Dimensions of *wh*-words: a German-Italian question time
Abschlussbericht

1. Allgemeine Angaben

- ### Antragsteller

Antragsteller (deutsch):
Prof. Dr. Marco Coniglio,
Seminar für Deutsche Philologie, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen

Antragstellerin (italienisch):
Prof. Dr. Chiara Gianollo,
Dipartimento di Filologia Classica e Italianistica, Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna

Weitere(r) Antragsteller/in:
Dr. Andreas Blümel, Seminar für Deutsche Philologie, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen
Prof. Dr. Anke Holler, Seminar für Deutsche Philologie, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen

- ### Thema des Projekts, Datum der Veranstaltung in der Villa Vigoni

„Dimensions of *wh*-words: a German-Italian question time"
Villa Vigoni, 6-8 May 2019

- ### Teilnehmerliste

Valentina Bianchi, Università degli Studi di Siena
Ermenegildo Bidese, Università degli Studi di Trento
Nicholas Catasso, Bergische Universität Wuppertal
Federica Cognola, Università di Roma La Sapienza
Paola Cotticelli, Università degli Studi di Verona
Anna Czypionka, Universität Konstanz
Chiara Dal Farra, Università Ca' Foscari Venezia
Chiara de Bastiani, Università Ca' Foscari Venezia & Bergische Universität Wuppertal
Ilaria Frana, Università degli Studi di Enna Kore
Eric Fuß, Ruhr-Universität Bochum
Maria Teresa Guasti, Università degli Studi di Milano Bicocca
Roland Hinterhölzl, Università Ca' Foscari Venezia
Olga Kellert, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen
Horst Lohnstein, Bergische Universität Wuppertal
Cecilia Poletto, Università degli Studi di Padova & Goethe-Universität Frankfurt
Claudia Poschmann, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt
Maribel Romero, Universität Konstanz
Petra Schulz, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt
Radek Šimík, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

- **Tatsächlich durchgeführtes Programm**

  May 6th, 2019 (Monday)

  16:00 - 16:30 **Introduction** (Blümel, Coniglio, Gianollo, Holler)
  16:30 - 18:30 **1st discussion forum: "Form-meaning and their relations"** (Blümel)
  Input: Bianchi, Hinterhölzl, Lohnstein, Simik
  19:00 Social evening

- **May 7th, 2019 (Tuesday)**

- 9:00 - 10:45 **2nd discussion forum: "Semantics/pragmatics interface"** (Lohnstein)
- Input: Frana, Kellert, Romero
- 10:45 - 11 Coffee break
- 11:00 - 13:00 **3rd discussion forum: "Synchronic variation"** (Coniglio)
- Input: Bidese, Catasso, Poletto, Cognola
- 13:00 - 14:30 Lunch break
- 14:30 - 16:30 **4th discussion forum: "Empirical methods"** (Holler)
- Input: Czypionka, Guasti, Poschmann, Schulz
- 16:30 - 17 Coffee break
- 17:00 - 17:40 Guided tour of the Villa
- 19:30 Dinner

- **May 8th, 2019 (Wednesday)**

- 09:00 - 11:00 **5th discussion forum: "Diachronic variation and change"** (Gianollo)
- Input: Cotticelli, De Bastiani, Fuß
- 11:00 - 11:30 Coffee break
- 11:30 - 12:30 **General discussion**
- 12:30 – 13:30 Lunch
- departures

- **Angaben zu eventuellen Publikationen, die aus der Kooperation bereits hervorgegangen oder noch geplant sind.**

We decided to plan a further meeting before publishing the results of the workshop: given the highly programmatic nature of our discussion, which was meant to open new research avenues, the group decided that it is best to carry out further empirical studies in order to substantiate the theoretical and methodological claims that emerged from the meeting.

In the meanwhile, the participants have addressed the topics discussed during the *Gespräch* in the following research outputs:

Blümel, Andreas. (2019) Q-Float in West Ulster English and labeling, *Yearbook of the Poznan Linguistic Meeting*, 4(1), 55-73.

Blümel, Andreas & Mingya Liu (to appear). Revisiting Obligatory Relatives in German – Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives, *Zeitschrift für Sprachwissenschaft*.

Blümel, Andreas & Marco Coniglio (2019), What kind of constructions yield what kind of constructions? In M. Bouzouita, A. Breitbarth, L. Danckaert & E. Witzenhausen (Eds.), *Cycles in Language Change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bianchi, Valentina (2019). Spelling Out Focus-Fronting Chains and Wh-Chains: The Case of Italian. *Syntax* 22, 146-161.

Bocci, Giuliano, Silvio Cruschina & Valentina Bianchi (under review) Focus in wh-questions: Evidence from Italian.

