Indefinite pronouns in Maltese

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In this paper we study the formal and functional properties of Maltese indefinite pronouns in a typological perspective. Maltese has two main series of indefinite pronouns, which we call the *xi*-series and the *ebda*-series. From a formal point of view, it is remarkable that the *ebda*-series consists purely of special roots, i.e. none of its members is synchronically derived from a more basic word. When used in the negative function, the *ebda*-indefinites are in complementary distribution with the second part of the discontinuous negation, much like in standard French.

1. Introduction: indefinite pronouns and their uses

In this paper we describe and discuss indefinite pronouns in Maltese and put them in a typological perspective. By indefinite pronouns, we mean expressions like *somebody, something, anybody, anything, somewhere, anytime*, etc., i.e. we do not restrict our attention to "pro-nouns" in the narrow sense (grammatical words used as NPs), but we include pronominal adverbs with similar meanings.[1]

Indefinite pronouns in human languages are generally organized in series, i.e. sets of expressions that share the same semantic-syntactic functions. Each series has members representing the major ontological categories such as 'person', 'thing', 'place', 'time', 'manner', 'quantity'. English, for example, has two indefinite series: the *some*-series and the *any*-series, and Romanian has the *-va*-series and the *ori*-series, shown in (1a) and (1b) respectively.

(1)

	(a) English		(b) Romanian	
	some-series	*any*-series	*-va*-series	*ori*-series
person	*some-one*	*any-one*	*cine-va*	*ori-cine*
thing	*some-thing*	*any-thing*	*ce-va*	*ori-ce*
place	*some-where*	*any-where*	*unde-va*	*ori-unde*
time	*some-time*	*any-time*	*cînd-va*	*ori-cînd*
manner	*some-how*	*any-how*	*cum-va*	*ori-cum*
determiner	*some*	*any*	*care-va*	*ori-care*

In both English and Romanian, all the members of a series share not only the same semantic-syntactic functions, but also a formal element:

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in English, the prefixes *some-* and *any-*, and in Romanian, the suffix *-va* and the prefix *ori-*. This formal element is called INDEFINITENESS MARKER.

The conditions of use for different series of indefinite pronouns are of various types: syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic. The distribution of the *some*-series and the *any*-series in English is basically determined by the general rules of negative polarity, that is to say ultimately semantic-pragmatic factors (cf. Fauconnier 1975a, 1975b), the *some*-series being used in affirmative polarity contexts (cf. 2), and the *any*-series in negative polarity contexts (cf. 3).

(2) Affirmative polarity
Someone stole her computer.

(3) Negative polarity
a. (negative) She didn't notice *anything*.
b. (conditional) If she had seen *anybody*, she would have run away.
c. (interrogative) Can she get a new one *anywhere* in this town?

However, a syntactic condition restricts the *any*-series in negated clauses to postverbal positions, making (4) ungrammatical.

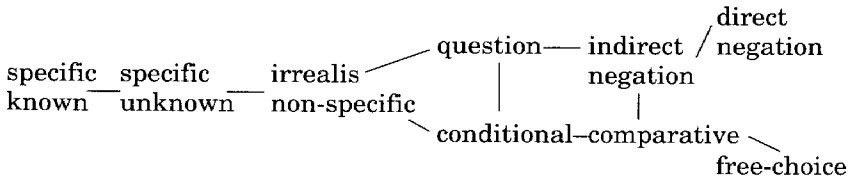
(4) **Anybody* will not forget it.

Moreover in some cases the distinction between the *some*-series and the *any*-series is of a pragmatic nature. For example, in conditionals the speaker uses *any* if he hopes that the condition is not fulfilled, but *some* if he hopes that it is fulfilled (cf. R. Lakoff 1969: 611).

(5) a. (I warn you that) If you eat *any* candy, I'll whip you.
b. (I promise you that) If you eat *some*/**any* spinach, I'll give you ten dollars.

