

The structure of the noun phrase in Maltese

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The structural possibilities of the Maltese noun phrase are presented in this paper according to the following schema: the absence of a full noun phrase in a syntactically complete sentence (section 1); the occurrence of different types of nominal forms on their own in the noun phrase (sections 2.0 to 2.6); elements preceding the noun (sections 3.0 to 3.14) and elements following the noun within the noun phrase (sections 4.0 to 4.16). Sections 5 and 6 look briefly at noun phrases as direct and indirect objects respectively.

1. *The non-occurrence of a full noun phrase*

Before attempting an account of the structure of the noun phrase in Maltese it is worth remarking that the verbal expression is inflected for first, second and third person, for singular and plural, and in the third person singular, for masculine and feminine. Information involving these categories in relation to the grammatical subject of the sentence is fully recoverable from the form of the verb and it is quite common to have utterances without a full nominal subject. Thus:

- | | |
|-----|--|
| (1) | Telaq.
'He left' |
| (2) | Telaq?
'Did he leave?' |
| (3) | Ma telaqx.
neg. neg.suffix
'He didn't leave' |
| (4) | Te-laq? |

With the appropriate intonation contour this could be glossed as 'You mean to tell me he left?.'

Furthermore, Maltese has pronominal suffixes for each of the categories indicated in relation to the inflection of the verb, and these, when joined to the verb, are interpreted as object pronouns, so that from the form of the verb, one can retrieve not only the characteristics of the subject, but also those of the object, as in:

- (5) Kiteb
'He wrote'
- (6) Kitibha.
he-wrote-her
'He wrote it'.

In addition, an element *l* immediately preceding these suffixes, changes their interpretation into that of indirect object, as in:

- (7) Kitibhielu.
he-wrote-her-to-him
'He wrote it for him'.

Each of the different indirect object suffixes (for each of the categories indicated in relation to the inflection of the verb) can occur immediately following the verb, or following the direct object suffix, only however when this is a third person suffix (whether masculine singular or feminine singular or plural). Having thus disposed of the non-occurrence of a full noun phrase, we can now go on to consider what elements occur in the noun phrase when it is present in the structure of the sentence. We will consider nominal forms occurring in the noun phrase on their own, and when preceded or followed by other elements. In what follows, however, no mention will be made of possessive expressions (cf. Fabri this volume).

2. Nominal forms on their own in the noun phrase

There are different types of nouns in Maltese, and not all of them can occur on their own within the structure of the noun phrase.

2.1. Proper personal nouns

Proper personal nouns obligatorily occur alone. Such a noun can only take the definite article in very restricted contexts, for example:

- (8) Il-Ganni li naf jien, mhux hekk jirraguna
the-John rel I-know I neg. so he-reasons
'The John I know doesn't reason in this way'.

2.2. Proper place names

Proper place names on the other hand can, in this sense, be classified into three groups: those which obligatorily occur alone, those

which take a definite article and those in which the definite article is optional either within the same idiolect or across several. Thus *Malta* 'Malta', *Għawdex* 'Gozo', *Sqallija* 'Sicily', *Londra*, *Ruma*, *Parigi* etc. occur without the article. *L-Ingilterra* 'England', *l-Iskozja* 'Scotland', *l-Italja* 'Italy', *il-Germanja* 'Germany', *il-Kajr* 'Cairo' occur only with the article. Finally there are names in which the definite article may appear depending on the speaker (or even in different contexts within the same idiolects): *Olanda* 'Holland', *Spanja* 'Spain', *Izrael* 'Israel' etc.

2.3. Common nouns denoting individuals

Common nouns denoting individuals can occur without the definite article. There is a sub-class of such nouns which has a suffix *-a* and a plural *-iet* (cf. Mifsud, this volume). Whereas this plural form cannot normally occur on its own the singular noun can, but in intransitive sentences such as (9) and (10), the un-marked version involves the noun following the verb:

- (9) Dahal tifel.
he-entered boy
'A boy came in'.
- (10) Waqghet gebla.
she-fell stone
'A stone fell'.

The order Noun + Verb here involves contrastive marking of the noun.

2.4. Nouns denoting uncountable masses

Nouns denoting uncountable masses do not normally occur on their own but require some kind of pre- or post-modification. Thus to say 'wine' or 'water' we usually say:

- (11) L-inbid
the-wine
- (12) L-ilma
the-water.