Cognola, Federica & George Walkden (forthcoming 2020). *Pro*-drop in interrogatives and declaratives. A parallel study of Old High German and Old Italian. *Linguistik Online.*

Coniglio, Marco (2019), Relative clause marking in historical German. *Linguistische Berichte* 258, 139-177.

Coniglio, Marco & Katharina Paul (2019), Unknown relatives from the North? On the origin and development of w-relative pronouns in German. In F. Costantini (Ed.), *Syntactic Variation: the View from the German-Language Islands in Northeastern Italy*. Udine: Forum Editrice Universitaria Udinese, 23-43.

Cotticelli, Paola (forthcoming 2019). Problemi di storiografia linguistica: la classificazione delle frasi relative nelle grammatiche tedesche dell'800. *Blityri*, vol 1/2 2019, special issue *Per la storia della linguistica. Saggi in onore di Giorgio Graffi per il suo 70esimo compleanno* (ed. Paola Cotticelli Kurras), 139-162.

Gianollo, Chiara (forthcoming 2020). Interrogative and relative pronouns and determiners. In Carlier, A. et al. (eds.) *Bridging the gap between Late Latin and Early Old French: Empirical investigations of (morpho)syntactic change*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Lohnstein, Horst (2019), Finitheit und Satzbildung im Deutschen: satzgrammatische, semantische und evolutionäre Aspekte. *Linguistische Berichte* 257/2019, 5–92.

2. Arbeits- und Ergebnisbericht (min. 10.000, max. 15.000 Anschläge, inkl. Leerzeichen)

Ausgangsfragen des Projekts
In linguistics, the label "*wh*-item" indicates lexical elements that are used to form questions (and happen to begin with *wh*- in English), such as *which*, or German *welcher*, Italian *quale*. As in other in Indo-European languages, these items have a still recognizable common historical source (Proto Indo-European stem *$k^w i$-/$k^w o$-), attesting to their remarkable diachronic persistence. The salient feature that characterizes them and attributes them a central role in the scientific discussion concerns their multifunctionality: besides occurring in questions, *wh*-items can introduce relative clauses (German *welcher*) or can be used as building blocks of indefinite pronouns (German (*irgend*)*welcher*). Moreover, the phrases that they build are subject to very specific distributional constraints holding across languages in a similar, and yet intricately different way. Current linguistic theories are still struggling to provide a satisfactory account which is able to capture, at the same time, the multifunctionality and the principled variation observed with *wh*-phrases across languages.
Taking stock of the headway made in different fields of linguistics, a number of recent works have revived and tried to answer different kind of questions related to the morphosyntactic and semantic properties of *wh*-phrases and their pragmatic inferences, basically addressing two types of questions:

1. What is the internal make-up of *wh*-phrases and their distribution?
2. What are the interrelations between their morphosyntactic/semantic properties and their discourse and pragmatic functions?

Zielsetzung des Projekts
By bringing together leading young and senior researchers from the two countries, the *Gespräch* was planned to address a very much debated topic in linguistics. It is undisputable that *wh*-elements have been well investigated in almost every language, thus also in German and Italian. However, there had hardly ever been any attempt to discuss them (in such a collegial form), with the goal of determining their properties in a comparative perspective.

The explanation of specific phenomena surrounding *wh*-phrases and of their functions was far from clear. Just to mention one, the not yet proved hypothesis that the relative function of *wh*-relative pronouns in German is ultimately borrowed from Romance languages (cf. Lehmann 1984:385). Since the history of German and Italian is strongly intertwined from the very beginning of their written traditions, we intended to investigate whether what we observe is shared common heritage or the result of independent developments.

The *Gespräch* was thus intended to open possibilities for new research cooperation opportunities in these particular research fields, but also in related ones, such as the more general issue of clause typing, etc.

