

**Textually-mediated social organisation for the exchange of
knowledge:
A study of language choice in organisational texts in Malta**

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Abstract

In what is officially a bilingual nation-state, post-colonial Maltese public institutions operate without explicit language policy guidance, such as provided in other jurisdictions by 'language schemes'. Whilst both official languages are used in formal institutions, English appears to be the more popular choice of language for organisational texts. As social practices are a better indicator of actual language ideologies (Spolsky, 2004), a transdisciplinary approach was adopted, looking into select textually-mediated practices that coordinate institutionally-based activities (Smith, 1990b; Campbell and Gregor, 2004) and textual analysis (Fairclough, 2003). Taking texts as social spaces where the ideational and interpersonal metafunctions of language are activated (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014; Fairclough, 1995) and writing as a disembedding mechanism (Giddens, 1990), choice of language in organisational texts may be due to the need for objectifying knowledge for sharing within the relations of ruling (Smith, 1990a; Campbell and Gregor, 2004), abstract, intangible social connections predominantly involved in the social organisation of knowledge societies within a global inter-state system (Hopkins and Wallerstein, 1982). The analysis suggests that language choice in institutional texts may depend on knowledge exchange systems designed for frontstage and backstage performativity. Furthermore, these language patterns imply that the environment within which these language practices occur needs to be accounted for in terms of polycentric social space (Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1985; Blommaert, 2007). Such variation, as well as the apparent stability of such language differentiation, may be better understood when looking beyond the borders of the nation-state and taking the world analysis system (WSA) as one influential model to understand language choice.

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, Melissa Joan Bagley, declare that this dissertation is my original work, gathered and utilized specifically to fulfil the purposes and objectives of this study, and has not been previously submitted to any other university for a higher degree. I also declare that the publications cited in this work have been personally consulted.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "mBagley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'y' at the end.

Signature

25 November 2019

Date

MELISSA JOAN BAGLEY

Name in block letters

Dedication

To Dad and Sally,
for getting me started.

To Shannon and David,
for joining me on the bumpy journey.

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Chapter ONE: Language and textually-mediated social organisation in a bilingual nation-state

1.1 Introduction: reconsidering bilingual practices in institutional settings

Nation-states declaring themselves as officially bilingual can be said to be doing two things. Firstly, such a move means that they have formally recognised that there is more than one language operating on the macro-level of society, and secondly, it is also a move towards the formal organisation of language use. The formal regulation and organisation of languages at the macro-level of society occurs for a number of reasons, linked to language ideologies that may be indicative of objectives that are political, economic, cultural and social by nature. In many cases, the administrative and identity functions are not fulfilled by one and the same language. For example, a language may be formally acknowledged as a national language, fulfilling the nationalist needs of a nation-state whilst asserting its ethnic and cultural identity through language ([Grillo, 1989](#)). On the other hand, a language may be recognised as an official language, reflecting a more pragmatic concern, such as facilitating intranational and international communication for nationalist concerns ([Fishman, 1968: 43](#)). This is a practice commonly observed in a number of ex-colonial states, having adopted the language of administration used during the previous colonial experience ([Li Wei, 2000a: 12](#)).

Having a language policy regulating languages in a nation-state may give the impression that all polities within the nation-state, such as municipal institutions, adhere to the official stance on language. However, whilst provisions for language use are formulated at societal level, whether as national and official languages, this is no guarantee that such regulations are applied or enforced by formal institutions at multiple levels. As a result, this may lead to a variety of language practices and patterns of use that may not have been envisaged when language policies were initially formalised. A case in point whereby actual language practices may not be reflective of explicit policies is post-colonial Malta, an officially bilingual Mediterranean island-state which was formally a British colony. Arrangements concerning the two official languages of Malta, Maltese and English, are

outlined in two public domains. The current language policy regarding official language use in Malta is stipulated in Chapter One, Article 5 of the [Constitution of 1964](#), setting the stage for the widespread use and dissemination of the official languages in major institutions in Malta, whether public or private. The Maltese language, which is also the national language, is clearly stipulated as the language of the Maltese law courts and the Maltese parliament; Maltese is co-official with English, and as such may be used for all government administration.

Insofar as language policy is concerned, Schiffman ([1996: 18](#)) describes Malta as one of the very few countries where policy and polity converge, meaning language use is closely connected to the official policy. Whilst provision has been made about these public institutions, it is interesting to note that the constitution does not specify any explicit guidance for other public institutions besides the law courts, parliament and government administration. Thus, it seems that while language use may be officially and explicitly regulated in the highest institutions in the country, there does not seem to be any indication of any detailed language schemes for public institutions overall, such as those referred to in the Welsh Language Act ([2003](#)) and Official Languages Act ([2003](#)) of Ireland; such schemes are intended to regulate language when communicating with the general public when providing services. However, the lack of planned language schemes for public institutions in Malta does not mean that language choice is a haphazard exercise. Taking Spolsky's premise ([2005](#)) that language practices may be a more useful indicator of actual language policy, current scholarship suggests that in the absence of language schemes regulating language use, institutions in Malta may actually have institutional practices that may favour one language over another for particular spheres of activity, leading to considerable variation in language selection. The use of language in institutional settings points to a situation that Maltese is more likely to be used for oral communication, but less likely to be used as medium for written communication ([Sciriha and Vassallo, 2001: 29](#)). Whilst English may not be popular as spoken medium of communication, it is more likely to be used as a written language ([Caruana, 2007: 185](#); [Caruana, 2011: 11, 15](#); [European Federation of the National Institutions for Language, 2014](#)).

These observations regarding the use of language, especially for services offered by public bodies, suggest that language use in institutional settings in Malta may be regulated by mechanisms not yet understood. Such a situation implies that language policy is a complex construct, embodying ideologies that may be considered desirable by the nation-state; in the case of no language scheme, it may be an issue of implicit cultural expectations that have not been formalized. The following section provides an overview of observed patterns of language use in Maltese society, highlighting the trends regarding language use in different spheres of activity, which are the starting point of this study.

1.2 Language policy in Malta: an issue of formal and non-formal regulation

Maltese and English are widely spoken in the Maltese Islands, an archipelago of five islands with a population of 417,432 ([NSO, 2014: 3](#)). Based on the self-assessment of inhabitants in census reports most residents claim to speak Maltese well (93.2%), whilst 92.3% speak English, varying in competence and proficiency ([NSO, 2014: xxi](#)). Italian, the unofficial third language of Malta, is spoken by 41.3% of the population (*ibid.*). Other languages are spoken by residents, such as French, German, and Arabic, but the numbers of speakers who claim to speak these languages are nowhere near the numbers registered for speakers of Maltese and English¹.

A fuller picture of the language situation regarding the use of Maltese and English languages can be provided by a number of large-scale surveys and academic papers published over the last few decades. Sciriha and Vassallo ([2001](#); [2006](#)) confirm that Maltese is the native language of most Maltese, suggesting that Maltese is not an endangered language in Malta and that English poses no threat to the language. English is the second most widely known language. In addition, people generally perceive the

¹ Whilst little is known about speakers of other languages living in Malta, the census of 2011 identified a segment of the population not in possession of Maltese citizenship, which represent 4.9% of the population. These inhabitants come from a number of European countries, both EU and non-EU, Australia, Canada, the United States of America, as well as from African states such as Somalia and Eritrea (NSO, 2014: 116). The state may cater for residents who speak neither official language; should speakers need to use legal translation and interpreting services for legal issues, the Maltese courts appoint court experts who are proficient in at least 22 languages, including Chinese, Kurdish, Greek and Slovak.

Maltese language to be the most important language for Maltese living in Malta, followed by English and Italian. The use of Maltese as the main language of interaction in the family domain is the predominant finding in Sciriha ([1993](#); [1996](#)) and Sciriha and Vassallo ([2006](#)), clearly suggesting that it is the main means of its transmission, having implications for its acquisition by children. English does not figure as strongly as a home language, although parents are reported to use English with children ([Sciriha, 1999](#)). Studies focusing on the language dynamics in the school environment show that both languages are used in the classroom and on the playground ([Sciriha, 1996](#)), and type of school may indicate popularity of either official language.

The Maltese language is widely used in many sectors. In addition to parliament, the law courts and the Public Service, it is used in schools, the local media as well as the Catholic Church ([Camilleri, 2000](#); Caruana, [2007](#), [2011](#); [Vella, 2013](#)). Perhaps one of the most overt forms of macro-level institutional support in post-colonial Malta is the Maltese Language Act ([2005](#)), outlining the obligations of the Maltese State to recognise the Maltese language as “a strong expression of the nationality of the Maltese, and for that purpose acknowledges its unique importance, and protects it from deterioration and perdition” (Chapter 470, p. 3). This act led to the establishment of the National Council of the Maltese Language in 2005, which is entrusted with the promotion of Maltese both nationally and internationally ([Kunsill Nazzjonali tal-Ilsien Malti, 2019](#)). Besides widespread institutional support, there is non-institutional micro-level support amongst speakers of Maltese. Attitudes towards Maltese are quite favourable. Sciriha ([2004: 73](#)) shows that people may be reluctant to use English with other Maltese-speaking people, as Maltese people are expected to know how to speak Maltese. The social discourses proposing the use of English at the expense of Maltese are perceived to be deviant at grassroots level, especially as the Maltese language is considered as a salient symbol of ethnic identity. This may be noted in the day-to-day discourses surrounding language use, indicating that the use of English instead of Maltese may be perceived as a rejection of group norms, unpatriotic or as an affectation (see [Said, 1991](#); [Bagley, 2001](#); Xarabank, [2001](#); [2007](#); [Caruana, 2007](#)). These popular perceptions may be informal norm-

enforcement mechanisms ([Milroy and Margrain, 1980](#)), regulating language use at both micro-level and macro-level.

On the other hand, the popularity of the Maltese language does not mean that the English language is not prominent in Maltese life, as English is spoken by the majority of the population ([NSO, 2104](#)). In fact, proficiency in English is desirable ([Sciriha, 1997](#)). English is considered an important asset and competence in both official languages is encouraged ([Berghäuser, 2007: 162](#)). This is especially evident in the educational sphere, where bilingual development is defined as the basis of the national curriculum (National Minimum Curriculum, [1999](#); [2012](#)). Moreover, English is the most popular language-based examination set by the Matriculation and Secondary Certificate (MATSEC) of Malta; in 2013 there were 5120 applications for the English Language examination, in contrast to 4691 candidates who applied for the Maltese Language and Literature examination ([MATSEC Examination Board, 2013](#)). In addition, further and higher education demand the use of English, and textbooks for tertiary level courses are mainly in English ([Caruana, 2007: 186](#)). Competence in English also provides occupational opportunities; one example of many in the opening of the HSBC Call Centre catering for the HSBC UK Contact Centre ([The Times of Malta, 2008](#); [The Malta Independent, 2015](#)). All in all, there is a general consensus that English is an important language to know for academic and occupational purposes.

Overall, Malta may arguably be identified as a bilingual society. However, it has been difficult to describe how these two languages are maintained; whilst Maltese society has been defined as bilingual, “the linguistic situation on the island is more complex than this definition may suggest as the situation is characterised by frequent interplay between bilingualism and diglossia” ([Caruana, 2011: 15](#)). Diglossia was first used by Ferguson ([1959](#)) to refer to the functional distribution of two or more language varieties in a speech community and used by speakers under different social conditions; this has been described as a “linguistic division of labour” ([Eckert, 1980: 1054](#)). Originally used to explain the different applications of a superposed language variety and non-standard varieties for intra-societal communication, it is also used to refer to the functional distribution of

different languages in a bilingual society, called *extended diglossia* ([Fishman, 1980](#)). The current language situation in Malta may come across as a form of extended diglossia, however this is unlikely to be the case. These two languages are widely used in Maltese society across different domains. Maltese has undergone extensive status and corpus planning, is taught in schools and has considerable institutional support. English is a global language and is the main language for higher education and professional advancement. In fact, the language situation has been described as an instance of bilingualism without diglossia, as both languages are used in the same domains ([Camilleri, 2000: 5](#)).

Whilst the two official languages are used extensively in many spheres of social life, there are indications that choice of language may vary in spoken and written contexts. The preference for English is predominantly in the written media, as observed by Caruana ([2007:184 - 185](#)):

“A closer look at the current sociolinguistic situation in Malta reveals that Maltese is very widespread as a spoken variety but then it is used to a lesser extent as a written medium. [...] ...English, on the other hand, is mainly used in writing. The most popular local daily newspaper is in English, and so are most textbooks used in schools”.

This observation suggests that there may be some variation across spheres of activity involving writing. Studies focusing on reading and writing in the two official languages tend to focus on educational issues, such as language learning and language proficiency. Research focusing on social aspects of literacy is rare, and trends may be extrapolated indirectly from censuses, reports and studies. Literacy was one issue dealt with in the census of 2011, establishing that 93.6% of the population was literate, not specifying languages or proficiency in the languages ([NSO, 2014: xx](#)). Educational attainment may offer a better indication regarding reading and writing proficiency in either or both languages. Nearly half of the population has had at least a secondary school level of education, and 14.1% have had a tertiary level of education; such indicators may point to different competencies in reading and writing. Little is known about the context of language use for written purposes. However, the few studies that focus on individual

bilingualism reveal that English is a popular medium for leisure pursuits, such as reading (NSO, [2001](#), [2012](#)), and individuals may prefer the use of English for text messaging ([Sciriha, 2004](#)).

So far, sociolinguistic studies have tended to focus on individual language use in role relations and in social units such as the family and school, which is not surprising given that these social institutions are considered core to the transmission and maintenance of a language. Societal bilingualism in other social units, such as commercial and governmental institutions, has not received the same attention, and the use of the Maltese and English languages in public institutions remains largely unexamined. There are several studies that suggest that there are some distinct and unexplained trends regarding language use, especially in formal institutions and organisations at large. Two survey-based studies ([Mazzon, 1992](#); [Sciriha and Vassallo, 2001](#)) report contrasting trends regarding work-based communication and the use of Maltese and English. It seems that whilst Maltese may be popular as an oral medium of exchange with clients and colleagues ([Mazzon, 1992: 31](#)), its use for written communication seems less likely; Mazzon ([1992: 54](#)) reports that items such as work-related letters and reports are predominantly composed in the English language. Sciriha and Vassallo ([2001: 29](#)) report a similar trend, with Maltese as the language of oral communication at work, but not a very popular medium when drafting emails, letters and reports. In the case of written language, English is the language of banking operations and internal communications, whilst both official languages may be used in customer-oriented communications, such as instructions for ATM use ([Bagley, 2001](#)). To conclude, it appears that there may be a distinction between social interaction in face-to-face situations, and that which is mediated by written texts.

In addition to the above-mentioned distinction between spoken and written media for work purposes, there may be distinct institutional patterns that can be inferred from public signage; this may depend on the type of institution to issue them ([Leclerc, 1989](#); [Caruana, 2007](#)). Leclerc ([1989: 250](#)) observes that government notices, such as inscriptions and thoroughfares, tend to be in the Maltese language, and other signage may be bilingual. Caruana ([2007: 185](#)) also notes bilingual documentation is more likely to be found in

connection with government institutions. On the other hand, signage in commercial spheres is predominantly in the English language ([Leclerc, 1989: 250](#)). This distinction potentially points to variation across institution types, which may need further analysis.

These observations regarding patterns of language use which appear particular to certain spheres of activity and which tend to follow an oral/written continuum reveal that bilingual practices may follow distinct sociocultural norms that may not be fully explained by the current language policy in the absence of language schemes. Also, it appears the bilingual practices follow norms that may seem to be contradictory in a nation-state, especially as issues of national pride are a driving force in everyday language use. Thus, the next question to discuss is the concept of language policy and the implications that language policy may have for a nation-state and its institutions, which is provided in the following section.

1.3 The reality of language regulation in a nation-state

Language policy and the nation-state are arguably both hallmarks of modern society. Whilst languages have been in contact for thousands of years, managed or mismanaged ([Romaine, 2013: 458](#)), language policy is only a relatively recent phenomenon ([Bianco, 2012](#)), the origins of which can be traced to the rise of nationalism and the formation of nation-states in its wake ([Wright, 2004: 8](#)). The question as to why a nation-state may need to have a language policy in the first place is “evidence that at one time the issue of language policy was of sufficient salience or political relevance for an attempt to be made to make it explicit and fix it in the constitution” ([Spolsky, 2004: 59](#)); one case in point is Malta, in which conflict regarding language status and use emerged during British colonial rule, and the explicit formal policy regarding language use for legal and parliamentary purposes has its roots in the political upheavals experienced vis-à-vis these two institutions (see [Hull, 1993](#)).

In understanding the management of language in a nation-state, it is important not only to consider the reasons for a formal language policy promulgated by the polity, but also the implications of such policies. The study of language policy has engendered multiple theoretical stances ([Johnson, 2013](#)); the definition provided by Bugarski (1992) is a suitable starting point, whereby language policy is “the set of positions, principles and decisions reflecting that community’s relationships to its verbal repertoire and communicative potential” (cited in [Schiffman, 1996: 3](#)). According to this definition, a policy is a framework that establishes the ‘verbal repertoire’ of the community for its potential communication, based on its own norms, values and ideologies. The official endorsement has implications for language use in institutions in general, as the official policy simultaneously creates affordances and constraints for the use of language in public spheres. This legitimisation may be interpreted as a means of inclusion and exclusion through the creation, maintenance and reproduction of collective identities that the nation-state chooses to uphold through its institutions (e.g. [Tollefson, 1991: 16](#); [Shohamy, 2006: 45](#); [Tollefson, 2013: 27](#)). In the process of creating an overt policy, the polity formally locates itself vis-à-vis language and socially organised behaviours and this may be of critical significance in a society in which more than one language is present.

However, the idea of language policy as a universal construct regulating all strata of society has been challenged ([Schiffman, 1996: 2](#)). It is not uncommon to find that despite “a formal written language policy, its effect on language practices is neither guaranteed nor consistent” ([Spolsky, 2005: 2153](#)). Whilst a formal language policy may be made available at state-level, other institutions within the polity may have their own ways of working with language. Schiffman (1996: 2) notes that although there may be a macro-level policy regulated at state level, there may be different policies for what can be called municipal (meso-level) institutions, which include educational institutions, different levels of state bureaucracy as well as non-governmental bodies. It may be assumed that whilst the macro-level policy may have some effect on various institutions operating within the polity, its effect may be minimal at grassroots level. In many cases, there is a difference between the policy as stated and the policy as it works at the practical level (ibid.). The mismatch between official and non-official policies is most evident when actual language practices

are at odds with the official stance on language use, and the incongruity between the official policy and non-official policy is what Schiffman (1996: 13) calls the *de jure* and the *de facto* policies respectively. As a result, gauging societal bilingualism through official language policies may not give a complete picture of the language situation. In addition to this, there are also situations whereby there is no official language policy. Some countries do not have an explicit policy, such as the United States. However, the lack of a formal policy does not mean that there is no language policy; in fact, not having a formal policy for institutional undertakings is not unusual (Spolsky, 2004: 8). Spolsky (2005: 2153) recognises the fact that although many polities do not have a formal or written policy, “language policy exists even where it has not been made explicit or established by authority”.

Whilst Malta has a language policy clearly outlined in the [Constitution of 1964](#), it does not have language schemes providing guidance for language use for public polities in general, such as those promoted by the Welsh Language Policy 2017 – 2019 ([RCAHMW, 2019](#)) and the Irish Language Policy ([Government of Ireland, 2019](#)). Some government departments or authorities may have some form of provision specific to certain sectors, such as the labelling of food products for public consumption ([Environmental Health Directorate, Malta, 2013](#)) and when the public is encouraged to communicate with an agency such as Foundation for Social Welfare Services (see Chapter Six), but such schemes are not the result of systematic nation-wide language planning lead by an appointed authority. Yet observations point towards a pattern of language use where Maltese and English tend to follow along an oral-written continuum in the absence of language schemes, with Maltese predominantly the choice for spoken communication and English more likely to be used for textually-mediated activities.

This leads to the question as to what could be the underlying reasons for these observed patterns of language use, particularly choices regarding textually-mediated activities. The observed patterns of language use suggest that there may be some form of language regulation not explained by *de jure* language schemes. Taking into consideration the observations by Leclerc (1989) and Caruana (2007; 2011), it appears that choice of

language for textually-mediated activities may vary according to institution type. Such unexplained variation is subject to questioning, which is the focus of discussion in the next section.

1.4 Questions regarding bilingual patterns of behaviour

Whilst current research has pointed to variation in language use, such shifts from one language to another in the case of textually-mediated activities remains unexplained. This cannot be explained by referring to the current language policy regarding the use of Maltese and English in the Constitution of 1964 or the Maltese Language Act of 2005. The current literature on language use in Malta does not give reasons for this variation or how this variation may have evolved in different institutional clusterings. To conclude, questions as to how macro-level institutions operate in a society which is declared officially bilingual remain unanswered, especially as to how institutions manage textually-mediated institutional practices when there are two official languages at their disposal.