2.5. The collective

Similarly, another nominal subclass, the collective, does not usually occur on its own but requires pre- or post-modification.

- (13) In-nemel, animal nadif
the-ants animal clean
'Ants are clean creatures'.

For a detailed study of this category, cf. Mifsud (this volume).

2.6. Nouns cognate with verbs

Another subclass of nouns, cognate with a corresponding verb, occurs in the position of the so called 'cognate object', usually without the definite article. Thus

- (14) Holom holma tal-genn.
he-dreamed dream of-the-madness
'He had a maddening dream'.

Naturally this does not mean that such nouns cannot be used without the corresponding verb and in other syntactic positions, for example:

- (15) Gużepi kellu holma profetika
Joseph he-had dream prophetic
'Joseph had a prophetic dream'.

3. Elements preceding the noun

3.1. The definite article

We come now to elements which may precede the noun. One such element is the definite article (there is no indefinite article), which undergoes phonetic assimilation before certain consonants. Comparing (15) and (16) to (8) and (9) respectively we would have

- (16) Dahal it-tifel
he-entered the-boy
'The boy came in'

- (17) Waqghet il-gebla
she-fell the-stone
'The stone fell'.

3.2. Demonstratives

There are two sets of demonstratives, one showing 'near' reference, relative to the speaker's location, the other 'distant'. These determiners inflect for singular and plural, and in the singular for masculine and feminine. As determiners they can only precede a noun (or an adjective

with nominal function) which is already definite, either via the definite article, for example:

- (18) Dak it-tifel dahal l-ewwel
that the-boy he-entered the-first
'That boy came in first'

or via a possessive suffix, for example:

- (19) Dawn uliedi jinkwetawni wisq
these children-mine they-give-me-trouble much
'These children of mine give me too much trouble'.

3.3. Demonstratives as pronouns

These demonstratives can also occur as pronouns, for instance as the subject of a nominal sentence:

- (20) Dik, mara bil-għaqal hafna
that sg.fem woman with-the-prudence much
'She is a very prudent woman'.

3.4. The singular feminine form as head of the noun phrase

The singular feminine form in particular can also appear as the head of a noun phrase with a relative clause, example:

- (21) Dik li joqghod ighajjat, ma nistax għaliha
that rel he-stays he-shouts neg I-can for-her
'I cannot stand this behaviour of his, always shouting'

3.5. Quantifiers for different degrees of quantity with plural indefinite nouns

In this section, we will give a brief account of various quantifying expressions which all precede the noun. There is a group of four expressions which signify different degrees of quantity. These are presented here in ascending order:

Ftit 'a little', *bosta* 'several', *ħafna* 'a lot' and *wisq* 'too many'.

- (22) Stedinna ftit hbieb
we-invited a-little friends
'We invited a few friends'

- (23) Bosta annimali huma tajbin għall-ikel
several animals they good(pl) for-the-food
'Several (kinds of) animals are good for eating'

(24) Inkiṭbu they-were-written bosta several kotba fuq dan is-sugġett
 'Several books have been written on this subject'

(25) Hafna nies jahsbuha hekk
 a lot people they-think-her so
 'Many people have this frame of mind'

(26) Jintefġhu wisq ogġetti fil-funtana
 they-are-thrown too-many objects in-the-fountain
 'Too many objects are thrown into the fountain.'

As can be seen from sentences (21) to (25) these expressions can be used with animate and inanimate plural nouns, which are however indefinite, that is, not preceded by the definite article. They can occur with plural countable nouns such as in sentences (21) to (25) but not with so called definite plural nouns (suffix *-iet*, the plural of the so-called noun of unity). Thus:

(27) *Rajt hafna hutiet fil-bahar
 I-saw much fishes in-the-sea.

Instead, these expressions occur with the so-called collective.

(28) Rajt hafna hut fil-bahar
 'I saw a lot of fish in the sea.'

(29) Din is-sigra ghandha wisq nemel
 this the-tree she-has too many ants
 'There are too many ants on this tree.'

3.6. Quantifiers with definite nouns

In conjunction with definite nouns, these expressions require the presence of the preposition *minn* preceding the definite article, or the noun with a suffixed pronoun, cf. (33) or in an otherwise possessive relationship (as possessed object), or even preceding a pronoun, cf. (32).

