

## Restrictive Relative Constructions in Maltese

This paper presents a description of Maltese relative constructions (RRCs), which are embedded and integrated clauses that restrict their head's/antecedent's denotation, and form one intonational unit with it. The presentation of the description will entail an exhaustive account of the possible relativisation strategies employed in Maltese RRCs, as well as the resultant different constructions, and eventually provide an analysis of Maltese RRCs set within Lexical Functional Grammar. The data presented in this paper is partially new, as only a brief description of *li*-introduced RRCs, such as the ones in (1), has been given in Borg & Azzopardi-Alexander (1997). More constructions will be added here, and some interesting variation found between the standard and the Northern dialectal varieties will also be discussed and accounted for.

- 1a. It-tifel            li                    rajt  
DEF-boy            that                    saw.1SG  
'The boy that I saw'
- b. Mara                li            ġiet                    tarani  
woman that        came.3SGF        3SGF.see.ACC.1SG  
'A woman that came to see me'

The paper also discusses the function of the element *li* in relation to its use in other syntactic constructions, and its diachronic development from the pronominal *allađi* and the rest of the paradigm in Modern Standard Arabic. Apart from *li*, Maltese uses a related form, which however has not been attested to occur in Arabic dialects, and is what may be called the partitive-completiser *milli*, 'from.that' as in (2), constructed from the fusion of the preposition *minn* 'from' and the form *li*.

2. Fadallek                                    [pasti    milli                    sajjartlek]?  
left.3SGM.DAT.2SG    buns    from.that                    baked.1SG.DAT.2SG  
'Do you still have from the buns which I cooked for you?'

Reflections on the nature of *milli* follows, and reasons speculating that such a construction may have necessarily developed out of a headless one, in order for the preposition *minn* and *li* to have been fused are also given. Moreover, there is some variation in the construction in (2), between its use in the Standard and the dialect.

A distinct type of relativisation strategy is that which employs the use of *wh*-pronouns. As is the case crosslinguistically (Falk, 2010), Standard Maltese uses the *wh*-pronoun strategy in preposition-fronted contexts only, as in (3):

3. It-tifel                ma'    min    iltqajt ...  
DEF-boy                with    who    met.1SG  
'The man with whom I met'

The inventory of *wh*-pronouns which can be used in preposition-fronted constructions is limited to *min* 'who', for [+Human] antecedents, *xiex* 'what', used with [-Human] antecedents, and *fejn* 'where'. Two further relativisation strategies may be thought of as being superimposed on both the *wh*- and

complementiser-strategies in Maltese, and these are the use of the GAP and resumptive pronoun (RP) strategies. The presentation will discuss the correlation between the *wh*- and complementiser-strategies vis-à-vis the GAP-RP strategies, as well as the relation between either of the strategies and the in-clause grammatical functions which can be relativised.

References:

Borg, A. J., & Azzopardi-Alexander, M. (1997). *Maltese*. NY: Routledge.

Falk, Y. N. (2010). An Unmediated Analysis of Relative Clauses. In M. Butt and T. H. King (Eds.), *Proceedings of the LFG10 Conference*.