These patterns of language use generate several questions. Firstly, these two languages seem to embody different social values and ideologies, implicit or otherwise. Given the usage of Maltese in formal spheres, such as law courts and parliament, this cannot be classified as a situation of diglossia vis-à-vis English. Also, whilst the use of English in conversation may generate general disapproval, its usage for reading and writing is far from controversial. These patterns of language use in different spheres suggest that languages are socially organised along unwritten conventions. Secondly, this variation in language brings about another question as to how public institutions function with at least two languages at their disposal. The observation by Leclerc ([1989](#)) suggests that there may be variation across formal institutions, with differences between the public (government) and private (commercial) sectors. Whilst the constitution makes clear the status of Maltese and English, it explicitly regulates language use for the legal, parliamentary, and to a certain extent government institutions. Having no language scheme vis-à-vis other public institutions means that these institutions are, in theory, free

to use these languages in any manner considered appropriate. Finally, this variation leads to a third question, namely the use of written language. Sociolinguistic research in Malta has largely focused on the use of spoken language; however, far less has been done to study written language. This is not unusual, given that this has been the global trend in sociolinguistic studies for most of the twentieth century. As a result, most studies have focused on the use of spoken language, which perhaps is not surprising given the primacy of spoken language in studies assessing language vitality; the trend was also predominant in sociological inquiry ([Smith, 1990b: 209](#)). Therefore, it is necessary to refocus interest on written language by treating it as a sociolinguistic object of inquiry in its own right, as an act of social and political significance, rather than a by-product of secondary importance ([Blommaert, 2013](#)). This may lead to a deeper understanding of language use in the written domains, especially in a bilingual society.

These three questions lead to the primary aim of this study, which is understanding language choice in institutional texts in the absence of a language scheme. With no explicit guidance on language choice for texts critical to operations of an institution such as a government authority or commercial organisation, questions arise with regard to what may be responsible for the trends regarding language and writing. The use of Maltese and English as outlined above suggests that the current language patterns are rather stable manifestations of language behaviours. How these stable patterns of language use are maintained in the absence of a language scheme is yet unidentified. Fishman ([1971: 17](#)) had clearly identified that the overall challenge with the investigation of language use in a stable ‘within group’ bilingual society was the recognition and description of ‘higher-order regularities’ that are present in a multilingual society. Turning to the local research on language and literacy, there is little to explain such patterns of language use, in particular language use within textually-mediated social organisation. Mainly written from an educational perspective, the focus is on literacy learning through formal instruction and the acquisition and development of proficiency in reading and writing skills in both languages. Therefore, to investigate what could possibly be contributing to ‘higher-order regularities’, it is necessary to reconceptualise texts and language by focusing on actual language practices as recommended by Spolsky ([2005: 2163](#)).

As a first step in investigating the ‘higher-order regularities’ that may be responsible for language choice in a bilingual society, I propose taking language choice in a bilingual environment as one element in the *discursive practices key to the social organisation of knowledge dependent on the current global world system as opposed to the nation-state*. To understand the ‘higher-order regularities’, the following three research questions (RQs), were formulated, focusing on literacy practices and the purpose of the texts used for such practices to understand language choice:

RQ1: How do texts in an institutional setting contribute to the routinised behaviours in an institutional setting? This research question takes into practices involving literacy and how these activities contribute to the overall social organisation of the entity.

RQ2: How are the two official languages used in textually-mediated social organisation? This research question deals with the languages used in organisational texts, patterns of preference in select texts and possible reasons for this preference in the absence of an explicit language scheme.

RQ3: Why are the two official languages assigned different roles in textually-mediated social organisation? This research question focuses on the possible dynamics behind the ‘higher-order regularities’ that are in operation in the absence of a language scheme.

The next section focuses on the theoretical framework adopted for this study.

1.5 Theoretical framework: redefining concepts of language, literacy and texts

In understanding the ‘higher-order regularities’ that persist in the manifestation of language practices within institutional contexts, I propose taking language choice linked to the social organisation of knowledge, including its generation, management and

dissemination, via such institutional entities. The organisation of knowledge within institutions, and thus within a modern nation-state, is overwhelmingly textually-mediated; as Smith ([1990b: 212](#)) observes, modern contemporary society is dependent on textually-mediated social organisation. Hence the nature of writing, the organisational text and language need to be reconceptualised as cultural artefacts involved in the activities linked to knowledge and its organisation and transmission, which is basically a change in epistemological stance and the re-assignment or re-categorization of an instance from one ontological category to another ([Deveau, 2009](#); [Chi and Hausmann, 2003](#)). To do so, a multidisciplinary approach was adopted, taking into consideration theoretical and methodological developments from New Literacy Studies (NLS), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), social theory as well as critical human geography. In addition, broader sociohistorical influences are also taken into consideration, looking into world-systems analysis (WSA), in which the global world system is taken as the primary unit of analysis as opposed to singular nation states ([Hopkins and Wallerstein, 1982](#); [Wallerstein, 2006](#)).

The first step towards reconceptualising written language is to acknowledge the relationship between language and literacy; whilst language is a semiotic system, literacy is how that semiotic system is used, and in particular the semiotic systems for written texts ([Clark and Ivanič, 1997](#)). As literacy presupposes the use of language, it is also important to analyse language and therefore reassess the nature of language as essentially a social phenomenon. Scribner and Cole ([1981](#)) and Street ([1984](#)) have questioned the traditional assumptions regarding literacy as a cognitive skill determining the degree to which a society advances in logical thinking ([Scribner and Cole, 1981: 11](#)) or as “a neutral technology detached from specific social contexts” ([Street, 1984:1](#)). This shift in perspective has focused on literacy embedded in various social practices, rooted in conceptions of “knowledge, identity and being” ([Street and Lefstein, 2007: 42](#)). The epistemological shift from the skills-based perspective of literacy, called the ‘autonomous’ model of literacy, to the ‘ideological’ model of literacy ([Street, 1984: 2](#)) has contributed to a different perspective on the role of written language in society. Written texts are the result of human activity, and therefore written language needs to be viewed as a channel of human communication and behaviour ([Basso, 1974](#)), which like oral forms of language

is socially and culturally embedded in human activities and therefore should be studied in 'context of situations' (Hymes, 1974: 3). Approaching literacy as a social practice rather than a skill reveals that literacy-related activities are organising forces in contemporary family and community life (e.g. Heath, 1983; Barton and Hamilton, 1988; Barton and Ivanič, 1991; Street, 1993; and Barton, Hamilton and Ivanič, 2000) as well as professional and institutional life (Swales, 1998).

The next step is to revisit the nature of language and the text. One analytical framework that provides a social component to the text is Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1995: 10), taking into account three metafunctions proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014: 30). The text, whether written or spoken, is primarily a social space (Fairclough, 1995: 6) in which the three metafunctions, identified as the ideational, the interpersonal function and textual functions, operate. The ideational function of the text concerns the representation of knowledge; language is taken as a means of meaning making and organising knowledge, which is essentially a way of representing the world. The interpersonal function emphasises the communicative nature of the text, viewing it as situated within social relations. The textual function, which is mainly the 'texture' of a text, are the grammatical systems contributing to the flow of the content of the text. These three metafunctions occur in the text simultaneously, which is the "the process of making meaning in context" (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014: 3). Therefore, the text may be perceived as filtering knowledge and experience within a social context via its 'texture'.

Understanding that texts are now critical to the evolution, maintenance and management of modern organisations worldwide (Barton and Papen, 2010: 3), it is evident that texts hold together the numerous social relations that are now indispensable to the life-modes typical of modernity (Smith, 1990a, 1990b; Giddens, 1990). Taking a social science perspective on the role of the text in the contemporary world, Smith (1990b: 122; 221) advocates taking texts as a form of social action when located within social relations between individuals and organisations which in turn govern and regulate modern society, which she identifies as 'the relations of ruling' (ibid, pg. 6). The bureaucratic apparatus is the predominant organisational force in modern institutions, a form of textually-

mediated social organisation ([Weber, 1921/1978](#); [DiMaggio and Powell, 1983](#)). This leads to the ontological shift whereby the text is perceived as speaking in the absence of speakers ([Smith, 1990b: 211](#)), and the concept of the text as a constituent of social relations creates a new perspective for the understanding of written language, in addition to understanding the implications of this type of ‘dissociated’ or mediated communication has for social organisation. With the text fulfilling ideational and interpersonal functions (see [Fairclough, 1995: 10](#)), the text becomes a cultural artefact ([Giddens, 1987: 215-216](#)) within the broader social relations that constitute macro-level social organisations and institutions. The regulation of modern society is based on organisational texts ([Darville, 1995: 254](#)), many of which tend to contribute to the social organisation of knowledge due to the very nature of their replicability across time and space ([Smith, 2014: 5](#)). Taking the text as an organisational force which transcends time and space, Smith ([1990b](#)) asserts that texts are part of stable practices that are conducive to the co-ordination and concertation of large-scale organisational activity. Such co-ordination of social activity is collective social action managed across time and space, which gives rise to the creation of social space, an issue which has been the subject of debate in critical human geography (e.g. [Lefebvre, 1991](#); [Soja, 1985](#); [Harvey, 1985](#)). When extending the three metafunctions of language to written texts and the ecology of the text, the issue of language choice may become clearer.

Therefore, when investigating the observed variation in the use of Maltese and English in connection with textually-mediated institutional activities, it is proposed that a social view of both writing and language is taken to analyse this phenomenon, and any present mechanisms influencing language choice; it is one way of ‘denaturalising’ what is taken for granted ([Fairclough, 1995: 27ff](#)). In this approach, the ecology of the Maltese and English languages is taken into consideration ([Haugen, 1972: 325](#)). In a nation-state that has two official languages, each of which has a distinct sociocultural history in connection with the functioning of its institutions, it is important to consider the sociohistorical background of these institutions within the context of the polity that provides the framework for the very institutions under observation: the nation-state. As a nation-state that emerged after decolonisation, the Maltese nation-state inherited the administrative

apparatus of its colonisers together with the language of administration. At the same time, it sought to define itself as a nation-state with its own distinctive collective identity, with language as a primary marker of identity. By viewing literacy as a social practice ([Barton, Hamilton and Ivanič, 2000](#)), I would be able to see how texts are used and their importance in relation to select functions within the organisation, contributing to production and maintenance of organisational knowledge; such ecology would also need to see beyond the immediate environment and seek an account of the ecology as a nation-state in a global economy. In addition, as the ecology under investigation is a situation of language contact involving ‘the use of more than one language in the same place at the same time’ ([Thomason, 2001: 1](#)), the investigation would be giving an added perspective to the temporal and spatial dimensions to societal bilingualism, which would demand the reconsideration of time and space in an advanced capitalist society. Taking this approach would be corresponding to the assertion by Spolsky ([2005: 2163](#)) that “the real language policy of a community is more likely to be found in its practices than its management”. As a result, it would be possible to identify and understand how language is both officially and unofficially regulated, indicating how language may indicate how knowledge is socially organised through discourse.

1.5.1 Defining the formal institution

The main focus of this study is language choice in organisational texts. As Darville ([1995: 254](#)) stresses, “work in the dominant organisations in our society is done essentially, though not exclusively, through texts.” These ‘dominant organisations’, whether corporations, bureaucracies, media, professions, and academia, exercise power in documentary processes ([Smith, 1990b: 209](#)). For the purpose of the present study, it is important to define the nature of the organisation, which Hodgson ([2006: 8](#)) defines as follows:

“organizations are a special kind of institution, with addition features. Organizations are special institutions that involve (a) criteria to establish their boundaries and to distinguish their members from non-members, (b) principles of sovereignty who is in charge, and (c) chains of command delineating responsibilities within the organization”.

Voss ([2015: 192](#)) observes that organisations such as governments, business firms, political parties, schools, and public administrations are commonly referred to as ‘institutions’ in everyday language as well as the social sciences. These would be classified as ‘formal institutions’ as they are “generally created and arranged by agents who are able to rely on third parties for monitoring and enforcement” (ibid.). This external influence is particularly important as it reveals that there is an element of interconnectivity between organisations. In addition, organisations may be recognised as governance structures critical to the creation, co-ordination and management of knowledge through activities and practices for governance; such governance may be “undertaken by a government, market, or network, whether over a family, tribe, formal or informal organization, or territory, and whether through laws, norms, power, or language” ([Bevir, 2012: 21](#)). A goal-oriented organisation, whether in public or private sector, depends on knowledge in textual form ([Darville, 1995: 254](#)). The organisations under study, a government authority falling under the national social welfare services and a micro-enterprise ([European Commission, 2015](#)), are both such goal-oriented entities dependent on third parties. These organisations may be referred to variously as ‘institution’, ‘organisation’, ‘workplace’ and ‘entity’ in the dissertation.

1.6 The data collection

Data collection was split into two phases. The first phase was between April 2013 and August 2013, when data was collected for Study One. This originally served as a pilot study to test concepts used in New Literacy Studies, using ethnographic methods to establish literacy practices in a work-oriented environment and investigate the choice of language in texts. The data collection phase for Study Two occurred between July 2015 and September 2016, after a government entity granting access for research purposes was located. Methods of data collection included the use of participant diaries and assessing a selection of texts published by the agency for language choice.

1.7 Outline of the study

The following study is organised as follows. Chapter Two provides a sociohistorical description of institutional language use in Malta, providing a background to the language situation in Malta, which slowly emerged from a diglossic language community into one of widespread bilingualism; this includes efforts by the Maltese government and other non-governmental organisations towards the standardisation of the Maltese language, and how the Maltese and English languages occupy particular niches in institutional settings. This overview also illustrates how Maltese society evolved from a premodern to modern society, with the respective changes in institutional practices, including language.

Chapter Three attempts to discuss the dynamics leading to the ‘higher level regularities’ possibly responsible for language choice in institutional texts. Choice of language is linked to topic, which is arguably a form of knowledge organisation; this may be extended to writing. Writing is associated with the beginnings of the urban revolution ([Childe, 1950](#); [Gnanadesikan, 2009](#)) and it was used as a medium to manage resources ([Giddens, 1981](#)). Described as a ‘disembedding mechanism’ that has enabled time-space distancing of social relations ([Giddens, 1981; 1990](#)), writing may be perceived as the extension of social action across time and space, a phenomenon which has taken exceptional importance in modern society. Taking into account the ideational and interpersonal functions of texts, I argue that choice of language for the representation of knowledge is dependent on the types of networks critical to the exchange of synoptic knowledge, a major defining factor of a postmodern society ([Lyotard, 1979](#)). The nation-state is dependent on such networks found within its institutions, which tend to be isomorphic in structure ([DiMaggio and Powell, 1983](#)). However, the nature of the institution in question may need re-evaluation, as institution type may affect choice of language once a more global approach to language is taken. In understanding societal bilingualism in a nation-state, and the potential tensions present, I also suggest that one must not stop at the national borders when evaluating language choices in a bilingual nation-state, but instead take the world-system as a single unit (Wallerstein, [1982; 2006](#)) to determine the flow of knowledge and ultimately language in investigation textually-mediated social organisation.

Chapter Four is an overview of the ontological and epistemological stances that influenced the methodology adopted for the study. It provides an explanation for the choice of a qualitative approach, and why the social practice approach was the main means to collect data. It also provides an overview of the data collection process, issues encountered as well as a brief description of each entity investigated.

Chapter Five is Study One; this was the original pilot study, involving the literacy practices of an individual who owned a small-to-medium enterprise (SME). This provided the opportunity to not only collect data using ethnographic methods influenced by New Literacy Studies, but also to reflect on conceptual tools from other disciplines, such as institutional ethnography, that may provide insight the dynamics behind language choice in texts. Findings hint at the ‘naturalisation’ of English for commercial practices. Chapter Six is Study Two, looking into select literacy practices in a government authority, in which texts were contextualised in terms of regionalisation ([Giddens, 1981](#)), adopting conceptual tools from institutional ethnography ([Smith, 1990a](#)) to account for the choice of Maltese and English within texts, as well as taking into consideration global influences in local spaces ([Lefebvre, 1991](#)).

Chapter Seven discusses the three research questions, taking into consideration the need for a critical approach to the use of written language and language choice. With textually-mediated practices in institutional settings as conducive to the extension of social action, such practices are linked to the social organisation of knowledge, influencing the choice of language in texts. It is proposed that choice of language for institutional texts critical to organisational practices is moulded by social, historical and political factors beyond the immediate setting, in this case the nation-state, and may be better understood by applying world-systems analysis (WSA), a theoretical framework that takes the global world system as the primary unit of analysis as opposed to the nation-state when analysing world history and social change ([Wallerstein, 2006](#)). This may account for the use of English in the Maltese context insofar synoptic knowledge is exchanged within textually-mediated social practices, connecting local practices with the global community.

Chapter TWO: Societal bilingualism in Malta: systems of institutionalised knowledge

2.1 Introduction

To understand the current sociolinguistic situation regarding Maltese and English in institutional life, it is important to view the political, cultural and social influences that have led up to this language arrangement. It is best to view this development from a sociohistorical perspective known as the *longue durée*, taking into account long-term historical structures as opposed to short-term and cause-and-effect factors. These institutional structures slowly evolved over centuries, involving the transition from a traditional to a modern society. Key factors contributing to the societal bilingualism in Malta were colonization and annexation as well as trade opportunities and employment, but whatever the causes, the resulting bilingual patterns reveal the social and cultural ideologies underpinning the organization of society, whether explicitly planned or the unintended by-products of other social forces.

The following is an overview of societal bilingualism in major social institutions in Malta, linking sociohistorical events to use of language in institutional settings and systems of knowledge management and organisation. The origins of the Maltese language are discussed first, followed by the sociohistorical contexts that led to its survival in an environment that offered both physical isolation from mainstream cultural movements in Western Europe and at the same time exposure to socio-political forces in the Mediterranean in an era dependent on sea transport for trade and travel. As for language within institutions, it is perhaps best to see this development slowly occurring over centuries in which considerable habitualization created stable institutional patterns of behaviour. These developments were not linear, but involved the “rebuilding of foundations” ([Foucault, 1972: 6](#)), which can be linked to the major socio-political upheavals in Maltese institutional life, following displacements and interruptions experienced by societal institutions; these successions are not necessarily complete breaks with previous politically influenced practices or linear progressions from one

administration to another, but rather a mixture of discontinuities and continuities in the evolutionary adaptation of social practices supported by language practices. Institutional evolution in Malta is divided into several major eras, starting with the introduction of Western institutions in the medieval period, which was influential in the formation of a class-divided society which can be classified as a pre-modern society indicative of traditional diglossia ([Snow, 2013](#)) with distinct High and Low languages in use. This was followed by a slow transformation into a prototypical modern society under the Knights Hospitaller of Malta, changing into a fortress colony under the British, and later into a nation-state after gaining independence. It may be argued that Malta faces the challenges of globalisation and the transition into what is identified as a knowledge society ([Stehr, 2001](#)). Each political change has been accompanied by changes in the manner resources were managed, which Giddens ([1981: 52](#)) defines as allocative (material) and authoritative (human) resources, and language is key to their management. Such socio-political developments have resulted in both formal policies regarding language as well as the unwritten, implicit ones found in Maltese society not regulated by the [Maltese Constitution of 1964](#).

2.2 The origins of the Maltese language

The Maltese islands are an archipelago of islands in the Central Mediterranean region, 81 kilometres south of Sicily and approximately 300 kilometres north of Libya. The islands have a history of human settlement going back to prehistoric times, but the sociocultural influences critical to the present sociolinguistic state took root in the context of Christian-Muslim conflict present in ninth century AD and the subsequent warfare affecting the central Mediterranean stretching from Italy to Northern Africa. The Byzantine Empire, the Eastern branch of the Roman Empire, was engaged in numerous wars with the growing Muslim Caliphate over several centuries; the Mediterranean Sea was the battleground for these two empires, when Arab raids reached a peak during the ninth and tenth centuries AD. The Maltese islands were under Byzantine rule until the military takeover by the

Arabs around 870 AD, and following the Arab conquests, Byzantine Greek culture was all but obliterated over the next two hundred years ([Brown, 1975: 86](#)).

Very little is known of Arab Malta, which is believed to be the most important contribution towards what is known today as the Maltese language ([Aquilina, 1958: 45](#)). The lack of documentation about this period has made Muslim Malta ‘something of a conundrum’ ([Metcalf, 2009: 27](#)), as it was commonly assumed that Malta was colonized by the Arab victors immediately after the takeover. However, there are documentary sources suggesting that it was depopulated ([Brincat, 1995: 11](#); [Metcalf, 2009: 26](#)). The depopulation theory is also supported by the linguistic evidence. In reconstructing a timeline of historical events and potential language contact, it appears that the variety of Arabic spoken at the time of the Aghlabid conquest is not the precursor to Maltese, but rather Siculo-Arabic, a medieval dialect of Arabic. Following military conquests and the colonization of Sicily by the Aghlabid Arabs, Arabic became the dominant language of communication. The variety of Arabic spoken in Sicily underwent changes after the island became a melting pot of Arab-speaking Muslims from all over the Muslim Caliphate ([Agius, 2012: 47](#)). In the process of resettling inhabitants to weaken any tribal or ethnic differences ([Metcalf, 2009: 56](#)), the numerous dialects and varieties in use would have assimilated into the dominant form of spoken Arabic, becoming a more homogeneous variety by the time of the Norman conquest of the eleventh century. This koiné became the main language of communication throughout Sicily amongst all ethnic groups, spoken by Sicilian Muslims, Christians and Jews alike ([Agius, 2012: 13](#)).

The main question remains as to how Siculo-Arabic survived in Malta, which died out in Sicily after the systematic expulsion of Muslims in the thirteenth century. It appears that the clue to this lies in the recolonization of the archipelago by Muslim Arabs around 1048 ([Brincat, 1995: 15](#)), which may have been the result of a civil war which broke out in Sicily ([Metcalf, 2009: 84](#)). This small colony, mainly consisting of Muslims and their slaves, built a new settlement on the ruins of Mdina (ibid, pg. 103). It was this single settlement that perhaps can be identified as to how Siculo-Arabic was introduced to Maltese islands. Its survival and evolution in Malta is treated in the sections below.

