

# Wh- Relative Pronouns in English: Predicativity Versus Virtuality

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**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to provide a systematic study of the functioning of wh-pronouns. The idea of their unity in the 'Tongue' Domain stands for us as a major requirement. The occurrence of *whoever*, *whatever*, *whichever*, and *wh(o)/(ich)* with their antecedents results from a systematicity built in the deep structure of language. The approach adopted in this study opposes a simple description of the linear sequencing of words in language to the potential significate in the Tongue domain, because the observable or the effects of sense have consequence on the mental representation of language. The system of wh-pronouns is mainly based on two concepts: 'predicativity' and 'virtuality'. These two constructs will be shown to underly the functioning of the wh-pronouns in English.

**Keywords:** Wh-Pronouns, Predicativity, Virtuality, Psychosystematic Theory

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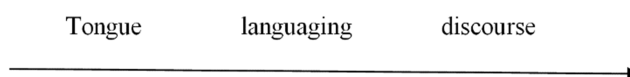
## 1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to put forth the hypothesis that the concept of predicativity, which distinguishes nouns and pronouns, operates fully within the class of the *wh-relative pronouns*, giving rise to *predicative relative pronouns* and *non-predicative relative pronouns*. Moreover, the concept of 'virtuality' which characterizes *wh-pronouns* is a dynamic concept as it embodies a movement from a maximum to minimum of virtuality in this theory. Throughout this paper, we will demonstrate that the constructs of 'Predicativity' and 'Virtuality', the underlying potential substance of *wh-pronouns*, are at the core of the systematicity of these pronouns. In fact, this system is composed of movement and positions that will enable the utterer to choose the most appropriate item in the specific discursive situation.

The paper consists of three main sections, excluding the Introduction and the Conclusion. Section one provides a brief review of Gustave Guillaume's theory of language (1883-1964). Section two presents a few methodological remarks. Section three presents the proposed analysis of *wh-relative pronouns* from the perspective of discourse grammar.

## 2. A Brief Overview of G. Guillaume's Theory of Language

To grasp the psychosystematics [1] or psychosystematics [2] of language, as generally conceived of in Guillaume's theory, it is essential to change our perspective in considering language as the end-product of a written text or speech. Language is to be seen as a dynamic operation involving components related in condition/consequence relationships. In other words, language, which is inherently operational, is composed of three phases closely linked to each other in a chain of causality. The following diagram <sup>1</sup>[3] illustrates this language perspective:



**Figure 1.** Phases of language.

While the 'Tongue Domain' (henceforth TD) phase represents language as Potential, "as a mental mechanism, a set of psychomechanisms" [4], Discourse evokes language as

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<sup>1</sup> M. Valette makes a very interesting comparison between Aristotle, Bally, Guillaume and Chomsky concerning this idea of Condition/consequence relationship of the mental process,

actualized in a situation leading to discourse utterances as output. On the other hand, *Languaging* deals with the sense of integrating one's experience into language use. According to this view, for each speaker language is a Potential giving rise to innumerable actualizations; and as Potential, language is systematic. In other words, language is a system, a set of mental conditions permitting some specific movements during which the speaker can use the form of movement and the position within his/her mind that will best represent what is being focused on in the intended message. Indeed, positions and movements are used by the speaker in a specific discursive situation to express his/her intended message.

Thus, psychosystematics is a theory of language whose main goal is to discover and reconstruct the mental processes that are operational in language<sup>2</sup> [5]. At the methodological level, by observing the uses of the forms in discourse, i.e., the said, the psychosystematic approach, reproduces the mental operations which belong to a deep level of language representation: the acts of representation [6] which generate the acts of expression. In other words, this theory rests on the general intuition that whatever exists in a 'real' state at a given moment in space and time must already have existed in a potential state. In other words, this implies that language in use results from a process which transforms actualizable language 'Tongue' into actualized language ('discourse').

One of the principles which characterizes Guillaume's theory is that every operation of thought in an act of language requires time; this time, called operative time [7], carries instantaneous mental operations; the potential significance of each form must thus be analyzed in terms of movement, position, and operative time. Time can be represented using its opposite, which is space. The vector, which symbolizes the operative time, could be intercepted at different points, depending on the time required for each mental operation. According to Wilmet, quoted by Joly (1975), it is possible to distinguish: a point (A) which, at the initial stage, is a starting mental operation; and a point (B), the middle phase which is an ongoing operation, and finally, a point (C) corresponding to a completed thought operation. Each of these interceptions represents a value of language that conditions the various effects of meaning in discourse. It should be pointed out that due to the close relation between the functions and the position of linguistic forms in a system, G. Guillaume sometimes gives to the psychosystematic theory the name of the Theory of Positional Linguistics [8]. This can be schematically represented as follows:

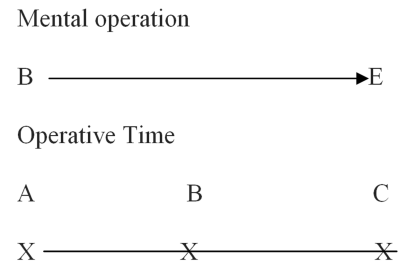


Figure 2. Mental operation & Operative time.

Furthermore, these movements of thought, which are representable on a continuum underlying operational time, are generally binary or ternary in character with a limit that determines 'before' and 'after', an immanence and a transcendence. Guillaume considers this binary tensor to be a radical psychomechanism on which all the systems of a language are based.

This double movement is at the origin of the system of the article [9] and of the verbo-temporal [10]. We posit, for our part, that the same principle finds its legitimacy in the system of the wh- relative pronouns.

### 3. Methodological Remarks

The recourse to psychosystematic theory is substantiated by a number of judiciously chosen examples of the relativizer from a wide range of literary sources because we do believe that a psychosystematic study cannot be elaborated without the participation of the speaker and the listener. Not only should the analysis make explicit the mental processes operational in language but it should also highlight the role of the enunciator in the discourse. In fact, the latter plays a central role in all the enunciative operations whether in the early phases (phrasal effect or intent of effect) or in the the 'said' or the spoken channel [11]. Consequently, the communicative intent, which includes the sense of intention of the enunciator plays a decisive role in our analysis.

