

## The Imperfective Cycle as manifest in Maltese

That the imperfective domain can encapsulate habitual and continuous readings as it expresses the internal temporal structure of a situation is typologically well-known (cf. Comrie (1976)). The same holds true of the Maltese imperfective verb-form, as has been identified in a number of scholarly work. This study delves deeper into the subject by focusing upon the intricate relation that manifests itself between the imperfective form and its association with distinct readings depending on different syntactic contexts. The verb-form's function and distribution is then compared with the distribution of the active participial form and the construction with *qed/qieghed*; two PROGRESSIVE ASPECT-realizing strategies in the grammar. The discussion will be further enhanced by integrating reference to both copular and non-copular structures, while the characterisation of the facts will be reviewed in light of Deo's (2015) Imperfective Cycle.

Two main claims will be argued for: The first is that there exists a major split between copular vs. non-copular structures. Based on the Imperfective Cycle, the structure with *qed/qieghed* displays its most advanced semantic use within the copular context, in contrast to its quasi-strict PROGRESSIVE-realization in non-copular contexts; even if therein, it incidentally displays more advanced morphophonological grammaticalisation. Secondly, matrix vs. embedded syntactic contexts contribute to the imperfective form's association with different stages in its own development. By embedded contexts, reference is here being made to both complement-type embeddings, e.g., *bdejt niekol* lit. 'I start.PFV I eat.IPFV', meaning both: 'I started to eat' and 'I started eating', as well as clausal adjunction of the type exhibited in (1) below:

- (1) Kif kien            j-hewden        hekk,    M ħass            ...  
as be.PFV.3SGM 3-rave.IPFV.SGM like that M feel.PFV.3SGM

As he was raving in this way, M felt ...

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By illustrating how the above two claims pan out in the system, this study will not only contribute to our morphosyntactic knowledge of the Imperfective's domain, but will additionally help us further reconstruct how the change took place and where it targeted what, while lending the grammar a syntactico-semantic test with which to identify syntactic embedding in asyndetic contexts.

## References

- Comrie, B. (1976). *Aspect*. Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Deo, A. (2015). The semantic and pragmatic underpinnings of grammaticalization paths: The progressive to imperfective shift. *Semantics and Pragmatics*, 8:1–52.