Languages differ greatly in the number and kinds of distinctions they make in indefinite pronouns. However, the nine functions in (6) turn out to be relevant in many languages.[2]

(6)



Haspelmath (1993, 1997) claims that this set of functions, arranged in this particular form, can be regarded as an "implicational map" representing indefinite pronoun functions. It is claimed that in any language an indefinite pronoun series will only have functions which are adjacent on the map. In English, for example, the *some*-series has the specific-known, specific-unknown, irrealis-non-specific, and (partially) question and conditional functions, while the *any*-series has the question, conditional, comparative, indirect-negation, direct-negation, and free-choice functions, so that there is an overlap between the two series in the middle, but there is no gap in the spread of functions covered by one series. This "map" can be thought of as summarizing a series of implicational universals, e.g. "If an indefinite pronoun has the free-choice function and the irrealis-non-specific function, it will also have the conditional and comparative functions", and so on.

We now propose to look at Maltese indefinites from this perspective.

2. *The forms of Maltese indefinites*

Maltese has two main series of indefinite pronouns: the *xi*-series, and the *ebda*-series, shown in (7). The indefinites of the *xi*-series all include the indefiniteness marker *xi*, whereas the indefinites of the *ebda*-series do not share a common element. Besides these two series, the numeral adjective *wie ed* 'one' can also be used as an indefinite pronoun.

(7) Maltese indefinite pronoun series

	xi-series	*ebda*-series
person	*xi ħadd*	*ħadd*
thing	*xi ħaġa*	*xejn*
place	*xi mkien*	*imkien*
time	*xi darba*	*qatt*
manner	*b'xi mod (u manjiera)*	*bl' ebda mod*
determiner	*xi*	*ebda*

The form of the Maltese indefinite pronouns bears almost no resemblance to the form of interrogative pronouns (*min* 'who?', *xi* 'what?', *fejn* 'where?', *meta* 'when?', *kif* 'how?', *liema* 'which?').[3] This is in contrast to the majority of the world's languages, where indefinite pronouns are derived from interrogative pronouns by means of indefiniteness markers (cf. Ultan 1978). Romanian is typical in this respect: the indefinites in the series in (1b) are based on the interrogative pronouns *cine* 'who?', *ce* 'what?', *unde* 'where?', *cînd* 'when?', etc.

Less commonly indefinite pronouns are derived from general nouns denoting the ontological categories 'person', 'thing', 'place', etc. For example, Persian has the indefinite series in (8).

(8) Persian

kæs-i	'someone'	(person-INDEF)
čiz-i	'something'	(thing-INDEF)
(dær) yek ja-yi	'somewhere'	((at) one place-INDEF)
yek vagt-i	'sometime'	(one time-INDEF)
yek tour-i	'somehow'	(one manner-INDEF)

English has a mixed system. Some forms are built like the Persian forms (*something, sometime, anyway*), others are derived from interrogative pronouns (*somewhere, somehow*), and yet others have their own root (*somebody, anybody*).[4]

Maltese is remarkable in that it has one series, the *ebda*-series, in which all the five members are formed by special roots. This phenomenon seems to be quite rare in the world's languages.[5]

The Maltese *xi*-series, on the other hand, is of the mixed type: one member, *xi ħaġa* 'something', is based on the general noun *ħaġa* 'thing'; two members, *xi ħadd* 'somebody' and *xi mkien* 'someplace' are based on the corresponding member of the *ebda*-series (*ħadd* 'nobody', *imkien* 'nowhere'); and one member is based on an adverb (*darba* 'once', *xi darba* 'sometime').

3. *Functions of the* xi*-series*

Indefinite pronouns of the *xi*-series are used in the specific function in realis contexts, where English uses the *some*-series. E.g.

(9) *Xi* *ħadd* qed jaħdem fil-ġnien.
INDEF ANYONE PROG HE:work:IPF in:the-garden
'Somebody is working in the garden.'