Two remarks concerning the methodology adopted in this paper are in order:

- a) Wh-relative pronouns have received little attention from linguists from all schools of linguistics, be they formalist or functionalist. This explains the rarity of published literature on this topic. However, in recent years, many linguistic theories in France, all of which are based on Gustave Guillaume's theory of language, have proposed interesting analyses of relative pronouns in English and have tried to capture their systematicity. These studies have the merit of addressing the 'hidden' aspects in the working of relative pronouns. They have adapted the deep / surface level distinction of generative grammar to the theoretical assumptions of their own framework. Indeed, two types of grammar of have emerged: The Grammar of Enunciative Operations by Culioli [12] and Meta-operational Grammar by H. Adamczewski [13]. Also, L. Danon-Boileau undertook a study of THAT, WHICH, and WHAT. A significant contribution of this study is the

<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that even if psychomechanics is interested in the mental operations in language it differs from Cognitive Linguistics.

use of deixis and anaphora to characterise the behaviour of WHICH and THAT, respectively [14]. On the other hand, in the context of the Meta-operational Grammar, Adamczewski analyses the behaviour of WHICH and THAT in terms of what he calls Phase 1 and Phase 2, which build on the Theme / Rheme distinction. This micro-concept sets two different levels of structuring; Phase 1 represents a fundamental level mental functioning, while Phase 2 transcends this primary level of the mental process [15]. Leaving aside methodological differences, this work does also adhere, just like the briefly reviewed literature above, to the same concern regarding the characterisation of the systematicity of language. In some cases, our approach is based on their results.<sup>3</sup>

- b) The empirical base of this paper is gleaned from Middle and Modern English data as used in well established literary works. The contrastive approach is motivated by the fact that *wh*-relative pronouns have undergone a certain evolution which elucidates the claimed relevance of Predicativity and Virtuality and their functioning in establishing relativised pronominal anaphora. The claimed interaction between these two constructs lends further support to the discourse-based approach assumed in this theory of grammar.

## 4. The Analysis

### 4.1. Genesis and Notional Matter in Tongue: Predicativity vs non-Predicativity

One of the criteria, on which the system of language is based, is the criterion of 'predicativity' [16]. The latter takes place within the construction of the word, at the level of the operation of its ideogenesis or notional ideation. Predicativity is thus related to the semic (lexical) charge of a word. The predicative parts of language assign a notional matter to a linguistic form. This matter is provided by the conceptualization of the human experience data. What makes up this matter or substance is the universe which humans have had to confront for their survival. However, the non predicative parts of language lack any direct reference to the experiences of the outside universe acquired by humans. The notional matter of these forms consists of mental awareness of the mechanisms of its own functioning. Therefore, within the framework of the psychomechanic theory of words, while the form part of the non-predicative items is complete, the matter one stands incomplete. This can be represented as follows:

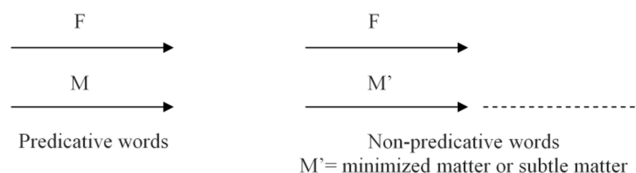


Figure 3. Predicativity vs non-predicativity.

While the noun, the adjective, the adverb, and the verb belong to the predicative parts of language, the pronoun, the article, the preposition and the conjunction belong to the non-predicative parts. For example, unlike nouns, which represent a specific notional substance, demonstrative pronouns, which are non-predicative, do not represent a notional idea identified as a matter. The potential significate<sup>4</sup> of the demonstratives are positions or movements in relation to positions in space and time. These positions and movements are implicitly or explicitly referred to by the utterer.

Moreover, the category of pronouns in general is considered as 'de-predicative items' because they are forms which refer in an allusive way to life experiences: they actually represent a dematerialized version of the predicative words. To illustrate, both the noun and the personal pronoun refer to beings. But while the first denotes the being by naming it, the latter identifies the being by only mentioning its rank in a particular enunciative situation.

As far as the relative pronoun is concerned, it is clear that it is a de-predicative form of the noun; it does work by a recall movement. However, I make, for my part, the following hypothesis: 'predicativity', which is a criterion related to the notional matter of a word, doesn't function only to make a distinction between a noun and a pronoun, it does fully characterize the system of the relative pronoun. This leads one to state that the class of the relative *wh*-pronouns is composed of: a) predicative and b) non-predicative forms.

- a) The predicative forms, the matter of which is "virtual ( $\pm$ ) animate being" will be almost completed during the ideogenesis<sup>5</sup> operation: they represent the first interception and position. They aptly perform the substantive's functions as well as any noun and accumulate two grammatical functions: one in the nominalized sentence and one in the main clause. It must be specified that, in this position on the operative time, it is the representative attribute that prevails over the integration capacity. However, during the Middle English period, the notional matter of the pronouns in *wh*- experienced completion in their lexigenesis (ideogenesis), which made these pronouns get the status of full discourse objects. They did not need to be completed by a phrase: they stood as antecedent as any noun. In this case, the integration attribute was null.

<sup>3</sup> Please note that there are no recent publications that deal with *Wh*-pronominals from the perspective of discourse grammar directly. The reviewed literature consists of a limited number of tests that have some bearing on the topic of this article but are not concerned with *Wh*-relatives

<sup>4</sup> 'Potential significate' refers to the French word 'signifié en puissance'. It represents the meaning of a word before its usage in discourse.

<sup>5</sup> There are two operations to form the potential significate of a word. There are the ideogenesis and the morphogenesis operations. The ideogenesis phase involves reconstructing the meaning of a word at the moment of speaking. The morphogenesis refers to the operations that will provide the grammatical meaning to the word.

The following examples will help clarify this claim:

(1) "Eek Plato seith, whoso that kanrede, the moote be cosyn to the dede."

Also Plato says whoever that knows to read, the words be cousins to the deeds

"Plato also says that the words must be the cousins of deeds for whoever knows to read"

(2) "Thow mayst have hire to lady and to wyf for whom that I moste nedes less my lyf.

You may have her to lady to wife for whom that I must

lose my life

"You may have as a lady and a wife the one for whom I must lose my life"

(Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales)

In these examples, it may be noted that the *wh-pronouns* acquired a full notional matter, they represented more a virtual animate being rather than a marker of integration; this role is played by "that". We put forth that the *wh-forms* are predicative "pro-nouns" closer to lexical items than to grammatical ones:

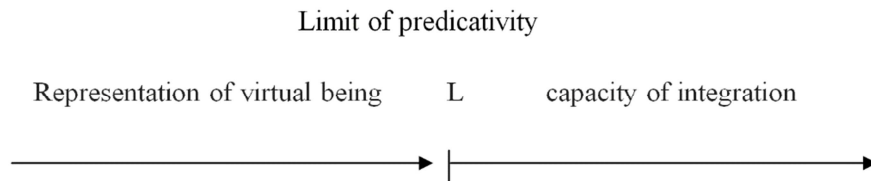


Figure 4. Notional matter of *Wh-pronouns* in Middle English.