(30) Hafna mit-tfal iħobbu jmorru l-iskola
 much from-the-children they-love they-go the-school
 'Many of the children love to go to school'

(31) Ftit mit-tobba jispeċjalizzaw barra
 a-little from-the-doctors they-specialize outside
 'A few of the doctors specialize abroad'

(32) Hafna minnħom ma jġugħ
 much from-them neg. they-come
 'Many of them don't come.'

(33) Bosta minn uliedu baqġhu jirrispettawh
 several from children-his they-remained they-respect-him
 'Several of his children still respect him'.

3.7. Quantifiers used pronominally

These expressions can also occur pronominally:

(34) Bosta jilmentaw minnu
 several they-lament from-him
 'Several people complain about him'

(35) Hafna jippreferu jitgħażżnu
 much they-prefer they-laze
 'Many prefer lazing about.'

When used pronominally, *ftit* 'a little' can be post-modified by *ħafna* 'much' to emphasise the degree of 'littleness'. Thus:

(36) Ftit hafna jahdmu bil-qalb.
 a-little much they-work with-the-heart
 'It's only a very few who put their heart into their work.'

3.8. Distributive and non-distributive quantifiers

Maltese has a distributive universal quantifier (cf. Borg, this volume) which also occurs before a singular, undefined noun.

(37) Kull raħal għandu knisja
 each village he-has church
 'There is a church in every village.'

There is also a negative counterpart to this, as in:

(38) Ebda raħal m'għandu sptar
 neg. he-has hospital
 'There is no village which has a hospital.'

This is quite a different meaning from that conveyed by *kull* used with a negative

(39) Mħux kull raħal għandu knisja
 neg. each village he-has church
 'Not every village has a church'

which would be equivalent to a positive sentence in which the quantifier *xi* 'some' occurs, with however, a plural noun

- (40) Xi rhula għandhom knisja
Some villages they-have church
'There is a church in some villages'.

Sentence (41) introduces us to a singular noun following *xi*. In such a case its function is more of an indefinite determiner, for example:

- (41) Bilfors xi għadu għamilha din
by-the-force some enemy he-did-her this(sg.fem)
'It must have been some/an enemy who did this'.

To get the same meaning of indefiniteness with a plural noun, the expression *uhud* 'ones', plural of *wieked* 'one' is used with a following preposition:

- (42) Uhud mis-suldati qatghu qalbhom
ones from-the-soldiers they-cut heart-their
'Some of the soldiers lost heart'

which is very close to:

- (43) Xi suldati qatghu qalbhom
'Some soldiers lost heart'.

but the soldiers in (40) are part of the 'given' information, in the 'given-new' pragmatic parameter, while in (43) they form part of the 'new' information.

3.9. Two determining expressions

Another determiner is *ertu* which in my idiolect for example, occurs mostly as an invariable expression, but it can display the nominal adjectival inflection in other idiolects.

- (44) Kelli nitkellem fuq ċertu/i sugġetti/sugġetti
I-had I-speak on certain sg/pl subject/subjects
'I had to speak on a certain subject/subjects'.

Its function is to limit the reference of the noun, a function carried out also by the expression for 'one':

- (45) Wanda mara kienet għaddejja u habtu għaliha
one(sg.fem) woman she-was she-passing and they-struck for-her
'A certain woman was passing by and she was attacked'

3.10. Cardinal numeral expressions

Cardinal numeral expressions precede the noun (cf. Fabri 1994): in this position they have a form which is different from the one when they are used pronominally: thus

- (46) Ra hames fliexken fuq il-mejda
he-saw five bottles on the-table

but

- (47) Fuq il-mejda, kien hemm hamsa
he-was there five
'There were five on the table'

with numbers from two to ten the noun is in the plural. In the case of nouns which have a collective and a definite plural form, it is the latter only which can occur before the numeral from two to ten, while with an indefinite quantifier, as we saw in section 3.6, it is the collective which appears: thus

- (48) Kiel tliet hutiet/*hut
he-ate three fish(def.pl)/coll
'He ate three fish'.

For numerals above ten, the noun in the singular is used as in:

- (49) Hfa mieghu ghoxrin suldat
he-took with-him twenty soldier
'He took twenty soldiers with him'.