2.3 From multiculturalism to the expulsion of Muslim Arabs

The next critical phase in Malta's political and linguistic history is the Norman takeover, which occurred in 1091 and lasted until 1194. Little is known about institutional life of Muslim Malta and use of language, save the little that can be gleaned from documentary and assumptions made through archaeological findings ([Molinari and Cutajar, 1999](#)). In 1091, the annexation of the Maltese islands meant Muslim Malta became part of Count Roger's multicultural and multilingual demesne, administered by Muslim emirs ([Dalli, 2002: 42](#)). Count Roger II reconquered the islands in 1127 ([Metcalf, 2009: 109](#)), a move which was marked by the establishment of a garrison manned with Christian soldiers, following the setting up of a Maltese bishopric in 1156 as one of the sees falling under the new jurisdiction of the archbishop of Palermo ([Dalli, 2008: 251](#)). The predominantly Muslim character of Malta during the reign of William II, Count Roger's grandson, was noted by the emissary of Frederick Barbarossa to Saladin, Bishop Burckhardt von Strasbourg, who stopped in Malta in 1175 on his way to Egypt, referring to the island as inhabited by Muslims ([Blouet, 1972: 43](#)). This may be corroborated by a finding which so far is the only known Muslim artefact to have survived from that same period, which is the headstone of Maymûnah discovered in Gozo, dated circa 1174, which clearly indicates a settled Muslim community at the time. Little else is documented about the community that remained, but at this stage it may be assumed that the connection between the Kingdom of Sicily and the Maltese archipelago, can be viewed as an example of the differentiation of centre/periphery relations ([Giddens, 1981: 95](#)). Within the *Regno*, the islands were on the periphery, and the physical distance and the comparative difficulty of sea travel made the archipelago relatively isolated. The physical, political and social relations defining Sicily and Malta vis-à-vis each other point to a city/countryside divide, providing a significant contrast in terms of social organization and activity that had a significant impact on language use.

The decades following the death of Roger II were marked by anti-Muslim tension mounting in the Kingdom, which lasted through the second half of the twelfth century ([Loud, 2007: 514](#)). The year 1194 marks the beginning of the Latinisation of the Kingdom

of Sicily, a slow but steady shift from multiculturalism to monoculturalism, which would also eventually influence Malta, both politically and culturally. When the *Regno* was passed on to the Hohenstaufen dynasty in 1194, the archipelago became part of a vast empire encompassing the Mediterranean and the Baltic region. This event brought about changes in the social fabric of the Kingdom of Sicily, where multiculturalism was gradually abolished in favour of a more monolithic Latin Christian rule. Relations between ethnic groups deteriorated. Around the year 1223, the systematic deportation of the Sicilian Muslims, the largest ethnic group on the island, commenced; this was complete by 1249. This move cleared the way for the repopulation of Sicily by Latin Christian immigrants, chiefly in the west and central regions of the island ([Loud, 2007: 332](#)). No evidence of such similar waves of ethnically motivated violence in Malta have been recorded, which may have offered sanctuary to Muslims who managed to escape Sicily at the time of the massacres in the late twelfth century. Goodwin ([2002:28](#)) notes that the Giliberto report, circa 1241, makes mention of Muslim Maltese in Malta and Gozo, seemingly the largest ethnic group on the archipelago at the time. This suggests that Maltese Muslims were not subject to deportation on the same scale as their Sicilian counterparts. In time, they were faced with the same fate as their counterparts in Sicily, as the Maltese islands could no longer remain as a Muslim annexation to a Christianized *Regno* at war with neighbouring Muslim powers. However, Malta did not experience the same large-scale deportation as in Sicily, but more likely large-scale conversions to Christianity ([Goodwin, 2002: 31](#)). Once this happened, only Christian and Jewish communities remained ([Wettinger, 1985: 7](#)). This may have affected Muslim Arab culture, but not the use of language. As in Norman Sicily, Siculo-Arabic spoken in Malta was spoken by all inhabitants, irrespective of the speakers' religious beliefs ([Dalli, 2006: 117](#)).

Towards the end of the end of Hohenstaufen dynasty, the islands experienced two major changes as far as social organization and language use are concerned. First, the islands experienced a transition to widespread Christianity through expulsion and conversion, eliminating Malta's largest ethnic group. In the process, the country underwent a process of Latinization that was politically motivated and culturally significant. The next significant move regarding language was the introduction of a style of political

administration dependent on literacy in the Norman era, taking root under Frederick II and consolidated by successive rulers. The establishment of two types of foreign powerful institutions, secular and religious, slowly altered the sociocultural structure of the Maltese community in medieval times, subjecting it to external forces that shaped its formal institutions and its language policies.

2.4 The rise of institutional life in Medieval Malta

Thirteenth century Malta, spanning Hohenstaufen, Angevin and Aragonese rule, is a period marked by the beginnings of large-scale institutional powers that had a slow but significant effect on local society. What is also notable is the increasing dependence upon writing in maintaining power relations in the absence of co-presence. The growing reliance on administrative practices involving the use of written documents and their archiving was a hallmark of thirteenth century government ([North and Thomas, 1973: 46](#)), providing evidence that European rulers retained the use of Latin for written purposes for official purposes rather than Greek or Arabic; Malta is no exception. Physically absent in terms of ruling sovereigns, these powers were the *Regno*, representing secular administration, and the Roman Catholic Church, with its emphasis on religious organization. Each institution may be described as having an impact on Maltese society, creating and maintaining different institutional orders through their own spheres of activities as well as power relations. These institutional forces, both concerned with social order and the management of resources, introduced new methods of organization dependent on the use of literacy. This created a class-divided, diglossic society where positions of power were fundamentally based on literacy and literacy practices, with choice of language for official purposes indicative of how power relations are defined.

The Norman system of bureaucracy had its foundations in Byzantine and Arab administrative practices, which later experienced homogeneity under Frederick II ([Abulafia, 1988: 36](#)). Frederick II is credited with the introduction of centralised methods of government (*ibid*, pg. 2) and in light of the sheer size of the empire and the cost of

maintaining power and funding wars, it is perhaps not surprising that there was the need to embark on a large-scale life-long exercise managing human and material resources. As noted previously, the official languages of the Norman administration were Latin, Arabic and Greek, which were still in use at the beginning of the Hohenstaufen reign, as can be attested by a diploma in the Latin language, with an appendix in Arabic, issued by Empress Constance in 1198 to ‘*tam Christiani quam Sarraceni*’ of Malta and Gozo ([Dalli, 2002: 45](#)). The primary language was Latin, perhaps foreshadowing what was to occur over the reign of Frederick II. This shift in language signalled the beginning of a new approach, paving the way for the changes that Frederick II was to implement in the year 1220, an important year for changes in administration and related practices involving the reorganization of the administration of the kingdom. Changes in administrative policies resulted in changes in language use; Latin gradually replaced Arabic and Greek, and the last known document written in Arabic was in 1242, signalling the slow displacement of Arabic with Romance languages ([Lewis, 1993: 130](#)). In tandem with this change in administrative practices is the rise of Sicilian as a distinctive Italo-Romance language, which was one of the consequences of the process of Latinisation at the expense of Siculo-Arabic.

The *Regno* introduced institutionalized activities centring around administration of crown resources, ongoing military warfare and the regulation of public order, which were adopted and further developed by successive colonizers. Secular administration had its origins in two distinct administrative bodies which were emerging on the main island, Mdina and Birgu. Mdina was the central inland hub, the capital city, which offered an insular lifestyle which focused on agricultural activities. Birgu was a seaport with its own castle, the *Castrum Maris*, and a garrison for soldiers ([Castillo, 2006: 31](#)); as was typical in pre-capitalistic Europe, this town was more likely to be exposed to cross-cultural influences as it was a port of call for the Sicilian-African sea route and military affairs. Gozo had its own capital city, with its own administrative body. Eventually, this divide in physical location and occupational activities would be a critical factor for language use following the political developments in medieval Malta, impacting both the development of the Maltese language and societal bilingualism.

The reign of Charles of Anjou is relatively short (1266 – 1283), culminating in the loss of the kingdom to Aragon following the War of the Sicilian Vespers ([Mott, 1999: 145](#)). Current knowledge of the Angevin period in Malta is due to the administrative practices that they adopted from the *Regno*, which points to the social reproduction of inherited social institutions. The administrative apparatus now implemented was a form of management whereby local appointments were controlled by the central government in Naples, the new royal seat. New appointees needed to be literate in the language of administration. One matter of interest in connection with this period were plans to have three suitably educated Maltese subjects appointed as notaries public, who needed to travel to the *Regno* to obtain their warrant ([Dalli, 2006: 131](#)). These three subjects are unusual as education and literacy were not widespread; Dalli ([2006: 131](#)) concludes that these appointees must have been received an education in Latin, and Greek and Arabic cannot be excluded. In addition, they would have spoken the local variety of Siculo-Arabic. This suggests that local appointees were necessary because of the language barrier; having officials competent in the written languages of the crown as well as proficiency in the local vernacular may have been considered the ideal intermediaries between the Maltese subjects and the Latin-based Crown.

The years marked by Aragonese and Castilian rule, from 1282 until 1530, were defined by a decline in trade and economic activity. Despite the fact that at the time Europe was experiencing what Goodwin ([2002](#)) refers to as a prototypical secular nationalism, “the Maltese islands remained a fiefdom internally restricted by feudalism and externally controlled by the policies of the Spanish rule” (pg. 33). However, it was a period when important cultural changes took place on religious and secular levels; Christianity was taking a central place in Maltese society, the development of a municipal government and the creation of a local nobility were in making, and an influx of migrants, mainly from Spain and southern Italy, were settling in Malta ([Blouet, 1972: 46](#)). When the Aragonese introduced a form of local government, a typical practice in areas controlled by Aragonese crown, the Maltese enjoyed some autonomy in managing their affairs. The *Università*, first established in 1397, was a form of municipal government entrusted with local administrative and judicial issues ([Sharp, 2015: 267](#)). The governor of the *Università*, also

known as the *Hakem* or *Capitano del Verga*, was royally appointed, and served as the representative of the Spanish monarchy ([Vella, 1974: 138-139](#)). The administrative body, the *Consiglio Popolare*, consisted of *giurati* who were elected representatives of the nobility, professional bodies, the clergy, the merchants, the guilds and heads of families from every town or village ([Laspina, 1971: 252](#)). These *giurati*, not necessarily literate, were entrusted with upholding traditional privileges and customs. The castellan of the *castrum maris* in Birgu, independent of the *Università*, was responsible for military affairs and seafaring activities. The *Università* and the *castrum maris* created two distinct nuclei of administration, attracting foreign traders and moneylenders, notaries and teachers, who mainly came from Sicily or Southern Italy ([Brincat, 2000: 43](#)); the latter was most likely to host soldiers from Western Europe, bringing together speakers of languages from around the Mediterranean. Both entities conducted business on behalf of the crown, reporting back periodically to absent rulers.

The other institution in Malta, no less powerful, was the Catholic Church, which had its own system with its own administrative practices and as an institution it was mainly concerned with maintaining religious unity and order. Separate and distinct from the crown, this institution was probably the beginning of the local Catholic Church in Malta. Its presence probably predates 1250, given that there was a small Christian community since Norman times. Their presence did not have a culturally significant impact before 1370; religious orders were initially reluctant to establish their presence on the islands due to the language barrier ([Wettinger and Fsadni, 1968: 25](#)). However, when they did, they became institutions that commanded considerable respect amongst locals, and contributed to the spread and consolidation of Christianity on the islands ([Blouet, 1972: 44](#)). As a result, it became a very powerful social force amongst Maltese from all walks of life ([Dalli, 2006: 246](#)). Foreign appointed, these members were most likely to have had an education which was both Christian and Latin-based. This institution worked in tandem with its secular counterpart, overseeing parish administration and ecclesiastical tribunals, as well as formal instruction. The arrival of the religious orders is linked with the introduction of Church-run education, dating back to 1461. Together with the *Università*, the Catholic Church ran what was the only grammar school in Malta until 1530 ([Cassar, 2000b: 162](#)).

This school was mainly for aspiring novitiates keen on obtaining instruction and training in preparation of joining the orders. Private tutors were also available for the more affluent members of Maltese society, providing classes in Latin, Italian and numeracy ([Zammit-Mangion, 1992: 10](#)).

These major institutions, working separately but often collaborating together, introduced forms of social organization that were distinct from the community-based ways of life, and in the process contributed to a form of societal bilingualism that reflected a class-divided society. These institutions were essentially gateways connecting Malta to social orders and languages that were in current use across states and universities in Western European countries. On the other hand, the indigenous home community was a network of family and neighbours, maintained by an unwritten dialect of Arabic that lacked the history and prestige of the standard languages used by the administration. The situation pictured here is bilingualism with diglossia ([Fishman, 1980](#)), where the ruling élite is bilingual in both High and Low languages for different conceptual orders of social life, using the former language for formal functions. Little opportunity existed for any form of transition between the High and Low languages, Latin and Siculo-Arabic respectively.

However, there were times when the High and Low languages intersected in official spheres, as can be confirmed by public and private notarial archives. Unlike the ecclesiastical presence, the notarial profession was well-established by the end of the fifteenth century, as can be attested by the abundance of documentation available ([Brincat, 2000: 58](#)). Latin and Sicilian Italian were the main languages for notarial deeds and contracts, and by the fifteenth century these two languages were considered the official languages of Malta. However, it appears that people generally spoke one language and wrote in another, as can be shown by numerous contracts and deeds documenting that the contents had to be explained orally in Maltese, including the use of interpreters for people who could not understand the official languages ([Wettinger and Fsadni, 1968: 22](#)). It was not uncommon for notaries to draft documents in the official languages, incorporating Maltese words which could not be easily translated into these official languages; Maltese was often noted down in such texts as *lingua vulgari* ([Fiorini, 1993: 179](#)). This practice

of using the vernacular for oral discussion, and the official languages for written documentation, involving two distinct languages suggests that a culture of translanguaging and modeswitching ([Baynham, 1993: 295](#)) may have been a fact of life in medieval Malta.

The issue of Maltese as the main language of oral communication could never be disregarded by the civil and ecclesiastical administrators in Malta. The earliest known occurrence revealing the views about the use of Maltese within institutions can be traced to 1453, when the *Università* of Gozo requested a Andrea di Bongeminu, the only formally trained lawyer on the island who was also native to the island, to be permanently assigned as a judge, on the insistence that as a person who “could understand the language and who knew the top and bottom people as well as the customs, usages and habits of the said land and island of Gozo” ([Wettinger and Fsadni, 1968: 23](#)). The issue of language is perceived to be critical in bridging the gap between the local and the official. Similar occurrences were documented in relation to ecclesiastical matters. On Sunday, 28 January 1481, the jurors of the *Università* of Mdina protested the appointment of a new parish priest for the city of Mdina, the reason being that he was unable to communicate in the Maltese language ([Fiorini, 1993: 179](#); [Zammit-Mangion, 1992](#)). This demand ultimately reached the court of Emperor of Charles V, who in 1514 instructed his ambassador in Rome to make a formal request to the Pope to appoint Maltese-speaking clerics to posts in Malta, the main reason being that knowing the language was critical to hearing confessions ([Wettinger and Fsadni, 1968: 26](#)). These events revealed the need for community leaders, in this case parish priests, to be proficient in both the community language as well as the administrative language to accomplish institutional needs (see [Baynham, 1993: 295](#)).

In the meantime, another institutional force was in the making, which was a loosely-organised trading society. Guilds of tradespeople and craftspeople, including shopkeepers, merchants, urban administrators as well as craftspeople and farmers were forming alliances based on their shared occupational activities; these groups were distinct from the typical village community in Malta, as these were ties based on occupation, not family or parish membership ([Dalli, 2006: 156 - 158](#)). The *Università* found it hard to influence these tradespeople. Many preferred to stay within the vicinity of the *castrum maris* in Birgu, of

which very little is known about its early administration or language use. This did not have the same prestige as the institutions representing state, religion and legal authority. This group of people, defined by occupation, would eventually find opportunity to consolidate its operations under the Knights of the Order of St John and have considerable influence on language as the other two institutions.

Towards the end of the late medieval period under Castilian rule, Malta can be reconstructed as an outpost of the Kingdom of Sicily, with Mdina as the central hub of the archipelago ([Luttrell, 1993: 267](#)). The *Università* and the Church institutions were landowning élites which had legal, political and military jurisdiction and ecclesiastical authority respectively, and contributed to a distinctly class-divided community, ruling the subjected illiterate monolingual peasantry ([Cassar, 2000b: 9](#)), a situation no different to that found in Medieval Europe ([Wright, 2004: 20](#)). Such social organization afforded very little social mobility, with hardly any middle class, a state of affairs that lasted until 1530. Few families could hope to enrol in the grammar school at the Cathedral or join the upper echelons of landowners and civil office; for example, notaries public and advocates came from the same group of families of landowners who monopolized the law-related offices, with intermarriage amongst upper-class families creating alliances and counter-alliances ([Dalli, 2006: 219](#)). Hence power relations, as well as social relations, were strictly controlled and stable, which may have been partly driven to have control over limited resources. These power relations were clearly demarcated in the compartmentalization of language use in Maltese society ([Savona-Ventura, 2004: 312](#)). The community was diglossic by the very nature of its social composition, with an uncodified vernacular used for intracommunication amongst community members, and separate, linguistically-unrelated established languages for a literate élite who had access to wider society in the Holy Roman Empire. This was about to change when Charles V donated the islands to the Knights of the Order of St John after their expulsion from Rhodes.

2.5 The urbanisation of early modern Malta

The arrival of the Knights of the Order of St John in 1530 heralded a new chapter in the history of Maltese institutions. The Order itself was a medieval, international institution consisting of a foreign aristocratic organization sharing little with the local population it was set to govern ([Dalli, 2006: 252](#)); Koster ([1983](#)) describes the style of government as essentially oligarchic, whereby “a small class of imported noble men determined most developments in the islands” (pg. 301). Yet, the 268-year theocratic rule by a religious order contributed to a complete break with medieval Maltese society in many ways, including the fact that it was never directly governed from Sicily after 1530 ([Goodwin, 2002: 34](#); [Castillo, 2006: 39](#)). The ensuing political, economic and cultural changes implemented by the Order would be responsible for the next language-based shift on two levels, including the vernacular itself.

The difference between the Order of the Knights of St John and previous rulers was that the Order was physically present in Malta and made it its stronghold. That move meant that Malta was no longer at the periphery of a kingdom, but at the centre of activities in the central Mediterranean ([Dalli, 2008 citing Fiorini, 1998; 2004](#)). From a political and social perspective, it was in their interest to develop its infrastructure to reflect their status as an exclusive organization of European nobility and prestige. No longer able to participate in the crusades in the Holy Land due to physical constraints, the Order changed its focus to patrolling the Mediterranean to protect Christian merchant shipping from Muslim pirates. In the meantime, the main concern facing the Knights was the fact that the island was not self-sufficient and the only way to mitigate that was to engage in trade. This necessitated the need to move its management operations to Birgu in relation to its dependence on sea activity. The Knights encouraged trade, and by 1565 consolidated an entrepreneurial class whose importance to the archipelago rivalled that of the established institutions. The Order also engaged in its own economic activities, which included slavery and piracy, on a scale that was to change the traditional way of life. Opportunities in the new city and its strong navy attracted Maltese as well as and foreigners from all corners of the Mediterranean and beyond ([Abela, 2012: 275](#)).

The Order also reorganized the administrative and judicial functions of the country. The local *Università* underwent changes to its administrative functions, ceasing to be the highest organizational order on the archipelago. The Knights suspended the privileges of the *Consiglio Popolare* and its *giurati*; the *Università* was rendered powerless, now simply responsible for the procurement and distribution of grain and other essential foodstuffs for an island unable to feed itself ([Castillo, 2006: 53](#); [Pirota, 1996: 26](#)). As the official body in charge of grain, the Order changed its organizational structure, appointing officials by the Grand Masters themselves and working under the supervision of selected members of the Order. As for judicial matters, the Order introduced their own judicial system on the inhabitants, and the *Università* was consigned to petty cases in the rural areas ([Pirota, 1996: 29](#)). All activities were now monitored and all developments were reported to the Grandmaster, with the *Università* gradually adapting to the new changes ([Cassar, 2000b: 21](#)).

With their focus on the coast rather than inland, the Order financed a massive infrastructural programme which involved the building of fortifications and fortresses along the coast, which was an easy target for pirate attacks. Within months of the siege of 1565, work started on Valletta, the new capital of Malta ([Bianco, 2009: 6](#)). In the process of building the new capital city, with its palaces and churches, the Knights were the catalyst in the urbanization of Malta. The entire economy of the country now depended on the Harbour area, offering opportunities to many local people who wanted to improve their standing in life, both economically and socially. The introduction of new industries and the unprecedented growth of trade that flourished during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries led to a new middle class. A new way of life was created, which Cassar ([2000b: 17](#)) defines as the beginning of the urban/rural divide, with Mdina and the surrounding areas receding to country status. Overall, the archipelago underwent a political and commercial revolution that prepared the way for a cultural revolution, which is consistent with the economic, social and political changes noted in Western European culture between 1500 and 1800 ([Burke, 1978: 244](#)).

The cultural transformation that followed included the establishment of grammar schools offering a formal education, with the Order working with other religious orders to promote educational opportunities on a par with educational institutions in mainland Europe ([Zammit-Mangion, 1992:13](#)). Formal learning involved grammar, rhetoric, Italian, and numeracy. These schools provided opportunities to become literate in the languages of high culture as well as the formal training necessary for the traditional professions, mainly law, medicine and theology. Literacy became a sign of education and culture. In addition, a printing press was set up for the publication of books in 1639, a theatre in 1732 and a public library in 1750. As these establishments were mainly in the Harbour area, especially Valletta, the area became “a pole of literacy *par excellence*, on account of the presence of an influential European nucleus, including an aristocratic élite together with Maltese landowners, and the rising entrepreneurial class” ([Cassar, 2000b: 261](#)).