In Modern English, this process is different: although the integration capacity is low in the first position, it does exist. We can formulate the following figure with the vectors of "virtual being representation" on the fall and 'integration capacity' on the rise:

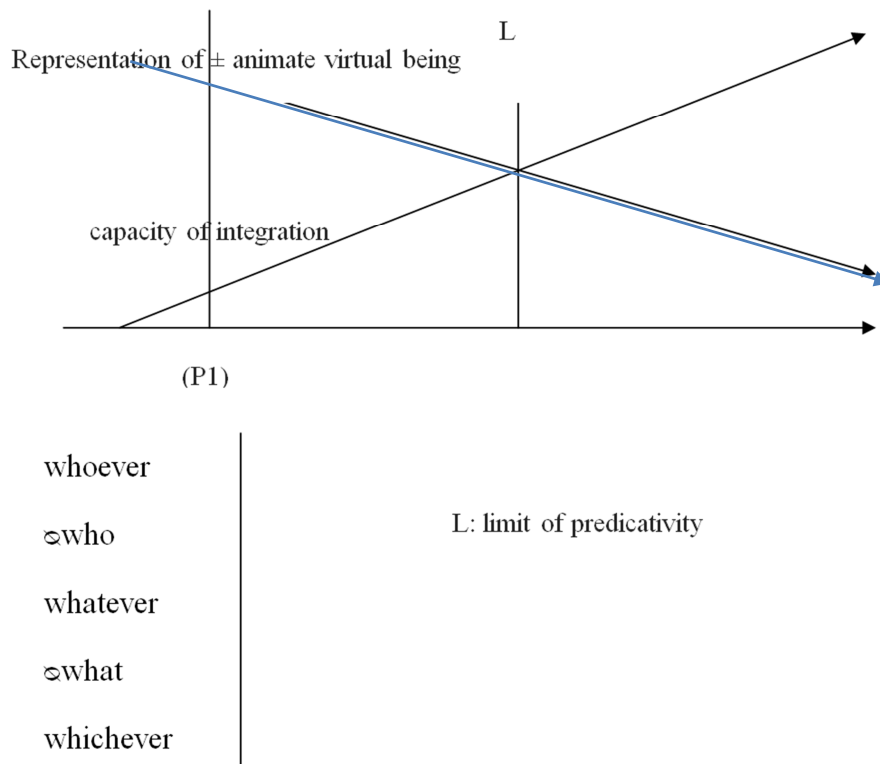


Figure 5. Notional matter of *Wh-pronouns* in Modern English.

- b) The forms in *wh-* are in their non-predicative state when the notional matter is more advanced in its non-completion. The gender and the grammatical case are provided only late in speech by reference to a nominal support, constituting the antecedent. The passage from (P1) to (P2) implies progressive dematerialization of the forms in *wh-*. This 'subduction' (subtraction or withdrawal) of the notional matter impacts the

grammatical attribute symbolized by the capacity of integration. Indeed, this characteristic is reinforced and is at the same level as that of the representation of the 'virtual ( $\pm$ ) animate'. The marker will integrate the sentence, placed on the right, forming, thus, not a noun but an 'adjective of discourse' that will seek support by a recall. We can inscribe (P2), in figure (6), as being after (P1):

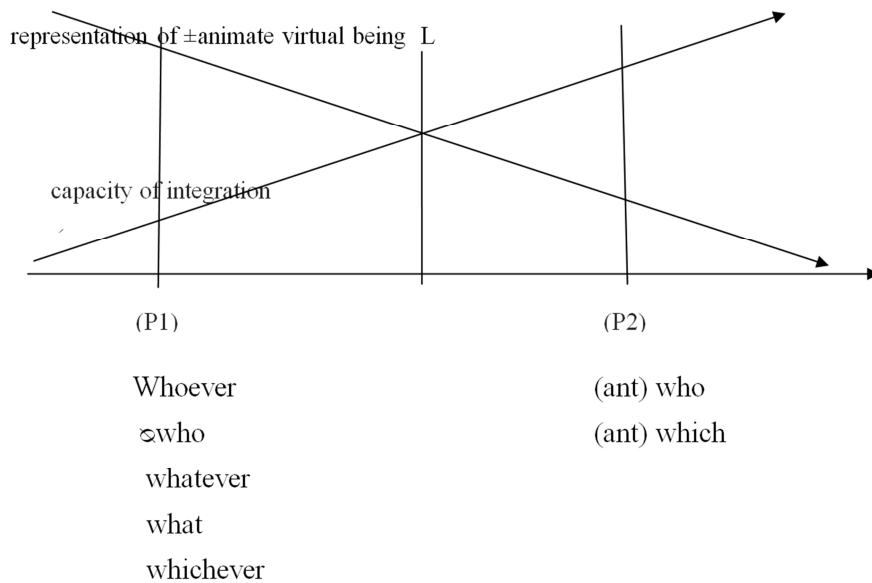


Figure 6. Positions of *wh*-pronouns corresponding to representation and integration.

#### 4.2. Virtual vs Actual

Like all the other systems of the English language, the class of pronouns is a system that takes the form of a binary movement of 'before' and 'after'; this binary nature will make it possible to identify two categories of pronouns: a category rooted in the 'field of the virtual' (before) and the other in 'the actual' (after). While the pronoun in 'tension I'

designates 'a being under its most virtual presentation' - this is the case of the relative - the pronoun of the field after 'tension II' refers to 'a being actualized' either by its rank in the system of the person - this is the case of the personal pronoun - or by positions and movements in time or space - this is the case of the demonstrative-. This dual movement system can be illustrated by the following figure:

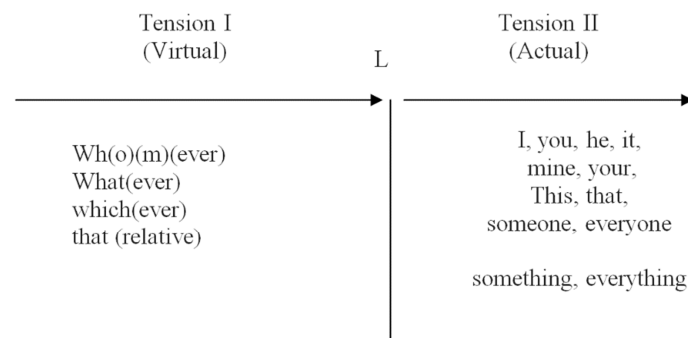


Figure 7. Virtual field vs actual field.

