Relativisation in Maltese
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1 Introduction

This paper provides a comprehensive description of relative clause structures in standard Maltese, which is a mixed language belonging to the South Arabic branch of Central Semitic, with a Maghrebi/Siculo-Arabic stratum, a Romance (Sicilian, Italian) superstratum and an English adstratum. Where relevant, we draw attention to divergences between standard and dialectal Maltese. We provide detailed discussion of a number of structures which have not received attention in previous literature (including non-restrictives). Our discussion draws on, and substantially extends, the data in Camilleri and Sadler (2011) and Camilleri and Sadler (2012a) to provide a comprehensive overview of relative clause structures in Maltese. To keep the dataset within manageable proportions, we excluded free (headless) relative clauses from consideration here. Within the broader Semitic perspective, our description adds to the relatively substantial literature on relativisation in the Arabic vernaculars, laying the ground work for a better understanding of how Maltese fits into the dialectal spectrum. At several points we make direct cross-dialectal comparisons, in particular in relation to the distribution of gaps and resumptives in relative clauses and the availability of a $wh$-relativisation strategy.

Our paper identifies a number of relative clause types which have largely gone unreported in the literature on Maltese, and provides an initial exploration of their syntax.

The paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 introduces the basic distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses (henceforth RRC and NRRRC respectively), and shows that there are a number of significant differences between these relative clause types in Maltese. Sections 3 and 4 introduce the two major strategies used for relative clause formation. We then go on in section 5 and section 6 to illustrate two further minor or peripheral strategies, to complete our description of Maltese relatives. Section 7 concludes. We use standard Maltese orthography throughout.
2 Distinguishing Restrictive and Non-Restrictive Relative Clauses

This section presents some salient similarities and differences between restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses (RRC and NRRC respectively) in Maltese. Contrary to a previous claim that no distinction exists between these relative clause types in Maltese (Borg and Azzopardi-Alexander, 1997, 37), we will show that the functional difference between them is accompanied by a number of constructional differences.

The basic functional difference between RRCs and NRRCs is that only the former function as intersective modifiers that identify the reference of the head. NRRCs express additional information about a specified entity that is already anchored in the discourse (Downing, 1978; Arnold, 2007).

It follows that RRCs may introduce a contrast set which is available for subsequent anaphoric reference, while NRRCs do not. This difference accounts for the contrast between the infelicity of the continuation in the non-restrictive (1a) and the acceptability of (1b) (from Camilleri and Sadler (2012a)) where the continuation is perfectly felicitous because the (restrictive) relative clause functions to delimit or define the (first) set of books.¹ There is a corresponding difference in the intonational contour associated with the two types of relative clause, in that a NRRC is offset by a prosodic boundary, as indicated orthographically by the commas.²

(1) a. Il-kotba, li xtraj-t-hom ilbierah, tajb-in hafna.
   DEF-book.PL COMP buy.PFV-1SG-3PL.ACC yesterday good-PL a lot
   #L-ohr-ajn mhux hażin.
   DEF-other-PL COP.SGM.NEG bad
   The books, which I bought yesterday are very good. #The others are not bad.

b. Il-kotba li xtraj-t ilbierah, tajb-in hafna.
   DEF-book.PL COMP buy.PFV-1SG yesterday good-PL a lot
   L-ohrajn mhux hażin.
   DEF-other-PL COP.SGM.NEG bad
   The books which I bought yesterday are very good. The others are not bad.

¹See the Appendix for a list of the abbreviations used in this paper.
²Anticipating our discussion of this item, we gloss the element li as COMP (complementiser).
A number of differences concerning the nature of the nominal head also follow from the functional difference between RRCs and NRRCs. A bare proper noun is perfectly acceptable as the anchor for a NRRC (as in (2)); while in general, a RRC cannot modify a bare proper noun, because it denotes an (already specified) individual. Since Maltese allows DEF-marking on a proper noun, the RRC in (3) is possible, typically in a context where there exist more than one man named Mario.

(2) Mario, li dahal issa
    Mario COMP enter.PFV.3SGM now
    Mario, who came in now

(3) il-Mario li dahal issa
    DEF-Mario COMP enter.PFV.3SGM now
    Lit: the Mario that came in now

Both types of relative clauses can have a free pronoun as an antecedent (but naturally enough, exclude a pronominal affix as head). Example (4a) has the intonational contour of a NRRC in which the nominal head is separated from the clause by a prosodic boundary, denoted by the commas offsetting the relative clause. This ‘comma intonation’ is absent in (4b), which suggests that this is structurally a RRC, although clearly the contrast set is people other than the denotation of jien.

(4) a. Lilha, li n-af-ha sew, ma
    her LI I-know.IMPV.SG-3SGF.ACC well NEG
    n-a-gmil-hie-x t’hekk.
    1-FRM.VWL-do.IMPV-3SGF.ACC-NEG of.this
    As for her, who I know very well, I do not associate her with doing this.

b. Jien li ma tant-x n-af-u sew, ukoll
    I LI NEG a.lot-NEG 1-know.IMPV.SG-3SGM.ACC well also
    dejjaq-ni, ahseb u ara int!
    bother.PFV.3SGM-1SG.ACC think.IMP.2SG conj see.IMP.2SG you
    As for me who doesn’t know him, I was also bothered by him, let alone you!

It is claimed in the literature that nominals involving quantified expressions such as each, every, no can occur as anchors of RRCs but not of NRRCs, as reflected
in the judgements in (5) for English from McCawley (1988). McCawley argues on the basis of this contrast that a \textit{NRRC} involves a (null) pronominal rather than a variable (gap) which could be bound by a nominal quantifier.

(5) a. The doctor gave a lollipop to each child that she examined. \textit{RRC}

b. *The doctor gave a lollipop to each child, who she examined. \textit{NRRC}

This is certainly true of negative quantifiers in Maltese, where we observe the same asymmetry: negative quantifier nominals such as \textit{hadd} ‘no one’ and \textit{xejn} ‘nothing’ occur as heads of \textit{RRC}s and not \textit{NRRC}s (see (6) below).

(6) a. Ma kien hemm hadd li ma kon-t-x
\textit{NEG be.PFV.3SGM EXIST no.one COMP NEG be.PFV-1SG-NEG}
naf-u qabel, \textit{il-laqqha.}
\textit{1-know.IMPV.SG-3SGM.ACC before DEF-meeting.SGF}
There was no one that I had not known before, at the meeting. \textit{RRC}

b. *Xejn, li x\textless{t}\textrangle aq-et t-i-sma ma
\textit{nothing COMP want.REFL.PFV-3SGM 3-FRM.VWL-hear.IMPV.SGF NEG}
t-qal.
\textit{PASS-say.PFV.3SGM}
Nothing, that she wanted to hear, was said. \textit{NRRC}

For positive universal quantifiers, we do not find the same pattern, however. The native speaker author of this paper finds examples with the determiner quantifier \textit{kull} ‘all’ in the anchor grammatical for both types of relative clause, as illustrated in (7).\textsuperscript{3}

(7) a. kull tifel, li gie j-kellim-ni
\textit{every boy COMP come.PFV.3SGM 3-speak.IMPV.SGM-1SG.ACC}
every boy, who came to talk to me \textit{NRRC}

b. kull tifel li gie jkellimmi \textit{RRC}

On the other hand, the nominal quantifiers \textit{kulhadd} ‘everyone’ and \textit{kollox} ‘everything’ show a different pattern. Despite the expectation (based on the behaviour

\textsuperscript{3}It should be noted that a native speaker reviewer reports different judgements here, finding (7a), which involves a \textit{NRRC}, ungrammatical, parallel to the English example (5b).
of quantifiers in other languages) that these nominal quantifiers will be acceptable in RRCs but not NRRCs, we find that they are excluded as antecedent of either type of RC, as shown in (8). Instead of the RRC, a free relative must be used, as shown in (10).4

(8) a. *kulhadd, li n-af jien
every.no-one COMP 1-know.IMPV.SG I

Intended: everyone, that I know

b. *kulhadd li n-af jien

(9) a. *kollox li ghid-t-l-ek kien minn-u
all COMP say.PFV-1SG-DAT-2SG be.PFV.3SGM from-3SGM.ACC

Intended: everything that I told you was true

b. *Kollox, li ghid-t-l-ek kien minn-u

(10) a. Kulmin ma lahhaq-x mad-deadline
every.who NEG reply.PFV.3SGM-NEG with.DEF-deadline
gie eskluž.
come.PFV.3SGM excluded.PASS.PTCP.SGM

Whoever did not reply by the deadline was excluded.

b. Kulma ghid-t-l-ek kien minn-u
all.what say.PFV-1SG-DAT-2SG be.PFV.3SGM from-3SGM.ACC

All that I told you was true.