It is perhaps no surprise that the two main occupational categories primarily associated with literacy, the legal professionals and the clergy, were very powerful and influential institutions at the time. Literacy was only for the élite. In the western world, these were highly prestigious occupations which were associated with a university education as well as the high status of the individual, as they tended to be well-born ([Freidson, 1986: 22](#)). This was quite a powerful combination, especially as very few people in Malta had the financial means to become literate. Notaries were “specialist producers of writing especially since, together with the clergy, they formed the most conspicuous social group on whom the largely illiterate mass of peasants, craftsmen and labourers depended” ([Cassar, 2000b: 169](#)). Literacy was controlled, the Church regulated what was taught and read, and the printing press that the Order opened in the mid-seventeenth century was closed several years later upon the command of the Inquisitor. Schools for the general population offered an ‘oral education’ ([Cassar, 2000b: 164](#)), primarily functioning as centres where catechism lessons were taught in the vernacular, which at this stage was neither codified nor standardized. Yet despite these restrictions, the Catholic Church fulfilled an important administrative function at grassroots level. Every parish was assigned a parish priest, who was a major figure in community life. In retrospect, priests had the role of ‘mediators of literacy’ ([Baynham, 1993](#)), as they would be one of the very

few literate individuals in each town or village ([Koster, 1984a: 190](#)). Not only were they responsible for administering the sacraments to the faithful and teaching catechism, they were also known to keep records of their parishioners, recording baptisms, marriages and deaths; the history of a town or village was largely the history of its parish and its activities ([Goodwin, 2002: 57](#)). To this effect, priests were administrators of their community.

Restrictions on literacy apart, language shifts were under way by which the language situation in 1530 had changed by 1798, the year the Order left Malta. First, there was a change in official language. Whilst the medieval period witnessed the Latinization of Malta, the presence of the Order saw the Italianization of institutions. Malta developed close cultural and economic ties with mainland Italy, and hence the adoption of the dominant variety of Italian that emerged at the time, Tuscan, which was to become the superposed variety of Italian ([Cassar, 2000a: 36](#)). The French traveller Sieur DuMont observed that “there are Three Languages spoken in the City; the French, Spanish, and Italian. The last of these is authoriz’d by the Government, and us’d in publick Writings” ([DuMont, 1690: Letter XI, 138 – 139](#)). By the late eighteenth century, Italian became the language of high society and the élite, as well as the language of the law courts of Malta, eventually spreading into most domains of public life. Frendo ([1988: 187](#)) observes that “for a Maltese to be educated and for him to know Italian was one and the same thing”. Maltese university educated professionals with an interest in academia wrote in the Italian language, which the cultural élite considered *la lingua materna*, and their books were to be found in many libraries across Europe ([Brincat, 2006: 11](#)). This identity had been strongly ingrained into the national psyche, becoming known as *Italianità* under British colonial rule.

Whilst one High language replaced another as the official language of Malta, the vernacular remained the main language of communication amongst locals in cities and countryside for mundane activities, transmitted orally from generation to generation within families without any formal instruction ([Agius de Soldanis, 1750: 43](#)). Bilingualism in the High and Low languages was for the Maltese élite, whilst monolingualism in Maltese was considered a sign of illiteracy. This diglossic state of affairs was also a deep-rooted class

difference, but despite the disparity in prestige, both languages fulfilled important roles. Agius de Soldanis ([1750: 43](#)) is on record having observed that the Maltese of the Harbour area communicated in the vernacular amongst themselves, and used contemporary Italian with foreigners, the common tongue of the educated Maltese.

However, this was not an easy situation for the literate classes to handle. As in medieval Malta, the dual language issue was still present. The need for Maltese-speaking clerics was felt during the Order's rule. In 1592, in a meeting of the town council of Mdina, the members protested the granting of eight benefices to foreign Jesuits who were not Maltese speaking, feeling it was considered a severe handicap for priests not to be able to speak the vernacular ([Wettinger and Fsadni, 1968: 26](#)). A similar incident occurred in the judicial sphere, where in 1584 a civil court judge formally requested a Maltese-speaking judge as his substitute for minor cases ([Cassar, 2000b: 161](#)). Requests emphasizing the need for people in to speak the indigenous language points to at least two issues. Firstly, appointing foreign officials may not have been bridging the gap between the needs of the local community and those of the institution. The use of Maltese for spoken communication was an important aspect of everyday life, irrespective of social standing. The fact that Maltese from all walks of life, including the higher echelons, communicated in the vernacular regularly is evident in the minutes of the above-mentioned meeting, whereby it was explicitly stated that the official meeting was conducted in the vernacular ([Wettinger and Fsadni, 1968: 26](#)). This points to a situation where people spoke in one language and wrote in another. Secondly, this demand may have been a means to create opportunities for local inhabitants and at the same time retain control over local resources.

It appears that notaries were not the only occupational class who needed to deal with the challenges of working with High and Low languages on a daily basis, translating and switching from spoken to written text in different languages. Priests faced this on a daily basis. According to Cassar Pullicino ([2009: 31](#)), “both teachers and pupils found themselves in the unpleasant situation of having to teach, or learn at the same time Italian and Latin – both of them new subjects – through the medium of Maltese, their mother tongue”. As priests, they were also faced with the reality of holding mass in Latin for a

congregation that was able to understand the language. Some priests resorted to developing their own writing systems of Maltese, which was unintelligible to other readers, others delivered their sermons in Maltese but drafted them in Italian, which meant they had to engage in translating and preaching at the same time, which led to translanguaging during sermons ([Cassar Pullicino, 2009: 31](#)).

It was during this period that the vernacular experienced what could be called the beginning of corpus planning ([Johnson, 2013: 20](#)). Hieronymus Megiser was the first linguist to document the Maltese language in his study *Thesaurus Polyglottus*, published in 1606 ([Brincat, 2000: 126](#)). Over the next two centuries, issues concerning the vernacular ranged from its origins to its description and codification, resulting in a variety of writing systems and a number of grammars and dictionaries by contemporary academics ([Brincat, 2000: 132](#); [Ciappara, 2009: 48](#)). Mikiel Anton Vassalli, influenced by the French policies at the time, was an early proponent of the cultivation of the Maltese language as a vehicle of learned culture. However, these efforts were largely uncoordinated, and any large-scale effort to codify and standardize the language was hindered by the lack of consensus on the writing system to be adopted, an issue which would take centre-stage during the Language Question controversy under British rule.

2.6 The Language Question and the rise of nationhood

The year 1798 marks the end of the presence of the Order in Malta, following Napoleon's decision to take Malta as part of the Mediterranean strategy to seize Egypt and weaken British influence on India. When the French occupied Malta, the 268-year rule by the Order of St John came to an end, a political organization which was obsolete in contemporary Europe ([Koster, 1983: 311 – 312](#)). The French were set to change the political scene. Once the Knights were expelled in 1798, the abolition of the feudal system, slavery, the nobility and the inquisition followed. Ecclesiastical power was curtailed, and a secular state was set in motion. Plans to implement nationwide changes in line with French reforms, including compulsory primary education and language policies, were in

the process of being implemented ([Zammit-Mangion, 1992: 15](#)). During that time, French was an official language alongside Italian; the first local newspaper, *Journal de Malte*, was a parallel bilingual publication. However, French occupation in Malta was not to last, and therefore these institutional developments; the uprising of 1800 was sparked off when the French troops ransacked the Maltese churches to fund their expedition to Egypt. The Maltese people, through their elected representatives, “proclaimed the King of Naples lawful sovereign of the islands and called in the British fleet stationed in Sicily to help them defeat and banish the French” ([Hull, 1993: 4](#)). According to the Treaty of Amiens of 1802, the islands were restored to the Order, but the revived *Consiglio Popolare* made a declaration that same year to place the islands under the protection of the British crown, subject to an agreement to allow the Maltese to have its own constitution and manage its own state administration. This decision was to set the stage for a controversial language issue that was to rock the status quo.

Once in Malta, the British forces found an island with established religious and secular institutions with its own public administration, a strong bourgeoisie class and a bustling commercial port linked to major trading routes in the Mediterranean. These institutions were once again set to be influenced by the new colonisers; over 164 years of colonisation, British influence left its mark on administration, its constitutions and electoral politics, the economy, the dockyard, the forces and education ([Frendo, 1994: 14](#)). The one institution that it left alone was the Roman Catholic Church. At a time when the state and religion were one and the same for the locals, the one institution the British needed to be on good terms with was the Roman Catholic Church. As a result, the British granted the Catholic Church, the most powerful institution on the island, special privileges, such as control over the printing of religious material for the Maltese public in fear of proselytization.

The one issue that the British thought could be handled was language. The new colony was totally Italianate in character, so much so that it was referred to as an archipelago of Italian islands under British rule, or ‘English Italy’ ([Hull, 1993: 6](#)). The desire to anglicise the island to serve British interests better set in motion a decades-long controversy affecting language use in major Maltese institutions. The initial idea was to replace Italian

with English in all formal domains, taking a top-bottom approach to language substitution, starting with administration, law courts and education (ibid, pg. 9). However, the British had “some five centuries of *Italianità* to contend with” ([Frendo, 1994: 14](#)). Attempts were made to do introduce English on a societal level, such as the bilingual English-Italian government gazette created in 1816. However, any attempts to have the law practitioners proficient in English, or Maltese criminal law codes changed and rewritten in English between 1824 and 1854 proved to be unsuccessful ([Frendo, 1992: 449](#)). According to Ganado ([1974: 101](#)), the main reason why the Maltese judiciary resisted this change was primarily to protect their own professional and economic position; substituting English with Italian would provide the prime appointments for the British, the administration of justice would no longer be in Maltese hands, and that would have rendered the local members of the bar powerless and potentially without their livelihood.

Another established institution that was affected by the early Anglicisation programme was the university, which produced the Maltese educated professional classes. Despite efforts to introduce English literature and English as an admission requirement, lectures were still held in Italian. In 1840, Italian was still the language of military command for the Malta Royal Fencibles, set up in 1802 ([Hull, 1993: 9](#)). During the first forty years of British presence, the use of Italian and French was still strong amongst the middle and professional classes, and English was spoken by very few Maltese ([Miège, 1841: 177](#)). All in all, English made slow, if any, progress, during the first half of the nineteenth century ([Hull, 1993: 9](#)).

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed changes to the English-Italian deadlock, with fresh attempts to change the linguistic *status quo* in institutions. The Maltese public service was one institution that the British slowly tried to mould along British lines. In trying to enforce a culture of competitive meritocracy as opposed to the more traditional practice of patronage developed under the Knights’ rule, the first open competitive examinations for clerkship within the Maltese public services were held in 1857, including English and Italian as languages under assessment ([Pirota, 1996: 192](#)). However, the turning point was the year 1879, when the Keenan Report for Malta was

published. The Colonial Office was specifically concerned about language issues and commissioned the report to see how the English language could become the official language of administration and how it could be better diffused amongst the general population ([Pirotta, 2015: 360](#)). The recommendations of the Keenan Report included suggestions to make English the language of government administration, including the Council of Government, the gradual substitution of Italian for English in the law courts and the use of Maltese and English as the two principal languages of instruction. The Council of Government soon split into two factions, the *riformisti* and the *anti-riformisti*, or pro-British and pro-Italian respectively. This triggered a politically-driven language issue that was to dominate Maltese politics for the next 60 years, ushering in a tumultuous period where ideologies concerning language emerged, including established norms regarding Italian, English and eventually also Maltese.

The two factions developed their own theories about the use of the Italian and English languages. There was the nationalistic perspective of language and hence allegiances ([Cassar, 2001: 270](#)). The *anti-riformisti* were adamant about the status of Italian in Maltese society, which was proclaimed ‘*la lingua nazionale dei maltesi*’ ([Hull, 1993: 34](#)), defining the Maltese as a people using Italian as a vehicle of cultural expression. Allegiance to Italy was strong, and for the next two decades this faction was the more popular of the two. On the other hand, the *riformisti* were positioning English as a sign of allegiance to Britain. In addition, they were arguing for the substitution of Italian with English in all formal domains in Maltese society, besides promoting it as a language of economic importance; English was essentially, according to Joseph Chamberlain, “a question of bread and butter” ([House of Commons, 1902: 1198](#)). What irked the *anti-riformisti* in particular was the objective of the *reformisti* to make Maltese a language for institutional use. This was perceived as the deliberate eradication of the language that identified them as a people with an established European, Christian culture prior to British rule, and its substitution with what the *riformisti* were pushing for would possibly annul that heritage ([Frendo, 1988: 206](#); [Hull, 1993: 134](#)). To counteract this, the *riformisti* revived old theories concerning the origins of the vernacular, seeking to link it with Carthaginian and Phoenician and thus

making it appear more ancient and more prestigious than Latin or Arabic (e.g. [Mizzi, 1925](#)).

The proposed language reforms also affected education. The main issue was the language of instruction, which became an ideological battleground for stakeholders with different agendas (e.g. [Marshall, 1971](#)). As early as 1838, there were attempts to teach Maltese in primary schools, but this was subject to repeated failures over the nineteenth century, one reason being the lack of graphisation and the selection of language variety to teach ([Hull, 1993: 16](#)). This was another arena for ideological disagreement, with different approaches towards its standardization, such as to develop an alphabet that used a mix of Latin and Arab graphemes, or simply to use a Latin-based alphabet inspired by Italian, or even to ‘clean up’ the language and teach Classical Arabic instead of the vernacular. Despite the abolition of the censorship laws in 1839 granting the Maltese freedom of the press, comparatively few newspapers were printed in the Maltese language (ibid, pg. 17). A number of writing systems were proposed over the nineteenth century, but it was not until the interwar period that a Latin-based writing system developed by *L-Għaqda tal-Kittieba tal-Malti* [The Society for Writers of Maltese] in 1924 was adopted by the government for use on a national scale.

The introduction of internal self-governance during the interwar period witnessed comparably rapid changes in a number of language reforms linked to the spread and consolidation of the Maltese language in several institutional settings by 1939 ([Brincat, 2000: 172](#)). The Amery Constitution of 1921 was a turning point for the use of Maltese in higher-level institutions, when members of the newly created parliament were given the right to hold discussions in the Maltese language and recorded in either of the two official languages, Italian and English; in retrospect, this was similar to the meetings held in medieval Malta, where participants spoke in one language but wrote in another. Italian was still the language of the courts, whilst English was the official language of the British Empire and hence the language of administration; both languages were recognised as languages of culture and education. Official records, public documents and official notices would be bilingual; at this stage, Maltese was given an ancillary role to Italian and English.

The election of 1927 saw the defeat of the Nationalist Party, the main supporter of Malta's *Italianità*. The new party in power, the Constitutionalist Party, together with the Labour Party, championed the use of English and Maltese in all strata of society, weakening the position of Italian. It is interesting to note that whilst the British Crown had attempted to substitute Italian with English during the nineteenth century, the language now set to replace Italian was Maltese, a language with grassroots support for its implementation. The gradual introduction of Maltese in legal spheres was also resisted by legal professionals, but by 1934 the consolidation of Maltese as the legal language was complete following the development of a legal register ([Hull, 1993: 160](#)). The previous year saw Italian removed from administrative spheres, including the Government Gazette, a move made by the British in fear of the rise of fascism and irredentism in neighbouring Italy. In the years leading to World War II, Maltese replaced Italian in most spheres. Proficiency in Maltese was necessary for entry into the Maltese civil service and promotions; it also became an examination subject for matriculation. The Chair of Maltese was re-established at the University of Malta in 1937, after an absence of 108 years ([Brincat, 2000: 173](#)). In the short-lived MacDonal Constitution of 1939, English and Maltese were declared as the official languages of the country ([Hull, 1993: 82](#)). If there were any plans to reignite the fight for Italian, World War II put an end to this; the bombing of Malta by the Fascist government in June 1940 quickly dispensed any favourable disposition towards Italian and their sympathisers ([Koster, 1984b: 115](#)).

Post-World War II Malta saw a different order ushered in, with decolonialisation on the horizon. This was the next political issue to dominate the post-war years, and this was tied to the status of Maltese as a national language. Post-War constitutions reaffirmed Maltese and English as the official languages of Malta. The Nationalist Party was working towards the reinstatement of Italian, but it did not garner popular support; the traditional order was gone, and its use amongst the Maltese was considered an affectation ([Hull, 1993: 107](#)). On the other hand, it remained popular for different reasons, mainly because of its close geographical proximity and cultural ties.

It was not until 1964 that changes were once again made to the status of English and Maltese, at the time Malta gained independence from Britain. This constitution was different from the previous ones, as it made a distinction between official and national languages, an important step for the language issue in Malta. Chapter One, Article Five of the Constitution of 1964 clearly states that Maltese is the national language, whilst Maltese and English are official languages of government administration and the Maltese parliament. The distinction between national and official language is ideological: a national language is indicative of national unity, whilst an official language is more likely to be utilitarian in purpose ([Holmes and Wilson, 2017: 107](#)). Thus, Maltese was meant to fulfil a dual function, as a language of national unity and functionality. It was also declared the official language of the courts of Malta, with the provision that ‘Parliament may make such provision for the use of the English language in such cases and under such conditions as it may prescribe’ in sub-article Three. The final sub-article regarding language use allows the House of Representatives flexibility in choice of language in connection with the proceedings and records of its activities. These four sub-articles are, in effect, the *de jure* language policy of the three highest-level institutions in Malta. In outlining language functions for three major institutions, it was also outlining its formal language policy for their operations. On the other hand, it left other institutions the freedom to formulate their own language policies vis-à-vis the official languages.

2.7 Post-Colonial Malta and institutional language use

Post-independent Malta is identified by the gradual diffusion of Maltese in all formal institutions, including literary, cultural and educational advancements in light of its symbolic function ([Frendo, 1988: 207](#)). As part of the decolonialisation and nation-state building phase, the use of Maltese was encouraged. Whilst defining itself linguistically as a nation, the country was also aspiring to have a foothold in international affairs. This was a period when Malta slowly transformed from an agricultural society into one dependent on providing services in banking, administration, tourism and industry, making it a distinctly knowledge-based society. In the process, the country was faced with two

languages representing two totally different world orders: one language representing its own national consciousness and the other, as a Language of Wider Communication ([Brutt-Griffler, 2010: 454](#)), giving it the opportunity to participate in global world orders. Educational policies have ensured that bilingualism in both official languages is widespread.

By the time Malta achieved independence, the Maltese language had gone through three stages of Haugen's fourfold model of language and corpus planning ([Haugen, 1983: 275](#)). The initial stages of selection and codification, however sporadic and uncoordinated, can be traced to the time of the Order's presence in Malta, and its diffusion was slow during British rule due to the lack of teaching resources, training and the consensus on its standardisation, but after becoming an official language in 1934, efforts were more concerted in its diffusion in schools. The voluntary organization, *L-Ghaqda tal-Kittieba tal-Malti* was renamed *L-Akkademja tal-Malti* the same year Malta gained independence, and its main objective was the promotion and dissemination of the Maltese language as an institutional language in public domains. In the years following independence, further language-related reforms for the Maltese language were periodically initiated. Maltese is a priority in primary and secondary schools, and an entry requirement for higher education at the University of Malta. Government administrators were encouraged to use Maltese in departments and ministries². However, what accelerated the push towards Haugen's fourth phase of language planning was EU membership in 2004. Upon accession, its national language became an official language of the European Union, the result of "years of discussions, negotiations and political pressures" ([Fabri, 2010: 799](#)). This was the first step towards elaboration, the fourth stage of language development for institutional purposes ([Haugen, 1983: 275](#)), bringing about further changes in both national and transnational spheres. On a national basis, such changes included the creation of the first government body legally responsible for the promotion of the Maltese language for public

² In 1989, twenty-five years after Independence, a circular was sent to government departments about the use of Maltese, encouraging its use. That same year a bill read in parliament and later published in the government gazette was published (see Supplement No. 104 to the MGG, no. 15, 188 (10.10.89), Part C). This is nowadays superseded by Article 41, Section 4 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2012).

use, the *Kunsill Nazzjonali tal-Ilsien Malti* [National Council for the Maltese Language]. Established in 2005, it is responsible for promoting “the widest use of the Maltese Language in education, broadcasting and the media, at the law courts, and in political, administrative, economic, social and cultural life” ([Maltese Language Act, 2005: 3](#)). The use of Maltese is prominent in most of these spheres, especially cultural activities, providing opportunities for the Maltese language to develop as a literary language. On a transnational level, Maltese became a language which EU citizens have the right to use in official correspondence with EU institutions, which are obliged to provide a reply in the same language ([European Union, 2012](#)).

The elaboration stage includes corpus planning such as terminological modernisation and stylistic development ([Haugen, 1983: 275](#)). Right after EU accession, the University of Malta introduced Masters-level programmes in translation, terminology and interpreting to meet the demand for translation services within EU institutions ([The Malta Independent, 2004](#); [University of Malta, 2019a](#)). Once Maltese was included in the list of languages covered by the Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union, terminology became a priority; according to Fabri ([2010: 803](#)), the focus is on lexical expansion to cope with the huge number of technical and legal terms required in the translation of official and legal European Union documents. The lack of specialised technical terminology dictionaries in Maltese and authoritative resources made it difficult at first, which prompted the National Council for the Maltese Language to co-ordinate resources to ensure a measure of standardisation and common practice among translators and interpreters is achieved. Support from the academic community is also present, which gave rise to the International Association of Maltese Linguistics in 2007, providing international scholarship on the Maltese language ([GHILM, 2019](#)).