From the above, the potential significance of the relative pronoun in general represents a 'virtual ( $\pm$ ) animate being'. However, we assume that this virtuality is not stative, it is in fact a movement which consists in going from more virtuality to less virtuality. The extreme value in this movement scale is guaranteed by the marker *ever* that joins *who*, *what* and *which*, characterizing, accordingly, the pronouns of "( $\pm$ ) animate being", whose virtualization is

carried to its maximum. However, we note that the degree of the inherent virtuality in *whichever* is not the same as in *whoever* and *whatever*. The least virtuality is introduced when we have the genesis of "animate and inanimate virtual being" without *ever* taking part to alter this notional basis. This variation can be ranged in on a continuum going from one (+) to one (-) of virtuality, figuratively:

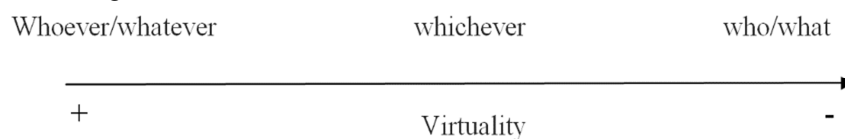


Figure 8. Continuum of virtuality.

In addition, within this dynamic movement we depart from virtuality to some *actualization* when this latter is endorsed by reference to the antecedent. In figure:

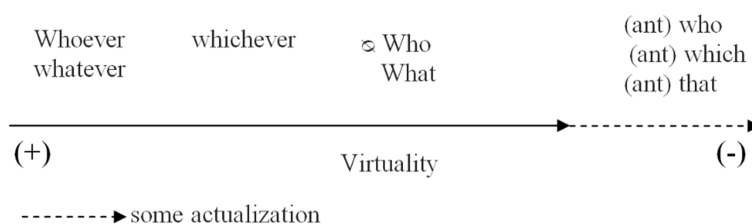


Figure 9. From virtuality to some actualization in *wh*-pronouns.

To conclude, the positions rooted in the fields of ‘predicativity’ and ‘non-predicativity’ as well as the variation in the degree of virtuality compound the systematicity of *wh* as a relative.

Based on these basic features and on the potential significate of *wh*-pronouns, we can now precede to a more detailed study of the relative sentence markers. At this stage, we are in the construction of the object of the piece of discourse. Consequently, our approach will focus on authentic situations, in which language activity is practiced and, in particular, to the inter-locutionary relationship between the sender and the receiver. In addition, far from attributing to the horizontal chain a subordinate role, we will rely constantly on the clues it provides to the analyst, in search of the underlying structures which determine the statements’ configuration.

### 4.3. Discursive Analysis of *WH/EVER*

#### 4.3.1. *WH* and *EVER* Combination

While representing the predicative relative pronoun *wh/ever*, we put forward the hypothesis that *ever* maximizes the virtual aspect of *wh*-. It is essential to uncover this close relation between *wh*- and *-ever*.

The fact that the item *ever* harbours this virtuality is the result of its significate at the level of the Tongue phase. *Ever* is a quantifying adverb that has as scope in the field of the potential unlike the adverb *always* which sets itself in the field of the effective, as in figure 10:

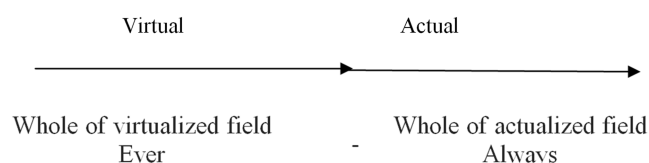


Figure 10. Potential significate of ‘*ever*’ and ‘*always*’.

It should be noted that *ever* involves two ideas: one related to totality (the case is true for “always”) and one related to virtuality, both of which are embedded to produce its significate. Thus, in the following statements,

- (3) Have you always spent your holidays there?  
 (4) Have you ever spent your holidays there?

In (3), the speaker presupposes that the predicative relation <you-spend-holidays-there> is actualized and acquired, while in (4), it is virtual and potential as the speaker is unable to confirm that the listener has in fact spent his holidays in the mentioned place.

Due to this significate in tongue, *ever* is used with

negative, interrogative, and hypothetical predications; the negation along with interrogation and hypothesis are part of the domain of the virtual. However, this item may appear in affirmative sentences associated with the actual field, when it is used with prepositions setting a perspective to this virtuality, such as *ever since*, *even after*, *ever before*. This combination provides a meaning corresponding to the entire scope of virtualized time “from” or “to some certain limit”.

First of all, the complex items built with *ever* are, without exception, indexed to *wh*-; *ever* is incompatible with *that*:

Table 1. Incompatibility between *ever* and *that*.

Whoever	
Whatever	*thatever
Whichever	

*That* is foremost anaphoric denoting actualization and predetermination, which is not the case of *ever* which refutes any sort of actualization. Second, *ever* doesn’t tie up with the predicative parts of speech, even if they enclose a sort of indetermination in their meaning, such as “place”, “body”, and “thing”:

Table 2. *Ever* and the predicative forms.

Placever	
Thingever	
Bodyever	

At this level, there is another marker, namely the quantifier ‘any’, which quantifies the field of ‘the potential’. This guarantees the virtualization of the above lexemes. Accordingly, we may suggest the following table:

Table 3. ‘any’ and the field of potential.

Anybody	Whoever
Anyone	
Anything	whatever
Anyplace	wherever

This paradigm can show some subtle difference in virtualization as displayed by “any” and “ever”. The hypothetical value of “any” is transmitted to the segments “body”, “place”, and “thing” whereas *ever* pushes the virtuality of *wh*- to its maximum.

Last, it is clear that the inherent virtual or hypothetical value of *ever* and *wh*- enables these two items to be assembled, so it will be possible at this stage to analyse the impact of this combination on the linear channel, i.e within real statements. Before starting the analysis, it is important to point out that even if *whoever* and *whatever* differ due to the

trait of [(+,-) animate], they both represent the same operation. If in some cases we put much emphasis on one marker at the expense of the other, this will not alter the results of this study.

#### 4.3.2. *Wh/Every and the Use of Modals*

(5) "Where do you go from Clea, or, more comprehensively from Justin series?"