(10) It-tifel ra *xi* *ħaġa* wara s-siġra.
the-boy he:see:PRF INDEF thing behind the-tree
'The boy saw something behind the tree.'

The *xi*-series is also used in irrealis contexts like imperative sentences and complements to 'want', when the reference is non-specific. (Some languages use a different indefinite series here, e.g. Russian, where the non-specific *-nibud'*-series contrasts with the specific *-to*-series, cf. Padučeva 1985).

(11) Jekk ma tafx, staqsi lil *xi* *ħadd*.
if NEG you:know:IPF:NEG ask:IMPV ACC INDEF anyone
'If you don't know, ask somebody.'

(12) Trid tiżżewweġ lil *xi* *ħadd* b'xagħru iswed.
she:want:IPF she:marry:IPF ACC INDEF anyone with-his:hair black
'She wants to marry someone (non-specific) with black hair.'

(13) *Xi* *darba* is-sena d-dieħla mmur l-Afrika.
INDEF time the-year the-entering I:go:IPF the-Africa
'I'll go to Africa sometime next year.'

Finally, the *xi*-series is also used in negative-polarity contexts like conditional clauses and interrogative sentences, where English generally uses its *any*-series.

(14) Jekk tara *xi* *ħaġa*, għidli.
if you:see:IPF INDEF thing tell:me:IMPV
'If you see anything, tell me.'

(15) Rajt *xi* *ħaġa*?
you:see:PRF INDEF thing
'Did you see anything?'

4. *Functions of the* ebda*-series*

Indefinites of the *ebda*-series are used in negated sentences, like English indefinites of the *any-* or *no*-series. They are more like the *any*-series in that the verb has to be accompanied by a negative marker, e.g.

(16) a. It-tifla ma rat *xejn*.
the-girl NEG she:see:PRF anything
'The girl didn't see anything.' (= 'The girl saw nothing.')

b. Ma se nitlaqha *qatt*.
NEG FUT I:leave:her:IPF ever
'I will never leave her.'

c. Ma kelli *ebda* mistrieħ.
NEG I:have:PRF any rest
'I did not have any rest.'

However, the *ebda*-series is inherently negative in that it can be used in elliptical negative answers to parametric (i.e. "wh-") questions. This test for the negative status of an indefinite series was developed in Bernini & Ramat (1992). E.g.

(17) Question: X'rat?
what-she:see:PRF
'What did she see?'
Answer: *Xejn*!
anything
'Nothing!'.

The *ebda*-series also contrasts with the English *any*-series in that it cooccurs only with the preverbal negation. Standard verbal negation in Maltese consists of two elements, as in the French *ne...pas*. In Maltese the particle *ma* precedes the verb and the suffix *-x* attaches to it.

(18) It-tifla ma rat-x lit-tifel.
the-girl NEG she:see:PRF-NEG ACC:the-boy
'The girl didn't see the boy'.

Further evidence of the negative status of the *ebda*-series and its contrast to the *any*-series is that when a pronoun of the *ebda*-series is present in a negative clause, the preverbal negative particle is retained but the suffix *-x* is dropped, again as in French (compare (16a) above with French *La fille n'a rien vu*).[6]

In contrast to the English *any*-series, but like the French *aucun*-series, a pronoun of the *ebda*-series may occupy a pre-verbal position, e.g.

(19) a. Ħadd ma qalli *xejn*.
anyone NEG he:tell:me:PRF anything
'Nobody told me anything.'
b. Qatt ma jiġri *xejn* f'dan ir-raħal.
ever NEG it:happen:IPF anything in-this the-village
'Nothing ever happens in this village'.

And an *ebda*-indefinite may also occur in a subordinate clause when the pre-verbal negation is on a superordinate verb:[7]

(20) a. Ma naħseb li ġie *ħadd*.
NEG I:think:IPF that he:come:PRF anyone
'I don't think that anyone came.'
b. Ma ried li jkun jaf *ħadd*.
NEG he:want:PRF that he:be:IPF he:know:IPF anyone
'He did not want that any man should know it.' (Mk 9.30)

The negation does not even have to be of the ordinary verbal kind. It may be the negative preposition *minħajr* (or *bla*) 'without', e.g.