A key issue in the analysis of NRRCS is the question of whether they are syntactically independent of the antecedent head noun, as proposed, for example in radical orphanage accounts (Espinal, 1991; Peterson, 2004), or whether they are syntactically integrated Arnold (2007). A number of behaviours are consistent with the idea that NRRC are independent clauses which are not tightly integrated with the anchor in the syntax (but see Arnold (2007) for arguments that these empirical observations are in fact consistent with a syntactically integrated account of NNRCS). Here we briefly discuss the extent to which these properties also distinguish Maltese RRCs from NRRCS.

4It should be noted that a native speaker reviewer again reports different judgements here, finding the NRRC example (8a) grammatical in this case.
Consider first the interaction of RRCs and NRCs with sentential negation, where the behaviour of NRCs in English is like that of independent clauses. The examples in (11) are both grammatical, while those in (12) are constrasting. The salient reading of (12) has the indefinite scoping inside the negation: thus (12a) is interpreted as saying that it is not the case that Salvu owns a car which has a roof. The oddness of (12b) follows on this scoping, for it involves making a comment about the (non-existing) car. Similar examples with independent clauses are also ungrammatical (see (13)).

(11) a. Salvu ghand-u karozza li ghand-ha saqaf.
    Salvu 3sgm.acc.car.sgf comp at-3sgf.acc roof
    Salvu owns a car which has a roof.  
RRC
b. Salvu ghand-u karozza, li ghand-ha saqaf
    Salvu at-3sgm.acc car.sgf comp at-3sgf.acc roof
    Salvu owns a car, which has a roof.  
NRRC

(12) a. Salvu m’ghand-u-x karozza li ghand-ha saqaf.
    Salvu neg.at-3sgm.acc-neg car.sgf comp at-3sgf.acc roof
    Salvu doesn’t own a car which has a roof.  
RRC
b. *Salvu m’ghand-u-x karozza, li ghand-ha saqaf.
    Salvu neg.at-3sgm.acc-neg car.sgf comp at-3sgf.acc roof
    Salvu doesn’t own a car, which has a roof.  
NRRC

(13) *Salvu mg’hand-u-x karozza. Ghand-ha sunroof.
    Salvu neg.at-3sgm.acc-neg car. At-3sgf.acc sunroof
    Lit: Salvu doesn’t have a car. It has a sunroof.

As in English, NRCs are not limited to nominal anchors, allowing a wider range of antecedents. (14) and (15) are perfectly grammatical, but the RRC counterparts would be completely ungrammatical. Again, the behaviour of the NRC in this regard is similar to that of an independent clause.

(14) Marija poggie-t kollox f’kamrit-ha, li
    Mary place/put.pfv-3sgf all in.room-3sgf.gen comp
    fil-verità kien l-ahjar post fejn setgh-et
    in.def-truth be.pfv.3sgf def-best.compar place where can.pfv-3sgf
    t-a-hbi-hom.  
3-frm.vwl-hide.impv.sgf-3pl.acc

6
Mary put everything in her room, which in all honesty was the best place where she could hide them.

(15) Imbaghad Kim beda j-suq then K start.PFV.3SGM 3-drive.IMPV.SGM j-għaqgħel/bl-addoċċ. li filfatt 3-hurry.IMPV.SGM/with.DEF-random COMP in.DEF.fact n-a-hseb luwa/kien perikuluz hafna. 1-FRM.VW1-think.IMPFV COP.3SGM/be.PFV.3SGM danger.SGM a.lot

Then Kim started driving far too fast, which I think is really dangerous.

Given the evidence we have seen so far of the relative independence of the NRRC from its antecedent, we might expect NRRCs to permit split antecedents, as they do in English examples such as *Kim likes muffins, but Sandy prefers scones, which they eat with jam* (Arnold, 2007, 274). The availability of split antecedence is consistent with a pronominal status for the relative pronoun *which* in such cases. Split antecedence is also possible in Maltese NRRCs: in (16) the wh-phrase *liema frott* ‘which fruit’ is anteceded by *it-tuffie* ‘apple’ and *il-banana* ‘banana’.\(^5\)

(16) Marija t-hobb it-tuffieh filwaqt li Rita Mary 3-love.IMPV.SGF DEF-apple.MASS while COMP Rita t-hobb il-banana, liema frott dejjem 3-love.IMPV.SGF DEF-banana.MASS, which fruit.MASS always j-ieħd-u-h magħ-hom għal-lunch. 3-take.IMPV-PL-3SGM.ACC with-3PL.ACC for-lunch

Mary loves apples, while Rita loves banana, which fruit they always take with them for lunch.

The two types of RCs are also distinct in terms of their interaction with ellipsis, when the relative clause is VP-internal (McCawley, 1982). Here again, this empirical contrast underlines the relative independence of the NRRC (as opposed to the RRC) from its antecedent. In the RRC in (17), the relative clause is understood as forming part of the elided material (given its attachment within the NP). As a consequence the pronoun *-ha* (in the elided material) can be understood as referring to *Marija* or *Rita* (reflecting the distinction between strict and sloppy identity) or as disjoint from both. In (18) on the other hand,

\(^5\)We discuss further this type of ‘internally headed’ NRRC in section 6.
the non-restrictive relative clause is not taken as part of the ellipsis, and hence the pronominal -ha can only refer to Marija (or someone distinct from both Marija and Rita).

(17) Marija gharf-it-u r-ğał el li Mary recognize.PFV-3SGF-3SGM.ACC DEF-man COMP serq-i-l-ğał 1-portmoni, u anke Rita. steal.PFV.3SGM-EPENT.VWL-DAT-3SGF DEF-purse CONJ even Rita
Mary recognised the man who stole her purse and so did Rita. RRC

(18) Marija gharf-it-u r-ğał, li Mary recognize.PFV-3SGF-3SGM.ACC DEF-man COMP serq-i-l-ğał 1-portmoni, u anke Rita. steal.PFV.3SGM-EPENT.VWL-DAT-3SGF DEF-purse CONJ even Rita
Mary recognised the man, who stole her purse, and so did Rita.

Another difference between NRRCs and RRCs is that while NRRC may be stacked, as in (19), this is not possible with RRCs. Moreover, while the two types of RCS co-occur, the RRC must linearly precedes the NRRC, as in (20), again consistent with a difference in syntactic representation between the two types of relative clause.

(19) it-tifel, li soltu n-a-ra-h l-iskola, DEF-boy COMP usually 1-FRM.VWL-see.IMPV.SG-3SGM.ACC DEF-school li j-kun liebes dejjem sabih, li COMP 3-be.IMPV.SGM wear.ACT.PTCP.SGM always nice.SGM COMP n-af-u 1-omm-u 1-know.IMPV-PL ACC mother-3SGM.GEN
the boy, who I usually see at school, who always dresses nicely, whose mother we know..... NRRC: CS 2012a: 4

(20) it-tifel li n-af jien, li j-o-qghod DEF-boy COMP 1-know.IMPV.SG I COMP 3-FRM.VWL-live.IMPV.SG fejn-i, ... near-1SG.ACC
the boy who I know, beside whom I live... CS 2012a: 4

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6 One native speaker reviewer found the NRRC in (18) unacceptable, while the native speaker author of the present paper finds it fully grammatical. We have no explanation for this divergence in grammaticality judgements.
Beyond the differences outlined above, RRCs and NRRC share a number of clear commonalities both in terms of internal structure and in terms of the distribution of different relative clause formation strategies across the two functional types. The full range of grammatical functions are available to relativisation in each type of relative clause, including subject (SUBJ), object (OBJ), recipient/goal indirect object (TOBJ), secondary (theme) object in a double object construction (DOBJ2), the object of a preposition (OBL OBJ), oblique, adjunct and the possessor functions (OBL, ADJ and POSS respectively). In the following two sections we look in detail at the internal structure of the relative clause and the two major RC formation strategies, treating RRC and NRRC together and pointing out differences (in the distribution of different morphosyntactic strategies) as appropriate.

3 The complementiser strategy

The relative clauses in the examples above are all introduced by the element li ‘that’, which we take to be a cognate of the forms yalli/alli/illi/lli found in relative clauses in the modern Arabic dialects. In very formal speech, the form illi may sometimes occur in place of li. Diachronically, it may be that li has derived from the relative pronoun which persists as allaβi (and paradigmatically related forms) in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), and indeed several grammars do in fact refer to li as a relative pronoun (Sutcliffe (1936, 183), Aquilina (1973, 295)). One important difference between Maltese and Arabic dialects is that there is no counterpart in Maltese to the Arabic complementiser ?inna ‘that’ (used in declarative subordinate clauses); Maltese makes use of li to correspond both to yalli/alli/illi/lli and ?inna. In fact there is no good reason for arguing that the li used in Maltese RCS is distinct from the li used elsewhere in subordinate clauses, which sources agree in treating as a complementiser (or subordinator, as they call it) (Fabri, 1987; Borg, 1991, 1994; Borg and Azzopardi-Alexander, 1997). We therefore treat li as a complementiser. The literature on the modern Arabic dialects takes various positions on the cognate yalli/alli/illi/lli.