"I haven't any clear idea of what I'm going to do, but whatever I do will depend up on trying to crack forms. You see, I have a feeling about forms that they are up in the air in the Shelleyan way. If the damn things would come down like soap bubbles and settle on my head I'd be very grateful if the form comes off, everything comes off,"

(G. Plimpton, 1977, p. 81)

(6) He told me this morning that his head ached fit to burst, and he hardly seemed to know where he was. And no wonder, considering how he mixed his drink last night. We must not let him go back to his lodgillg. Whatever you advanced I'll pay back to you again."

(T. Hardy, 1896, p. 457)

(7) "The sums that I've set aside, year by year, for this orphanage, make the amount- I've reckoned it out very carefully-the amount that made lieutenant a good in his day."

"I don't see- "That was my purchase price. I don't want that money go to Osvald. Whatever my son inherits shall come from me and no one else."

(H. Ibsen, 1881, Tr. P. Watts, pp. 52-53)

(8) "Ralph picked up his stick and prepared for battle. "But what could they do?"

It would take them a week to break a path through the Thicket and anyone who wormed his way in would be helpless. He felt the point of his spear with his thumb and grinned without amusement. Whoever tried that would be stuck squealing like a pig."

(W. Golding, 1954, p. 212)

(9) -Dr Larch announced in the boys' division. "Smoky Fields has found a family. Good night, Smoky."

"Good night, THmoky" said David Copperfield. "G'night!" young Steerford cried. "Goodnight, you little food hoarder", nurse Angela thought. "Whoever took him, she knew, would soon learn to lock the refrigerator."

(J. Irving, 1985, p. 341)

The above statements illustrate a very strong systematicity concerning the verbal structure of the main clause and the one introduced by whoever or whatever, which can be

summarized in the following pattern:

- (1) Whatever + V (ind) + will (V)
- (2) Whatever+ V (ind) + will (V)
- (3) Whatever+ V (ind) + shall (V)
- (4) Whoever + V (ind) +would (V)
- (5) Whoever + V (ind) + would (V)

An important point to be brought out here is the analogy of structure between *if* and *wh-ever*. We can, actually, restate the same above examples with the item "if":

(1') If I do anything, it will depend up on trying to crack forms

(2') If you advanced anything I'll pay it back..

(3') If my son inherits anything it shall come from me.

(4') If anyone tried that he would be stuck...

(5') If anyone took him (..) he would soon learn

This close parallelism between *wh/ever* and *if* doesn't involve any element of chance: both of these two items are not linked to the "actual" domain, each of them makes the assumption present in the sentences. While with *wh/ever* it is the class of animate or inanimate beings which are virtualized, with *if* it is the predication.

On one hand, the occurrence of the 'present' along with *wh/ever* might be interpreted as incompatible: as the 'present mode' is in fine tune with what is actual and real whereas *wh/ever* is linked to what is virtual. To explain this apparent contradiction, we assume that *wh/ever* involves overloading virtualization, which makes the usage of a mode with hypothetical and non-assertive value, the subjunctive, completely redundant. In other words, the presence of *wh/ever* makes the present and the past forms take hypothetical value and the event mentioned becomes supposed.

On the other hand the verbal structure of the main clause is limited to the auxiliaries of modality. The significant point here is the harmonious relationship between the modals and the markers of maximized virtuality. Compared to *wh/ever*, modals are in accordance with expressions of the potential and the virtual; in fact, they express the existence in a hypothetical way. On this aspect, G. Guillaume (1975) puts forward that there exists, in the mind, a notional chronology representing the development from possibility, probability, and certainty. The modals, which are essentially potential, are only concerned with the fields of possibility and probability. The field of certainty requires other fundamental auxiliaries which are have, be and do. Schematically:

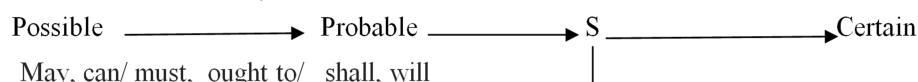


Figure 11. Micro-system of modals and auxiliaries.

The above micro-system shows that the limit of possibility, expressed by may, and the limit of probability, identified by will, reveal the progression from a maximum of hypothesis to a maximum of probability to what is nearly certain. As a result, the modals discuss the chances of validation or non-validation of the event denoted by the lexical verb.

All in all, the co-occurrence of modals and *wh/ever* is the

mark of an operational rapport. This rapport relates to the domain of the potential including the modal and the virtual pronoun: while *whoever* and *whatever* represent, hypothetically, the animate or inanimate being, while the modal hypothesizes the actualization of the event. It is worth emphasizing that the above examples account for the development from less hypothetical (-) to more (+)

hypothetical. We will examine the significance of these remarks through a detailed analysis of the five extracts.

In (5), above the sentence “I haven’t any clear idea of what I’m going to do” signals that the speaker has no knowledge concerning the situation, which explains the usage of *whatever* and *will*: he is unable neither to actualize, nor to specify the object, nor to assert one value and exclude another one. *Whatever* traces a scanning on the class of virtual inanimate elements which, “I”, the speaker is likely to do. This virtuality goes hand in hand with *will*; to be noted that *will depend* is incidental to “*whatever I do*” (Incidental is the adjective form of the word “incidence”. “Incidence” means the process involved in bringing the meaning of one word into relation with that of another). The modal expresses the projection into the future, as well as the likelihood of the predicate’s validation: the field of the non-actual seems to be the outcome of these two values. We can argue that both the markers *whatever* and *will* assume a function of non-assertion, the first with respect to the object and the second with respect to the elements of the predicate.

It is with interest to point out the occurrence of *what* and *whatever*. This superficial order finds its explanation in the representation of these two morphemes in the Tongue, namely the virtual surplus of *whatever* with regard to *what*. The clause “*I haven’t any clear idea of what*” is related to the interviewer’s question; but *whatever*, on one hand, refutes this reference and, on the other hand, denies any potential actualization of *what*. The use of “but” highlights the emergence of *whatever* in P1 because this coordinator suggests that P1 doesn’t match P2: it does reflect « a semantic gap (or shift) » between the two.

The same analysis may be applied to example (6). However, we note that the verb “*advanced*”, which is incidental to *whatever*, is in the past tense. In the context, the past form doesn’t symbolize a real and effective event but rather a hypothetical one, which is in accordance with the marker of maximisation. *Whatever* is any element that is likely to instantiate the place of the object in the relation <you-advance-(X)>.