(21) It-tifla għamlitha minħajr *ebda* għajnuna.
the-girl she:do:it:PRF without any help
'The girl did it without any help.'

Or the negation may be implicit in a 'before' clause:

(22) Kien jaf x' ġara qabel ma *ħadd*
he:be:prf he:know:IMPF what it:happen:PRF before that anyone
qallu.
he:tell:him:PRF
'He knew what had happened before anyone told him.'

Ebda-indefinites may also occur in the standard of comparison, or in the qualifying relative clause of a superlative expression:

(23) Dan huwa l-isbaħ inkwatru li *ħadd* *qatt*
this it the-beautiful:comp picture that anyone ever
pinġa.
he:paint:PRF
'This is the most beautiful painting that anyone has ever painted.'

There is one member of the *ebda*-series that behaves somewhat differently, namely *qatt* 'ever'. This word can also be used in conditionals and questions, where otherwise indefinites of the *xi*-series are used.

(24) a. Jekk *qatt* tiġi Londra, ejja arani.
if ever you:come:IPF London come:IMPV see:me:IMPV
'If you ever come to London, come and see me.'
b. *Qatt* mort Londra?
ever you:go:PRF London
'Have you ever been to London?'

The corresponding sentences with other members of the *ebda*-series are ungrammatical, e.g. **ħadd mar Londra?* 'Has anyone been to London?'

5. *The indefinite pronoun* wieħed *'one, someone'*

In addition to the two indefinite series discussed in the previous sections, there is one important indefinite expression that must be mentioned in this context, namely *wieħed* (m.) / *waħda* (f.) 'one'. This is originally a numeral adjective, but like 'one' expressions in many other

languages, it can also be used as an indefinite pronoun and as an indefinite article, though in Maltese this is restricted to nouns denoting human beings. This makes it very similar in meaning to *xi ħadd*:

(25) Tkellimt ma' *wieħed* il-bieraħ fuq il-karrozza tal-linja.
I:talk:PRF with one the-yesterday on the-car of:the-line
'I talked to someone yesterday on the bus.'

But there is a subtle difference in meaning between *wieħed* and *xi ħadd*. *Wieħed* refers to a specific person or one who is known to the speaker (but whose identity is irrelevant or is not revealed for other reasons), and *xi ħadd* refers to an unknown person or to a non-specific person. In realis contexts, the reference must be specific, so the relevant contrast is 'known to the speaker/unknown to the speaker'. This can be nicely illustrated by the following two sentences from the New Testament:

(26) Qallu Ganni: "Mgħallem, rajna *wieħed* joħroġ
he:tell:him:PRF John master we:see:PRF one he:throw:IPF
ix-xjaten f'ismek." (Mt 9.38)
the-devils in-your:name
'John said to him: "Master, we saw someone casting out devils in thy name.'"

(27) Qal Gesù: "Messni *xi* *ħadd*,
he:say:PRF Jesus he:touch:me:PRF INDEF anyone
għax ħassejt qawwa ħierġa minni." (Lk 8.46)
because I:feel:PRF strength going.out from:me
'Jesus said: "Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.'"

In (26), the speaker (John) was a witness of the reported event and therefore knows the referent, while in (27), the speaker (Jesus) does not know who touched him.

In irrealis contexts, *wieħed* is again preferably interpreted as having a specific referent, while *xi ħadd* expresses a non-specific referent, the contrast in meaning between (28) and (29) being indicated by means of the context in brackets.

(28) Trid tiżżewweġ lil-*wieħed* b'xagħru iswed.
she:want:IPF she:marry:IPF ACC-one with-his:hair black
'She wants to marry someone with black hair [that's a salient feature of her future husband].'

