

## The intonation of imperatives and vocatives in Maltese, and a first glance at exclamatives

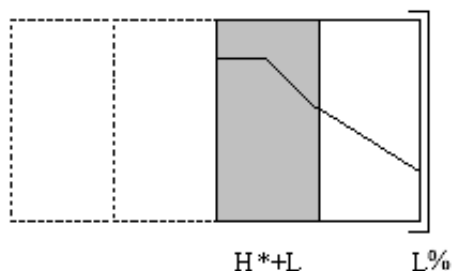
Work on the intonational phonology of Maltese has identified a falling contour which is distinct from the *Typical (declarative) falling contour* schematised below, in that it has a (H)igh peak which is not associated with the stressed syllable, see *Falling contour with “early” H peak* schematisation below.

Originally noted to occur with vocatives and positive tags (Vella 1995), as well as imperatives (“peremptory” rather than polite), and q(uestion)-word interrogatives, this contour has been examined extensively in such qword interrogatives (Vella, 2007, 2011). A recent study (Grice, Vella & Bruggeman, submitted) presents empirical evidence for a proposal that the H peak referred to above be interpreted as a tone which associates with the left word-edge,  $\omega T$ , rather than with either the left boundary or with the lexically stressed syllable. Existence of this type of tonal event is interesting since accounts of the intonational phonologies of different languages to date do not normally include the possibility of both regular pitch accents and word edge tones in one and the same language.

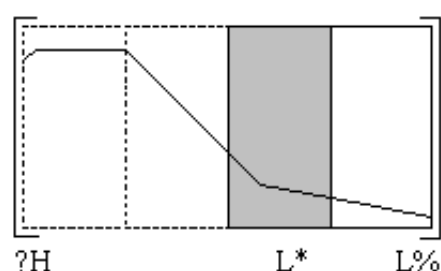
The aims of this paper are twofold. First it sets out to present data involving imperative structures intended to further test the case for a left word-edge tone,  $\omega T$ , in Maltese, keeping in mind different illocutionary functions which can be involved. For example, imperatives in contexts which prompt speakers to revert to using the typical declarative falling contour as an expression of “politeness” will be compared to more “peremptory” imperatives. The paper also briefly examines the intonation of vocatives with a view to establishing the facts about the tonal events involved since the contour involved seems to be more “stable” for this construction.

Second, a preliminary data set of exclamatives (as distinct from exclamations, in the sense established by Rett, 2011) was collated based on examples taken from a variety of descriptions of Maltese (Sutcliffe, 1936; Borg & Azzopardi Alexander, 1997; Mifsud & Borg, 1997). Some examples are *Illallu!* ‘My goodness’, *U ma tarax!* ‘Of course not!’ *X’wahda din!* ‘What a \_\_\_!’ (meanings could vary e.g. ‘hoo-ha’, ‘shame’, ‘wonder’ etc.). Recordings were made of speakers producing these examples in dialogue contexts created for the purposes of this study. This paper reports on the analysis carried with a view to (i) providing a first understanding of the intonation of such expressions; (2) establishing whether the tune involved is the same one as that used in the other constructions examined here, or whether it is a more complex version of this which, for example, uses both the left word-edge association for the H peak noted for the other constructions, and a slight rise at the right edge. An attempt will also be made to explore the idea that differences in illocutionary function correlate with a tune which is more compositional in nature in the case of exclamatives as compared to the other constructions examined here.

*Typical declarative falling contour*



*Falling contour with “early” H peak*



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