‘that he always must hate that one who receives some honour’

What these complex free-choice indefinite pronouns from North and West Germanic languages have in common is that their first constituents lack convincing etymologies. Some sort of pronominal stems, of a demonstrative or personal nature, have been suspected in Old High German *sih-* and *deh(h)-*, perhaps inflected for one case, number, gender or another, and perhaps accompanied by a copulative particle (‘also, even’) (thus Bech 1964: *deh(h)ein* < **„es-h-ain-* ‘this.GEN.SG.MASC/NEUT-also-one-’, *sihwer* < **si-h-hwez* ‘this-also-who’). Old Norse *vel-* and Old English *wel-* have been tentatively identified with an intensive or generalising word *vel/wel* (cf. Modern English *well*). But the formal and semantic problems coming with such etymologies have not been resolved to unanimous satisfaction.

So, if only *faute de mieux*, Sievers, Gutmacher, Horn, and Lotspeich should still be considered serious contenders with their alternative suggestion that Old High German *sih-* might be the imperative of the verb *sēhan* ‘see, look’ (equivalent to Old English *l cian*), Old Norse and Old English *vel-/wel-* the imperative of the verb *velja* ‘choose, wish’ (Old Norse, not attested in Old English itself), and Old High German *deh-* the imperative of a verb **teq-* ‘stretch forth the hand, take’, preserved in Old High German as *diggen*, in Old Saxon as *thiggian*, and in Old English as *picgan*. These etymological conjectures are not without formal problems of their own. Semantically, at any rate, they are rendered all the more credible by the analogy of something crosslinguistically rare, but undeniably existing in one member of Germanic, English — free-choice indefinites based on the imperative of predicates of choice, including ‘look and see!’,⁹ lowered into their subordinate clauses by amalgamation, here now without a correlative main clause and with no need to get verb omission licensed in the free relative clause.

⁹ Horn offers the same exclamatory rather than choice interpretation of the imperative as in the bi-clausal source construction.

5. A Germanic *nonesuch*?

Considering the inherent plausibility (i) of the imperative of predicates of choosing, including ones based on visual screening ('look and see!'), as the lexical source of free-choice marking of indefinite pronouns, and (ii) of amalgamation and contextually recoverable verb omission as the relevant mechanisms of syntactic reanalysis, it would be surprising if Germanic were indeed the only family boasting indefinite pronouns with such a grammaticalisation history. Nonetheless, such indefinites so far do not seem attested elsewhere. Even within Germanic, where they may conceivably date back to the proto period (or else the similarities in spirit among the several North and West Germanic instantiations of 'look and see WH-!' would have to be considered independent innovations), they have remained marginal and short-lived in comparison with other, crosslinguistically more familiar kinds of expressions of free referential choice.

In some respects the closest known analogues are "emphatic interrogatives" in Latin (as already noted by Kluge 1882): these are also vision-based and of an imperativish flavour, though not strictly verbal, insofar as their first element is the particle *ecce* 'behold! lo! see!', shortened to *ec-*, and their second constituent is an interrogative/relative pronoun (*qui(s)* 'who' etc., *quando* 'when'). Unlike in Germanic, where similar complex forms made it into free relative clauses, and perhaps even into independent declaratives, their Latin counterparts remained confined to interrogative function, with their added force coming especially handy in passionate interrogation, as illustrated in (22):

- (22) *ecqui pudor est? ecquae religio, Verrus?*
'is there any shame whatsoever? any religion whatsoever, Verrus?'

It would not have taken much reanalytical ingenuity to read such passionate rhetorical questions as statements, with *ecqui* thus going the way of *deh(h)ein*: 'There is no shame, no religion whatsoever, Verrus.'

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