Overall, it appears that the Maltese language is a thriving language in institutional settings, for both oral and written purposes. However, there are also indications that the oral/written dimensions are not balanced in all areas of life. Whilst people are most likely to use Maltese as spoken language at home (90%) and work (70%), as a written language its use is less pronounced especially when writing emails and letters at work (13.8%) and work-

related reading (18.4%) ([Sciriha and Vassallo, 2001: 29](#)). In this case, the preference shifts to English as a written medium. English has a strong institutional presence in formal domains, such as education. Caruana ([2007: 184](#)) and Rosner and Joachimsen ([2011: 15](#)) note that textbooks, especially technical and science subjects, are mostly in English. Rosner and Joachimsen ([2011: 14](#)) also point out that “efforts to translate technical and scientific terms (from English) into Maltese have encountered several problems, one of them being the acceptance by the language community”. Invariably, English is the international language of science and technology, which may be a factor conditioning language selection ([Crystal, 2012: 80](#)). To compensate for this, Maltese may end up being the language of instruction during lessons, whilst formal assessment is in English. English is linked to professional training, employment and administration ([Caruana, 2007: 186](#)), which may have further repercussions on language selection in institutional settings. Looking at the reforms that the Maltese language has undergone, it appears that institutional support for Maltese may not have affected the use of English in formal domains. It appears that English does not need much overt support for maintaining its institutional presence. As for the use of Maltese and English, Brincat ([2000: 179](#)) observes that whilst the Maltese are more likely to use the national language in spoken interaction in the home, community and work domains, including broadcasting, people are more likely to write and read in English rather than speak it. In addition, a person is more likely to write official and business correspondence in English (*ibid.*).

Italian has retained a place in Maltese society. Following World War Two, the only Maltese institution that retained the use of Italian for its administration was the Catholic Church, which was replaced with Maltese in 1975 ([Hull, 1993: 105](#)). It is considered a foreign language nowadays, not a second language, especially for the younger generations. However, it is still the most popular foreign language studied in Maltese secondary schools and “there are regular political, commercial and cultural exchanges between Italy and Malta” ([Caruana, 2013: 602](#)). Italian television channels are very popular amongst Maltese resident of all ages, and to a certain extent also radio programmes and music, as well as newspapers and magazines ([Caruana, 2007: 186](#)).

2.8 Conclusion

Political events, economic factors and religious influences contributed to societal bilingualism in Malta, and changes in societal organisation and power relations resulted in changes in the status of languages and eventually the distribution of languages. As a country, Malta has successively developed from a small, traditional community under feudalistic rule into a fortress colony, and following independence is now a modern, post-industrial island-state. These changes had an impact on the social institutions in Maltese society which in the process had implications for language.

The use of Maltese and its status vis-à-vis the succession of languages introduced by foreign rulers reveals that societal bilingualism was indicative of the power relations present in Maltese society, as well as forms of knowledge. Maltese was not perceived as a language suitable for the transmission of formal knowledge, amongst other factors, acting as a Low language. The other languages – Latin, Sicilian, Italian, French and English - acted as High languages for macro-level institutional organisation, communication and formal representation of knowledge, and at the same time as a means of identifying with a particular culture or organisation within the Mediterranean and Western Europe; High and Low languages may be recast as means of cultural transmission using different orders of discourse. In this diglossic organisation, different orders of discourse became the means whereby social reality was constructed along two broad dimensions. These two dimensions intersected at times, as evident in the situations involving translanguaging and modeswitching, guided by community interpreters who straddled both orders.

A changing world order is one reason why Maltese emerged as an official language for administration of the country's affairs, and later as a national language. Frendo (1988: 208) argues that the rise of Maltese as a language worthy of cultivation was due to “an induced process of growing self-awareness as well as *a direct consequence of the wish to impart knowledge through the vernacular*” (my italics). Making a language a vehicle for the transmission of knowledge is a slow process. Such a process was slow as institutions are not subject to sudden changes; institutional behaviours are quite resilient. However,

administration of the archipelago does not stop at its borders. English in Malta, once a High language, is also an institutional language on a global level. It is more than a colonial language; it is now the means Malta can have access to global orders of knowledge. Given that English is nowadays “the language of a great deal of the world’s knowledge, especially in such areas such as science and technology” ([Crystal, 2012:110](#)), it is no surprise that education in Malta strongly supports this choice of language at all levels. This may be one reason why the ‘language community’ was not keen on the use of Maltese for imparting specialised knowledge ([Rosner and Joachimsen, 2011: 15](#)), as it may imply limiting access to global orders of knowledge. It is potentially the current world order, explained by World Systems Analysis ([Wallerstein, 2006](#)), that may be well responsible for the ‘higher-order regularities’ concerning language choice in Maltese institutions, in particular written documentation. Such a world order may have been only possible through the creation and evolution of knowledge structures dependent on disembedding mechanisms refashioning spatiality, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter THREE: Societal bilingualism, knowledge organisation and language choice

3.1 Researching language choice in institutional settings

This chapter aims to discuss the rationale as to why one language may be given priority over another language in the institutional practices of a bilingual nation-state. As outlined in Chapter One, English appears to be the preferred language for organisational texts (e.g. [Mazzon, 1992](#); [Sciriha and Vassallo, 2001](#); [Caruana, 2007](#)). In exploring the issue of language choice in institutional contexts, this chapter attempts to clarify what mechanisms could be responsible for choice of written language in Maltese institutions, or “higher-order regularities” ([Fishman, 1971: 17](#)) which remain largely unidentified.

Despite their ubiquitous presence in modern nation-states, the focus on language use within formal institutions and organisations is a relatively recent development ([Duchêne and Heller, 2012: 323](#)). These clusterings of role relations did not receive much attention in early sociolinguistic work, perhaps due to the belief that language vitality and language maintenance was primarily dependent on the family domain ([Weinreich, 1953: 87ff](#)). The family domain is unlike the work sphere; as Fishman ([1971](#)) noted, a social institution of this nature brings people together “*primarily* for a certain cluster of purposes...(..) ... for a certain set of role relations and in a delimited environment” (pg. 20). Definitions of organisations are diverse, depending on different intellectual frameworks ([Reed, 1999: 25ff](#)), yet the underlying characteristic of all organisational collectivities is the impersonal, goal-oriented nature of the role relations involved. Understanding language use in this kind of environment may have proven to be challenging, as Fishman ([1980:5](#)) observed that “there is much in modern life that militates against such compartmentalisation” of language use, highlighting “the rationalization of the work sphere [...] urbanisation, massification and mobility”. I argue that ‘the rationalization of the work sphere’ and what it entails appears to affect language choice in institutions, directly or otherwise, especially those affecting the predominantly textually-mediated practices in institutional settings.

Whilst the primary aim is understanding language choice in organisational texts, it is necessary to understand the role of written texts within institutions ([Smith, 2001: 177](#)). Texts are integral to the operations of these institutions, which are largely bureaucratic apparatuses involved in the production, management and dissemination of information. This form of organisation is typically found in modern institutions, both private and public, and has been referred to as textually-mediated social organisation ([Smith, 1990b: 209](#)). When institutional practices are primarily practices which are textually-mediated, then texts become significant for two reasons as they are linked to two basic social processes: the representation of the world and communication ([Fairclough, 1995: 6](#)). These two processes are important for any spoken or written text, and in an institutional setting amongst individuals who are collectively working in different temporal and spatial settings these two processes become highly significant. Firstly, texts are key to the production, transfer and maintenance of data amongst individuals, providing them with the information necessary for the activities that are coordinated in anticipation of the successful outcome of collective goals. Such data must be structured according to the needs of the organisation. To communicate this data in the expected form, knowledge undergoes what is called objectification ([Smith, 1990a: 12 - 13](#)). This objectification is arguably necessary for rationalization, a process perceived as an integral feature of institutions; institutions require standardisation in the creation of data which can be shared with efficiency, calculability and predictability ([Weber, 1978: 974 - 975](#)) amongst social actors who interact largely within textually-mediated relationships. The text becomes an integral part of the rationalization process in institutions ([Smith, 1990b: 212](#)). Secondly, such texts have a communicative function because they connect individuals working within such networks. Information must be communicated in forms understood by individuals in the network, within and across organisations, and therefore socially-shared discourses are integral to the rationalization process. Choice of language is potentially linked to the rationalization process insofar objectified knowledge and its communication is concerned.

Once this has been established, I argue that language choice for written documentation is linked to the formal representation of knowledge and its objectification for sharing within communication channels designed for knowledge exchange which may potentially take

global proportions ([Lyotard, 1979: xxiv, 5](#)). These exchange systems involve the dissemination of knowledge via texts across time and space. Such knowledge exchange systems can only function globally if provision is made for such systems to be standardised in multiple locales via institutions created for the management of knowledge; it is here that the conceptualisation of the text as social space ([Fairclough, 1995: 6](#)) becomes key to understanding both how and why languages intersect socially-produced space. Isomorphism observed in institutions, the increasing “homogeneity of organisational forms and practices” ([DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 148](#)) is potentially driven by the need to have recognisable and similar knowledge exchange systems in place, which may be due to the need for “rationalization of the work sphere” ([Fishman, 1980: 5](#)). I propose that when discussing societal bilingualism, it is important to take into consideration the temporality and spatiality of language via writing and the conceptual orders represented in texts, leading to the issue of social spaces in contemporary postmodern society. In postmodern society, social spaces are no longer bound by national boundaries, but open to global forces.

The current chapter is organised as follows. First, it looks at the sociolinguistic treatment of topic. Topic is acknowledged as an important factor in language choice and can be perceived as a means of knowledge organisation. Discourses representing different forms of knowledge compete for the same social space within the text, with some discourses eventually taking precedence in the process. Second, sharing knowledge depends on the transformation of human action via mediation through socially-recognisable media amongst social actors; this leads to the creation of shared social space, including space for mediated relationships. Thirdly, knowledge shared on a large-scale was primarily possible due to two factors: mediated relationships and the creation of synoptic knowledge for sharing amongst universal networks, maintained by institutions and organisations. Language is critical to the objectification of knowledge that is recorded on texts and disseminated within social relationships maintaining the governing conceptual mode ([Smith, 1990b: 17](#)); such relationships are typically found in institutional settings. The rest of the chapter looks into the nature of the nation-state, and how the bilingual nation-state may be subjected to multiple knowledge exchange systems which go beyond its borders.

3.2 Language choice as a means of knowledge organisation

The concept of language choice in relation to the organisation of knowledge may be traced to the treatment of topic which has been identified in the sociolinguistic literature as an organising factor in language choice amongst bilinguals ([Fishman, 1999: 153](#)). Early studies on language choice were designed to identify factors which influenced the selection of one language variety over another as such variation was unlikely to be random. Ervin-Tripp ([1964: 88](#)), Fishman ([1971: 17 – 18](#)), Greenfield ([1968, cited in Fishman, 1971](#)) and Blom and Gumperz ([1972](#)) demonstrated that topic of interaction, in addition to role relation and locale, was one influential extralinguistic variable in the language choice amongst speakers. These three components were considered the major non-linguistic constraints affecting verbal communication in face-to-face encounters, whether in a standard-with-dialects or bilingual situation. Blom and Gumperz's ([1972](#)) seminal work on code-switching in a standard-with-dialect situation identified topic as one such constraint. The switch from one code to another within the same stretch of discourse, whether style shifting or an entirely different language, points to the realisation that switching from one language to another is not random, but dependent on the nature of the topic being discussed. Thus, it may be argued that there is a link between topic and language choice, implying that the theme or subject of discussion may somehow have an organising effect on interaction ([Gardner, 1987: 129](#)).

Once topic is understood to have an influence on language choice, the next step is to ask why it is so influential. Noted as a concept which has been difficult to define ([Brown and Yule, 1983](#)) and taken for granted in studies in discourse ([Gardner, 1987](#)), topic can be perceived as having a regulatory function in discourse and interaction. The answer may be linked with the metafunctions of language, which are the ideational function and the interpersonal function associated with the representation of the world and communication respectively ([Halliday and Matthieson, 2014; Fairclough, 1995](#)). Topic may be understood as a mechanism that organises the way the world is perceived in the process of communicative exchange. Knowledge has a central role in society and social life, a binding force in any given community at all levels, irrespective of size, structure and

technological sophistication. Language binds social agents in the process of meaning making whilst activating the interpersonal metafunction through linguistic exchange ([Jeffries, 2014: 409](#)) and it is the necessary medium for the exchange of meaning, acting as a surrogate in the representation of knowledge.

The nature of knowledge has been the subject of debate in many disciplines, ranging from philosophy to psychology, from computer science to engineering and management ([Jakus et al, 2013: 47 - 48](#)). It is linked to other conceptual abstractions, such as data and information; all three theoretical concepts can be shared in communication, commonly interchanged and yet they have different capacities for purposeful action. Of the three, knowledge is considered more than data and information, because it is considered key to the transformation of human action and has the potential to generate action ([Stehr, 2001: 35](#)). It is also central to social action, because the transformation of human action necessitates the sharing of knowledge. It may be argued that knowledge starts with cognition, in other words the mental state; however, it cannot remain within the mental realm. In an early reference to the social nature of language, Vološinov ([1973: 13](#)) explains that cognition, which he refers to as consciousness, “takes shape and being in the material of signs created by an organised group in the process of its social intercourse” Consciousness taking form in ‘the material of signs’ is clearly indicating that the externalisation of meaning via symbols, or a semiotic system, is one main factor in the transformation of consciousness. This externalisation can take form in signs produced in speech or writing, and such signs can only become meaningful with individuals who share similar norms for meaning making. If there is no such externalisation, ‘knowing’ remains in the subjective realm of consciousness.

For ‘knowing’ to become knowledge, consciousness must be represented ‘in the material of signs’, subject to organisation by shared users. If language, or any other semiotic system, is used as a means of representation, what needs to be acknowledged is that representation can only be successfully accomplished if there are structures for knowledge representation, or frames, influenced by the organisation of human experience and memory (see [Jakus et al, 2013: 50](#)). Haslett ([2012: 5](#)) remarks that

“Frames may be used to represent the conceptual, cognitive context in which organising and communicating occurs. As such, frames incorporate pre-existing, shared knowledge about events, objects and activities that people use to make sense of their experience.”

These frames, also called ontologies, are means by which abstract concepts - the building blocks of consciousness - are organised to serve as the key elements of knowledge representation. To be productive, these building blocks must be organised along ontologies which are a convenient means of uniting a subject, a relationship or an object for discussion ([Snowden, 2015: 572ff](#)). The organisation of concepts is vital as it facilitates the sharing of knowledge amongst individuals. In addition, for individuals to engage with language in purposeful interaction, they must be socially-organised individuals attuned to the universals that are part and parcel of these systems of organised media to create, organise, share and manage their subjective experiences. Taking knowledge as a resource to be shared, it must be externalised beyond consciousness, structured in a manner consistent with ontologies that are shared according to norms and practices binding the individuals. Therefore, topic becomes an important frame which structures subjective experience, or consciousness, into objective knowledge.

Consciousness expressed through language is one of the issues with social theory has attempted to expound, questioning the nature of consciousness and its externalisation. The concept of consciousness being shared through language is a basic tenet of the theory of structuration ([Giddens, 1979: 4](#)), a model of social reproduction which takes forms of consciousness as well as social practices as mediating units between ‘the dualism of the individual and society’. A basic feature of the theory of structuration is that the individual is a purposeful, knowledgeable social actor who generates knowledge in practical, social conduct, also known as situated social practices (*ibid.*). According to Giddens (*ibid.*), all social actors have recourse to two types of consciousness, or knowledge, which are practical consciousness and discursive consciousness; the former is the tacit type of knowledge that the social actor has, whilst the latter is the type of knowledge which is conveyed through discourse. Discursive consciousness, in other words, is knowledge that is externalised through language (*ibid.*).

In externalising consciousness in ‘the material of signs’, knowledge is subjected to organisation in language, or discourses. Discourses are not random collections of words; rather, they are subject to organisation, collections of statements “controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures”, and working within ‘systems of restriction’ Foucault (1981: 52). Statements are discursive formations subject to a vast and complex set of discursive relationships that are institutional in nature (Foucault, 1972: 49). As a vehicle of knowledge dissemination, discourse is mediated knowledge clearly dependent upon ordered and controlled collections of statements; these systems are organised and predictable, a prerequisite for a social entity which relies on the future outcomes of purposeful goals. These views of regulated and ordered discursive consciousness converge on the single understanding that individuals participate within different levels of social reality, intangible yet recognised systems of reality traversing across time and space through language. In addition, such systems vary according to purpose.

Regulated discourses are subject to different hierarchies and value systems, which Foucault (1981: 48) refers to as ‘the order of discourse’. Such differentiation of discourses may be linked to variety of spheres of activity, a premise upon which Fairclough (1995: 12) develops his application of ‘the order of discourse’ as “the ordered set of discursive practices associated with a particular social domain or institution [...] and the boundaries and relationships between them”. Such organised discourses are not exclusive to any singular activity, nor is a single social situation associated with a single ‘order of discourse’. Rather, such discourses are relational. Fairclough (1995: 12) contends that “a social situation is better regarded as having its own order of discourse within the social network of orders of discourse, in which different discourse types are ordered in relation to each other”. Organised discourses are not all equal. For any given sphere of activity, some discourses will be preferred over others, bringing into the equation the issue of ideological norms and practices. The variability in discourses, therefore, may then be understood as ways of organising experience and creating knowledge, subject to an ordered social reality.

The concept of variability in discourses may be perceived as the heterogeneity of language, the multiplicity of discourses within a ‘unitary language’, an idea proposed by Bakhtin ([1981: 270](#)). In discussing forms of language within a unitary language, contrasting linguistic norms “struggle to overcome the heteroglossia of language” ([Bakhtin, 1981: 270](#)); utterances are points where the ‘centripetal’ and ‘centrifugal’ forces are in constant interplay, subject to “centralisation and decentralisation [and] unification and disunification” (pg. 272) respectively. Utterances are not articulated randomly, but are organised hierarchically according to ideological norms:

“at any given moment of its evolution, language is stratified not only into linguistic dialects in the strict sense of the word (according to formal linguistic markers, especially phonetic), but also - and for us this is the essential point - into languages that are socio-ideological: languages of social groups, ‘professional’ and ‘generic’ languages, languages of generations and so forth.” ([Bakhtin, 1981: 271 – 272](#))

Hence an order of discourses, or utterances, may be inclusive and therefore seen as examples of centripetal forces at work, and at the same time excluding other discourses, identified as centrifugal forces. Parallel to this idea is the heterogeneity of the text (Fairclough [1992: 34](#); [1995: 7 – 8](#)), which is also subject to orders of discourse; the text also exhibits centripetal and centrifugal forces, simultaneously both inclusive of some discourses and exclusive of others. The concept of genre may be considered a form of constraint in the interplay of discourses, inclusive of some discourses but excluding others (e.g. [Kress and Threadgold, 1988: 216](#); [Kress, 1989: 450](#); [Fairclough, 1995: 13](#)).

Influenced by Foucault’s (1981) concept of ‘orders of discourse’, Blommaert ([2007: 117](#)) cites the necessity of order when discussing indexicality, highlighting the breadth of variation when taking multilingual environments into consideration:

“as meanings that connect discourses to contexts and induce categories, similarities and differences in frames, and thus suggest identities, tones, styles and genres and appear to belong or to deviate from expected types [...]. Indexicality connects language to cultural patterns, and considerations of multilingualism thus also become considerations of multiculturalism”.

Indexicality is critical to the social reproduction of society on different levels. One example of indexicality is the way speakers organise themselves along abstract concepts and symbols to reproduce social identity, using language to index ethnicity. Such choices are reflective of the cultural reproduction that they are involved in, using language to index their ethnic identities, as Gudykunst and Schmidt ([1987: 1](#)) indicate: “language and ethnic identity are related reciprocally, i.e. language usage influences the formation of ethnic identity, but ethnic identity also influences language attitudes and language use.” Social reproduction is recursive, with language and social identity recursively influencing each other.

To conclude, the connection between language choice and topic may be argued as a means of organising knowledge, indexing contexts and categories. Knowledge must be organised prior to dissemination amongst individuals participating within the network; individuals must evaluate the social situation and role relations to structure their knowledge accordingly prior to its exchange, and this involves the selection of discourses amongst many, taking into account the ‘orders of discourse’ available. Such orders may be represented within a language, and hence variation in styles within a single language, or between languages, which may involve the selection of one language to another prior to seeking the appropriate ‘order of discourse’. Yet to engage in the exchange of knowledge between individuals, another important factor needs to be considered. Exchanges of this nature can only occur in an environment which is essential to such action, and that is spatiality.

3.3 Social space, presence-availability and disembedding mechanisms

Whilst factors such as topic and role relations are considered essential to human interaction and language choice, human interaction is also dependent on a shared, common space for interaction to occur. Perhaps the earliest reference concerning space for the basis of communication was made by Vološinov ([1973: 10](#)), specifically referring to it as the *interindividual territory*. Taking Saussure as the basis of his critique, Vološinov claimed

that the starting point for understanding language, which he calls ‘the world of signs’ (ibid.), should be this ‘territory’ created by individuals who are socially organised and members of the same social group, with ‘signs’ as the carriers of purposeful meaning that individuals share in this space. This concept of space as a shared, social entity is essential to understanding language choice.