Note that the syntactic behaviour of these cognate elements is not necessarily identical across the range of Arabic vernaculars.

While we may want to extend this claim for the use of li in free relative clauses as well, we restrict attention here to RRCs and NRRCs, and will leave any claim with respect to free relative clauses for future research.
Brustad (2000:104) refers to it as a complementiser, yet treats it as a relative pronoun in its relative clause use (p. 90). A number of analyses, including Nouhi (1996), Aoun (2000) and Aoun et al. (2010), and Alqurashi (2013) for Moroccan, Lebanese, and Hijazi Arabic respectively, take the corresponding element in relative clauses to be a complementiser.

One significant fact favouring the complementiser over the pronominal analysis is the impossibility of pied-piping a preposition alongside li. This is illustrated in the contrast in grammaticality between (21) and (22).

\[(21) \text{it-tifel li kon-t miegh-u} \]
\[
\text{DEF-boy COMP be.PFV-1SG with-3SGM.ACC}
\]
\[\text{the boy that I was with}\]

\[(22) *\text{it-tifel ma’ li kon-t} \]
\[
\text{DEF-boy with COMP be.PFV-1SG}
\]
\[\text{Intended: the boy who I was with}\]

Combinations of a preposition (or other element) with the form li are nevertheless found in Maltese, introducing a range of adjunct clauses (Borg and Azzopardi-Alexander, 1997, 38-48). Some examples are provided in (23)-(27), and others include the fused forms talli ‘of.li’ (‘since/because’) (mentioned in (Sutcliffe, 1936, 183), filli ‘in.li’ (‘sometimes’) and halli ‘hortative/injunctive ha+li’ (‘so that, let’s’) (Vanhove, 2000, 235).

\[(23) \text{Irlaq i_ gri } [malli t-i-smag-ni]! \]
\[
\text{leave.IMP.2SG run.IMP.2SG with.LI 2-FRM.VWL-hear.IMPV.SG-1SG.ACC}
\]
\[\text{Go running as soon as you hear me! BAA: 39}\]

\[(24) \text{U n-e-rğgh-u } [ghalli kon-na qabel l-1964]. \]
\[
\text{CONJ 1-FRM.VWL-repeat.IMPV.SG for.LI be.PFV-1PL before DEF-1964}
\]
\[\text{And we go back to how we were before 1964. MLRS}\]

\[(25) \text{[Billi ma staj-t-x n-i-hem]}, \]
\[
\text{with/through.LI NEG can.PFV-1SG-NEG 1-FRM.VWL-understand.IMPV.SG}
\]
\[\text{ma j-fissir-x li jien iblah. NEG 3-mean.IMPV.SGM-NEG COMP I ignorant.SGM}\]

\[^9\text{Another argument put forward in support of the complementiser analysis of alladi (and related inflecting forms) in MSA is the fact that the Case expressed by alladi reflects the Case of the antecedent, rather than that assigned within the relative clause (Alqurashi, 2013, 76), (Jassim, 2011, 9). This is not relevant to Maltese.}\]
Even though/if I couldn’t understand, it doesn’t mean that I am ignorant.

(26) Ahjar uff milli ahh.
    better.COMPAR uff(groan) from.LI ahh (moan of hurt)
    Better to groan in discontent rather than moan in pain. (Maltese
    Proverb)

(27) t-i-sta’
    t-waqqaf il-brawżer
    2-FRM.VWL-can.IMPV.SG 2-stop.CAUSE.IMPV.SG DEF-browser.SGM
    tiegb-ek [milli j-a-ghmel]...
    of-2SG.ACC from.LI 3-FRM.VWL-do.IMPV.SG
    you can stop your browser from doing ...

A plausible hypothesis is that these synchronically fused complementising elements which introduce adjunct clauses have developed diachronically through the lexicalization of PPs (and possibly li may have been a wh-pronoun at that stage). In section 4 we discuss some similar lexicalisations including prepositional heads, in relation to the wh-pronoun strategy for relative clause formation in Maltese.

The complementising element milli, which introduces ‘from’ and ‘instead of’ adjunct clauses in (26)-(27), may also introduce RCs: see (28) for a RRC and (29) and (30) for NRRCs. In relation to these relative clause cases we refer to milli as a partitive complementiser, whose interpretation is derived from a fusion of minn ‘from’ with li.

(28) Ghoġb-ok xi ktieb milli ġib-t-l-ek?
    like.PFV.3SGM-2SG.ACC some book.SGM from.LI bring.PFV-1SG-DAT-2SG
    Did you like any book from (the ones) that I got you? RRC

(29) Fadal-l-ek past-i, milli sajjar-t-l-ek jien?
    Do you still have (some) buns, from those I baked?
    NRRC: CS 2012a: 7 (fn. 2)

10Our native speaker reviewer found (29) ungrammatical, while the native speaker author finds it perfectly grammatical. We cannot account for these strongly divergent views. (30) is a further example, from the web – it is abundantly clear from the context that this is a non-restrictive example.
Does she have a book of recipes in Maltese, from (the ones) which Petra does? Thanks. I send greetings to you.

The possibility of using *milli* in RCs is noted in Sutcliffe (1936, 183), who provides the example in (31), but is not mentioned in any subsequent literature. However his example (31) is actually a headless (or free) relative clause, since there is no nominal head external to the RC. A corresponding headed example is (32).

(31) barra milli ghid-na, ...
    out from.LI say.PFV-1PL
    apart from what we said ...
    Sutcliffe 1936: 183

(32) barra mill-kliem li ghid-na, ...
    out from.DEF-word.PL COMP say.PFV-1PL
    apart from the words which we said, ...

*Li* occurs as the complementising element in a range of other adjunct clauses as part of expressions such as *waqt li/ filwaqt li* ‘while’, *tant li* ‘so much so’, *hekk li* ‘such that’, *apparti li* ‘apart from that’, *once li* ‘once that’, *wara li* ‘after’, *bejn li* ‘between’, *dment li* ‘on condition that’. Additionally, it introduces embedded complements to verbs of thinking and telling (33), noun complements and factive clauses (34), and cleft and focus constructions (35).

(33) a. N-a-hseb li n-af-u.
    1-FRM.VWL-think.IMPV.SG COMP 1-know.IMPV.SG-3SGM.ACC
    I think that I know him.

b. Qal-u-li li wasl-u.
    say.PFV.3-PL-DAT-1SG COMP arrive.PFV.3-PL
    They told me that they arrived.  
    cs 2012a: 5
In the following section, we discuss the distribution of gaps and resumptive pronouns in relative clauses using the complementiser strategy.

### 3.1 Resumptive Pronouns and Gaps

The complementiser strategy occurs with both resumptive pronouns (RPs) and gaps at the relativised/within-clause position in both RRCS and NRRCS. The personal pronominal forms of Maltese are given in Table 1. The bound forms in the third column, headed ‘Bound DAT/IOBJ’ are typically used for recipients, goals and beneficiaries and other sorts of dative arguments. The strong forms in the final column correspond to both ACC and DAT bound forms. The bound forms in Table 1 and also (in some cases) the strong SUBJ(NOM) forms are used as RPs.\(^{11}\)

As noted above, Maltese allows relativisation on a wide range of within clause functions. We illustrate the use of the gap strategy by a simple SUBJ example.

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\(^{11}\)Resumptive pronouns occur in a range of other unbounded dependency constructions, including topicalisation, tough constructions, and interrogative constructions but our focus here is solely on relative clauses.
Table 1: Pronominal Forms in Maltese

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NOM/SUBJ</th>
<th>Bound ACC/OBJ</th>
<th>Bound DAT/IOBJ</th>
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<td>-ni</td>
<td>-l-ni</td>
<td>lili</td>
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<td>int</td>
<td>-(V)k</td>
<td>-l-Vk</td>
<td>lilek</td>
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<td>huma</td>
<td>-hom</td>
<td>-l-hom</td>
<td>lilihom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(36) it-tifel li hareġ issa  
DEF-boy COMP go.out.PFV.3SGM now  
the boy that just went out RRC

(37) il-forn, li hnej-na l-hobż fi-h  
DEF-oven COMP bake.PFV-1PL DEF-bread in-3SGM.ACC  
the oven, in which we baked the bread NRRC CS 2012a: 8

As we will see, the RP and gap strategies in Maltese are not in strict complementary distribution, as they may be used interchangeably in some relativised positions. This means that it would be incorrect to characterise resumption as a strategy of last resort (Aoun, 2000) in Maltese relative clauses (and this in turn has ramifications for theoretical analyses, see for example Camilleri and Sadler (2011)). Indeed, if we restrict our attention to the complementiser strategy of relative clause formation, the distribution bears out McCloskey (2011)’s intuition (for Irish) that resumptive and gap are in free variation except where constraints on movement (in his framework) independently rule out the use of a gap.

Relativisation on the highest SUBJ within the relative clause obligatorily involves the gap strategy (in the sense that a NOM pronominal form may not be used) in both RRCs and NRRCs. This indicates that Maltese RPS are subject to an anti-locality condition in the form of the familiar Highest Subject Restriction.