(29) Trid tiżżewweġ lil *xi* *ħadd* b'xagħru iswed.
she:want:IPF she:marry:IPF ACC INDEF anyone with-his:hair black
'She wants to marry someone with black hair [that's a condition any potential suitor must fulfill].'

6. *Expressing the meaning of free choice*

In many languages, indefinite pronouns of the type that we are treating in this paper may also express free choice, e.g. the English *any*-series:

(30) Anyone can solve this problem.

In Maltese, neither of the two indefinite series nor the word *wieħed* can be used in this way. One way of expressing the free choice meaning is the Italian loanword *kwalunkwe* 'any' (from Italian *qualunque*).[8] The following example is from Borg 1995.

(31) *Kwalunkwe* tifel jista' jgħidlek din.
any boy he:can:IPF he:tell:you:IPF this
'Any boy can tell you this.'

Free choice can also be expressed by the universal pronoun *kull* 'every; any' and the compound *kullħadd* 'everyone; anyone' (as is the case in German with *jeder* 'every; any'), and by the verb *ried* 'want' in combination with the interrogative pronouns *min* 'who', *fejn* 'where', *meta* 'when', and *liema* 'which', this last also combing with nouns (cf. (33)). The distribution of these forms seems to be determined largely by syntactic factors, *kull* occurring in preverbal position and interrogative pronoun plus *ried* occurring mainly in postverbal position. *Kwalunkwe* is freer in its syntactic distribution, however many Maltese speakers claim they do not use it very often and still regard it as "not quite Maltese".

(32) Kull qattus għandu denb.
every cat he:have tail
'Any cat has a tail.'

(33) Kulħadd jista' jsolvija din il-problema.
everyone he:can:IPF he:solve:IPF this the-problem
'Anyone can solve this problem.'

(34) Tista' tieħu liema tuffieħa trid.
you:can:IPF you:take:IPF which apple you:want:IPF
'You may take any apple.'

(35) Staqsi lil min trid.
ask:IMPV ACC who you:want:IPF
'Ask anyone.'

(36) Setgħet tmur fejn riedet.
she:can:PRF she:go:IMPF where she:want:PRF
'She was allowed to go anywhere.'

7. *Maltese compared to Arabic*

We have not come across any detailed descriptions of Arabic indefinite pronouns in the literature. The descriptions of indefinite pronouns in reference grammars and dictionaries are usually fragmentary, and the comparison of Maltese to Arabic will be restricted to a few observations based on such sources.

First let us look at the etymology of Maltese indefinites, which is to say at their Classical Arabic cognates.

(i) The indefinite determiner and indefiniteness marker *xi* evidently goes back to *šay?* 'thing, something'. An expression like *xi nies* 'some people' must originally have meant '(some)thing of people'.[9]
(ii) The root *ħadd* goes back to Classical Arabic *ʔaḥad* 'one', which must be related to *waaħid* 'one' (= Maltese *wieħed*).[10]
(iii) The root *mkien* goes back to Arabic *makaan* 'place' (from *kaan* 'be', corresponding to Maltese *kien*).
(iv) The root *xejn* seems to go back to the accusative form *šay?* '(some)thing'.
(v) The root *qatt* corresponds to the Arabic adverb *qaṭṭu* 'never (chiefly with the past tense in negative sentences)'.
(vi) The root *ebda* goes back to Arabic *ʔabadan* '(n)ever (in the future)', adverbial accusative of *ʔabad* 'eternity'.

Thus, virtually all Maltese indefinites ultimately go back to general nouns or the numeral 'one', not only those that are identical to nouns in Maltese (like *ħaġa* 'thing'), but also all the others with the exception of *qatt* which goes back to the adverb *qaṭṭu*.[11]

Looking at modern Arabic dialects, one sees a very similar picture in several dialects. Despite the many centuries of isolation from the Arabic speech community, the fundamentally Arabic nature of the Maltese indefinite pronoun system has not changed much.