3.11. Fractions

In the case of fractions, *nofs* 'half' immediately precedes the noun while *terz* 'one third' and *kwart* 'one fourth' require the presence of the preposition *ta'* 'of' before the singular noun. Thus:

- (50) Kiel nofs hobza / kwart ta' hobza
he-ate half loaf / quarter of loaf
'He ate half a loaf / quarter of a loaf'.

With plural nouns, the same variation is observed, but the preposition is more likely to be *minn* 'from' rather than *ta'* 'of'

- (51) Gew nofs is-suldati / kwart mis-suldati
 they-came half the-soldiers / quarter from-the-soldiers
 'Half / a quarter of the soldiers came'

3.12. The superlative

The comparative construction involves an adjective with comparative morphology following the noun (as we shall see below, section 4.2) but the superlative is formed by having the definite article precede the comparative adjective which precedes the noun:

- (52) L-isbah fjura, il-gizimina
 the-nicest flower, the-jasmine
 'The jasmine is the most beautiful flower'.

For adjectives lacking a specifically comparative form there are at least two possibilities:

- (53) L-ghadu l-izjed kattiv
 the-enemy the-more cruel

In (53) the adjective follows the noun. It is preceded by the comparative degree adjective, *i'jed* 'more' but with a superlative meaning because of the definite article.

- (54) L-izjed ghadu kattiv
 the-most enemy cruel

In (54) the superlative for 'most' precedes the noun, but the adjective denoting the particular lexical content follows the noun.

Notice that both in (52) and in (54) there is only a definite article, preceding the adjective. The situation in this respect can be different when the adjective follows the noun (cf. below, section 4.1).

3.13. Adjectives preceding the noun in a marked construction

In general, adjectives follow the noun, as we shall see. However it is possible for some adjectives to precede the noun in a construction which is not so frequent, and therefore generally marked.

- (55) a. Ghaziz Ganni
 Dear John
 (the usual way to start a letter and therefore unmarked)

- b. il-kbir Alla
 the-big God
 'God almighty'
- c. l-gharef huk
 the-wise brother-your
 'your clever brother' (ironic).

3.14. Emphatic expressions

Finally there are some emphatic expressions which do precede the noun (although we will see others which follow; cf. below, section 4.15):

- (56) Imqar l-ghasafar isibu x'jieklu
 even the-birds they-find what-they-eat
 'Even the birds find something to eat'
- (57) Anki inti tista' tigi
 also you you-can you-come
 'You too can come'.
- (58) Sahansitra l-kelba tiehu hsieb iz-zghar taghha
 even the-bitch she-takes thought the-small of-her
 'Even a dog takes care of its young'.

In a marked construction *biss* 'only' can occur before the noun. Usually it occurs following it:

- (59) Biss in-niedem jara wiċċ Alla
 only the-repentant he-sees face God
 'Only the repentant will enjoy the Beatific Vision'.

4. Elements following the noun

We come now to elements which follow the noun. In general this is a more frequently used position.

4.1. Adjectives

The adjective normally follows the noun:

- (60) Kelb iswed iggriela ma' qattusa bajda
 dog black he-fought with cat white
 'A black dog fought with a white cat'.

When the noun is definite, the adjective too is preceded by the definite article

- (61) Il-keġb l-iswed iġġieled mal-qattusa l-bajda.
'The black dog fought with the white cat'.

However, speakers often omit the article before the adjective and there are even contexts (possibly in the case of originally non-Semitic adjectives), where the absence of the article before the adjective is obligatory:

- (62) L-istudju grammatikali mhux faċli
the-study grammatical neg. easy
'Grammatical studies are not easy'.

- (63) *L-istudju l-grammatikali mhux faċli.

It is more difficult to omit the article before the adjective in the case of a noun made definite by a suffixed pronoun.

- (64) Ibnu l-kbir mar jghinu
son-his the-big he-went he-helps-him
'His oldest son went to his help'.

4.2. Comparative adjectives

Adjectives with a comparative form also follow the noun

- (65) Illum rajt fjura isbah nicer
today I-saw flower
'I saw a more beautiful flower today'.

It is also possible to have the form of comparison, preceded by the preposition *minn* 'from' within the same noun phrase:

- (66) Rajt fjura isbah mill-ohra
from-the-other
'I saw a flower which was more beautiful than the other'.