In example (7), this outreaching calls for an item of maximisation. “*Whatever S*” signals that “.....that money s” is a segment already integrated. The dot punctuation, which identifies the end of an enunciative phrase and the beginning of another one, actually facilitates the implemented operation. With *whatever*, the speaker takes into consideration not only the money to be inherited by Oswald from his father but also the possible totality of heritage.

It seems that this surpassing tested by the use of *whatever*, implies, in a certain way, the enunciator’s insistence and commitment. This is emphasized by the modal “shall” which expresses in the context a very strong will on the part of the speaker, Mrs. Alving. She uses it to point out that she guarantees and assumes the fulfilment of the event < come from me and no one else>.

In the statements (8) and (9), we are in the presence of a

lower probability, translated by the past and the modal “would”. Thus, the utterer, who considers that the realization of the event is not likely to happen, directs his statement towards this value.

First, we note in (8) the mark of the transition from the domain of the Actual to the domain of maximized virtualization endorsed by the configuration: “they Anyone whoever”. The pronoun “they”, which has its basis in the actual, refers to the children who are on the island whereas “anyone” expresses the virtual movement proceeding through the class of children already evoked by “they”. This value comes from the nesting of “one” and “any.”

While the item “one” denotes an element that serves as a representative of a previously settled class, “any” seizes the whole of this class virtually to highlight the value of undifferentiating (as for the choice of an element). [Any] in ‘anyone’ has its effect on [one= representative of the total class previously actualized]. The function of “anyone” then seems to take the following shape:



Figure 12. The value of ‘any’ combined with ‘one’

*Whoever*, on the other hand, loses control of any prior segment or class located earlier. Indeed, *who* marks the starting point: it considers the virtual animate being as waiting for actualization. But *ever*, maximizing this virtuality, directs the first to the right; it stands against any reference and resists any lexical realization in the statement. This state in the language should be systematized as follows:

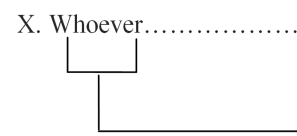


Figure 13. No actualization with ‘ever’

The presence of the dot (.) supports our argument. Indeed, as stated before, this punctuation requires, in most cases, a new beginning. The choice of *whoever*, in (8) and (9), indicates that the stage of virtualization takes precedence over that of actualisation. The validation of <be stuck squealing like a pig> and <learn to lock the refrigerator> could apply to any virtual person, likely to be affected by the spear, in (8), or to have adopted Smoky Fields in (9).

Due to this operation of maximisation, Ralph, the utterer, wants to demonstrate that he has the control and power and hence all the chances to win. However, the occurrence of the past and the modal ‘would’, in “*whoever tried.....would be stuck*”, instead of the use of the present and ‘will’ betrays, to a certain extent, the intent of the enunciator because it leads to the realization of the event to the field of a plus (+) in the hypothetical.

It turns out that Ralph is not as convinced as he seems to be of his victory over this class of virtual beings. The extracts from (5) to (9) thus reveal a close compatibility in function between *wh/ever* and the *auxiliaries of modality*.

#### 4.3.3. WH-EVER/ Past and Non-Past Forms

The same compatibility is also ensured with the simple past and non-past forms, as evidenced by the statements below:

(10) "In an old house there is always listening, and more is heard than is spoken. And what is a spoken remains in the room waiting for the future to hear it. And whatever happens began in the past and presses hard on the future."

(T. S. Eliot, 1939, p. 141)

(11) "He seems very fond of her, "I said" very attentive to her wishes and all that. Nurse Craven laughed rather disagreeably. "She sees to that all right!"

-"You think she trades on her ill health?" I asked doubtfully.

Nurse Craven laughed. "There isn't much you could teach her about getting her own way. Whatever her lady wants happens. Some women are like that - clever as a barrelful of monkeys."

(A. Christie, 1975, p. 52)

(12) "It was an orphanage law: an orphan's life began when Wilbur Larch remembered; and if an orphan was adopted before it became memorable (which was the hope), then its life began with whoever had adopted it. That was Larch's law."

(J. Irving, 1985, p. 95)

(13) «Whatever happens, happens always for the best.»

(R. Kimpling, 1894, p. 100)

From the above quotes, we notice the presence of the forms "present" and "simple past" which take up the predicate of the main clause. The affinity of these forms with *whoever* and *whatever* is explained in the following way.

The present simple in English refers to the "narrow" and to the "large" (broad), to the contrast actual/virtual. The narrow present is reduced to the time of speaking, thus to "now" which is purely associated to "here" of the speaker. In contrast, the broad (large) present refers to the infinity of time, the "always" and the "general" which presupposes the virtual. A. Joly and D. O'Kelly (1990: 146) talk about a static notion of the present in the first case compared to a dynamic notion in the second case. This can be depicted in the following figure:

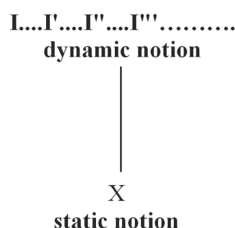


Figure 14. Dynamic and static notion of the present tense.

Because of the virtual aspect of the relative pronoun

*Wh/ever*, it is the dynamic notion which is searched in the verb of the main clause in the above examples.

It seems that the past in (10) and (12) acquires the same value as the present; the past does not designate the real but the hypothetical. It should be noted that it is the context that gives a rise to the past instead of the present. In (10), it is the phrase "in the past" that requires the simple past. Since, in (12), we have a story that unfolds in the past, the occurrence of the past in "began" is normal.

The initial statement represents a commentary resulting from a chain of events in the Monchensey family. Indeed, Harry, the hero, suffers from a mental disorder caused by what happened between his parents when he was a child. The enunciator assigns to this singular experience a generic value without any circumstantial limitation. In other words, we leave the field of the actual and the singular to take position in the field of the virtual and the universal. In this case, *whatever* is the logical subject of "happens", but the marker *what*, a virtual form, influences the nature of the subject. Since *-ever* maximizes this virtuality, the utterer is to specify that no matter what the element it refers to is, it is able to represent the grammatical subject provided that it has the feature [(-) animate].

By renouncing to submit a single fully determined subject, the speaking subject guarantees that the register of reference is not at all his purpose. Indeed, the latter gives his statement the value of a general truth; he doesn't need to actualize it. (10) Suggests the following phrase "what is true for X is also true for another X". The simple aspect of the main clause gives validity to our phrase because, as stated before, the present and the past denote the virtual value which symbolizes the "always" and the "large".

