

Secondary predication in Maltese

Secondary predication in Maltese has not been explored in any detail (see Mifsud 2014 and Muscat 1921 for some discussion). Generally two types of secondary predication are assumed (see , among others), namely, descriptive (1) and resultative (2).

1. Kiel il-laħam nej
eat.SGM.PERF DEF-meat.SGM raw.SGM
'He ate the meat raw.'
2. Żeba' l-ħajt isfar
paint.SGM.PERF DEF-wall.SGM yellow.SGM
'He painted the wall yellow.'

Moreover, depictive predicates can be subject oriented or object oriented. Thus, (2) is object oriented while (3) is subject oriented.

3. Zeba' l-ħajt għarwien
paint.SGM.PERF DEF-wall.SGM naked.SGM
'He painted the wall naked.'

This study aims to provide a characterisation of secondary predicate construction in Maltese by exploring its semantics and morphosyntax. For example, one question is whether there are restrictions on what can serve as a possible predicate in such constructions and, if so, what are they. For example, to what extent are the following possible, if at all?

4. ?Sa jistad-u l-ibħr-a vojta
FUT fish.PL.IMPERF DEF-sea.PL empty-PL
'They fished the seas empty.'
5. ?Għaffegħ il-kartun-a ta-l-ħalib ċatt-a
squash. SGM.PERF DEF-carton-SGF of- DEF-milk flat- SGF
'He squashed the milk carton flat.'

Another issue concerns agreement, cliticisation and word order (for example, (6a) and (6b)). What is possible and what do the facts suggest about the morpho-syntax of the construction?

- 6a) *Żeba' isfar il-ħajt
paint.SGM.PERF yellow.SGM DEF-wall.SGM
- b) Żebgħ-u isfar il-ħajt
paint.SGM.PERF-3SGM yellow.SGM DEF-wall.SGM

This talk aims to add another piece in the Maltese grammar jigsaw puzzle.

References

- Mifsud, J. (2014) *Il-funzjoni avverbjali fil-Malti*. B.A. thesis, University of Malta.
Muscat, D. (2021) *Il-Funzjoni Avverbjali ta' Forom Agġettivali*. B.A. thesis, University of Malta.