Space is not simply a physical property as in natural surroundings, but more critically a ‘social space’ for human action through interaction. Building upon Lefebvre’s (1991: 15) concept of ‘abstract space’ as ‘produced space’, Soja (1985: 92) maintains that socially-produced space, or *spatiality*, is more than the “physical space of material nature and the mental space for cognition and representation, each of which is used and incorporated into the social construction of spatiality but cannot be conceptualised as its equivalent”. The production of social space is defined as both “the medium and the outcome of social action and relationship” (Soja, 1985: 94). Urry (1985: 25) also highlights the importance of social relations, taking social space as partly dependent on relations between social entities, ranging from relations between individual social actors to those connected to the state. Therefore, social actors are actively involved in the social production of space through their social relationships, which provides the structure upon which societal reproduction is dependent. Social relations are essentially dependent on the organisation of space, and social actors are actively involved in the social production of space, and hence spatiality as socially produced space is recursive (Soja, 1985: 90). It is only within such space that media, including language and symbolic tokens, take special significance.

Lefebvre (1991: 85) makes a very important contribution towards the conceptualisation of social space. Defining social space as ‘abstract space’ as opposed to ‘absolute space’, he describes it as ‘polyvalent’ (ibid.); Lefebvre’s (1991) proposal here is that social space is composed of *multiple spaces* within the same social space:

“we are confronted not by one social space but by many – indeed, by an unlimited multiplicity or unaccountable set of social spaces we generically refer to as ‘social space’” (pg. 86).

Such spaces are not separate, bounded spaces; social spaces, unlike ‘natural’ space, “*interpenetrate one another and/or superimpose themselves upon one another*. They are not *things*, which have mutually limiting boundaries and which collide because of their contours or as a result of inertia” (Lefebvre, 1991: 88). This view of social spaces as interpenetration of multiple spaces constructs social spaces as “not simply juxtaposed; they may be intercalated, combined, superimposed – they may even collide” (Lefebvre, 1991: 88). The polyvalent nature of social space is the result of the interpenetration of space caused by networks of social exchange, constellations of relationships and the flow of material and media. These networks are systems which allow social action to ‘flow’ along from social actor to social actor, and in the process shaped and determined by social actors and realised by technology and knowledge, subjected to the social division of labour, the demands of organisations and the superstructures that keep the multiple levels of society united. In other words, social spaces may be polyvalent as in having the potential to activate different networks, and in terms of language, social space may potentially be ‘polycentric and stratified’ (Blommaert, 2010: 75ff).

This perception of space has implications for how different levels of social life may be actualised within the same social space. Lefebvre (1991: 86) discusses social spaces in terms of modes of production conveyed through “works, symbols and signs”; such modes of production are practices - social action, both individual and collective – which may be also described as spatial practices (ibid, pg. 33). This may be linked with Giddens’ (1981: 46) theory of structuration, which also postulates situated social practices as critical to social and cultural reproduction, and thus provides an important perspective regarding the concept of human interaction in terms of time and space. Human interaction is described as ‘the communication of meaning, the operation of power and modes of normative sanctioning’ (ibid.). In sharing meaning, negotiating authority and seeking legitimate approval, members of society must engage in what Giddens defines as two essential characteristics of human life: *transformation* and *mediation*. Both are important for the generation of power, an institutional force that can only be managed within social relations and actualised in the process of interaction to accomplish outcomes in strategic conduct in relation to resources (Giddens, 1979: 88). Transformation is the basis of human action

which necessitates the exchange of knowledge, and hence the importance of the mediation between individuals. Mediation is the means as to how this is brought about through use of language and other cultural artefacts. Yet whatever the type of media used to exchange knowledge, it can only occur within a shared social space structured in social terms:

“Mediation expresses the variety of ways in which interaction is made possible across time and space. All interaction is carried out across time and space by media, organised structurally: ranging from the direct consciousness of others in face-to-face encounters to the modes in which institutions are sedimented in deep historical time, and in which social interaction is carried out on across broad areas of global space.”
([Giddens, 1981: 53](#))

Sociological inquiry has attempted to classify types of societies, all of which depend on a system of interrelationships connecting individuals within a geographical or social territory, having a distinctive culture and social institutions ([Nolan and Lenski, 2014](#)). Social systems are mechanisms that manage the flow of power. Whatever the type of social system present, it is conducive to social action; whilst all society types engage in the transformation of human action through social relationships, mediated by socially and structurally organised media, the purpose and means of transformation and choice of mediation vary. These two characteristics, which provide the channels through which power is conveyed, have been used to classify societies. The central influential issue is that societies may roughly fall into two main categories based on what Giddens ([1981: 25](#)) calls *presence-availability*, affecting both transformation and mediation of social action. Presence-availability brings into account the temporality and spatiality of human interaction, the degree of physical proximity between social actors in a set locale; this notion is core to Giddens’s analysis of contemporary social theory ([Lash and Urry, 1994](#)), ranging from the immediacy of face-to-face presence between actors to the non-presence of actors in an abstract community, such as a nation-state ([James, 1996](#)). All societies display presence-availability to varying degrees, as all societies exhibit both presence and absence in the various interrelationships that constitute society. Giddens ([1981: 38](#)) emphasises the concept of absence and presence as critical to understanding social interaction:

“all social interaction, like any other type of even, occurs across space and time. All social interaction intermingles presence and absence. Such intermingling is always complicated and subtle, and can be taken to express modes in which structures are drawn upon to incorporate the *longue durée* of institutions within the contingent social act. Structures convey time across time-space distances of indeterminate length.”

Taking presence-availability as a means of assessing society types, two broad categories emerge, mainly those that are mainly dependent on high presence-availability of social actors and those that may exhibit increasing reliance on their absence. Societies such as tribal societies and similar collectivities dependent on the immediacy of presence exhibit high presence availability, in which mediation is primarily through human interaction mainly conducted through the physical characteristics of perceptual abilities of the individual, which includes the face-to-face positioning of the body and the physical presence of others. Strong co-presence associated with face-to-face interaction creates the social space for meaning making, with verbal interaction mediating and transforming human action. This was typically found in societies in which kinship and traditions were the basis of social structure. In the case of urbanisation, a life-mode which gave rise to a social system that depended on the absence of social actors linked by the systematic use of texts, temporality and spatiality changed. Large collectivities such as cities in agricultural class-divided societies signalled the early emergence of *time-space distancing*, a process whereby role relations experience dislocation in terms of temporality and spatiality. This is typical of the more abstract type of social relations normally associated with separate institutions for political administration or legal sanctioning, forms of social organisation more likely to be associated with urbanisation. Such dislocation was dependent on media that permitted *disembedding* of social systems, a process where social relations were ‘lifted out’ from “local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space” ([Giddens, 1990: 21](#)). Disembedding is a term used to refer to the historical movement of what is concrete, tangible and local towards a more abstract world, a process which lifts out phenomena such as ideas and things from their original context ([Eriksen, 2014](#)). Such disembedding was a reconfiguration of time and space, connecting social actors absent in time and space via symbolic tokens, disembedding mechanisms that enable

the exchange of meaning without the immediate co-presence of social actors; examples of symbolic tokens are money, time-keeping devices and writing ([ibid.](#)). A symbolic token must be a cultural artefact which has shared meaning making potential amongst its users, becoming a “medium of interchange” ([Giddens, 1990: 22](#)). For social actors to employ symbolic tokens, they must be aware of their significance in the immediate absence of social actors. Hence the necessity of social space for such exchanges.

Writing is one disembedding mechanism that externalises knowledge for communication. Described as “the symbolic mark”, it is incomparably “the most potent means of extending experience in time-space” ([Giddens, 1981: 39](#)). By externalising knowledge, it becomes mediated communication, as written texts may be interpreted as communication in the absence of speakers ([Smith, 1990b: 211](#)). In understanding how this disembedding mechanism developed, it is important to look at the ecology in which it emerged: urbanisation. Urbanisation is a territorial, economic, political and social phenomenon, associated with increasing social complexity, population growth as well as governance by an elite class ([Kleniewski and Thomas, 2011: 49](#)). Territorially, such settlements were spatially organised in a manner that highlighted the size and the power structures of the settlement ([Smith, 2009](#); [Thomas, 2012](#)). These transformations coincided with changes in economic means of production, political systems and social structure. This was arguably a form of problem solving following the Neolithic Revolution due to three pressing concerns, namely “the mobility of people to available resources, ecosystem management to secure enhanced local growth of produce, and the increasing social complexity encoded in formal institutions that guided an expanding range of activities” ([Elmqvist et al, 2013: 14](#)). The nature of the social organisation of early urban polities points to a governing apparatus which organised and coordinated internal affairs via writing; writing may be said to have emerged in contexts of governance ([Trigger, 2006](#)). The ecological niche in which writing systems originated and developed shows that writing was primarily used in the management and administration of early urban settlements dependent on more complex forms of social order and social organisation ([Gnanadesikan, 2009: 14](#)).

Whilst urbanisation is linked to changes regarding the temporality and spatiality of human communication and social structure, it also has implications as to how power is reproduced within a social system. Power is understood as the “mobilization of people’s concerted activities” ([Smith, 1990a: 80](#)), and with the rise of urbanisation came changes in the way power was managed and reproduced. When writing is viewed within terms of governance, it becomes clear that such needs typically centred around management of resources. In view of a population increase, the management of large areas of territory, and the creation and distribution of a surplus of material resources in an urban society, it may be argued that a different means of managing resources was needed. The management of resources, both human and material, was dependent on a distinct approach towards social organisation that required formal record keeping that went beyond retention within human memory (e.g. [Alkadry, 2002: 333 – 334](#)), and dependent on a system of personnel trained in the use of writing systems ([Parpola, 1997: 321](#)). Unlike methods of knowledge management typical of a small population, whereby knowledge of tradition was rooted in human memory through oral practices ([Ong, 1982: 32](#)), a more ‘permanent’ knowledge system than human memory was needed, which appears to have been linked to the use of writing; as Giddens ([1981: 5](#)) remarks, “writing seems to have originated in most cases as a direct mode of information storage: as a means of recording and analysing information involved with the administration of societies of increasing scale”, creating a form of external ‘storage capacity’ as a cultural practice, particularly for the management of material resources ([ibid.](#)). It is interpreted as a move towards a new system of information retention unlike methods of information storage typically found in societies dependent on oral tradition and human memory, such as verbal memory skills ([Ong, 1982: 56](#)). The move towards the storage of information using graphical representation as opposed to dependence on human memory may have provided the social systems that emerged from this form of resource management, or rather the management of information in relation to these resources, with new possibilities for the social reproduction of the social system.

The retention of formal-record keeping practices in various empires in the ancient and mediaeval worlds ([Trigger, 2006](#); [Crooks and Parsons, 2016](#)) and later on in absolutist states prior to the emergence of the first nation-states indicates that writing was intrinsic

to many practices involved in resource management. The administrative function became a permanent fixture in political entities in successive eras, whether in ancient, medieval or modern times ([Lutzker, 1982](#)). In fact, imperial bureaucracies were fully functioning in ancient empires, and not only the exclusive domain of the nation-state ([Crooks and Parsons: 2016: 9](#)). However, it appears that this form of resource management gained prevalence with the rise of the nation-state ([Lutzker, 1982: 123](#)), arguably becoming one of the most significant socio-political changes in the social organisation of society at large. Such social organisation, which is associated with the rise of mediated relationships, time-space distancing and disembedding mechanisms, may be conceived as the extension of social action, is discussed in the next section.

3.4 Social action and the rise of mediated relationships

Core to the understanding of language use is social action, the meaningful behaviour of the individual oriented towards others, whether as individuals or collectively. Weber ([1978](#)) identifies social action as critical to understanding underlying social forces governing society, and defines this type of action as follows:

“Social action, which includes both failure to act and passive acquiescence, may be oriented to the past, present or expected future behaviour of others. [...] The ‘others’ may be *individual persons*, and may be known to the actor as such, or may *constitute an indefinite plurality and may be entirely unknown as individuals.*” ([Weber, 1978: 22](#))

Social action, in Weberian terms, has to be purposeful and has to involve ‘others’, known or otherwise to the individual concerned. What made social action ‘social’ was that the actor would take into account how the recipients of such action would react. Therefore for social action to be ‘social’, action must have an audience, and as a result, influence behaviour.

The next step is to understand how time-space zoning or time-space distancing ([Giddens, 1990: 16](#)) affects social action, and therefore social interaction within social

networks. Social action in most major traditional forms of social organisation depended mostly on strong co-presence. In general, oral communities were typically small in scale ([Goody, 1999: 31](#)), and given that spoken interaction depends heavily on high presence-availability, such time-space restrictions do not allow the expansion of social networks on a large scale. Although early premodern collectivities such as cities provided a primitive social structure that allowed social relations to extend beyond the immediate context of interaction, routinised administration of territory and its inhabitants was relatively restricted. Due to these restrictions, power relations on a large scale could not be sustained efficiently ([Calhoun, 1987; 1992](#)). On the other hand, communities which used writing were able to expand; expansion through orality was not sufficient.

Calhoun ([1992](#)) offers an interesting critique of classical social theory, referring to the ‘country/city’ contrast that was used to describe two distinct forms of social organisation. Expanding upon Cooley’s ([1909/1963](#)) classification of primary and secondary relationships, which were primarily direct interpersonal relationships which vary in social distance, Calhoun ([1987, 1992](#)) identifies a new type of relationship that has evolved, namely one in that involves no direct contact between actors. Relationships between people may have no immediate presence whatsoever and linked only by socially-organised media. In defining this new type of relationship, Calhoun ([1992: 218](#)) proposes the term ‘tertiary relationships’:

“Tertiary relationships need involve no physical co-presence; they may be mediated entirely by machines, correspondence, or other persons, but the parties involved are well aware of the relationship. A tertiary relationship may be created, for example, by writing to a more or less anonymous functionary of a large bank to complain about an error in one’s statement. Most ordinary citizens have only tertiary relationships with their national political representatives, relationships that are mediated by broadcast and print media, voting in elections, and occasionally, correspondence.”

Social action is directed towards individuals that are not personally connected, as in primary and secondary relationships, and mediated by inanimate objects, such as texts. Writing is considered a critical element in the ‘stretching’ of social relations, linked to the

increasing number of tertiary relationships, typically found in large-scale organisations such as corporations. Moreover, the role of these relationships are strictly of an instrumental nature, and co-presence is not a prerequisite. Despite this lack of personal involvement, each social actor is aware of the role of other actors in the network. This kind of relationship is typical in modernity, distinguished by the increasing frequency, scale and importance of indirect social relationships ([Calhoun, 1992: 231](#)). In addition to this, a new type of relationship has emerged, which takes abstraction to a further level, one in which one of the parties is unaware of any mediation or interaction. Called ‘quaternary relationships’ ([Calhoun, 1992: 218](#)), social action becomes communication in a manner which the original social actors are unaware of, becoming data or information that is subject to reassessment, such examples involve information that became data for statistical analysis for a variety of purposes, such as consumer behaviours or marketing information. Social action may be transformed into something which was never originally intended by the primary actor.

These types of indirect relationships can only occur when socially-organised media are used to transform social action and transcend the limitations of human interaction which depends on strong co-presence. Such relationships may seem transitory and unstable, however the mechanisms that have developed have allowed such ‘invisible’ ties to develop and be sustained; as mentioned above, one such medium is the symbolic token, allowing the fulfilment of social action without being tied by physical constraints of place ([Giddens, 1990: 22, 28](#)). All cultures make use of symbolic tokens to manage their knowledge of the world, including social relationships, yet few symbolic tokens have taken on such significant importance in the globalised world. Symbolic tokens allow people to communicate and organise social action to fulfil purposeful goals, which is of significance for large-scale organisations. Organisations based on mediated impersonal relationships, typical of such complex modern institutions, depend on the cultural artefacts that bind these factors together, of which language – or writing – is the prime element. This has allowed for the extension of social action. Albeit critical, communication involving strong co-presence and spoken interaction is not sufficient for its operations. If social action is not extended, then the organisation is very unlikely to function with the necessary

expediency. Social action cannot move beyond the immediate ‘interindividual territory’ without disembedding mechanisms, such as texts in the case of institutions and organisations.

Contemporary society may be reinterpreted as ‘modern’ in terms of social action being affected by changes in social space, time-space distancing and disembedding mechanisms; resulting in the new forms of mediated social relations which are considered the hallmark of modernity ([Haslett, 2012: 141](#)). The central issue here is not whether relationships are direct or indirect, face-to-face or mediated by symbolic tokens. It is relevant to comment at this stage that all social relationships, whether direct or indirect, are mediated by nature ([Ling, 2000](#)); all relationships involve the externalisation of subjective thought. What makes such relationships of particular significance is that modern institutions are typically composed of such indirect relationships, permitting the coordination of social action on a large scale. These indirect relationships also enable organisational and co-ordination of social action, having far-reaching consequences. The modern organisation, a special form of institution, provides a unique environment for interaction amongst its members, who are primarily connected through their assigned roles, duties and expertise. In the modern organisation, both direct and indirect relationships are present. Whilst bounded by role and purpose, frequently within a set locale, it is important to note that the organisation is not a bounded unity cut off from other organisations and entities, but in constant contact with other purposeful agents and collectivities. Communication involves interaction amongst members as well as non-members, with varying degrees of presence and absence.

Whilst social relationships may vary in terms of co-presence, two common factors critical to them are social space and the use of socially-organised media common to its users. In the case of textually-mediated social organisation, the text would be considered a cultural artefact that is shared amongst members within mediated relationships. Socially produced space is critical for the exchange of knowledge, regardless of direct and indirect relationships, for social and cultural reproduction. Moreover, any media used – in this case written texts – must engage a common discourse amongst members involved in its

exchange, as knowledge can only become operational within these exchange channels if they ‘fit’ into these channels by reducing their complexity ([Lyotard 1979: 61](#), citing [Luhmann, 1969](#)). The concept of knowledge being quantifiable and reduced for exchange is the key issue here, discussed below.

3.5 The rise of the knowledge society: synoptic knowledge and knowledge systems

As discussed in previous sections, the centrality of knowledge in any given society is indisputable. The collection of information and its management, storage and distribution are practices that societies engage in, but what differentiates societies is the treatment of knowledge. Two major shifts in knowledge management can be traced over the last few centuries. The first major shift was the means of production that powered the Industrial Revolution, a means of production focused on raw material as a resource. The second shift involves a shift towards knowledge as the new ‘raw’ material which is the foundation of knowledge-based economies ([Bell, 1973: 44](#); [Stehr, 2001: 20](#)). The shift in resource type driving contemporary society has prompted the use of terminology to denote the importance of technology and knowledge in society, as well as its more social aspects ([Heath and Luff, 2000: 226](#)). Stehr ([2001: 20](#)) provides a list of terms used by various authors to refer to the new knowledge-based societies, such as ‘post-industrial society’ ([Bell, 1973](#)), ‘information society’ ([Nora and Minc, 1980](#)), ‘knowledge society’ ([Drucker, 1969](#)), ‘science society’, coined by Kreibich ([1986](#)) and used by Böhme ([1997](#)), suggests a reliance on scientific and technical knowledge. Castells ([2010: xviii](#)) proposes ‘network society’, focusing on the flow of information within a network as opposed to information alone.

The rise of a knowledge-driven society on a global scale is connected to a shift in the value attributed to knowledge as a resource. It has become a valuable commodity, both as a resource in its own capacity and as a means of facilitating the management of human and material resources ([Giddens, 1981](#)). As a resource, it must be managed to ensure that it is effectively used for intended outcomes, highlighting the importance of rationalization.

Such concerted and collective effort directed towards a purposeful goal demonstrates that knowledge organisation, sharing and management has gained significant importance, so much so that it is considered a discipline in its own right, including the need to archive, store and share knowledge across disciplines for enhanced scholarship ([Szostak, Gnoli and López-Huertas, 2016: 1](#)).

Taking a social perspective of knowledge and its influence on society, knowledge systems may be reinterpreted as forms of social and cultural reproduction. Essentially, traditional and modern societies are both involved in social and cultural production, dependent on human and physical resources as well as situated practices structuring such social reproduction; perhaps what could be considered as major differences between the two types of societies is what was considered as knowledge and how it was stored for reference. Oral societies typically depend on oral traditions, relying on myth and storytelling techniques to store and maintain community knowledge of the past ([Ong, 1982](#)). Tradition involves ritual, a practical means of remembering formulaic truth through repetition and recall. Storage of knowledge was primarily based on memory, entrusted to guardians of knowledge and passed down from elder to novice ([Giddens, 1994: 82ff](#)). What needs to be observed is that tradition is linked to the immediate physical and social context, managed and stored by select individuals; this is also applicable to scientific knowledge developed in connection with the local, physical environment and locally-available materials ([Levi-Strauss, 1966: 19](#); [Harrison, 2007: 15ff](#)), called *nature-knowledge*, a form of knowledge specific to tradition and locale ([Cohen, 2010: 3](#)). Knowledge was unlikely to be dissociated from its local context or transplanted elsewhere; in this way, knowledge was culturally reproduced in terms of people, practices and technologies localised in the immediate context.

Modernity, on the other hand, is defined by a different approach to knowledge. Nature-knowledge experienced a slow disassociation from the immediate, local and physical context, and was slowly replaced by *synoptic knowledge* ([Tsoukas, 2011: xii](#)). Unlike nature-knowledge, this type of knowledge is not context-dependent, an “intellectual appropriation of nature and society” precisely because it is knowledge that mediates the

relationship between nature and social actors ([Stehr, 2001:31](#)). Referred to as explicit knowledge ([Polanyi, 1966: 23](#)), formal knowledge ([Freidson, 1986: 3](#)), objectified knowledge ([Smith, 1990a](#); Stehr 2001: 31, 33) and encoded knowledge ([Blackler, 1995: 1023 – 1025](#)), synoptic knowledge is identified as the kind of abstract knowledge graphically represented and conveyed by signs and symbols, typically found published in books and manuals ([Tsoukas, 2011: xii](#)). The symbolic character of this kind of knowledge is stressed by Stehr ([2001: 31](#)):

“Knowledge can be objectified; that is, the intellectual appropriation of things, facts and rules can be established symbolically, so that to know, if it is not necessary to get into contact with the things themselves, but only their symbolic representations”.

