

## GHILM 3rd Conference on Maltese Linguistics

Abstract

*Title of Paper*

Language Profiling – The Weaving of Maltese and English in Maltese Children’s Conversations

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### Abstract

#### Language Profiling – The Weaving of Maltese and English in Maltese Children's Conversations

The paper outlines how Maltese children interweave two languages in their everyday informal conversation. This interweaving can be seen as a continuum with the possibility of grouping children on the basis of the kind of interweaving present in their spontaneous conversation. Along the continuum there are a number of distinct groups. The conversation of the first group is characterized by only a minimal presence of English. This could be considered to form an intrinsic part of informal Maltese itself for children whose main home language is Maltese. The second group is characterized by conversation with substantial mixing. This is used by children whose home languages are both Maltese and English. The conversation of the third distinct group is characterized by only a minimal presence of Maltese. These children have English as their main home language. Sub-groupings can be defined on the basis of what kind of interweaving occurs.

A discussion of child-directed language is included with a view to informing the discussion on the children's developing language. The profile-type that emerges is based on the qualitative analysis of recorded conversations in the home. The implications of this profile-typing are discussed. These present considerations for clinical work with children with speech and language impairments as well as for language enrichment programmes that are suitable for the early years in school. There is also the need to consider these within the testing scene where results often benefit students in the support assigned to them at school as well as in the arrangements made when sitting for public examinations.