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12For completeness, we note that a reviewer disagrees with our grammatical judgement, finding (37) ungrammatical on the intended NRRC reading. This is orthogonal to the issue of the presence of the resumptive, which is always required for objects of prepositions.
In long-distance relativisation, however, both the gap and the RP strategies are grammatical. Contrast (38) with (39).

(38) it-tifel li (*hu) ra-ni lbierah  
DEF-boy COMP (*he) see.PVF.3SGM-1SG.ACC yesterday  
the boy who saw me yesterday  

(39) it-tifel, li qal-u-l-i  
DEF-boy COMP say.PVF.3-PL-DAT-1SG COMP he be.PVF.3SGM ra-hom lbierah  
see.PVF.3SGM-3PL.ACC yesterday  
the boy, whom they told me that he had seen them yesterday  

If relativisation targets one conjunct in a coordinated subject a RP is required:

(40) Ir-ra_ gel li Marija u hu ghad-hom kemm siefr-u  
DEF-man COMP Mary conj he still-3PL.ACC how travel.PVF.3-PL flinkien, j-a-hdem magh-ha.  
together 3-FRM.VWL-work.IMPV.SGM with-3SGF.ACC  
The man that Mary and him have just been abroad together, works with her.

The distribution of gaps and resumptives for subject relatives is identical to that in a number of Arabic vernaculars, including Moroccan (MA), at least for RRCs (there is no relevant NRRC date available in the literature):

(41) a. l-wlad lli mša l-Hariğ  
DEF-boy COMP go.PVF.3SGM to-abroad  
the boy that went abroad  

13It is possible to have a type of epithetic phrase in the highest subject position in both types of relative clause.

(ii) Ir-ra_ gel, li ja baghal l’hu rebah elf ewro, qas  
DEF-man COMP VOC male COMP.he win.PVF.3SGM thousand euro NEG  
ta-ni ewro minn-hom!  
give.PVF.3SGM-1SG.ACC euro from-3PL.ACC  
The man, i.e. (my husband), who the-ox-he-is won a thousand euros, didn’t give me even a single euro.
b. l-wlad lli danni-t blli (huwwa) msha  
def-boy COMP think.PVF-2SG COMP (he) go.PVF.3SGM  
l-Hariq  
to-abroad  
the boy that you thought that went abroad  MA RRC Nouhi 1994: 10

c. r-ragqal lli huwwa u mart-u msha-w l-Hariq  
def-man COMP he CONJ wife-3SGM.GEN go.PVF.3-PL to-abroad  
the man that he and his wife went abroad  MA RRC Nouhi 1994: 11

The distribution of RPs in Maltese is not completely identical in RRCs and NRRCs involving object relativisation. RRCs on the OBJ function permit both gap and resumptive in free variation, with one exception: a resumptive is not possible in a short-distance OBJ RRC with a definite or quantified head. (42) and (43) exemplify long relativisation and (44) shows the optional presence of a resumptive in a short-distance RRC with an indefinite head.

(42) kull tifel lli hsib-t lli kellim-t-(u)  
every boy COMP think.PVF-1SG COMP speak.PVF-1SG-(3SGM.ACC)  
lbiera  
yesterday  
every boy that I thought I spoke to yesterday  RRC CS 2011: 112

(43) Sab-u speci t’ghadam li j-a-hsb-u  
find.PVF.3-PL species of bone.PL COMP 3-FRM.VWL-think-IMPV-PL  
li hadd ma ddokumenta-(hom) qabel.  
COMP no.one NEG document.PVV.3SGM-(3PL.ACC) before  
They found a species of bones that they think that no one has documented before.  RRC

(44) Tifel li n-af-(u) sew ghadda  
boy COMP 1-know.IMPV.SG-(3SGM.ACC) well pass.PVF.3SGM  
mill-ezami.  
from.DEF-exam  
A boy that I know well passed the exam.  RRC

(44) contrasts with examples involving a definite or quantified head, where only the gap strategy is possible. If some sort of anti-locality condition is responsible for this pattern, it must be one which is sensitive to features of the antecedent.
I met with the boy he spoke to yesterday.

She saw every boy Mary knows.

Turning now to NRRCs, long-distance object relativisation allows both the gap and the RP strategy, just as the RRCs do. NRRCs do not show the restriction on the distribution of RPs in short-distance (object) NRRCs seen in (45)-(46): they occur freely irrespective of the nature of the anchor. A resumptive is required in (short-distance) relativisation if the antecedent is a proper noun referring to a human (presumably for reasons connected to some sort of pragmatic salience), as the contrast between (49) and (50) illustrates.
Marija, li ghid-t-l-ek li n-af-(ha)
Mary, COMP say.PFV-1SG-DAT-2SG COMP 1-know.IMPF-3SGF.ACC
sew
well
Mary, whom I told you that I know very well

The material is not available in the literature to compare the Maltese pattern of distribution in NRRCS with that of any Arabic vernacular, but some comparison is possible in the case of RRCs. Both Nouhi (1996) (for Moroccan Arabic) and Alqurashi (2013) (for Hijazi Arabic) report a relationship between definiteness and the distribution of gaps in short-distance relative dependencies on the OBJ. A RP is necessary in all relativised long-distance OBJ positions, irrespective of the antecedent’s definiteness, but in short-distance relativisation involving the highest OBJ a gap is optionally available when the antecedent is definite, while a RP is obligatory when the antecedent is indefinite. The examples (51)-(53) illustrate.

(51) l-ktab lli danni-t blli nsit-i-h
DEF-book COMP think.PFV-2SG COMP forget.PFV-1SG-3SGM.ACC
f-l-qsam
in-DEF-class
the book that you thought you forgot in class NRRC CS 2012a: 7

(52) ġbar-t l-ktab lli nsi-ti-(h) f-l-qsam
find.PFV-1SG DEF-book COMP forget.PFV-1SG-3SGM.ACC in-DEF-class
I found the book that I forgot in class NRRC Nouhi 1994: 10

(53) ġbar-t wahd l-ktab lli nsi-ti-h
find.PFV-1SG one DEF-book COMP forget.PFV-1SG-3SGM.ACC
f-l-qsam
in-DEF-class
I found a book that I forgot in class NRRC Nouhi 1994: 12

Relativising upon the recipient or goal/indirect object in-clause function in Maltese involves a further difference between RRCs and NRRCS concerning the distribution of gaps and RPs. In Standard Maltese, relativisation on the recipient or goal/indirect object function always involves a RP, in both RRCs and NRRCS, and in cases of both short-distance and long-distance relativisation.
(54) Pawlu, li bghat-nie*(l-u) l-ittra
Paul COMP send.PFV-1PL-DAT-3SGM DEF-letter
Paul, who we sent the letter to

(55) Ir-raĝel li kien-u qed j-a-hsb-u li
DEF-man COMP be.PFV.3-PL PROG 3-FRM.VWL-think.IMPV-PL COMP
ma baght-u-l-u-x l-ittra, weġib-ni.
NEG send.PFV.3-PL-DAT-3SGM-NEG DEF-letter reply.PFV.3SGM-1SG.ACC

The man that they had thought that they hadn’t sent him the letter,
replied.

In the non-Standard variety, on the other hand, a minor difference emerges
between RRCS and NRRCs, as it is possible to have a gap in short-distance RRCS.14

As mentioned above, Maltese allows relativisation on a wide range of functions,
including the OREP (see (37) above and (56)), the POSS within NP (57) and the
secondary object in a double object construction (58). While the OREP and
POSS in-clause GFs require the obligatory presence of a RP, as in other Arabic
dialects, relativisation on the secondary object in a double object construction
obligatorily involves a gap. Example (59) shows that the same is true of MA.15

(56) il-flus li kulhadd j-a-hdem
DEF-money COMP every.no.one 3-FRM.VWL-work.IMPV.SGM
ghal-i-hom
for-EPENT.VWL-3PL.ACC
the money that everyone works for

(57) it-tarbija, li n-af 'l omm-ha
DEF-baby COMP 1-know.IMPV.SG ACC mother-3SGF.GEN
the baby, whose mother I know

(58) il-grammatika li ghid-t-l-li ghallim-t-hom
DEF-grammar COMP say.PFV-1SG-DAT-2SG teach.PFV-1SG-3PL.ACC
the grammar that I told you I taught them

---

14 As we proceed, we will note in passing a number of other differences between the Standard
and dialectal Maltese varieties.