Even in Classical Arabic, the nouns on which Maltese indefinites are based were often used as indefinite pronouns and some of them occurred most commonly in negative and non-assertive contexts, especially *ʔaḥad*, *ʔabadan*, and *qaṭṭu*.

For Egyptian Arabic, Ahmed 1981 reports that *ħadd* 'someone, anyone' is especially used in interrogative and subordinate clauses, while *waaħid* is used in positive main clauses:

(37) *ħaddi* minkum ṭafa n-nuur?
anyone from:you he:switch:off:PRF the-light
'Has any of you switched off the light?'

(38) *Waaħid* biyisʔal ʕalek.
one PROG:he:ask:IPF on:you
'Someone is asking for you.'

Similarly, in Gulf Arabic *aḥad, šay* and *mukaan* are used "in questions and sentences in which the verb is negative" (Holes 1990:241):

(39) a. *Aḥad* mawjuud taḥt?
anyone found down
'Is there anyone downstairs?'
b. Ma šift *aḥad* daaxil.
NEG I:see:PRF anyone inside
'I didn't see anyone inside.'

(40) a. Fiih *šay*?
there.is thing
'Is there anything the matter?'
b. Ma fiih *šay* yimnaʕik min id-duxuul.
NEG there.is thing it:prevent:IPF from the-entering
'There isn't anything preventing you from entering.'

(41) Ma riḥt *mukaan* fi ṣ-ṣeef il-maaḍi.
NEG I:go:PRF anyplace in the-summer the-past
'I didn't go anywhere last summer.'

The complementarity between the negative suffix *-š* and the negative indefinite pronoun is also found in some modern Arabic dialects. For example, in Eastern Libyan Arabic verbs are generally negated by means of the particle-suffix combination *ma ...-š*, as in Maltese (Owens 1984:157).

(42) Ma šif-naa-k-š.
NEG see:PRF-we-you-NEG
'We didn't see you.'

But with a number of indefinite expressions, the final *-š* is optional (Owens 1984: 161-62).

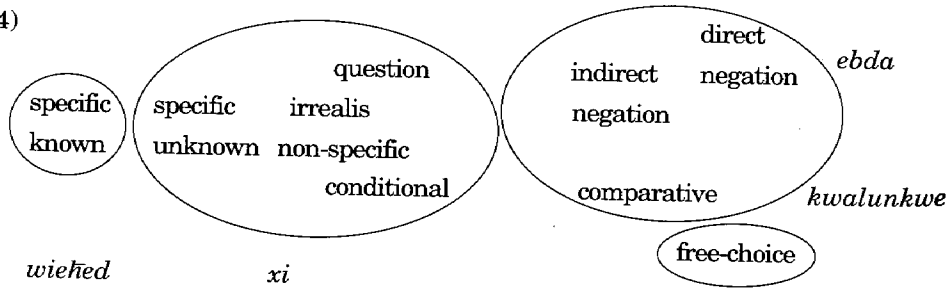
(43) a. Ma šifit *ħadd.*
NEG I:see:PRF anyone
'I didn't see anyone.'
b. *ʕamra* ma širba.
ever NEG he:drink:PRF
'He never drank it.'

The main systematic differences between Maltese and the modern spoken Arabic dialects seem to be (i) that the indefinites of the *ebda*-series are restricted to negative sentences and cannot be used in non-negative non-assertive sentences (i.e. interrogatives and conditionals), and (ii) that a new series characterized by the indefiniteness marker *xi* has been developed.[12]

8. Summary

Maltese has two main series of indefinite pronouns, the *xi*-series and the *ebda*-series, and the numeral *wieħed / waħda* 'one' is also often used as an indefinite ('someone'). The *xi*-series is used in specific, irrealis-non-specific and negative-polarity functions, while the *ebda*-series is used in the direct-negation and indirect-negation functions as well as in the standard of comparatives. The indefinite *wieħed / waħda* is restricted to a special type of realis function ('known to the speaker'), and there are two special free-choice expressions, *ried* 'want' and *kwalunkwe* 'any'. This yields the picture in (44), where the functions of the four types of indefinites are all adjacent, in accordance with the universal hypothesis of Haspelmath (1993, to 1997).

