

Word formation in Maltese: restrictions in loan derivational suffixes

The features and factors which condition the attachment of different affixes to bases are usually discussed in the domain of word formation (Bauer, 2001). In the literature, these factors, which specify the productivity of individual affixes, are presented as word-formation rules (WFRs) and are categorised into two: constraints, which are of a more general nature, and restrictions, which are language-specific (Gaeta, 2015; Rainer, 2005). The latter result from the interaction of morphology with other components of the language and have recently been investigated in numerous studies (e.g. Katsouda, 2016). Not much has been written on this subject in studies on the morphology of Maltese and this paper is meant to fill in this gap.

In this paper I present an analysis of four loan suffixes, *-uż*, *-ezza*, *-erija* and *-aġni*, by drawing on an extensive corpus of relevant complex formations extracted from the MLRS corpus. The bases with which these suffixes occur are discussed from a phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic perspective. Reference is also made to the concept of blocking, which appears to play a role in the derivational process. Comparing loan formations with local formations, I show that some restrictions have been retained from the source language whilst others have been lost.

Key words: complex word, derivational suffixes, word formation, concatenative morphology, restrictions, local formations

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