It will be understood that the use of the present and the past, with regard to the modal forms, increases the chances of actualizing the predication; the speaker considers his predication is valid for the entire class of the inanimates, taking into consideration that the "whole" here is potentially evoked. The outcome is that no inanimate being is left out. On the linear level, the construction of the statement requires some thinking on the part of the receiver to access the actual interpretation.

The successive character of [what S...and whatever S] implies, again, the increase in virtuality; whereas *what* is in relation with what precedes, namely with "is spoken" in the first proposition. *Whatever* goes beyond this defining stage and neutralizes any conformity to the actualized, as indeterminate as it is. The occurrence of the conjunction allows the passage from the minimized virtuality to the maximized virtuality; that is to say that "and", which represents an additive movement, introduces and poses a new element which, certainly, goes in the direction of the first, but also transcends it. It is appropriate to consider the use of the verb "happen" with *whatever*. The semantics of this verb harmonizes particularly well with *wh/ever*. In fact, its meaning includes the idea of a certain contingency, which presupposes the effect of hypothesis, thus the desertion of the actual; the co-occurrence "whatever / happen" appears

therefore fully justified.

The same analysis can be applied to the statement in (11). "Whatever S" represents the final product of what has just been stated in the text. We move from what is relative to what is absolute, and it is *whatever* that manifests this transit. This marker represents the class of elements that can instantiate the place of the object in the relation <her ladyship wants (X)>, which the subject is of <happens>. Assuming that for each occurrence of this covered class there is a chance for its realization. The enunciator maximizes the chances of achieving all what Mrs. Franklin desires. In addition, *whatever*, representing the entire referential potential field emphasizes that we are beyond the detail, the specific and the actualization of each element of this class. Therefore, it is obvious that this marker covers the possible elements only as already integrated in the potential.

On the one hand, the use of "ladyship" instead of "she" to refer to Mrs. Franklin is very suggestive; it corroborates this operation of the realization of 'the virtualized entire class'. Indeed, "ladyship" is a name that presupposes a social status, the authority and the power to materialize and to carry out all the wishes of Mrs. Franklin. We also note that the enunciator uses the verb "want" instead of "wish", because the latter implies that Mrs. Franklin, the agent, gives a chance to her husband to accept or not to fulfill her desires, while "want" reduces this chance: the will thus becomes an obligation.

On the other hand, the non-past form of the verb "happen" reveals the phenomenon of moving from the narrow (now) to the large (always), thus to omni-temporality. On this basis, the enunciator presents her utterance as a non-arguable fact. It is obvious that everything in the text develops this value of maximization and exaggeration.

The example in (12) introduces a law, a state of permanence. It follows that the speaker will depart and go beyond any mark of specification in his utterance. In this case the article "an", which conveys the general, validates this operation of non - particularization. *Whoever*, on the other hand, is an anti-singularizer that represents any being likely to adopt an orphan. This matches the form of the past in the relations <its life began>. Finally, like (10 to 11), the statements (12) and (13) endorse the existing harmonization between the marker *wh/ever* and the non-past form.

The statements we have analyzed so far are confined to the domain of the hypothetical. This value finds its trace in the predicative relatives of maximum virtuality *wh/ever*, in the modal auxiliaries, which are essentially in the potential, and finally in the form of the present, which expresses not the present of "now" but that of the "always"; all in compatibility with the maximized modalization translated by *wh/ever*.

Note, nevertheless, that the marker "wh/ever" may also be present in contexts that fall within the thetic field. This field subsumes 'the effective' and the real, thus a complete break with the potential and the virtual. We discern here a contradiction between this type of context and *wh/ever*, instantiating here a hypothetical value. We will show that this incongruity is only superficial; it is not representative of the underlying operation that leads to the emergence of *wh/ever*.

#### 4.3.4. *Wh/Ever and the Effective*

(14) -We shall have to wash him out." "Regrettable, isn't it?" said the Inspector Hegrinned. "And any way, he killed Gulbrandsen. It seems there's no doubt the one thing hinges on the other. Whoever is poisoning Mrs Serrocold killed Gulbrandsen to prevent him spilling the beans.

(A. Christie, 1952, pp. 117-118)

(15) -Miss Marple said slowly: "Christian was murdered."

"Yes... I see what you mean. You think that does matter? "

"Don't you ? "

"Not to Christian," said Carrie Louise simple.

"It matters, of course, to whomever murdered him."

"Have you any idea who murdered him?"

Mrs Serrocold shook her head in bewildered fashion."

(Ibid, P. 153)

(16) -"I didn't throw it, I tell you !" asserted one girl to her neighbour, as if unconscious of the young man's presence.

"Nor I," the second answered.

"O, Anny, how can you!" said the third.

(.....)

"You didn't do it -o no!"

(.....)

"that you" "I never be told, "said she deedly

Whoever did it was wasteful of other People's property."

(T. Hardy, 1896, pp. 80-81)

In (14), the proposition "there is no doubt" reveals that the speaker is in the domain of the 'certain'. He is able to assert the validation of the two relations <X - poison- Mrs Serrocold> and <X- kill- Gulbrandsen>. The "ing" form of the predicate <poison Mrs...> and the past of the predicate <Kill Mr....> make it clear the certainty of the utterer. In fact, the progressive form implies the development of a real process in which the enunciator is a spectator: he cannot assign an anchor to it, neither to the right nor to the left. In other words, this form holds an "imperfective" aspect which fixes it in the past in the form of two views; a retrospective one of the accomplished, of the already realized portion of duration, and the perspective one of the unaccomplished that of "not yet" (A, Joly & D, O'Kelly. 1990: 265).

The process of "is poisoning" can be represented as follows:

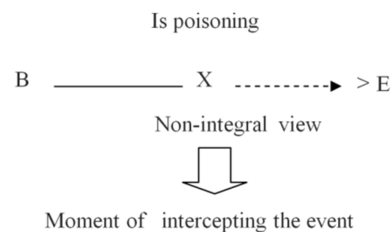


Figure 15. Imperfective vision of the event.

The past, which is recovered past time, assumes a factual reality. In contrast to "be + ing", it evokes the event under a perfective vision. The "killed" event is seen taking place in its totality, from beginning to end. In the following diagram, the vector depicts the unfolding of the event from beginning B to end E:

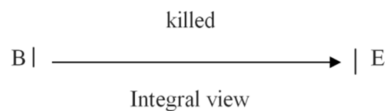


Figure 16. Perfective vision of the event

This brief comment on the form of “be+ing” and the “past” has allowed us to note that the speaker is in the field of the assertion and the actual, that is to say, that the events are set as real. As a result, both processes require a grammatical subject, an agent, as indeterminate in reference as it is. The use of *whoever* indicates that one has gone beyond the phase of choosing the subject, in other words that the presence of the subject is now achieved even if his/her identity escapes the enunciator’s perception and makes it in the maximum of virtuality. We propose the following gloss: “*whatever the identity among all those that are possible....*”.