Synoptic knowledge is not person-specific, as in traditional societies that had guardians memorising nature-knowledge for the community. Tsoukas ([2011](#)) observes that synoptic knowledge is produced by *expert systems*, making reference to Giddens’ ([1990: 28](#)) notion of expert systems as “impersonal systems of knowledge and expertise whose validity is independent of those drawing upon them” (pgs. xi - xii). Expert systems are networks of individuals who have gained technical expertise in formal learning environments, becoming recipients of knowledge that is positioned as ‘universal’ across time and space; these impersonal expert systems are “disembedding embedding mechanisms because, in common with symbolic tokens, they remove relations from the immediacies of context” ([Giddens, 1990: 28](#)). Such expertise is neither of local value nor locale specific to communities. An expert system disembeds like symbolic tokens, providing guarantees of expectations across time and space; these expectations mean that technical knowledge is ‘universal’, and such universality is only possible through the extension of the social action within such networks. Expert systems draw upon knowledge which is re-presented symbolically, which can be shared amongst members within the network.

The rise of synoptic knowledge and its use within expert systems is tied with the development of modern science. Providing an anthropological perspective on modern society and the evolution of scientific knowledge, Latour ([1993: 24](#)) postulates that this kind of knowledge, taken as ‘universal’, was possible due to two things. Firstly, the

development of scientific knowledge based on socially-organised practices to establish the nature of scientific fact and secondly the transmission of this knowledge within a network of individuals who shared the same interests. Scientific knowledge is contained within a system of practitioners who share the same social practices:

“No science can exit from the network of its practice. The weight of air is indeed always a universal, but a *universal in a network* [emphasis added]. Owing to the extension of this network, competences and equipment can become sufficiently routine for production of the vacuum to become as invisible as the air we breathe.” ([Latour, 1993: 24](#))

‘Universal’ knowledge started in situated practices; in becoming routine, the process of standardisation commenced. The laboratory, the site of controlled experiments with designated tools to ensure uniformity in establishing facts, is not in isolation but recreated across time and space, in different locations and different periods. In spreading the social practice, with its calibrated tools and set procedures, the “network is extended and stabilised beyond a single room” ([Latour, 1993: 24](#)). Gunnarsson ([2011: 3 - 16](#)) notes that this extension was the necessary catalyst for the development and spread of scientific knowledge. The diverse scientific communities emerging in seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe, coinciding with the emerging modern life-mode, were instrumental in the development of networks that were sustained by the sharing of ideas and knowledge in letters, journals and encyclopaedias. Coincidentally, the fact that such communities could be in contact with each other across Europe parallels the rise of the postal networks across major European cities since their inception in the sixteenth century, with correspondence increasingly important for personal, commercial, professional and administrative purposes ([Vincent, 2000: 2](#)). It is perhaps no coincidence that such communication systems flourished at a time when the infrastructure, such as the rise of postal networks, supported the new flow of human interaction. With the creation of communications systems that linked individuals across time and space, individuals were able to share and discuss knowledge. Taking Giddens’ ([1990](#)) concept of disembedding mechanisms, texts as symbolic tokens shared within expert systems are carriers of information. The next challenge for this dispersion of knowledge was the need for a common discourse and hence

the gradual development of a genre that would be identified as the vehicle for techno-scientific knowledge ([Gunnarsson, 2011: 8](#)). Such a vehicle was not only necessary for science and technology, but also for other activities ([Foucault, 1972: 71](#)). Such networks also gave rise to the professional bodies in the West (e.g. [Freidson, 1986](#); [Evetts, 1998; 2012](#); [Larson, 2013](#)).

The development of discourses for knowledge production and organisation is connected to institutional use, which is key to understanding language choice for text types. At this point it is apt to recollect Foucault's (1981) 'orders of discourse', referring to a collection of statements that are sustained through a network which Foucault defines as 'institutional support' ([1981: 55](#)). This observation is extremely important in understanding how knowledge systems are maintained. Orders of discourse cannot survive on their own, but must be maintained within what Foucault (1981) calls a system of exclusion so as to support the 'will to truth'. Institutional support consists of whole strata of practices that reinforce and renew its legitimacy ([Foucault, 1981: 55](#)). Foucault ([1972; 1981](#)) makes one important observation: language alone does not reproduce and represent knowledge, but exists within 'procedures' or practices in society. Language as symbols and signs are linguistic representations of knowledge subject to intangible systems of social behaviours, collectively organised and supported through established social practices and designated cultural artefacts to support such diffusion. In addition, these 'discursive formations' are institutionally supported and reinforced by established organisations that are repositories of knowledge and its creation, such as libraries and laboratories. A social system is maintained not only by practices which guarantees their reproduction but also by the potential to reinterpret practices. Corresponding to the argument posited by Giddens ([1979: 35](#)) in his interpretation of Wittgenstein, these 'orders of discourse', or discursively organised knowledge, can only be understood and acted upon as a situated product. Thus language and its use, as a situated and controlled product, is not an idiosyncratic choice. Choice of statements is organised, and its selection and redistribution is indicative of a stable situation regarding its use, including its predictability within a system.

The reinforcing and renewing of knowledge through a system of support is analogous to Giddens's (1979) notion of duality of structure in his theory of structuration. Agency and structure are interrelated, as a social system cannot exist without either of these two fundamental components: "the structural properties are both the medium and the outcome of the practices that constitutes those systems" (Giddens, 1979: 69). Fairclough (1995: 38) also takes up the issue of language as a situated practice in his discussion of discourse, whereby a social situation is perceived as an apparatus of verbal interaction. Fairclough (1995: 12) takes Foucault's (1981) concept of orders of discourse to "refer to the ordered set of discursive practices associated with a particular social domain or institution", and the boundaries or relationships between these practices. Such discursive practices may have boundaries that may be "rigid or permeable", depending on a multitude of factors. Fairclough (1995: 12) focuses on the 'local' orders of select domains, citing the usefulness of referring to the societal order of discourse to chart the relationships and boundaries between 'local' orders of discourse. This intersection of discourses is interesting, as also points to relations amongst members of the network and non-members. Essentially, such discourses will only be able to function in a "network of distinct sites" (Foucault, 1972: 60). Members of a network are experts participating within professional networks maintained by social practices identifying it as such, as members work towards the fulfilment of goals. Specialised discourses, particularly discourses which have institutional support, work as carriers of an interindividual organisation of consciousness (Smith, 2014: 226ff), and arguably within a network. Members of expert systems, for example professional bodies, support "selected orders of discourse" through social practices particular to the relevant system in the process of communicating from member to member, from role to role and from expert to non-expert; in the process, knowledge is circulated through selected discourses. Yet for such knowledge to be organised and disseminated amongst individuals, systems for the exchange of synoptic knowledge must be in place. Urban centres, from ancient civilisations to present times, developed their own institutional practices to manage resources (Jacoby, 1973: 9 - 11); such resource management practices were dependent on disembedding mechanisms such as symbolic tokens and expert systems. However, it may be said that such forms of knowledge, whether scientific, technical or economic, may have attained global significance only with

a combination of factors: the emergence of the nation-state and the development of capitalism, both of which depend on a type of social system for the introduction of a new mode of production: the bureaucratic apparatus.

3.6 The bureaucratic apparatus, rationalization and language

The bureaucratic apparatus may not seem to be a significant factor in determining language use at institutional levels. If the bureaucratic apparatus is taken as a means of systematic production and management of knowledge and resource management, therefore one may add that record-keeping and decision making are part of the process. With urbanisation, the need to manage may have been more acute, and social agents needed a systematic approach towards resource management that was dependent on time-space distanciation. Writing emerged as a disembedding mechanism that enabled the stretching of social relations on terms of time and space amongst agents involved in resource management, recording information relevant to the management of a society increasingly dependent on mediated relationships.

Whilst bureaucratic practices were present in different eras across different empires and political entities in the ancient and medieval world, changes in bureaucratic administration – at least in the West – were observed with the advent of the nation-state:

“The changes came gradually; one sees a pattern only in retrospect. They paralleled the rise of the European nation-state. In a complex process lasting some 400 years, authority was gradually transferred from numerous local feudal bodies to a central administration...[..]... Administration came increasingly to be entrusted to distant, more impersonal offices applying a central system of uniform decrees or laws. In time a new type of individual emerged onto the historical stage: the administrator, the civil servant whose task it was to carry out the will of the central authority.” ([Lutzker, 1982: 123](#))

The adoption of a centralised system of administration in states is perceived as a slow, gradual shift from traditional modes of production to modern modes of production. The capitalist economy is perceived as the leading feature in the changes in the development and expansion of bureaucratic processes, with emphasis on rules and regulations to ensure

conformity across time and space; this is defined as a form of rational (social) action ([Ritzer, 2001: 181](#)).

Weber ([1978](#)) proposed formal rationality, a form of social action dependent upon three factors underpinning the organisation and co-ordination of social actors for a set task, which are efficiency, calculability and predictability. Rationality is not only contained within the sphere of capitalist economy as a mode of production, but also formalistic law and bureaucratic administration, and common to all three is the “objectified, institutionalized, supra-individual form: in each sphere, rationality is embodied in the social structure and confronts individuals as something external to them” ([Brubaker, 1984: 9](#)). Weber ([1978: 987](#)) perceived bureaucracy as “*the* means of transforming social action into rationally organised action”, taking Western bureaucracy as the quintessential example of the process of formal rationalization ([Ritzer, 2001: 8](#)) and as a major element in the rationalization of the modern world ([Albrow, 1970: 43](#)). What was considered the foundation of the modern capitalist system, a mode of production based on calculable action, spread to non-economic spheres of life, utilising a form of bureaucratic administration within institutions and organisations. Rationalization as a mode of production has had considerable influence on society in general; Scott ([2014: 50](#)) points out that “the engines of rationalization include the professions, nation-states, and the mass media whose efforts support the development of larger numbers and more types of organisations.”

The question is how rationalization may affect knowledge; knowledge is the basis of social action, and for knowledge to be shared, it must become a symbolic token in some manner. Lyotard ([1979: 4 – 5](#)) mentions that knowledge in the postmodern world is subjected to transformation; for knowledge to be fashioned into the “form of an informational commodity”, it will need to be transformed into a form suitable for circulation “along the same lines as money” (pg. 6), with knowledge being transformed into units for exchange. Such an exchange must involve “a thorough exteriorization of knowledge with respect to the ‘knower’ at whatever point he or she may occupy in the knowledge process” ([Lyotard, 1979: 4](#)). In this case, synoptic knowledge becomes the ‘unit of knowledge’ for circulation within the exchange systems that may be shared amongst expert systems, unlike the non-

transferable, locale-specific nature-knowledge. Such exchange systems would depend on the ability for symbolic tokens to be shared along systems that permit time-space distanciation. It is here that the bureaucratic apparatus appears to be essential to the creation of exchange systems.

The bureaucratic apparatus is a means of knowledge management and for knowledge to be managed, it must be organised. The bureaucratic apparatus as a “means of transforming social action into rationally organised action” ([Weber, 1978: 987](#)) may arguably be closely interconnected with the forms of textually-mediated social organisation found in contemporary society, entering a mode of production that depends on synoptic knowledge, its quantification and standardisation. Darville ([1995: 254](#)) notes that “work in the dominant organisations in our society is done essentially, though not exclusively, through texts. Knowledge is organised in textual form.” The organisation of knowledge is conducted in the discourses considered necessary for organisational processes. This knowledge is objectified, written in “bureaucratic, administrative, legal and professional language” and accessed by individuals “dispersed in time and space to develop complementary ideas and to act in concert towards the people or situations that they make account of, administer, interpret, legislate for” (ibid). It is here that the idea of “orders of discourse” becomes relevant to the textual mediation found in conceptual orders of governing. Within textually-mediated social organisation, social agents involved in such processes are most likely to be dispersed across time and space, and hence the types of discourses employed within texts will need to reflect the needs of the institution and understood by its agents, reflecting the need for rationalisation. Darville ([1995: 256](#)) mentions that organisational literacy utilises discourses which identify action as agentless, substituting the agent with the process; such forms of discourse highlighting the process may include, but are not limited to, grammatical constructions such as nominalisation ([Fairclough, 2003: 144](#)). The abstraction of knowledge within institutional contexts is enabled to a certain extent through language, in particular the ‘orders of discourse’ that represent such knowledge. Such knowledge must be rendered into identifiable units for circulation amongst professional and technical experts in hierarchically organised bureaucratic apparatuses dispersed across time and space ([Lyotard, 1979: 49ff](#)).

The connection between language choice in terms of rationalization, knowledge organisation and management and the bureaucratic apparatus may not be immediately evident. Contextualising these factors within the social setting they occur, in this case mainly the bilingual nation-state via its institutions, may provide reasons as to why one language may take precedence in textually-mediated social organisation, potentially revealing ‘higher-order regularities’ that may highlight the different ideologies that are operating within the social system dependent on institutions.

3.7 The nation-state, institutions and societal bilingualism

The link between societal bilingualism and the political system of a nation-state may not be immediately evident. However, once it is understood that the modern nation-state is a social system primarily dependent on a bureaucratic apparatus for its administrative functioning, a system dependent on time/space distancing, mediated relationships and disembedding mechanisms for the organisation and management of knowledge, the issue of language choice for the social organisation of knowledge becomes clearer. The primary locations for such knowledge exchange systems are the modern institutions and organisations, intermediate units mediating the individual and society. With the text as an organising force in this apparatus, it also becomes evident that spatiality is another factor to consider; purposeful social action oriented towards ‘orders of indexicality’ in polyvalent space ([Blommaert, Collins and Slembrouk, 2005: 200](#)) is influenced by the type of knowledge to be exchanged and the type of relations involved.

The result of profound and extensive social and political reorganisation starting in the nineteenth century and currently the dominant political unit in the international order ([Pierson, 1996: 13](#); [Wimmer and Feinstein, 2010: 768](#)), the nation-state is a major unit of analysis in investigating societal bilingualism at state level today ([Romaine, 2013: 450](#)). It encompasses communities that have emerged which are by far more intense, complex and diverse compared to previous epochs in world history. Political system apart, with bureaucratic apparatuses in operation, the modern nation-state is unlike any other

community in human history due to the type of social ties that sustain it. As a social unit, it is built on abstract ties rather than traditional social ties maintained in close face-to-face contact, such as kinship. The nation-state may be perceived as an imagined community “because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them or even hear of them” ([Anderson, 1991: 6](#)). James ([1996: 31](#)) refers to the nation-state as an “abstract community” due to the extensive levels of abstraction predominant in the polity, identified as “disembodied integration”. Sustaining a community based on abstract ties demands organisational practices that enable it to maintain its coordination, especially when consisting of large numbers of people from diverse backgrounds, communities and ethnicities. Such an undertaking involves considerable coordination and mobilisation which cannot be possible without disembedding mechanisms.

The connection between the nation-state and the bureaucratic apparatus that evolved can be historically situated. As Wimmer and Feinstein ([2010: 768](#)) note,

“starting in the sixteenth century permanent war between competing European states made techniques of governmental control and resource extraction ever more effective and efficient. Indirect rule via regional elites and notables was replaced by direct rule through a unified and hierarchically integrated bureaucracy. From there, two major pathways led to the nation-state. In autonomous states (e.g., France), state elites gradually homogenized the population over the course of the nineteenth century and developed an assimilatory nationalism to legitimize their rule (Hechter 2000; Tilly 1994). In Mann’s (1995) related, yet differently accented, account of this process, nationalism emerged from below to justify the public’s demands for democratic representation vis-à-vis the increasingly interventionist military state.”

The term ‘nation-state’ combines two separate conceptualisations, ‘nation’ and ‘state’. The ‘nation’ is, according to Symmons-Symonolewicz ([1985: 221, cited in White, 2004: 27](#)),

“a territorially-based community of human beings sharing a distinct variant of modern culture, bound together by a strong sentiment of unity and solidarity, marked by a clear historically-rooted consciousness of

national identity, and possessing, or striving to possess, a genuine political self-government”.

Thus, a nation is dependent on a shared consensus regarding a collective identity including a common heritage and culture, which may not yet have its own political self-government. On the other hand, the state is a different type of abstraction, a complex and multifaceted social construct which can be approached from different perspectives. In political science, there are several definitions of the state; in social theory, the distinction may not be that necessary ([Giddens, 1985: 17](#)). One comprehensive definition of the state is provided by Vincent ([1987: 222](#)):

“the complex institutional structure which through historical, legal, moral and philosophical claims, embodies self-limitation and diversification of authority and power and a complex hierarchy of rules and norms, which act to institutionalise power and regulate the relations between citizens, laws and political institutions”.

The concept of ‘institutional structure’ is important here, as it is central for the self-government of a nation; once that is possible, the next step for a nation is to become a nation-state. This definition essentially stresses the coordinative nature of this political unit on two different levels. Once nation and state have been defined, the nation-state can be perceived as a fusion of both nation and state, encompassing the cultural and the political spheres ([McClone, 2004: 216](#)). This political unit evolved during the age of modern globalisation, at a time when modern nation formation and modern global formation evolved during the same period and out of the same processes of abstraction such as “capitalist production, print communication, commodity exchange, bureaucratic organisation and rationalised analytic enquiry” ([James, 2006: 370](#)). Therefore, whilst it is a social unit sharing a distinct collective consciousness that sets it apart from other nation-states as well as an administrative apparatus that provides the necessary infrastructure for intracommunication within the polity, it also shares the same organisation for intercommunication with other nation-states using the same practices; in retrospect, the global system is a system of nation-states linking a network of national communities ([Giddens, 1985: 255](#)).

What is of particular interest here in connection with the issue of language, language policy and the nation-state is the role of written language. Writing, which Giddens (1981: 169) links to the development of state power, is linked to the organisational practices that enable the polity to fulfil its unifying and administrative functions. The complexity of modern nation formation includes not only changes in political reorganisation but also social organisation, giving rise to an increasing reliance on what has been called as agency-extended integration and disembodied integration (James, 1996: 25ff), whereby relations have progressively become dependent on mediated communication (Calhoun, 1987; 1992). It is this dependency on mediated communication that has made language, particularly writing, a vital feature in the development of communities defined by the levels of abstraction present in modern society. Mediated communication through writing for administrative purposes can be traced to earliest known civilisations, but it took on significant importance in Europe during the thirteenth-century. The origins of an administrative system in most modern nation-states can be found in the European absolutist states (Wright, 2004: 29). The coordination and mobilisation of resources in a kingdom was only possible through a centralised system supported by a bureaucratic apparatus. To have a uniform and efficient administrative apparatus, one single language was sufficient (see Chapter Two, Section 2.4). It may be argued that the reduction of languages may have been an issue of efficiency, at a time when thirteenth century Europe was experiencing changes in administrative practices. Although Latin was the language of the Holy Roman Empire and of Christendom, it was not widespread. Latin slowly ceased to be the universal language of the Western world, and in its stead the preferred ‘administrative vernaculars’ language of European monarchies and their state apparatuses were adopted (Anderson, 1991: 42). The languages used by states apparatuses were not linked to any ideologies concerning nationalism or ethnic identity, a movement that was to appear later in the nineteenth century; rather, Anderson (1991: 42) observes that

“in every instance, the 'choice' of language appears as a gradual, unselfconscious, pragmatic, not to say haphazard development. As such, it was utterly different from the self-conscious language policies pursued by nineteenth-century dynasts confronted with the rise of hostile popular linguistic-nationalisms”.

The concept of a national language is not influenced by administrative concerns. Nationalism, which is distinct from administration, is what Gellner (2008: 1) defines as “a political principle, which holds that the political and national unit should unite”, and is linked to the nation-state (Breuilly, 1982: 10). Nationalism has its origins in eighteenth- and nineteenth century Europe, which was heavily influenced by French Republicanism and German Romantic nationalism. The Enlightenment saw the divine right of kings being questioned, and the shift from an absolutist state to a democratic state where people were no longer subjects but citizens with rights and obligations was brought about by the French Revolution. German ethnolinguistic nationalism was based on the idea of a people sharing a primordial collective identity which included language, culture, history and religion (Wright, 2000: 15). Both types of nationalism focused on the power of the people and unity through a collective duty to defend the nation. Nationalism became a form of political ideology which was based on the unique and explicit character of the nation, with its own interests and values taking priority (Breuilly, 1982: 3). The unification of the nation-state depended on building a collective national identity as a way of life (Billig, 1995: 24), which would affect all nations-states to varying degrees.

The role of language in nation-building was typically a central concern following decolonisation, a form of political restructuring which occurred in many countries worldwide in the second half of the twentieth century. Major political reorganisation following nation-state building, whether through state consolidation in the West or decolonialisation in many parts of the world, has had consequences on language at state level. Decolonialisation created a number of new nation-states that were in reality multilingual and multi-ethnic, which was at odds with the popular belief that a nation-state should share a single language (Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Cleese, 2012: 3). This is perhaps the era when the ‘messiness of bilingualism’ became pronounced in the nation-state environment (Heller, 2007: 5). European colonial expansion had affected all major continents, creating new situations where European languages encountered indigenous languages of the colonies, irreversibly changing the linguistic ecological habitat of the world (Johnson, 2013:16). The borders of many modern nation-states in the post-colonial world were arbitrarily drawn by colonisers, dependent on the needs of the political and

economic interests of Western colonial powers rather than the pre-established territorial boundaries ([Romaine, 2013: 458](#)). It also gave rise to extended diglossia ([Fishman, 1980](#)), with European languages and indigenous languages fulfilling High and Low functions respectively, particularly in scenarios with indigenous languages lacking a writing system ([Riney, 2012](#)). The issue of language in the postcolonial and post-secession experience frequently led to bitter disputes and controversy in multilingual and multi-ethnic nation-states, proof of the failure of language policies drawn up by language experts to provide a solid foundation for language management in new nation-states ([Spolsky, 2012: 3](#)).