15 Brustad (2000, 108-109) presents (59) as a case of OBJ relativisation, but since the recipient
is expressed by means of the object pronominal affix -ni we analyze this as a double object
construction.
The following summarises the pattern of distribution of RP and gap pattern for *li* RRCs and NRRCs in short-distance and long-distance relativisation.\(^\text{16}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GF</th>
<th>RRC Short Dist</th>
<th>Long Dist</th>
<th>NRC Short Dist</th>
<th>Long Dist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subj OBI</td>
<td>GAP</td>
<td>GAP/RP</td>
<td>GAP</td>
<td>GAP/RP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Def/Quant Obj</td>
<td>GAP</td>
<td>GAP/RP</td>
<td>GAP/RP</td>
<td>GAP/RP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indef Obj</td>
<td>GAP/RP</td>
<td>GAP/RP</td>
<td>GAP/RP</td>
<td>GAP/RP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obj2</td>
<td>GAP</td>
<td>GAP</td>
<td>GAP/RP</td>
<td>GAP/RP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iOBJ</td>
<td>GAP/RP</td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>RP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oprep</td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>RP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poss</td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>RP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{\text{i}}\): A gap is permitted only in dialectal Maltese

Table 2: The distribution of gaps and RPs in RRCs and NRRCs in Maltese

For purposes of cross-dialectal comparison, we provide an additional table providing a comparison of the distribution of RP and gap in Maltese RRCs with that in Moroccan Arabic RRCs, drawing primarily on Nouhi (1996) and Brustad (2000). This shows an identical pattern of gap/RP distribution in non-direct object functions, while the gap strategy extends further into types of direct object function in Maltese than it does in Moroccan Arabic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GF</th>
<th>MT RRC Short Dist</th>
<th>Long Dist</th>
<th>MA RRC Short Dist</th>
<th>Long Dist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subj OBI</td>
<td>GAP</td>
<td>GAP/RP</td>
<td>GAP</td>
<td>GAP/RP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Def Obj</td>
<td>GAP</td>
<td>GAP/RP</td>
<td>GAP/RP</td>
<td>RP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indef Obj</td>
<td>GAP/RP</td>
<td>GAP/RP</td>
<td>GAP/RP</td>
<td>GAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obj2</td>
<td>GAP</td>
<td>GAP</td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>RP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oprep</td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>RP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poss</td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>RP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: The distribution of gaps and RPs in RRCs in MT and MA

Where relevant examples are given, a distributional pattern similar to that of MA is reported in Alqurashi (2013) for Hijazi Arabic. However, strict complementarity is reported for the distribution of gap/RP in some other Arabic

\(^{\text{16}}\)Note that we use iOBJ to refer to the (dative-marked) recipient or goal function and Obj2 for the theme object of a double object construction.
dialects, including Latakian Syrian Arabic (Shaheen, 2012, 61) and Iraqi Arabic (Jassim, 2011).

The whole of this discussion thus far, and the basic distribution of gaps and RPs summarised in Table 2, abstracts away from contexts in which other factors intervene and require the use of RPs. The most notable cases where gaps are systematically excluded are of course the island constraints. Resumptive pronouns are used in syntactic islands in Maltese. (60) and (61) illustrate the fully grammatical use of an RP in relation to the Complex NP Constraint and the Wh-Island Constraint respectively.17

(60) Ir-ragel li n-af il-mara li
def-man COMP 1-know.IMPV.SG DEF-woman COMP
 t-hobb-u, j-ism-u Mario.
3-love.IMPV.SGM-3SGM.ACC 3-name.IMPV.SGM-3SGM.ACC Mario

The man who I know the woman that loves (him), is named Mario.

(61) il-mara li int rid-t t-kun t-af
def-woman COMP you want.PFV-2SG 2-be.IMPV.SG 2-know.IMPV.SG
min ra-ha
who see.PFV.3SGM-3SGF.ACC

the woman that you wanted to know who saw her

A further context where a resumptive is required, even when it would otherwise be excluded, is when the relativised position is also the target of clause-internal topicalisation. Discussion of this aspect of Maltese syntax itself would take us too far afield, but the interaction with RCs is illustrated in (62), a relative clause where otherwise we would expect a gap, given that the antecedent is associated with the highest definite (quantified) OBJ.

(62) kull mara li lilha ma ta-w-hie-x rigal
every woman COMP her NEG give.PFV.3-PL-3SGF.ACC-NEG present

every woman that (as for her) they didn’t give (her) a present

17 A reviewer disagrees with the grammaticality judgement in (60), which we find extremely puzzling.
4 The wh-pronoun strategy

In this section we outline the characteristics of the wh-pronoun strategy for RCs in Maltese, a strategy which has been largely ignored in the previous literature. The major contemporary descriptive grammar of Maltese (Borg and Azzopardi-Alexander, 1997) makes no mention of the use of wh-pronouns in relativisation, while the earlier grammars of Aquilina (1973, 295,337) and Sutcliffe (1936, 183) allude briefly to ma ‘what’ and min ‘who’ as relative pronouns (Sutcliffe refers in passing to ma as the ‘neuter relative’ pronoun (p. 183)).

We start by considering the distribution of this wh-strategy in Standard Maltese. At first sight the wh-strategy appears to be used only in examples involving relativisation on the object of a preposition. The prepositional phrase may function as an oblique or as an adjunct, in both RRCs and NRRCs. (63) and (64) have the wh-pronoun min ‘who’, because the antecedent/anchor is human. In all of the following examples, the fronted material within the relative clause is shown in boldface.

(63) (ir)-ragel ma'/fejn/ghand min hsb-t li
raj-t-ek
see.PFV-1SG COMP
the/a man with/near/next to whom I thought I saw you
RRC CS 2011: 114

(64) Franco u Carl, hdejn min spjegaj-t-l-i li
Franco CONJ Carl near who explain.PFV-2SG-DAT-1SG COMP
poq'qaj-t sit.PFV-2SG
Franco and Carl, next to whom you explained to me that you sat
NRRCS 2012a: 11

Equivalent examples are found with the wh-item xiex ‘what’ and non-human antecedents, also involving relativisation on the OBJ within a prepositional oblique or adjunct, in both RRCs and NRRCs.

18 Although see Camilleri and Sadler (2011) and Camilleri and Sadler (2012a) for some discussion.
The beams on which the bells are hung rusted.

The *wh*-item *fejn* ‘where’ may occur alone, or within a fronted PP, as shown in the examples (67)-(69).

In all the examples above, we find the *wh*-strategy with an obligatory gap.\(^\text{19}\)

The fact that the *wh*-pronoun + gap strategy in the standard language seems to be only limited to prepositional OBLs and ADJs is interesting in terms of the expectations following from the Accessibility Hierarchy (Keenan and Comrie, 1977, 650), since (unusually) the strategy is apparently confined to positions low on the hierarchy.

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\(^{19}\)Resumptive pronouns are not totally excluded with the *wh*-strategy, however, for they occur in strong islands and other contexts where gaps are systematically excluded, such as relativisation on non-selected datives.
Note however that, as we will see below, this picture as it stands will turn out to be over-simplified.

Although most Arabic vernaculars do not make use of a wh-strategy in headed RRCs and NRRCs, the use of the wh-strategy with obliques and adjuncts in the standard variety of Maltese finds a striking parallel with the Western dialects of Moroccan Arabic (MA) and Algerian Arabic (AA). According to Harrell (1962, 162) for MA, the non-human OBJ wh-pronoun as, which is also an indefinite specific marker (as in Maltese), is found together with the preposition f ‘in’ or b ‘with, by means of’. (71a) illustrates this use of the wh-strategy as an alternative to the non-wh-pronoun strategy, shown in (71b). Similar data for Algerian Arabic (AA) is given in Guella (2010, 104): as well as the prepositions b ‘with’ and f ‘in’ preceeding as, the preposition yla ‘on’ also occurs in a fronted wh-phrase, as illustrated in (72a). Again, the complementiser with RP strategy is an alternative, shown in (72b).

(71) a. le-mkohla b-as qtel-t s-sbeq
DEF-rifle with-what kill.PFV-1SG DEF-lion
the rifle that I killed the lion with

b. ha le-mkohla lli qtel-t bi-ha s-sbeq
here’s DEF-rifle.SGF COMP kill.PFV-1SG with-3SGF.ACC DEF-lion
Here’s the rifle that I killed the lion with. MA Harrell 1962: 164

(72) a. el-metra ylaas neys-u kbir
DEF-mattress.SGM on-what sleep.PFV.3-PL large.SGM
The mattress they slept on is big.

b. el-metra elli neys-u ylih kbir
DEF-mattress.SGM COMP sleep.PFV.3-PL on-3SGM.ACC large.SGM
The mattress they slept on is big. AA Guella 2010: 104

Brustad (2000: 106) states that the wh-pronoun relativisation strategy in MA is limited to ‘oblique objects of low individuation whose semantic role is generally locative or temporal’. However, this claim is challenged by data such as (73) from MA, with the human wh-pronoun mn ‘who’ (Nouhi, 1996, 11) (compare the similar Maltese example in (63) above). Again, the alternative lli and RP strategy is equally possible. Parallel examples for AA are given in (74).
(73) a. ir-ra'gal m'ya mn m's-t
   DEF-man with who walk.PFV-1SG
   the man with whom I walked

b. ir-ra'gal lli m's-t m'ya-h
   1DEF-man COMP walk.PFV-1SG with-3SGM.ACC
   the man that I walked with

MA Nouhi 1994: 11

(74) a. el-wl'ad m'yä-men ddähz-u
   DEF-boy.PL with-who fight.PFV.3-PL
   the boys with whom they fought

b. el-wl'ad elll ddähz-u m'yä-hum
   DEF-boy.PL COMP fight.PFV.3-PL with-3PL.ACC
   the boys who they fought with

AA Guella 2010: 105

Examples (68)-(69) above illustrate the wh-strategy with fejn ‘where’. This usage is also found in the Western dialects of MA and AA. Brustad (2000, 108) refers to the use of the ‘interrogative particle’ fin in MA providing the relative clause example in (75), and Guella (2010, 105) gives examples of the use of the wh-pronoun -ayen ‘where, which’ in AA, occurring with a variety of prepositions (and giving rise to reduced/unreduced pairs such as f-ayen - f-in ‘in what/where’ and mn-ayen - mn-in ‘from what/where’).