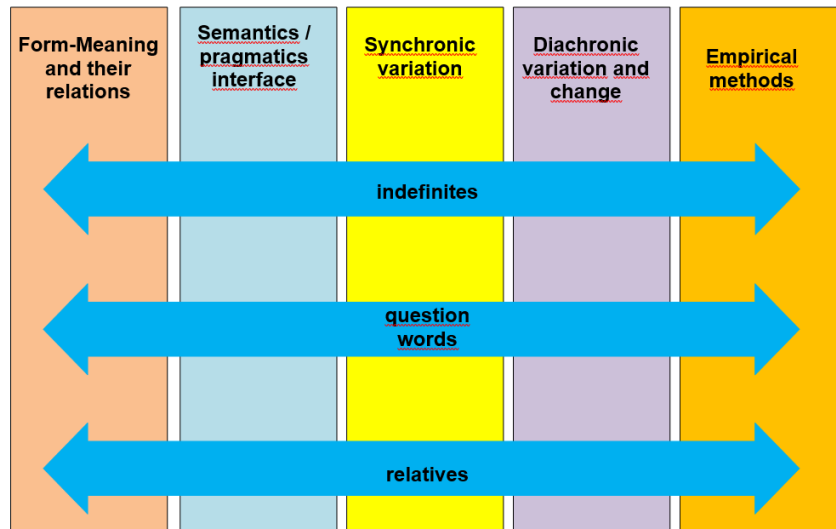**Angaben zu etwaigen Änderungen gegenüber dem ursprünglichen Antrag mit Begründung**
Due to the internal activities of Villa Vigoni, our Gespräch had to take place on different days from those proposed in the application (6-8 May, instead of 24-26 April 2019), but in general the structure originally indicated was maintained, with some specific changes indicated below:
1. Due to the late arrival or earlier departure of some of the participants and the difficulties to reach Menaggio, we partially re-scheduled the initial program, as is shown in the final program published by Villa Vigoni. In particular, the discussion forum "Diachronic variation and change" and "Empirical methods" had to be switched.
2. In order to make the content of the discussion forum "Pragmatics" more incisive, its title was changed to "Semantics/Pragmatics interface".
3. Due to impossibility for some of the invited colleagues to participate in the meeting, new participants were invited. Furthermore, a young researcher (Chiara Dal Farra) was invited as an auditor, since she is working precisely on the topics of the *Gespräch*.

Darstellung der Diskussionsschwerpunkte und der erreichten Ergebnisse
In contrast to traditional linguistic meetings, there were no talks followed by a question period. Instead, we organized five discussion sessions, with very short input presentations in each session, sketching problems in previous analyses or addressing questions that were then debated by the group as a whole. The single topics were discussed in a collegial and dialectic form involving all the participants under the moderation of a senior researcher. The questions addressed cross-sectorial issues and thus covered the participants' expertise in different domains.

The major fields that are represented in the five slots for the discussion forums were syntax/semantics, semantics/pragmatics, synchronic and diachronic variation and empirical work (e.g. corpus and experimental methods). The *Gespräch* aimed at surveying the properties of *wh*-elements (indefinites, question words and relative complementizers/pronouns) in a broad comparative, diachronic, and cross-disciplinary perspective, as represented below:

The discussion forum "Form-meaning and their relations" focused first on the morphology and internal makeup and meaning of *wh*-words and on the syntactic distribution of indefinite, interrogative and relative elements. What are the differences between simple and complex *wh*-phrases (e.g. German *wer* 'who' vs. *welche Person* 'which person', cf. Munaro & Obenauer 1999, Pankau 2013, etc.)? For example, the fact that bare interrogatives can be used as indefinites in German raises the question as to how they should be characterized in terms of their meaning properties (cf. Simik 2017). Furthermore, the following issues were discussed: lexical ambiguity vs. semantic underspecification (cf. Kratzer & Shimoyama 2002), classification strategies of forming *wh*-questions inter- and intralinguistically (Rizzi 1991, Sabel 2000, Cable 2007), the effects ensuing from the different syntactic positions of *wh*-XPs (for example, their fronting), more generally the interconnections between syntax, semantics and information structure (in particular focus), etc. The discussion revealed that a morphosyntactic/semantic description of *wh*-phrases should better define the core properties and capture the differences and meaning relations between *wh*-interrogatives, *wh*-indefinites and *wh*-relatives.

In the discussion forum "Semantics/Pragmatics interface", we concentrated on the denotation of *wh*-words and on the usage of *wh*-phrases in context. Different areas were defined that have to be further investigated in the future, such as: How are these meanings constrained across different types of *wh*-expressions? Is Focus a constitutive ingredient in the formation of *wh*-questions or not (Sabel 1998, Beck 2006)? What is the full range of meaning types available to *wh*-words and their traces? What is the common pattern of grammaticalization processes of *wh*-words?

The discussion forum "Synchronic variation" focused on Germanic and Romance languages (also in contact situations). The discussion pointed to important aspects that need further future refinements, such as the internal structure of *wh*-elements, their different cartographic positions in the left periphery, the nature of these positions (Operator positions?), how we best account for cross-linguistic differences with respect to strategies and/or options of relative clause formation (cf. Lehmann 1984, de Vries 2002) and question formation (e.g. absence vs. presence of multiple *wh*-questions in Italian and German, Calabrese 1984), the link between syntactic distribution and interpretation of the *wh*-items, the encoding of information-structural notions (like Topic, Focus and the like) in syntax (cf. Rizzi 1997 for their interrogative and relative uses; Miyagawa 2010, 2017, etc.).