The last two statements are subject to the same analysis of (14). The speaker makes the assertive value prevalent, leading to the emergence of the past and the non-past, which are mainly actualizing forms.

The predicates “murdered him” and “did it”, expressing actual events, systematically call on an agent who is charge of carrying out the related processes. However, the fact that the identity of this agent is supposed to be unknown to the speaker leads to the occurrence of *who*, representing a virtual animate being, and *ever* maximizing this virtuality. *Whoever* indicates in this context that the existence of this agent is exceeded.

Finally, the following phrases illustrate the indeterminate effect involved in the semantic value of *whoever*:

(15) “*it’s important for the one, whatever his identity among all those who are possible,....*”

(16) “*whatever the identity among all those that are possible*”

#### 4.3.5. *Whichever and Some Degree of Determination*

Because of its distance from the maximized virtuality, *whichever* differs from *whoever* and *whatever*. This marker can invalidate the distinction *whatever/whoever*, it actually solves and dissolves this semantic discrimination by designating both an animate and inanimate being.

Through a sampling of examples, our focus will be on the effect of some determination induced by *whichever*:

(17)- “I’m not sure whether Sir Basil saw it, but he hesitated, and again the hand that held the axe came edging for ward, and it was almost exactly like that card trick where the man says “take one. Whichever one you want”, and you always get the one he means you to have.”

(R. Dahl, 1979, pp. 118-119)

(18)- “This would soon induce a mood of melancholy, and the love-songs would become more doleful, while between each Larry would pause to inform whichever member of the family happened to be present that spring, for him, did not mean the beginning of a,, one new year, but the death of the old one.”

(G. Durrell, 1956, p. 83)

(19)- “Harry Truman had never written back, either, and

Larch couldn’t remember if he’d written to Mrs. Truman, too, or to Truman’s daughter – whichever one it was hadn’t answered, either.”

(J. Irving, 1985, p. 510)

(20) - “The Inca is to come and look at me, and pick out whichever of his sons, he thinks willsuit.”

(B. Shaw, E. D. D, p. 205)

(21) - “Whichever of **you** come in first will receive a prize”.

(O. E. D)

In these above structures the instantiation of *whichever* is very suggestive:

Table 4. Virtualized specific class.

Whichever	(17) one + (of the cards)
	(18) members + of the family
	(19) one + (of them)
	(20) ____ + of his sons
	(21) ____ + of you

These patterns assign to *whichever* a status of a “determining relative pronoun”: it is incidental to the noun or a pronoun that comes after it. The instances “(of the cards)”, members “of the family”, “(of them)”, “of his sons”, and “of you” constitute, by definition, an inventory of [±animate] beings. It should be noted that the combinations “of them” in (17) and “of them” in (19) are not made clear in the text. The marker concentrates virtualization on those units representing a specific class. It underscores that the speaker no longer evokes the “virtualized infinite whole” but the “virtualized finite whole”. Thus, the enunciator scans the defined class, specified by the segments, without picking out any [(±) animate] being in particular.

Like *whoever* and *whatever*, the *whichever* operator can be combined with the modals such as “will” in (21), “would” in (18) and “is to” in (20). The modal “will” expresses the probability of the predicate “receive a prize”; it announces its realization. We find the same meaning effect in (20) in which the modal value is induced by “is to”. In fact, with the use of “is to”, the relation <the Inca is to pick....> is presented to be possibly validated. This non-actualization joins the notion of virtualization inherent in *whichever*.

With the deontic modality in (13), the realization of the event remains subject either to the will or to the capacity of the hearer; thus the predication does not cross the limit of the hypothetical: this value determines the co-occurrence of the deontic modality/*whichever*. In “take ..... whichever one you want”, the enunciator invites the co-enunciator to select any card from all those submitted to him (without getting out of this specific class).

Our analysis emphasizes the aspect that the maximized virtuality, represented by –ever, is reduced when this morpheme and which are bound. This virtuality is limited to the fact that no element is extracted from a class already circumscribed by the enunciator.

This is further confirmed by the following example:

(22) - “I’ve chosen “Captain” rather than “Chamberlain”

for the title; "Captain" seemed less pretentious."

- "Oh yes, whatever you think best."

(H. Ibsen, 1881, Tr. P. Watts, p. 34)

In the first line of the dialogue, the speaker fixed his choice on a title for Mrs. Alving's husband, the class is restricted to two titles: "captain" or "chamberlain". Because of this determination, the use of whichever in place of whatever is possible:

(22) –"Whichever (one) you think best."

By using *whatever*, the speaker exceeds the preset class by the hearer, he plans to reopen this class to bring it to a maximized virtuality. Whatever signals that Mrs. Alving is quite indifferent as to the choice of title for her husband because she hates him. The statement suggests the following phrase: "you can choose any title, either captain or chamberlain or anything else, I don't care. To include *whichever* in this context is grammatically correct but the effect of indifference, which is the intent of the enunciator, is less, compared to the one symbolized by *whatever*. The phrase would be then; "You can choose the title which seems the best to you, either captain or chamberlain"

## 5. Conclusion

The analysis of modern English and Middle English Wh-relative pronouns has shown the significance of predicativity, the potential significate of the relative pronoun in tongue, and virtuality, as characterised by movement from maximal to minimal virtuality. Indeed, we have examined the discursive manifestation of the marker of maximized modalization: *wh/ever*. The emergence of *whoever*, *whatever*, or *whichever* holds essentially to their potential significate; the first two are at the front of the continuum of the movement of virtuality.

We have noted that the *wh-ever/modal and wh-ever / present* co-occurrences are more common. This frequency comes from a compatibility between these forms. Indeed, *wh/ever*, representing an [(±) animate] being whose virtualization is maximized, and the modals, relating to the potential field, and the present, evoking the always, situate the utterance in the domain of the hypothetical.

All in all, at the theoretical level, the claimed significance of the two construals of Predicativity and Virtuality does suggest that at the tongue level linguistic forms are determined in their significate potential and that their capacity for integration progresses from maximal to minimal virtuality as the result of particular discourse strategies of interpretation that are available to both the speaker and the hearer.

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