(75) w yatkabh-lu  yıla l-bläsa fin gäls hüwa w
   CONJ he-throw-up on DEF-place where sit.ACT.PRT.SGM he CONJ
   l-mra dyälu w  wläd-u
   DEF-wife of-his CONJ children-his
   ... and threw up on the place where he’s sitting, he and his wife and children

MA Brustad 2000:108

(76) a. el-bäb mn-ayen duxl-u zd'id
   DEF-door.SGM from-which enter.PFV.3-PL new.SGM
   The door through which they entered is new.

b. el-bäb elll duxl-u menn-u zd'id
   DEF-door COMP enter.PFV.3-PL from-3SGM.ACC new.SGM
   The door through which they entered is new.

AA Guella 2010: 105

25
The baths where they went is far.

Several P+wh-pronoun combinations have become lexicalised in Maltese to the extent that we might consider them synchronically to be single words.\(^{20}\) An exhaustive list of these elements is given in (78). These (fused) words to function as wh-forms in both interrogative and relative constructions, corresponding to oblique and adjunctival functions. Three further forms (which all mean ‘why’) occur as interrogative wh-elements but do not introduce RCs: ghallxiex lit ‘for what’; ghalfejn lit: ‘for where’ and the Southern dialectal form ghalfex lit: ‘for in what’, which diachronically seems to have fused two Ps along with the original wh-pronoun.\(^{21}\)

\[(78)\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{fuqxiex} &> \text{ fuqx} \text{ xiex} & \text{‘on what’} \\
\text{fiex} &> \text{ f}’\text{xiex} & \text{‘in what’} \\
\text{biex} &> b’\text{xiex} & \text{‘with what’} \\
\text{miex} &> \text{ min xiex} & \text{‘from what’} \\
\text{ghalxiex} & & \text{‘for what’} \\
\text{mnejn} &> \text{ minn fejn} & \text{‘from where’}
\end{align*}
\]

Standard and dialectal Maltese share the use of the forms in (78), the wh-pronoun fejn ‘where’ used for locative obliques and adjuncts (ADJS), and the use of wh-pronouns xiex and min as objects of prepositions (in cases of relativisation on OPREP functions), all of which are illustrated above.

Dialectal varieties such as North-Eastern Naxxar differ markedly from standard Maltese in extending the use of the wh-pronoun strategy to relativisation on direct (term) grammatical functions, provided that the antecedent is definite or specific. This includes a very restricted use of ma ‘what’ (in RCs only) and fully productive use of min ‘who’ and ‘l min ‘who.ACC’. The use of ma in RCs is as far as we are aware limited to fixed phrases such as the one in (79), which is a dialectal form and in which the antecedent is always hekk.

\(^{20}\)The same might also be true of the ma bāš and fāš, and the AA counterparts and other such pronominal combinations.

\(^{21}\)Note that the fused forms (on the left in (78)) are to be distinguished from the forms on the right such as b’xiex ‘with what’. Although Borg and Azzopardi-Alexander (1997, 23) label b’xiex as an ‘instrument question-word’ (our emphasis), a form such as this involves procliticisation of the preposition bi ‘with’ onto the wh-pronoun xiex and the combination is still syntactically transparent. The fused forms on the right, on the other hand, are syntactically opaque.
Borg and Azzopardi-Alexander (1997, 36) mention the availability of the ‘element ma’ instead of li in ‘the case of some (largely fixed) expressions’, and give the examples in (80), from Standard Maltese (and also found in dialectal Maltese). However we would analyse these differently, as one of a number of uses of ma in which it does not correspond to a wh-pronoun in a vanilla RRC or NRRC. We consider that phrases such as ma ra (‘MA see.PFV.3SGM’) and ma telaq (‘MA leave.PFV.3SGM’) in (80) are probably best analysed as free relatives, aligning ourselves with the discussion of ?awwalu ma ‘the first of what’ in MSA in Badawi et al. (2003, 254).22 (Note that this use of ma is also present in a number of Arabic vernaculars Brustad (2000, 90).) Apart from examples such as (80), ma is also found in the quantified pronominal kulma ‘all that’ introducing free relatives. Ma is not however part of the synchronic inventory of interrogative pronouns.

(80) a. L-ewwel ma ra kien-u l-kart-i
    DEF-first MA see.PFV.3SGM be.PFV.3-PL DEF-paper-PL
    PASS.PTCP-overturned-PL
    The first thing he saw were the overturned papers.

b. L-ahhar ma telaq kien il-kaptan.
    DEF-last MA leave.PFV.3SGM be.PFV DEF-captain
    The last to leave was the captain.  BAA 1997: 36

Two other uses of ma (in both Standard and dialect) may be related to the pronominal form ma (see Badawi et al. (2003, 521-538) for extensive discussion of the related MSA forms). The first is what Badawi et al. (2003) take to be ‘subordinating conjunctions’ with ma. The relevant forms in Maltese involve ma with the prepositions qabel ‘before’ (81a), sa ‘until’, and bhal (81b). Borg (1994) also considers these cases to be derived from a wh-pronoun use, while synchronically ma simply introduces an embedded clausal argument to the preposition, just as li does in similar contexts, e.g. wara li ‘after’. Parallel

22This is distinct from the ‘temporal’ mă in ?awwala mă ‘the first time’, which is not found in Maltese.
uses of this pronominal form in Egyptian Arabic (EA) are illustrated in (82) below.

(81) a. T-i-tlaq-x qabel ma t-ghid-l-l!
   2-FRM.VWL-leave.IMPV.SG-NEG before COMP 2-say.IMPV.SG-DAT-1SG
   Don’t leave before you tell me!

   b. Ghamil-t bhalma wreq-t-ni.
      do.PFV-1SG like.COMP show.PFV-1SG-1SG.ACC
      I did just as you showed me.

(82) a. murad kân sâyîf el-felûn da
      Murad be.PFV.3SGM see.ACT.PTCP.SGM DEF-film.SGM DEM.SGM
      ?abl ma nî-rûh es-senîma sawa
      before COMP 1PL-go.IMPV DEF-movie.theatre together
      Murad had seen that movie before we went to the movie theatre together.

   b. ʕala ma te-rgaʕ hakûn näyîm-l-i
      on PRN 2-return.PFV.SG FUT.1SG.be sleep.ACT.PTCP-DAT-1SG
      saṭṭên
two.hours
      By the time you return, I will have slept for two hours.
      EA Mughazy 2004: 102

The second (further) use is in constructions such as (83) for Maltese (compare the parallel with MSA in (84)). Badawi et al. (2003, 514) refer to this context as ‘annexation with elatives’ and consider the mā here to be yet another function of the ‘relative mā’.

(83) Irhas ma j-kun-u, iktar ahjar.
    cheap.COMPAR MA 3-be.IMPV-PL more.COMPAR good.COMPAR
    The cheaper they are, the better.

(84) ka-ʔalṭaʕi, waʔaraqqi mā ya-kūn-u
    like-nicest CONJ-most.delicate MA 3-be.IMPV-PL
    like the nicest and the most delicate [thing] that could ever be
    Lit. ‘of that which could be’      Badawi et al. 2003: 518
Unlike *ma* ‘what’ (which is restricted to one fixed phrase), the *wh*-pronoun *min/’l min* ‘who/who. ACC’ is productively used as a relative pronoun in dialectal Maltese. The (dialect) examples in (85)-(88) illustrate relativisation on direct functions (SUBJ and OBJ) using the *wh*-pronoun strategy, where the antecedent is definite/specific. As shown from the contrast between (88)-(89), relativisation on the POSS is only possible if the containing NP is pied-piped.