Notice that a comparative adjective does not inflect for number or gender.

For adjectives lacking a comparative form, the degree adjective *i-jed* 'more' is used:

- (67) Naf tifel iżjed bravu minn shabu
I-know boy more clever from fellows-his
'I know a boy who is more clever than his fellows'.

The degree of an adjective in comparative construction can be intensified using the expression *hafna* 'much' once or even twice, as in (66) and (67) respectively:

- (68) Rajt fjura hafna isbah mill-ohra
much which was much nicer than the other'
'I saw a flower which was much nicer than the other'
- (69) Naf tifel hafna u hafna iżjed bravu minn shabu
much and much more clever
'I know a boy who is by far much more clever than his fellows'.

To achieve the opposite effect, i.e. to lessen the degree of an adjective, the expression *inqas* 'less' is used but with an adjective in positive and not comparative form:

- (70) Rajt fjura inqas sabiha / *isbah mill-ohra
I-saw flower less nice / nicer
'I saw a flower which was not as beautiful as the other'.

To express an equivalent degree between two terms of comparison, the expression *daqqs* 'size' is used, with a positive degree adjective.

- (71) Rajt fjura sabiha daqs l-ohra
nice size the-other
'I saw a flower as beautiful as the other'.

The expression *kwa* 'almost' can also occur before a comparative adjective or one in comparative construction or even before the expression for equivalence, *daqqs*:

- (72) Rajt fjura kwazi isbah mill-ohra
almost nicer
'I saw a flower which was almost more beautiful than the other'

- (73) Naf tifel kwazi iżjed bravu minn shabu
'I know a boy who is almost more clever than his fellows'

- (74) Rajt fjura sabiha kwazi daqs l-ohra
'I saw a flower which was almost as beautiful as the other'.

4.3. More than one adjective in the same noun phrase

The possibility of more than one adjective occurring within the noun phrase has not been studied at all for Maltese. For a noun not preceded by the definite article, it seems a limited number of adjectives is possible, as in (75):

- (75) Tifel kbir, ohxon u mqareb inqabad jisraq kejk
 boy big fat and naughty he-was-caught he-steals cake
 'A big, fat and mischievous boy was caught stealing a cake'.

In (75) notice that the conjunction occurs only before the last adjective in the sequence. I cannot find any particular reason for the relative order of the adjectives in (75). With a noun defined by the definite article, it becomes more difficult to have say more than two adjectives:

- (76) It-tifel il-kbir u ohxon inqabad jisraq kejk
 the-boy the-big and fat
 'The big, fat boy was caught stealing a cake'.

Notice that this time it is only the first adjective in the sequence which receives the definite article (like the noun it modifies). If the definite article is prefixed also to the second adjective after the conjunction, this would tend to be interpreted as meaning that two individuals were involved (cf. below, section 4.13, for adjectives used nominally). In the following example:

- (77) Element kostituttiv qawwi fil-Malti huwa
 element constitutive strong in-the-Maltese he
 l-komponent Semitiku
 the-component Semitic
 'The Semitic component is a well established factor making up the Maltese language'.

I have quite a definite intuition about the relative order of the adjectives here. Besides, notice that there is no conjunction between the two adjectives this time. Obviously this is an area where much work remains to be done.

4.4. Adjectival function of the verb in the Imperfect

In Maltese there are two finite forms of the verb, the so called Perfect and Imperfect. In the Perfect we have a combined tense/aspect

opposition but in the Imperfect we have, I believe, purely an aspectual component which I characterise as unrestricted habituality (cf. Borg 1981). The Imperfect occurs in all kinds of temporal contexts, but the point which concerns us here is that it can also function adjectively in modifying a noun, a function which the Perfect verb cannot assume:

- (78) Dahlet tifla tibki bil-qalb
 she-entered girl she-cries with-the-heart
 'A girl came in crying her heart out'

This form of the verb can even occur as part of a sequence of adjectives:

- (79) Kont naf tifel ohxon, imqareb u jiekol hafna
 I-was I-know boy fat naughty and he-eats much
 'I used to know a fat and mischievous boy who used to eat a lot'.

