Different Maltese ways of being in Sydney (and elsewhere).

On the formal variation of expressing Place with toponyms.

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Recent cross-linguistic research in the domain of the grammar of names has focused on the morphosyntactic behavior of toponyms (Stolz/Levkovych/Urdze 2017a). Very frequently the rules postulated for common nouns fail to capture the entire range of properties which are characteristic of toponyms. This is why Stolz/Levkovych/Urdze (2017b) speak of *Special Toponymic Grammar* (= STG). Maltese too gives ample evidence of STG (Stolz/Levkovych/Urdze 2018). The differences between toponyms and common nouns come to the fore especially when members of these word classes function as Ground in constructions which express spatial relations such as that of Place. Example (1) shows that it is grammatically possible (and stylistically often preferable) to use the bare toponym *Sydney* without accompanying preposition whereas the absence of a preposition is not tolerated if the toponym is replaced with a common noun such as *kċina* 'kitchen' as in (2a). In this case, the presence of the preposition *fi* 'in' is required as in (2b).

(1)   Bare toponym (Attard 1999: 67)

Dun Guliermu	*qagħad*	*[Ø*	*Sydney]*	*fejn*	*ħadem*	*ħafna*
Dun Guliermu	stay.PERF	[Ø	Sydney]	where	work.PERF	much

mal-Maltin.

with:DEF-Maltese:PL

'Dun Guliermu stayed [**in** Sydney] where he worked a lot with the Maltese.'

(2)   Common noun as Ground

(a) | **Dun Guliermu* | *qagħad* | *[Ø* | *il-kċina]* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dun Guliermu | stay.PERF | [Ø | DEF-kitchen] |

(b) | **Dun Guliermu* | *qagħad* | *[Ø* | *il-kċina]* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dun Guliermu | stay.PERF | [Ø | DEF-kitchen] |

'Dun Guliermu stayed [**in** the kitchen].'

However, the preposition *fi* 'in' is optionally compatible also with toponmic Grounds as shown in example (3) which involves the same toponym as the one featured in (1).

(3)   (Attard 1999: 128)

[F'	*Sydney]*	*Mons. Gonzi*	*kien*	*il-mistieden*	*tal-Kardinal Gilroy*

[**in**	Sydney]	Mons. Gonzi	be.PERF DEF-PPTCPL:invite	of:DEF-Cardinal Gilroy

'[**In** Sydney] Mons. Gonzi was the guest of Cardinal Gilroy…'

In a dedicated section, Stolz/Lestrade/Stolz (2014) account for the *Ø-fi*-alternation in written Maltese, where the phenomenon is commonplace (not only for the static spatial relation of Place but also for the dynamic spatial relation of Goal). This alternation has also been discussed by Saari (2003).

In this talk, we argue that the alternation is not limited to the pair formed by *Ø* and *fi* but extends over at least two further prepositions, namely *ġo* 'in, within, inside' and *ġew(wa)* 'inside, in, within' which are considered variants of each other by Aquilina (1987: 393-394, 409). The same source from which we have drawn examples (1) and (3) also provides evidence of the toponym *Sydney* as complement noun in PPs headed by *ġo* and *ġewwa* as in (4)-(5).

(4)   (Attard 1999: 76)

Skond	*Parnis*	*fl-1929*	*[ġo*	*Sydney]*	*kien*	*hemm madwar*
according_to	Parnis	in:DEF-1929	[**in**	Sydney]	be.PERF there	around
erba' mija u ħamsin		*Malti*	*jaħdmu*		*fl-industrija*	
450		Maltese	3.IMPERF:work:PL		in:DEF-industry	
tat-tiġieġ	*u*	*l-bajd.*				
of:DEF-chicken	and	DEF-egg				

'According to Parnis, in 1929 [**in** Sydney], there were about 450 Maltese working in the chicken and egg industry.'

(5)   (Attard 1999: 127)

waqt	*quddiesa*	*fil-katidral*	*ta'*	*St Mary's*
during	Holy Mass	in:DEF-cathedral	of	St Mary's
[ġewwa	*Sydney]*			
[**inside**	Sydney]			

'…during Holy Mass in St Mary's Cathedral [**in** Sydney]…'

On account of these and numerous similar instances of variation, one may ask

(a) whether the above cases are semantically identical in the first place, and
(b) what the syntactic or other factors are which determine the choice of construction.

As to (a), Borg/Azzopardi-Alexander (1997: 157-158) treat the prepositions *fi, ġo,* and *ġewwa* as functional equivalents of each other as markers of Place (interior, at rest) and Goal (interior, motion

to). Since Ø has been shown to fulfill the same task, the differences between examples (1), (3), (4), and (5) can be considered genuine instances of variation.

The talk sketches the major characteristics of the above fourfold variation with toponymic Grounds on the basis of a quantitative and qualitative analysis of a corpus of modern Maltese prose. We aim at pinpointing those structural and/or functional factors which regulate the variation between Ø, fi, ġo, and ġewwa in order to contribute substantially to our understanding of the grammar of Maltese prepositions.

Abbreviations

DEF = definite article, IMPERF = imperfective, PERF = perfective, PL = plural, PP = prepositional phrase, PPTCPL = passive participle, STG = Special Toponymic Grammar

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