(85) ir-ra_ gel/*ra_ gel  
\text{DEF-man/*man who say.PFV-1SG-DAT-2SG open.PFV.3SGM-DAT-1SG}  
\text{il-bieb}  
the man who I told you opened the door for me  
\text{RRC CS 2011:5}

(86) Pawlu, ’l min kellim-t  
\text{Paul, ACC.who speak.PFV-1SG}  
Paul, who I spoke to  
\text{NRRC CS 2012a:9}

(87) it-tifel/tifel, ’l min n-a-hseb  
\text{DEF-boy/*boy ACC.who 1-FRM.VWL-think.IMPV.SG COMP send.PFV-1SG}  
l-ittra  
\text{DEF-letter}  
the boy, who I sent the letter to  
\text{NRRC CS 2012a:10}

(88) It-tifa/*tifa  
\text{id min qbad-t, j-isim-ha}  
\text{DEF-girl/*girl hand who grab.PFV-1SG 3-name.IMPV.SGM-3SGF.ACC}  
Marija.  
The girl whose hand I grabbed is named Mary.  
\text{RRC}

(89) *it-tifa  
\text{’l min n-af }  
\text{lil omm-u}  
\text{DEF-boy ACC.who 1-know.IMPV.SG ACC mother-3SGM.GEN}  
\text{the boy whose mother I know}  
\text{RRC}

Although the *wh*- gap strategy is possible for relativisation on direct functions when the antecedent is human and definite/specific, it is not available for relativisation upon either the SUBJ or the OBJ functions with an inanimate antecedent, irrespective of whether this is definite or indefinite. The non-human *wh*-pronoun *xiex* ‘what’ is only available when the relativised position is the OPREP ((65) - (66) above) and the reduced form *x’/xi* ‘what’ is equally ungrammatical.
To summarise, there is a clear divergence between Standard and dialectal Maltese concerning the distribution of the wh-strategy for relative clause formation. The use of the wh-strategy for non-term functions is productive in all varieties of Maltese. In addition, dialectal variants show fully productive use of the wh-pronouns min/’i min ‘who’ (but not xiex/x’xi ‘what’) in relativisation on direct (term) grammatical function, while the wh-strategy is restricted to non-term functions in standard Maltese. The use of ma ‘what’ (which is not found as a wh-interrogative pronoun, is highly restricted.

Despite the fact that xiex/x’xi is systematically ungrammatical in relative clauses such as (90) and (91) there is one relative construction in which x’xi does occur in direct relativisation, in both standard and dialectal Maltese. In (grammatical) examples such as (92)-(94), the matrix predicate can only be some form of existential and the predicate of the relative clause must be imperfective in form. These examples are rather reminiscent of Modal Existential free relative clauses Grosu (2004); Šimůk (2011) which are subject to the same constraints, and we believe they constitute examples of a further, distinct subtype of rrc.

(92) Ma sib-t-x ktieb tajjeb
NEG find.PFV-1SG-NEG book.SGM good.SGM
x’(n-i-sta’) n-a-qra.
what.1-FRM.VWL-can.IMPV.SG 1-FRM.VWL-read.IMPV.SG
I didn’t find a good book which I can read.

(93) Fadal xi xoghol x’i-sir?
remain.PFV.3SGM some work.SGM what.3-become.IMPV.SGM
Lit: Remain some work what becomes?
Is there any work left to be done?

(94) M’hemm xejn x’in-ti-k.
NEG.EXIST nothing what.1-give.IMPV.SG-2SG.ACC
There is nothing that I can give you.

These existential constructions are also possible with the wh-pronoun min ‘who’ in both standard and dialectal Maltese, although as outlined above, the wh-pronoun min ‘who’ does not otherwise occur in cases of relativisation on direct argument functions in standard Maltese. An example is given in (95), while (96) is also grammatical in dialectal Maltese.23

(95) M-ghan-d-i  ’l hadd ’l min n-afda
   NEG-at-1SG.GEN ACC no-one ACC who I-trust.IMPV.SG
   I don’t have anyone to trust/I trust.

(96) Hemm xi hadd min j-i-sta’ j-ghin-ek
   EXIST some no-one who 3-can-IMPV.SGM 3-help.IMPV-2SG.ACC
   There is someone to help you.

Laying these existential RCs to one side, the following summarises the basic distribution of the wh-pronoun relativisation strategy in Standard and dialectal Maltese. Except where an intervening factor (such as an island constraint) forces the use of a resumptive, wh-relativisation involves the obligatory use of the gap strategy.24

<table>
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<td>Gap min</td>
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<tr>
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<td>OREP</td>
<td>Gap P + xiex</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Human</td>
<td>OBL</td>
<td>Gap Fused P + xiex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human</td>
<td>ADJ</td>
<td>Gap P + min</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Human</td>
<td>ADJ</td>
<td>Gap P + xiex, Fused P + xiex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locative</td>
<td>OBL</td>
<td>Gap fejn, P + fejn, mnejn</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Distribution of wh-relatives

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23 We have found no discussion of this construction in the existing literature, and leave the development of an analysis of these cases for future research.

24 If the target of relativisation is a non-selected dative encoding a beneficiary, maleficiary, possessor and or affected experiencer a resumptive pronoun is obligatory, see Camilleri and Sadler (2012b) for discussion of such non-selected arguments.
5 The bare strategy

In MSA and most of the contemporary Arabic vernaculars we find a ‘bare’ relativisation strategy with no COMP or relative pronoun when the antecedent is indefinite. In this section we show that a ‘bare’ strategy can also occur in indefinite RCCs in Maltese, subject to certain restrictions. Firstly, the antecedent must correspond to either a subject or a possessor within the relative clause, as shown in (97) and (98). In all cases of relativisation on the possessor, the use of a RP is obligatory. The relative dependency may be long-distance as in (99).

(97) il<$t$qaj-t ma’ tifel j-af-ek
met.RECIP.PFV-1SG with boy 3-know.IMPV.SGM-2SG
I met with a boy who knows you SUBJ

(98) N-af fejn t-i-sta’ s-sib tifel
1-know.IMPV.SG where 2-FRM.VWL-find.SG boy
omm-u Ghawdx-ija
mother-3SGM.GEN Gozitan-SGF
I know where you can find a boy whose mother is Gozitan. POSS

(99) Tifel n-a-hseb (li) t-af lil
boy 1-FRM.VWL-think.IMPV.SG COMP 2-know.IMPV.SG ACC
omm-u, weggį́ ā́
mother-3SGM.GEN, got.hurt.PFV.3SGM
A boy whose mother I think you know, hurt himself. POSS

Examples (100)-(102) show that in contrast to the Arabic vernaculars, the bare strategy is not available when the relativised position is neither subject nor possessor.

(100) *tifel n-af
boy 1-know.IMPV.SG
Intended: a boy I know

(101) *čavetta n-i-ftah il-bieb bi-ha
key.SGF 1-FRM.VWL-open.IMPV.SG DEF-door with-3SGF.ACC
Intended: a key to open the door with
Secondly, the verbal predicate (if there is one), must be imperfective in form in this construction - the contrasts in (103) and (104) show that the perfective verb-form is systematically excluded. This is in contrast to Arabic dialects, which do not limit the ‘bare’ strategy to imperfective forms, as shown in (105) for Tripoli Libyan Arabic (TLA) and (106) for Iraqi Arabic (IA).25

(103) a. Tifel j-o-qtol il-qtates mhux se
   boy 3-FRM.VWL-kill.IMPV.SGM DEF-cat.PL NEG PROSP
   j-i-bza’ miinn ġurdienn.
   3-FRM.VWL-be.afraid.IMPV.SGM from mouse
   A boy who kills cats will not be afraid of a mouse.  
   BAA 1997: 35

   b. *Tifel qatel il-qtates mhux se
      boy kill.PFV.SGM DEF-cat.PL NEG PROSP
      j-i-bza’ miinn ġurdienn
      3-FRM.VWL-be.afraid.IMPV.SGM from mouse
      Intended: A boy who killed cats will not be afraid of a mouse.

(104) a. tifel n-af lil omm-u
      boy 1-know.IMPV.SG ACC mother-3SGM.GEN
      a boy whose mother I know

   b. *tifel kon-t n-af lil omm-u
      boy be.PFV-1SG 1-know.IMPV.SG ACC mother-3SGM.GEN
      Intended: a boy whose mother I knew

---

25 We note in passing that adjunctival (circumstantial) clauses are also limited to imperfective verb-forms in Maltese, as they are in Arabic.

(iii) a. Telaq lura d-dar j-għaggel kemm j-i-flaħ
     leave.PFV.3SGM back DEF-home 3-hurry.IMPV.SGM how 3-FRM.VWL-strength.SGM
     Lit: He left back to the house he hurries how he has strength
     He went back home hurrying as much as he could.

   b. Marr-et fejn-hom t-għajjar u t-i-bki
     go.PFV-3SGF near-3PL.ACC 3-shout.IMPV.SGF CONJ 3-FRM.VWL-cry.IMPV.SGF
     She went near them shouting and crying.