Although in (79) the Imperfect verb comes last in the sequence, it is not impossible to have 'normal' adjectives follow it. Note also that the verb itself is modified via the expression *kafna*. In the case of temporal qualification, we find pre-modification as in sentence (80):

- (80) Naf mara dejjem tidhak
 I-know woman always she-laughs
 'I know a woman who is always smiling'.

The Imperfect verb in this position can also be negated normally as in (81):

- (81) Naf ragel zorr u qatt ma jidhak
 man rough and never neg. he-laughs
 'I know a rough mannered man who never smiles'.

4.5. Participles with adjectival function

In addition to the Imperfect verb, there are two types of participle which can also occur with adjectival function. (That is, as adjectivalised complement cf. section 4.12 below)

- (82) Kelb rieqed la tqajmux
 dog sleeping neg. you-wake-him
 'Let sleeping dogs lie'.

Rieqed in (82) is the present (also called, active) participle from *raqad* 'he slept'.

- (83) Karozza misjuqa bil-mod dahlet farblu
 car driven with-the-slow she-entered in pole
 'A car which was being driven slowly, crashed into a pole'.

Here *misjuqa* is the feminine singular form of the past (also called passive) participle *misjuq* from *saq* 'he drove'.

In the case of modification by an Imperfect verb and a participle form there seems to be a preference for the modified noun to be indefinite.

4.6. Prepositional phrases with adjectival function

A noun may also be modified by a prepositional phrase as in (84):

- (84) Mara b'hames xhur tqala korriet
 woman with five months pregnancy she-got-injured
 f'incident tat-traffiku.
 in accident of-the-traffic
 'A woman who was five months pregnant had a traffic accident'.

The preposition *bi* occurs elsewhere, for instance in a passive construction to mark the instrument expression.

4.7. Relative clauses

A relative clause may also modify a noun. To a certain extent sentences (78) to (81) could be interpreted as containing a relative clause which has no overt marker. However, since there is such a marker for relative and other clauses, including fully marked relative clauses with Imperfect verbs, it seems best to keep the two constructions apart and simply admit the possibility of verbal modification of a noun. In addition, the noun modified by a relative clause can be co-referential with the subject or object of the subordinate clause, but a noun modified by an Imperfect verb can only be co-referential with the grammatical subject (signalled inflectionally) of the Imperfect verb.

- (85) It-tifel li dahal jigi n-neputi.
 the-boy rel. he-entered he-comes the-nephew
 'The boy who came in is my nephew'.

Here *it-tifel* is the subject of the main sentence and is co-referential with the subject of the subordinate clause. In (86):

- (86) It-tifel li rajt int, jigi n-neputi
 the-boy rel. you-saw you
 'The boy you saw is my nephew'

the subject of the subordinate sentence is now *int*, the second person singular form of the independent pronoun, and the object although formally unexpressed, is co-referential with the subject of the matrix sentence. Note that in this case, the subordinate verb cannot take a suffixed object pronoun, co-referential with the matrix subject, although it can easily take a suffixed indirect object pronoun as in (87):

- (87) It-tifel li bghattli int, jigi n-neputi
 rel. you-sent-to-me you
 'The boy you sent me is my nephew'.

4.8. Sentences as noun phrases

A sentence can occur as the argument of a verb, that is essentially with the function of a noun phrase (cf. Borg 1994a, 1994b). Thus in (88)

- (88) Is-surmast qal hmerija
 the-headmaster he-said silly-thing
 'The headmaster said something silly'

- (89) Is-surmast qal li se jmur vaganza
 that future he-goes holiday
 'The headmaster said that he would be going on holiday'

hmerija is the object of the verb *qal*, whereas in (89) the object of the verb *qal* 'he said' is a sentence marked with the same expression *li* occurring as marker of the relative clause. For this reason it is better to regard *li* as a general subordinator. There are various complications with regard to sentential complements, including also the possibility of the absence of an overt subordinating expression, and the distinction between relative clauses and sentential complements which we cannot go into here.

4.9. Nominalised sentential complements

A sentential complement can also be nominalised as in (90)-(91):

- (90) Pietru tefa' gebla
 Peter he-threw stone
 'Peter threw a stone'.

- (91) It-tfigh tal-gebla holoq paniku kbir
 the-throwing of-the-stone he-created panic big
 'The throwing of the stone caused a great panic'.