(44)



This distribution of indefinite types over the implicational map is

not unusual. There are, however, two respects in which Maltese is rather peculiar: (i) Maltese has one indefinite series which consists entirely of special roots, and (ii) negative indefinites are in complementary distribution with the second part of a discontinuous double negation. These features are not common cross-linguistically, but they are shared by other, non-Semitic circum-Mediterranean languages, notably French. It is tempting to suggest that there is an areal relationship here (as discussed in Bernini & Ramat 1992 on the areal distribution of negation in Europe).

Abbreviations

ACC	accusative
COMP	comparative degree
FUT	future
IMPV	imperative
INDEF	indefiniteness marker
IPF	Imperfect
NEG	negation
PRF	perfect
PROG	progressive marker

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Notes

[1] The term *indefinite pronoun* is also often used to refer to generic pronouns like French *on*, German *man*, to scalar quantifiers like *much, little*, and to universal pronouns like *every, all*. None of these are considered in this paper.
[2] The term *function* is intended to be neutral between 'meaning', 'use', 'contextually conditioned variant', etc. What is important here are the necessary distinctions, not their exact nature.
[3] The only exception is *xi*, which is both an interrogative pronoun ('what?') and an indefinite determiner ('some'). See note 9.
[4] Diachronically, *-body* is of course identical to the noun *body*, but it is doubtful whether this is a synchronic fact.
[5] Another case with four special roots is the French *aucun*-series: *personne* 'nobody', *rien* 'nothing', *jamais* 'never', *aucun* 'no'. Maltese also resembles French in the syntax of these forms, cf. section 4 below.

[6] Fenech 1978:78 notes that this rule is not always observed in the spoken and journalistic language, where postverbal negation may cooccur with *ebda*-indefinites, e.g.

(i) Ma jiqrax bl-ebda mod.
NEG convenient:IPF:NEG in-any way
'It is not convenient in any way.'

[7] However, the version with downstairs negation is better:

(i) Naħseb li ma ġie ħadd.
I:think:IPF that NEG he:come:PRF anyone
'I think that nobody came.'

Superordinate negation is not possible with all verbs, e.g. (ii) is ungrammatical, only (iii) is possible.

(ii) *Ma qal li ġie ħadd.
NEG he:say:PRF that he:come:PRF anyone
'He didn't say that anyone came.'

(iii) Ma qalx li ġie xi ħadd.
NEG he:say:PRF:NEG that he:come:PRF INDEF anyone
'He didn't say that someone came.'

It seems that superordinate negation is possible only in the case of negative raising, but a full answer to this question is beyond the scope of this paper.

[8] When *kwalunkwe* is postposed, it means 'ordinary':

(i) Aqbad borma kwalunkwe u saħħanha sew.
take:IMPVpan ordinary and heat:it:IMPV well
'Take an ordinary pan and heat it well.' (from Borg 1995)

[9] The Maltese interrogative pronoun *xi* 'what?' also derives from *šay?* 'thing' (cf. Italian *cosa* 'what?' < 'thing'). Whereas in most languages indefinites are similar to interrogatives because they are derived from them, it is the other way round in the case of Maltese *xi*.

[10] *Ħadd* is also the word for Sunday in Maltese and the words for Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday are identical to the numbers two, three and four, which indicates that in this context the word *ħadd* has survived as the covert numeral one.

[11] Note again the parallel to French, where some indefinite pronouns of the *aucun*-series go back to general nouns, especially *personne* 'nobody' (from 'person'), *rien* 'nothing' (from 'thing', Latin *rem*).

[12] However, not all Arabic dialects are as similar to Maltese as Egyptian Arabic, Gulf Arabic, and Eastern Libyan Arabic. Baghdad Arabic (as described by Ali 1970), for example, seems to have quite a different system.

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