The forum "Empirical methods" dealt with the empirical methods for the investigation of *wh*-items, especially language acquisition and psycholinguistics, such as the interaction between discourse particles and *wh*-questions (cf. Bayer et al. 2016 and Czypionka et al. 2017), multiple *wh*-questions, ambiguity vs. underspecification, etc. In fact, many of the aspects discussed in the other forums were re-proposed, but enriched with insights coming from modern empirical research done on these elements.

The discussion forum "Diachronic variation and change" showed that, from the diachronic perspective, it is undisputable that interrogative, indefinite and relative *wh*-elements are etymologically related to each other and that their functions are strongly intertwined (cf. Haspelmath 1997), but a very much debated issue was whether there is also a common semantic source to their different uses. The discussion of the origin and evolution of *wh*-words focused on Indo-European languages in general, and on (West) Germanic languages in particular. Empirically, diachronic studies most typically work on closed, written corpora, which pose a number of challenges to linguists in various perspectives (reliability of text editions, comparability across genres/text types, annotation schemata, etc.).

To sum up, starting from a close comparison between German and Italian, and further extending the discussion to the broader Germanic and Romance landscape, we surveyed their uses as interrogative, indefinite, relative pronouns and tackled the reasons of the observed multifunctionality, by combining the evidence resulting from crosslinguistic comparison and diachronic investigation with insights emerging from corpus methods and recent psycholinguistic experiments. On the last day, a general discussion wrapped up the most important aspects and achievements of the *Gespräch*.

Furthermore, future meetings and projects were discussed, and other activities followed the *Gespräch*. The most important ones are listed below:

- The next meeting will be organized by the end of 2020; negotiations are ongoing to hold it at the Università degli Studi di Enna Kore (under the coordination of Ilaria Frana, one of the invited participants).
- Planned under the coordination of Horst Lohnstein and Anke Holler: collaboration between linguists and literary scholars on grammar and narrative structure.
- Anke Holler and Chiara Gianollo were invited speakers at the Workshop "RED 2019. Referential expressions in discourse. Pronouns and discourse prominence", Grimmwelt Kassel, 2-3 October 2019.
- Andreas Blümel presented his research connected to wh-words at a number of meetings during his research visit to Japan (9.-10.11.2019*: Exploring Pair-Merge of Heads*, Workshop auf der English Linguistic Society of Japan (ELSJ), Osaka (mit Nobu Goto und Yushi Sugimoto); 5.11.2019: *An Interface Principle for Root Clauses and its Derivational Options*, linguistisches Kolloquium von Masao Ochi, Osaka; 5.11.2019: *An Introduction to Labeling Theory*, linguistisches Seminar von Masao Ochi, Osaka; 2.-3.11.2019: *Do Exocentric Structures Exist in Syntax?* 2-tägiges Kolloquium, Keio, Tokio)
- Radek Šimík is principal investigator in the project "From interrogatives to relatives" (2019-2022), Charles University Prague.
- The Summer School "Speech Acts" organized by Marco Coniglio, Anke Holler and Markus Steinbach, which took place in Göttingen (8-19 July 2019), could profit from the results of the *Gespräch* in Villa Vigoni.
- The continuing research for the section on dependent clauses in the two-volume work on "Indogermanische Syntax" which is being prepared by Paola Cotticelli for the *Indogermanische Grammatik*, Winter Verlag, Heidelberg.

Gegebenenfalls: Ausführungen zur Teilnahme und Rolle des wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchses im Projekt.

The workshop very much benefited from the presence of both senior and junior researchers: in inviting the participants we made sure to include a number of doctoral and postdoctoral scholars, as presenters as well as auditors (this was the case with Chiara Dal Farra). This way, a broader perspective on the investigated topic could be combined with the newest results emerging from empirical research by the doctoral and postdoctoral participants.

Hinweise auf die spezifisch deutsch-italienische Konstellation des wissenschaftlichen Diskurses in der Villa Vigoni

The participating researchers from Germany and Italy work on the same topic, but in different research subdisciplines of linguistics and answering partial research questions concerning specific aspects of the issues discussed in the *Gespräch*. This ambitious *Gespräch* created a venue for a collegial, more global discussion, where insights from the various case studies contributed to a more comprehensive picture and, in turn, helped single out further, still unexplored research questions leading to cutting-edge projects. Especially with respect *wh*-phrases, the comparison between German and Italian was crucial and fruitful. The topic concerned all languages (mainly Indo-European, but also non-Indo-European ones), but the comparison between Italian (as representative of the Romance branch) and German (as representative of the Germanic branch) was not only particularly telling, but also absolutely necessary. It paved the way for further bilateral cooperation opportunities, but also for international and European ones. For many research topics, a general European scientific teamwork is missing. For the future, we intend to establish such constructive platforms as the usual way to investigate and discuss specific research problems in a broader European perspective.