4.10. Nouns taking sentential complements

In addition, certain nouns may themselves take a sentential complement as in (92):

- (92) Ix-xewqa li jara lil huh zammitu haj
 the-wish that he-sees to brother-his she-kept-him alive
 'The desire to see his brother kept him alive'.

4.11. Nominalised complements taking a sentential complement

Furthermore, a nominalised complement may itself take a sentential complement as in (94):

- (93) Pietru stqarr li l-affarijiet graw hekk.
 Peter he-declared that the-things they-happened so
 'Peter declared that that was the way things happened'.
- (94) L-istqarrija ta' Pietru li l-affarijiet graw hekk
 the-declaration of Peter that
 ma emminha hadd nobody
 neg. he-believed-her nobody
 'No one believed Peter's statement that that was the way things happened'.

4.12. Noun-modifying adjectives taking sentential complements

In addition to the adjectivalised complements (constructions involving present and past participles cf. above, section 4.5) which we noted in sentences (82) and (83), there are also a number of adjectives (many of them participles) which can take a complement while themselves modifying a noun as in (95):

- (95) Naf raġel iddispjaċut li qatt ma siefer.
 I-know man sorry that never neg. he-went-abroad
 'I know a man who regrets never having been abroad'.

4.13. Adjectives with nominal function

Many adjectives in Maltese can function as nouns. In some cases it seems reasonable to analyse such adjectives as implicitly modifying an elided noun as in (96) and (97):

- (96) Il-batut trid tgħinu
 the-suffering you-want you-help-him
 'One has to help suffering people'
- (97) Is-Setghani għamel miegħi hwejjeg kbar
 the-powerful he-did with-me things big
 'The Almighty has done great things for me'

where one can easily postulate that *il-batut* modifies some such nominal as *il-bniedem* 'man' in (96), and *Alla* in (97) is understood as the subject of the sentence. However the frequency of this usage makes it plausible to accept this double function for such adjectives.

- (98) Il-fqir irid jgħin ruhu
 the-poor he-wants he-helps soul-his
 'The poor have to help themselves'.

In particular the singular masculine form of colour adjectives is used (with the definite article) to refer to the colour itself. Thus:

- (99) L-aħmar u l-aħdar huma kuluri skuri
 the-red and the-green they colours dark
 'Red and green are dark colours'.

Some of these adjectives used nominally can themselves be further modified, especially in the case of colour adjectives:

- (100) L-aħmar ċar u l-aħdar skur ma jaqtgħu
 the-red clear and the-green dark neg. they-cut
 xejn flimkien
 nothing together
 'Light red and dark green don't match at all'.

But in other cases such modification sounds forced, for example:

- (101) ? Il-fqir-il-miskin trid tgħinu
 the-poor the-miserable
 'One has to help miserable and poor people'.

Furthermore there is a form which is traditionally regarded as expressing a noun of agent, which I believe is more accurately described as a participle associated morphologically with a causative verb (cf. Borg 1981). Thus we have *gerrej* 'runner' from *gerra* 'he made someone run' from *gera* 'to run', *mexxej* 'leader' from *mexxa* 'he made someone walk, he led' from *mexa* 'he walked', etc.

- (102) Il-gerrejja Maltin hadu sehem f'kompetizzjoni internazzjonali
the-runners Maltese they-took part in competition international
'The Maltese runners took part in an international competition'
- (103) Il-mexxej irid ikollu kwalitajiet speċjali hafna
the-leader he-wants he-has qualities special much
'A leader has to have very special qualities'.

In (102) and (103) it is obvious the forms in question are used in their nominal function, but they can also be used adjectivally

- (104) Dal-poeta żagħżuġ għandu vers mexxej wisq
this-the-poet young he-has verse walking too-much
'This young poet's verses are really smooth flowing'
- (105) Iz-żiemel l-izjed gerrej huwa dak l-iswed
the-horse the-more running he that the-black
'The fastest horse is that black one'.

Furthermore, such adjectives may also occur in nominal function without the definite article:

- (106) Mexxej għaqli jaf x'għandu jagħmel
leader wise he-knows what-he-has he-does
'A wise leader knows what to do'
- (107) Fqar dejjem se jkollkom magħkom
poor always future you-have with-you
'The poor you will always have with you'.

As far as I can make out however, no such adjective can ever take a pronominal suffix, while there are classes of nouns which do (in the so called construct state, cf. Fabri, this volume).