(iii) jalasa l-rajulu yatahadda[lu]
     sit.3SGM DEF-man.NOM talks.3SGM
     The man sat talking.  
     MSA Badawi et al. 2004: 489
I spoke with a boy who didn’t understand me.  
TLA Pereira 2008: 279

I bought a book which you talked about a lot.  
IA Jassim 2011: 9

It seems that predicate in the modifying phrase may also be adjectival in nature as in (107) and (108). We give these examples for completeness, although of course it is in principle an open question whether they are also best analysed as a type of relative clause. Note that if the antecedent is definite, as in (109) and (110), the bare strategy is no longer available.

They entered a house whose owner is abroad.
Aquilina 1973: 338

They saw a girl whose hair is green.

They entered a house whose owner is abroad and stole everything.

They didn’t allow/let the girl whose hair is green to enter the school.

6 Internally-headed RCs

In this section we discuss two other types of non-restrictive relative clauses. 
Apart from a brief mention in Camilleri and Sadler (2012b) (where they are
referred to ‘internally headed’) these constructions are not addressed in the literature as far as we are aware. Both types involve an ‘additional internal head’ (de Vries, 2006), or an ‘epithetic relative phrase’.26 An example of the first type is (111), with the *wh*-pronoun *liema* ‘which’ in specifier position. This is similar to the English and Italian examples given in (112) and (113).

(111) Pawlu u Salvu, liema rğiel it-telgh-u l-Qorti
Paul and Salvu which men PASS-raise.PFV.3-PL DEF-court
Paul and Salvu, which men were taken to Court   CS 2012a: 26

(112) There were only thirteen senators present, which number was too few for a quorum.  Arnold 2007: 289

(113) Ha raggiunto la fama con *Il giardino dei Finzi-Contini*, il quale has reached the fame with *Il giardino dei Finzi-Contini* the which romanzo ha poi anche avuto una riduzione cinematografica.
He became famous with *Il giardino dei Finzi-Contini*, which novel was then also made into a film.   ITALIAN Cinque 2008: 105

*Liema* ‘which’ is only mentioned in previous literature with respect to its function as an interrogative *wh*-pronoun, but it is certainly productive in the appropriate register (typically that of more formal reported language, particularly in journalistic prose) in these sorts of *NRRCS*. (114) illustrates a long-distance subj dependency using *liema rğiel* (with no obvious resumptive), while (115) and (116) involve fronted (prepositional) adjuncts (and no resumptive).

(114) Pawlu u Salvu, liema rğiel qal-u li t-telgh-u
Paul and Salvu which say.PFV.3-PL COMP PASS-raise.PFV.3-PL DEF-Court
Paul and Salvu, which men they said that were taken to Court   CS 2012a: 26

26It is hardly surprising that these constructions are *NRRCS*, since otherwise the relative clause itself contains an additional nominal which would be problematic given reasonable assumptions about semantic composition. The existence of these structures of course constitutes a further difference between *RRCs* and *NRRCS* in Maltese.
(115) il-martell, b’liema biċċa ghodda
DEF-hammer.SGM with.which piece.SGF tool.SGF
rnexxi-e-i
succeed.PFV.3SGM-DAT-1SG
the hammer, with which tool I managed CS 2012a: 27

(116) il-Palazz, f’liema post t-laqqgh-u l-mistedn-in
DEF-palace in.which place PASS-gather.PFV.3-PL DEF-guest-PL
the palace, in which place the guests were gathered CS 2012a: 27

Since liema is a wh-item, we might expect it not to occur with a resumptive, given that this is the pattern we observe elsewhere. However we find that there are examples in which it does co-occur with a resumptive in cases of object relativisation. The distribution of the gap/RP for the relative-clause internal OBJ is quite complex. A Google search on newspaper sources reveals that, at least for definite antecedents, if the SUBJ is pro-dropped, then the relativised position is obligatorily marked with an RP (117), but if the SUBJ is a lexical NP the relativised position (OBJ) is normally a gap, though a RP may occur in speech (118). For indefinite antecedents, both a gap and RP appear to be equally available (119), providing us with another case in which gaps and RPs are not in complementary distribution.

(117) Pawlu u Salvu, liema rġiel raj-t*(-hom) ilbierah
Paul and Salvu which men see.PFV-1SG-3PL.ACC yesterday
Paul and Salvu, which men I saw yesterday CS 2012a: 26

(118) Pawlu u Salvu, liema rġiel xi nies ra-w(-hom)
Paul and Salvu which men some people see.PFV-3PL(-3PL.ACC)
ilbierah
yesterday
Paul and Salvu, which men some people saw yesterday CS 2012a: 26

(119) Sikkina, liema oġġett wiċhed j-uża-(h) ta’
knife.SGF which object.SGM one 3-uses.IMPV.SGM-(3SGM.ACC) of
kuljum, t-i-sta’/j-i-sta’
every.day 3-FRM.VWL-can.IMPV.SGF/3-FRM.VWL-can.IMPV.SGM
j-kun/t-kun 
sors ta’ periklu.
3-be.IMPV.SGF/3-be.IMPV.SGF source of danger
A knife [generic], which object one uses daily, can be a source of danger.
For (indirect) recipient objects, there is at least a marked preference for a RP.

(120) Pawlu, liema mistieden ma bghatt-nie-l-u-x invit
Paul which guest.SGM NEG send.PFV-1PL-DAT-3SGM-NEG invitation
formali
formal
Paul, which guest we did not send a formal invitation to CS 2012a: 26

The other type of ‘internally-headed’ NRRC combines the complementiser strategy with a fronted epithetic phrase such as haġa bhal din ‘something like this’ (as in (121)). Although a gap is possible, a RP is strongly preferred. Note that the antecedent and the epithetic phrase functioning as an ‘internal-head’ do not have to match in terms of agreement features (see (119) and (121)). A long-distance example is given in (122).

(121) l-qtil tat-tifel, li haġa bhal din ma
DEF-killing.SGM of.DEF-boy COMP thing.SGF like this.SGF not
stejnji-t-(ha) qatt
expect.PFV-1PL-3SGF.ACC never
the death of the boy, the sort of thing we never expected CS 2012a: 25

(122) l-ikla li kien kapaċi j-sajjar u
DEF-meal.SGF COMP be.PFV.3SGM able 3-cook.IMPV.SGM conj
j-organizza Mario, li haġa bhal din hadd
3-organize.IMPV.SGM Mario COMP thing.SGF like DEM.SGF no.one
min-na ma kien qatt basar li
from-1PL.ACC NEG be.PFV.3SGM never guess.PFV.3SGM COMP
seta’ able.PFV.3SGM
j-a-għmel/j-a-għmil-ha ... 3-FRM.VWL-do.IMPV.3SGM/3-FRM.VWL-do.IMPV.3SGM-3SGF.ACC
the meal that Mario was capable of cooking and organising, which (something like this) not one of us ever guessed that he could do ...  

7 Conclusion

In this paper we have provided a comprehensive description of the range of different restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses found in Maltese, highlighting a number of semantic and syntactic differences between the two types. Two
strategies are each found to exist in only one type of relative clause: internally-headed relatives are found only non-restrictively (as they are in Italian and English) and bare relatives are always restrictive. Our discussion has provided detailed description of the overall distribution of gaps and resumptive pronouns in Maltese relatives. We have seen that the overall distribution is very different in the two major constructions. In relative clauses using the complementiser strategy, gap and resumptive are very often in free variation in positions which permit ‘extraction’, and hence resumption should not be viewed as a strategy of ‘last resort’. The picture in \textit{wh}-relatives is quite different, however, and resumptives are found only when gaps are systematically excluded by other intervening constraints and conditions. The existence of two quite different distributional patterns within the same language argues against any approach based on the setting of a single simple parameter.

Our discussion of \textit{wh}-relatives in Maltese has outlined a number of important differences between the range of the strategy in standard and dialectal Maltese. In particular, we see an extension of the \textit{wh}-strategy in dialectal Maltese to relativisation on direct (term) functions with human, definite antecedents. Our discussion of \textit{wh}-relatives has also identified a distinct type of headed \textit{wh}-relative clause, in both standard and dialectal Maltese, found in the complement of a class of existential predicates and bearing a strong resemblance to modal existential free relatives. As far as we are aware, this type of relative clause is not previously discussed in the literature on Maltese.

Our discussion of both the complementiser strategy and the \textit{wh}-strategy has shown the strong parallels between Maltese and (in particular) Western dialects of Arabic. In relation to the complementiser strategy, we see a strong similarity to Western dialects in which gaps and resumptives are often in free variation. The connection between Maltese and the Western dialects is particularly striking in the light of the data we provide from Moroccan and Algerian Arabic, showing the use of the \textit{wh}-strategy with obliques and adjuncts. Comparison of the Maltese bare strategy to the distribution of this strategy in standard and dialectal Arabic shows that, while the strategy exists in Maltese, it is more highly constrained. Whereas in Arabic, it is found with indefinite antecedents, in Maltese it is also subject to relative clause internal restrictions, requiring the relativised position to be subject or possessor and the verb (if present) to be imperfective in form.
References


**Abbreviations**

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>AA</td>
<td>Algerian Arabic</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
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