

Fourth International Conference on Maltese Linguistics

University of Lyon 2, 2013 June 17-19

MORE ON MALTESE LOANWORD TYPOLOGY

Bernard Comrie

*Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology and
University of California Santa Barbara*

and

Michael Spagnol

University of Malta

The Leipzig Loanword Typology project
led by Martin Haspelmath and Uri Tadmor

Haspelmath, Martin and Uri Tadmor (eds.). 2009. *Loanwords in the World's Languages: A Comparative Handbook*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton

Haspelmath, Martin and Uri Tadmor (eds.): *World Loanword Database*. Munich:
Max Planck Digital Library, 1344 entries.
<http://wold.livingsources.org>

now continued as

Loanwords in the World's Languages

led by Anthony Grant, Kim Schulte, and Uri Tadmor

http://lingweb.eva.mpg.de/loanwords/index.php/Main_Page

Database

1500 lexical concepts from different semantic fields

incl. both easily borrowed and not easily borrowed items

“translated” into the language in question

Each word in the language in question is identified as

not borrowed

borrowed

with indication of immediate source language

thus Maltese *dixx* is from English *dish*

not from Latin *discus*

Main advances since Comrie's presentation

at Third International Conference on Maltese Linguistics (2011)

1.

Extensive reworking of Maltese translation equivalents
carried out by Michael Spagnol as postdoc at MPI-EVA
under supervision of Bernard Comrie
and with help of student assistant Deborah Arbes (U Bremen)

This has led to a reorientation away from Aquilina's dictionaries
– without denying the undoubted importance of these works –
towards contemporary standard Maltese
as spoken by younger urban speakers

‘bicycle’	Maltese	<i>rota</i>	(more usual)
		<i>bajsikil</i>	
‘lion’	Maltese	<i>ljun</i>	
		<i>dorbies</i>	(archaic)
‘live, dwell’	Maltese	<i>joqgħod</i>	
		<i>għex</i>	
		<i>abita</i>	(formal)
		<i>għammar</i>	(formal, archaic)

'vomit'	Maltese	<i>rremetta</i>	Italian rimettere, also 'to vomit' this sense not found for Sicilian
		<i>rrigetta</i>	(more formal) Italian rigettare, also 'to vomit' this sense not found for Sicilian
		<i>qala'</i>	also 'to get' sense 'to vomit' only Maltese?
		<i>tella'</i>	also 'to raise' sense 'to vomit' only Maltese?

‘eyebrow’	Maltese	<i>ħaġeb</i>
	Arabic	<i>ħājib</i>

‘tapir’	Maltese	<i>tapir</i>
	English	<i>tapir</i>
	Italian	<i>tapiro</i>

2.

Use of more reliable sources for Sicilian
as suggested by Joseph Brincat among others
in particular:

Piccitto, Giorgio/Tropea, Giovanni/Trovato, Salvatore Carmelo, 1977-2002.
Vocabolario siciliano. 5 volumes. Catania etc.: Centro di Studi Filologici e
Linguistici Siciliani.

Maltese *brazzuleta* ‘bracelet’

Sicilian *bbrazzulettu* ‘bracelet’

Sicilian *bbracciulettu* ‘bracelet’

Italian *braccialetto* ‘bracelet’

Maltese *sorpriz* ‘surprise’

Italian *sorpresa* ‘surprise’

feminine of past participle *sorpreso* ‘surprised’

but archaic *sorpriso*

Sicilian

no similar form found

Maltese *sufarina* (*sulfarina*) 'match'

Italian *solfarello* (*zolfarello*)
solfino (*zolfino*)

Sicilian *suffareddu*, *suffarellu*, *suffarièddu*
sulfaloru, *surfaloru*

Distinguishing Italian- from Sicilian-origin remains a problem

Forced choice	Italian	Sicilian	
	47.8	52.2	
Non-forced choice	Italian	Sicilian	Italian/Sicilian
	11.7	7.4	80.9

3.

Use of more reliable sources for vernacular Arabic
as suggested by Martin Zammit among others
in particular:

a)

Iraqi Sinaceur, Zakia, 1993-1994. *Le dictionnaire Colin d'arabe dialectal marocain*. 8 volumes. Rabat: Al-Manahli.

Maltese *maħmuġ* ‘dirty’

Arabic *xamija* ‘to spoil, rot, decay’

Moroccan Arabic *məxmūž* ‘dirty’

Maltese *šhun* ‘warm’

Arabic *suxn*, *sāxin* ‘hot, warm’

Moroccan Arabic *sxūn* ‘hot’ (also Tunisian Arabic)

Maltese *wisq* ‘too (excessively)’

Aquilina suggests: Arabic *wasu‘a* ‘to be wide’

Arabic *wasāqa* ‘to load’

Moroccan Arabic *wāsəq* ‘full to bursting, jam-packed’

b)

Az-Ziwārī, ‘Alī and Aš-Šarfī, Yūsuf, 1998. *Mu‘jam al-kalimāt wa-’t-taqālīd aš-ša‘bīyah bi-Şafāqis [Dictionary of folk words and traditions in Sfax]*. Sfax: Al-Mu’allifūn.

Maltese *dghajsa* ‘boat’

Tunisian Arabic (Sfax) *dyīsa* ‘kind of boat’

c)

Ben Abdelkader, Rached et al, 1977. *Peace Corps English-Tunisian Arabic dictionary*. Washington DC: Peace Corps.

Maltese *liema* ‘which?’

Tunisian Arabic *āmā* ‘which?’

Maltese *artab* ‘soft’

Arabic *raṭb* ‘moist; fresh; succulent’

Tunisian Arabic *arṭib* ‘soft’

Vocabulary sources according to Language of origin

	Arab.	Rom.	Eng.	
raw number	1886	1123	112	
percentage	60.4	36.0	3.6	
	Arab.	Rom.	Eng.	Other
%-age 2011	61.2	34.0	3.0	1.8

Vocabulary sources with breakdown of Romance

	Rom.	Sic.	Ital.	OIt.
raw number	1123	586	532	5
percentage	36.0	18.8	17.0	0.2

	Rom.	Sic.	Ital.	Sic./It.
%-age 2011	34.0	4.2	25.8	3.9

Maltese among other “(very) high borrowers” (Tadmor 2009: 56)

Selice Romani	62.7	Bezhta	31.8
Tarifiyt Berber	51.7	Kildin Saami	30.5
Gurindji	45.6	Imbabura Quechua	30.2
Romanian	41.8	Archi	29.5
English	41.0	Sakha	29.0
Maltese	39.6	Vietnamese	28.1
Saramaccan	38.3	Swahili	27.8
Coq Wong	37.0	Yaqui	26.5
Japanese	34.9	Thai	26.1
Indonesian	34.0	Takia	25.9

Grazzi!

Nizzukom ħajr!

Ta!

Thank you!

Šukran

شُكْرًا