4.14. Independent personal pronouns

Maltese has independent personal pronouns which can occur as the constituent of a noun phrase. They correspond to the verb inflection we have mentioned, namely:

Table 1.

	Singular	Plural
xejn flimkien	jien (jiena)	ahna
First	int (inti)	intom
Second	hu (huwa)	huma
Third	hi (hija)	

- (108) Jien naf li mhux hekk graw l-affarijiet
I I-know that neg. so they-happened the-things
'I know that this was not the way things happened'.
- (109) Intom ġejtu hawn biex taħdmu
You you-came here to you-work
'You came here to work'.

It may be that the redundant presence of the pronoun adds an emphatic element to the sentence, but this result can be achieved equally well, if not more forcefully, via intonation.

4.15. Emphatic expressions

There is a small class of emphatic expressions which unlike the ones mentioned in section 3.14 above, follow the noun.

- (110) Il-Papa stess jgħidlek li tista'
the-pope same he-tells-you that you-can
'The Pope himself says you can'
- (111) Id-direttur innifsu ġie jara x'għara
the-director himself he-came he-sees what he-happened
'The director himself came to see what happened'
- (112) Il-fqar ukoll iridu jieklu
the poor as well they-want they-eat
'Even the poor need to eat'
- (113) Intom ilkoll tafu x'għara
you all you-know what happened
'You all know what happened'
- (114) It-tifel biss ma ġiex
the-boy only neg. he-came
'Only my son didn't turn up'.

There is also a special use of the word *gmiel* 'beauty' with a pronominal suffix, which somehow involves underlining the quality of the noun preceding it:

- (115) Xtraw dar gmielha
they-bought house beauty-her
'They bought quite a house'.

4.16. An emphatic construction

There is also another construction, limited in occurrence, which is used to achieve the effect of emphasis:

(116) Dawk xtraw dar darun
those they-bought house house-big
'They bought a really big house'

(117) Hmar hmarun kellu jkun li għamel żball bħal dan
donkey donkey-big he-had he-is that he-did mistake like this
'It had to be someone really stupid who made this mistake'.

The suffix *-un* is obviously related to the augmentative suffix *'one'* in Italian, used however also in conjunction with a Semitic lexical form.

5. Direct object noun phrases

In Maltese some noun phrases with the function of direct object are marked with the preposition *lil* 'to'. Noun phrases which are proper personal names are obligatorily marked, as in sentence (118):

(118) Rajt lil Marija
I-saw to Mary
'I saw Mary'

while other animate noun phrases, especially if made definite via a number of different ways (discussed in Borg 1981) also tend to be so marked, as in sentence (119):

(119) Rajt lill-mara ta' Pietru
I-saw to-the-woman of Peter
'I saw Peter's wife'

although marking here, remains syntactically optional, cf. sentence (120):

(120) Rajt il-mara ta' Pietru
I-saw to-the-woman of Peter
'I saw Peter's wife'.

Inanimate and abstract direct object noun phrases, on the other hand, occur without this mark, as in sentences (121) and (122):

(121) a. Pejjep is-sigarett
he-smoked the-cigarette
'He smoked the cigarette'
b. *Pejjep lis-sigarett

(122) a. Sema' l-istorja
he-heard the-story
'He heard the story'
b. *Sema' lill-istorja

6. Indirect object noun phrases

Although Borg and Comrie (1984) present cases where two arguments taken by a single predicate, compete, as it were, for direct object status, there are instances where it is probably profitable to operate with the notion of indirect object. Such objects obligatorily take the preposition *lil* as in sentence (123):

(123) Ganni bagħat il-ktieb lil huh
John he-sent the-book to brother-his
'John sent the book to his brother'

except as far as I can see, in the case of place nominals, cf. sentence (124):

(124) Ganni bagħat il-ktieb l-uffiċċju
John he-sent the-book the-office
'John sent the book to the office'.

However, certain place nominals with indirect object function can lend themselves to an interpretation as an institution, rather than as a mere physical location, and in this case they take the preposition:

(125) L-avukat bagħat l-ittra l-qorti
the-lawyer he-sent the-letter the-court
'The lawyer sent the letter to court'.

(126) L-avukat bagħat l-ittra lill-Qorti
to-the-Court
'The lawyer sent the letter to the Court'.

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