In many former colonies, the administrative and identity functions are fulfilled by different languages. In fact, issues of language and official recognition follow a pattern along what Fishman ([1968: 43](#)) identified as nationalist and nationist concerns, where the former calls for a language to express national sentiment and the latter is largely concerned with administrative and communicative functions to ensure the smooth functioning of the state. As many “new nation-states have mostly come from administrative upgrade of segment states” ([Roeder, 2007:11](#)), meaning that the administrative apparatus was already part of the institutional make-up of these nation-states upon independence, many ex-colonies adopted the former colonial language for administrative purposes ([Li Wei, 2000a: 12](#)). Adopting the former colonial language was mainly for political expediency and the economic planning and development that coincided with the mobility that was predicted ([Russet, 1967: 29](#)). The nationalism/nationism dichotomy concerning languages was not only evident in the era of mass decolonisation, but also in the emergent nation-states following secession in the post-Cold War era ([Coulmas, 1994: 36ff](#)).

However, the designation of different languages for national and administrative purposes is not without its tensions in this polyvalent space, and as Tollefson ([2013:13](#)) observes, “many of the institutional, cultural, and social forms and practices of language in the nation-state’ are at odds with the present economic systems and globalised capitalism; these tensions have been defined as national ‘pride’ and global ‘profit’” ([Duchêne and Heller, 2012: 3](#)). Capitalism is perceived as a process responsible for the transformation of the political-administrative structures of the state, and colonialism was one means of

such transformation ([Harvey, 2019: 105](#)). Colonialism provided more or less such temporal-spatial transformation, primarily by the administrative apparatus introduced to serve the interests of the colonisers.

The tensions are better understood when the focus is shifted away from the single nation-state to the global inter-state system as a whole, based on the world-systems analysis proposed by Wallerstein ([1974](#); [1982](#); [2006](#)). Wallerstein ([2006: xi](#)) uses this system to explain how knowledge – political, economic and sociocultural - has been structured and spread across the world through globalisation. The world-system becomes the unit of analysis rather than the state, taking into account the *longue durée* to provide insight into long-term social change on a global scale, such as production relations (ibid, pg. 20). Whilst the nation-state may be perceived as a territorially and socially bounded community demarcated by locally-defined ideologies supporting nationalist concerns, it is also connected to similar political units across the global scene, resulting from the underlying unbounded nature of the nation-state and its connectivity with other nation-states.

Reconceptualising the nation-state as a centre of power (Giddens, [1981: 189](#); [1985: 13 - 17](#)) linked to other centres of power in a chain spanning the international community is an important step in understanding these perceived tensions, particularly when taking into consideration the current dominant economic system, capitalism, and its effects on institutional clusterings within the nation-state. The role of each nation-state within such a system depends on three principal ‘zones’ in the capitalist economy, namely the core, the semi-periphery and the periphery. This may be applied to the exchange of knowledge in modern society, especially as knowledge is now considered the main commodity nowadays in the knowledge society ([Lyotard, 1979: 5](#)), facilitated by networks ([Castells, 2010](#)). This is the main commodity in the tertiary sector, focusing on “information, services and symbolic goods” ([Duchêne and Heller, 2012: 9](#)). The exchange of goods and services, as well as knowledge, along the global world-system may be unequal in distribution. It is here that language may also be subjected this inequality. Organisations are entities involved in the exchange of such resources, linked across time and space, which may be one reason for what DiMaggio and Powell ([1983](#)) refer to as *institutional*

isomorphism, which may have significance in the wider global context. Blommaert, Collins and Slembrouk (2005: 201 - 202) posit that cultural and linguistic goods are also subject to the relations of dependence as outlined by world-systems analysis approach: “the value of goods from centers is systematically higher than of the (semi-) peripheries”; this may be extended to the idea of language as a ‘cultural good’. Having inherited the bureaucratic apparatus from their former colonisers (Roeder, 2007:11), it is perhaps clearer why the language of the bureaucratic apparatus is frequently retained (Li Wei, 2000a: 12), leading towards a situation of societal bilingualism that may rather complex. Whilst in premodern societies the adoption of an established administrative system and language was common (Gnanadesikan, 2009: 22, 77, 113), the emergence of extensive networks following the formation of a global inter-state probably made it a necessity.

Taking the global world-system as a unit of analysis, it may be easier to see how these expert systems are also part of this global system. Such expert systems also include professional associations and educational institutions; these are examples of exchange systems not bounded by territory but by affiliation, cutting across different nation-states (Giddens, 1990). If expert systems are influenced by ‘core’ nation-states such as North America and past European colonising states, such a flow may be visualised as knowledge ‘flowing’ from core states to semi-peripheral and peripheral states, signalling the participation of the latter in such systems; potentially, the political-administrative structures adopted by semi-peripheral and peripheral states would be attuned to those of the core states to participate as effectively as possible in these networks. Keeping Lefebvre’s concept of social space in mind, colonialism would be one factor contributing to the creation of abstract space, and later on globalisation; it would be an example of global space ‘interpenetrating’ or ‘superimposing’ upon the local space. Such social spaces are created by markets of exchange involving human activity and objects (Lefebvre, 1991: 86 – 88). Relationships between ‘core’ countries and ‘peripheral’ ones are arguably active despite decolonization; for example, there are still active links between a number of former European colonial powers, considered core ‘zones’, and their former colonies, the latter receiving financial aid (The Guardian, 2015).

The concept of borders may seem attractive to a nation-state, entrusted with building its own economy and state apparatus; however, it may be the case that nation-states are meant to engage within an inter-state system. As a political unit, the nation-state provides its institutions with the social structure enabling them to operate within its parameters. However, the activities of these institutions are not necessarily constrained by the borders of the nation-state; these activities are potentially influenced by expert systems stretching across different nation-states. In the case of the bilingual nation-state, such as an ex-colony or post-succession state, tensions may arise from intranational and international concerns, which Coulmas (1994: 35 – 36) calls centripetal and centrifugal forces respectively. These tensions may manifest in the language practices supporting these different systems.

In terms of language choice and language tensions within the nation-state, the concept of the polycentric nature of social space becomes especially relevant for societal bilingualism (Blommaert, 2010: 75). The nation-state may be perceived as a polycentric social space, in which formal institutions may act as “centring institutions” (see Silverstein, 1998: 404). Again, such “centring institutions” are not bounded to a specific single, physical, geographical space; each “centring institution” is again subject to a social environment which may be potentially polyvalent (Lefebvre, 1991: 86) or polycentric (Blommaert, 2007: 118). Taking the institution as a hub for knowledge organisation and management where written texts act as the main medium of exchange within expert systems dependent on time-space distancing, each institution is subject to producing social space and at the same time acting as an anchor for some ‘orders of discourse’ in accordance with stratified ‘orders of indexicality’ determined by local, regional, national, transnational and international influences (Blommaert, 2010: 75). As an abstract entity within an inter-state system, the nation-state may be perceived as part of a global order of polyvalent space, indexing national, transnational and international social spaces. Thus, if the nation-state is subject to extraterritorial influences political, economic and social in nature, its meso-level institutions may also be subject to the same influences, depending on the nature of the knowledge exchange systems they may be responsible for. These conflicting concerns

may account for the language tensions observed in a bilingual nation-state, influencing language choice for different activities.

3.8 Conclusion

In seeking an explanation for ‘higher-order regularities’ guiding language choice in the absence of an explicit language policy, the issue of topic was taken as the starting point for analysis. Identifying topic as a means of knowledge organisation for communication ([Fairclough, 1995](#)), it emerges as a form of social organisation through discourse. In institutional contexts, some ‘orders of discourse’ may be preferred over others ([Foucault, 1981](#)), facilitating the exchange of knowledge amongst institutional members, in particular through texts that enable time-space distancing. Understanding societal bilingualism in modern society, which has been described as messy ([Heller, 2007](#)) or difficult to categorise ([Fishman, 1980](#)), entails understanding spatial interaction and how social action is transformed and mediated amongst social actors. Modernity is characterised by the rise of indirect, mediated relations based on low presence-availability and time-space distancing dependent on disembedding mechanisms such as expert systems and symbolic tokens to manage resources. Sharing meaning within impersonal, mediated relations is dependent on symbolic tokens that are characterised by the ‘reduction of complexity’. Writing is a disembedding mechanism that permits the extension of social action across time and space, and therefore texts act as objects of mediation to share synoptic knowledge:

“texts speak in the absence of speakers; meaning is detached from local contexts of interpretation; the ‘same’ meaning (Olson, 1977) can occur simultaneously in a multiplicity of socially disjointed settings (Benjamin, 1969).” ([Smith, 1990b: 211](#))

This is essential for a knowledge-driven society that is increasingly dependent on networks that can potentially take global proportions.

Such networks contribute to the creation of social space ([Lefebvre, 1991: 86](#)), leading to the creation of polyvalent space, and in the process influencing its ecology. This polyvalency may be applied to the nation-state, a complex, abstract entity subject to multiple spaces that fuses local, regional, national, transnational and international influences to create an ecology in which these influences “may be intercalated, combined, superimposed – they may even sometimes collide” ([Lefebvre, 1991: 88](#)). This proposition can be linked to the observation made by Coulmas ([1994](#)), in which languages for national and administrative purposes in a bilingual nation-state may be subject to tensions.

Applying the observation by Coulmas ([1994](#)) to the use of Maltese and English as described in Chapter One and Chapter Two, it appears that the two official languages in Malta may be subject to the above mentioned centripetal and centrifugal tensions in governing conceptual modes, which are reflected in its current institutional practices rather than the official policy. Taking the nation-state as an abstract community based on the notion of nationhood and a state that operates as a social unit to maintain both governmental and private sector issues, these tensions appear to manifest themselves in language. As a nation-state that emerged after decolonisation, it inherited the administrative apparatus of its colonisers together with the language of administration. At the same time, it sought to define itself as a nation-state with its own distinct collective identity, with language as a primary marker of identity. Institutions as knowledge exchange systems may act as ‘centring institutions’, in which they may be potentially ‘sites of struggle’ for language within organisational texts. It may be useful to rethink societal bilingualism in terms of knowledge networks working within and across polyvalent social spaces so as to provide insight into what Fishman ([1980](#)) referred to as the ‘higher-order regularities’ influencing language choice.

Chapter FOUR: Research Questions, Rationale and Methodological Concerns

4.1 The conceptual background: the rationale for a social practice approach

With official language policy as an unreliable indicator of actual language use in officially bilingual countries, the question remains as to how people manage these languages in institutional settings. In Chapter One, three issues were identified, and research questions were developed. The research questions focus on 1) how texts contribute to routinised social action; 2) how the languages are involved in textually-mediated social organisation and 3) why the official languages are assigned different roles ([Section 1.4](#)). These research questions were formulated following initial observations and analysis of the available literature, becoming the “intellectual puzzle” of this doctoral study ([Mason, 2002: 7](#)). In exploring issues related to bilingual language use and literacy, several issues needed to be carefully considered. The research design and methodology selected are determined by the theoretical framework adopted and the ideological position regarding the nature of the social and cultural processes under investigation. This reveals the researcher’s stance on the nature of language, particularly written language, including bilingualism, and the ontological nature of the phenomena researched determines the epistemology, followed by methodology and methods of data collection.

The next step in understanding language choice in texts is by looking into appropriate methodological approaches and the rationale behind their choice. As highlighted in previous chapters, actual language practices may not reflect official language policies on language ([Spolsky, 2005: 2163](#)). Rather than take the official policies as an indicator of societal bilingualism, focusing on language practices as the *de facto* policy may provide insight into the ‘higher-order regularities’ influencing language choice in written texts. The focus on the actual practices calls for an inductive approach whereby the focus shifts to the patterns, themes and other observations that emerge from inductively generated fieldwork ([Patton, 2015: 183](#)).

In looking at language practices to understand language choice using an inductive approach, the social practice approach to the study of language was considered the most appropriate means to understand the *de facto* language policies. There were three main reasons why a qualitative approach was the more suitable option as opposed to a quantitative approach. First, language should be researched in “contexts of situation” ([Hymes, 1974: 3](#)), i.e, its social context. Language is primarily human behaviour situated in social space. Moreover, as reading and writing are situated, social activities, adopting a qualitative approach would position these activities as grounded in human experience. By viewing reading and writing as situated practices, human behaviour becomes the starting point, with a view to study language as a social phenomenon. Second, a qualitative approach offers the opportunity to look into complexities and processes that a quantitative approach cannot ([Marshall and Rossman, 2006: 2](#)). A qualitative stance in analysing language practices may contribute to a deeper understanding of how individuals’ language practices are shaped by social contexts, and in turn reconstruct and reshape these social practices. Third, a qualitative approach is ideal when embarking upon research of which little is known (*ibid.*); there is little known research which looks into the variation evident into the use of institutional practices in the Maltese context. This would be the ideal approach to research internalized notions of language use in institutional settings.

A social practice approach is associated with an ontological shift in the re-conceptualisation of language and literacy (e.g. [Darville, 1995](#); [DeVeau, 2009](#)). It implies that language and literacy are treated as phenomena essentially social in nature; like oral language, written texts are perceived as the result of human activity, socially and culturally embedded in human activities, and therefore need to be perceived in ‘contexts of situation’ ([Hymes, 1974: 3](#)). There are two research paradigms linked to the concept of language and literacy as a social practice. The first one is the New Literacy Studies. The concept of literacy as a social practice is one of two features defining the New Literacy Studies (NLS), which subsequently focused on the use of literacy and numeracy in everyday contexts rather than formal educational settings ([Papen, 2005: 32](#)). This is what Barton ([2007: 32](#)) calls the ecological approach towards language, understanding “how literacy is embedded in human activity, its embeddedness in social life and in thought, and its position

in history, in language and in learning". In the NLS school of thought, such contextualisation becomes a fundamental aspect of understanding the use of literacy, and this can be extended to research into the choice of language for literacy activities. Another paradigm that views language as a social practice is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a discourse-analytical approach towards talk and text ([Baxter, 2010: 127 - 128](#)). Like New Literacy Studies, this paradigm takes context into consideration; context can arguably be divided into three main components or levels, ranging from the actual physical text, the practices surrounding the immediate text, to the wider social context within which practices are linked to in the social structure ([Fairclough, 2003: 23](#)). This multi-level approach, which also takes social theory into account, reconsiders the spatial and temporal dimensions of texts, writing and language, positioning texts as social spaces operating within social spaces, in addition to the concept of the intertextuality of the text ([Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000: 452](#)). This concept of space is shared by Lefebvre ([1991: 86](#)), who takes social space, also referred to as abstract or produced space, as multiple space. Thus, it may be argued that both approaches conceptualise text as having multi-layered ecologies within and beyond the text.

The next step is to understand the nature of the social practice, which is the basis of the ideological model of literacy ([Street, 1993](#); [Barton, 2007](#); [Barton and Hamilton, 1988](#)). Given that the choice of language is the main focus of this study, the social practice model of literacy defining reading and writing activities as situated, contextualised social practices may offer a more insightful account for language selection. The social practice is perhaps one way of establishing a link between the microanalytic and the macroanalytic levels of language analysis. In the following section, the social practice is discussed, highlighting ontological and epistemological matters that re-evaluate the way writing, and therefore language, may be perceived.

4.2 The social practice: ontological and epistemological considerations

Social practices, or simply practices, have emerged as the main object of study in social sciences, primarily in anthropology and sociology. This approach presupposes a number of ontological and epistemological issues regarding human activities, also referred to as social action. To understand practice theory, it must be understood as a subtype of cultural theory, which are social theories “explaining social action and social order by referring to symbolic and cognitive structures” (Reckwitz, 2002: 246). Practice theory evolved in reaction to the functionalist/interactional divide in approaching social behaviour, which was mainly viewed from either a structural or agentive perspective (Ortner, 2006: 2). This new construct challenged the structural/agency dichotomy, and in attempting to overcome this opposition, a small number of researchers (e.g Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1979) sought to explain individual, routine behaviours by referring to the social structures and finding an intermediate position that allowed for the sharp divide between ‘objective’ structures and ‘subjective’ action to be presented as a *dialectical* relationship as opposed to an oppositional one. Early practice-based studies in anthropology and sociology focused on power relations between individuals, the historicization of practices and social transformation of culture, but the theorization was yet to be developed (Ortner, 2006: 8-9).

At its most basic, social practices are routine activities perceived as linking individual agency with the intangible superstructure. Taking the definition proposed by Reckwitz (2002: 250), a practice is “a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are discussed and the world is understood”. This definition of practice emphasises the routinized action, identifying practices as the collective, purposeful and co-ordinated actions of the individual agent, contrasting them to physiological and physical responses to stimuli; such actions can be interpreted as meaningful only in connection with other agents and their actions. As action, the social practice is a transformative form of action involving the “reflexive monitoring of behaviour” (Giddens, 1979: 57); it also involves *tacit knowledge*, a form of practical knowledge which is contextual in character as well as *discoursal knowledge*. Rouse (2007)

observes that the practice idiom can be used to refer to “the most mundane aspects of everyday life to highly structured activities in institutional settings” (pg. 499). These ‘routinized ways’ may be culturally specific, and hence localised, or dispersed across different settings, shared across the globe; in addition, they may be transient in nature or strongly institutionalised in time and space. As routinized activities, practices are predictable and fairly orderly, and contribute collectively to social order, which is a property of social structure ([Tang, 2016: 6](#)). Routinization of behaviour, or social action, is hence an identifying feature of practices, making the concept of orderly conduct crucial for consideration. This begs the question as to the nature of the stability of practices, and their role in maintaining stability and predictability in patterns of behaviours in relation to social structure, which is also mediated by norms and institutions.

However, of particular importance in relation to social order is individual agency and its relation to the social structure. This is of special importance when analysing practices, given that actions performed cannot be studied in isolation; practices must be understood within a superstructure, namely the social system. Moreover, practices are not isolated activities performed by the individual agent, but orderly behaviours that are shared by multiple agents, passed on from expert to novice, or across multiple agents responsible for various roles; knowledge is transmitted from person to person within social relations. Rules and norms, together with bodily skills, objects, language and knowledge may only be understood within a broader social structure. Taking the observation by Rouse ([2007: 505](#)),

“If one simply examined the actions of individuals without reference to supra-individual settings, such familiar activities as voting, exchanging money, performing a ritual, or even speaking a language might not make sense. Individual actions and agents may thus only be identifiable and understandable as components of a larger culture or society”.

This is a basic tenet in practice theory. Action is social not because it is performed, but because it is performed in connection with a superstructure which provides the legitimacy for such action to be considered social (see Chapter 3, Section 3.4). One theoretical framework that accounts for the dialectical nature of individual agency and social structure

embedded in the social practice is Giddens' (1979, 1984) theory of structuration. The key to understanding the transformative nature of social action is understanding that "the routines of day-to-day life are fundamental to even the most elaborate forms of societal organisation" (Giddens, 1984: 64). Social practices contribute to the social reproduction of society, as social systems can only exist through them and are dependent on them (ibid, pg. 83). Routinisation is a fundamental concept in structuration theory, highlighting the recursive nature of practices in the social reproduction of life; routinisation may also implicate not only a degree of stability but also predictability.

The theorization of practices is essentially a means of explaining social order and the actions that sustain it. What makes the social practice a central theme in the social sciences are a number of considerations, including the premise that practices are rules and norms enacted via bodily skills, language and tacit knowledge (Rouse, 2007). Hence practices are stable, orderly and routinised actions as opposed to action which is involuntary or idiosyncratic. Bourdieu (1991) developed the concept of habitus as a heuristic to describe

"a set of *dispositions* which incline agents to act and react in certain ways. The dispositions generate practices, perceptions and attitudes which are regular without being consciously co-ordinated or governed by any rule. The dispositions which constitute the habitus are inculcated, structured, durable, generative and transposable" (Thompson, 1991: 12).

These structured dispositions give rise to ways of being and thinking which are taken as the norm in the social environment they are produced (Maton, 2012: 50). These dispositions provide the individual with the necessary social reference or social framework to act which could be tentatively described as 'situated' behaviour, because it is always within a context. Moreover, these dispositions are revealing of the practices, perceptions and attitudes prevalent in the social environment.

Once social practices are understood as purposeful, routinised social action, the next step is to see practices as situated in terms of time and space. The routinisation enacted through social practices is of importance as "the structural properties of social systems exist only in so far as forms of social conduct are reproduced chronically across time and space"

([Giddens, 1984: xxi](#)). Bourdieu ([1977: 8](#)) had initially mentioned that practices are situated in time, and Giddens ([1979](#), [1984](#), [1990](#)) developed this further in his theory of structuration, positing that all “social practices, or social activities, are situated activities in terms of three intersecting moments of difference: temporally, paradigmatically (invoking structure which is present only in its instantiation) and spatially” ([Giddens, 1979: 54](#)). Social structure is mainly possible through the reproduction of social action, with the affordances and constraints that are constrained by the social structure.

As mentioned earlier, practices may be strongly institutionalised. To understand why practices are critical to the operations of formal institutions and organisations, the first step is to clarify the conceptual basis of institutions. Scott ([2014: 56](#)) offers the following conception: “institutions comprise regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life”. Institutions also demonstrate properties that are stabilising and somehow resistant to change; Spolsky ([2006: 96](#)) remarks that “given the pervasiveness and complexity of language in human society, it is not surprising that language practices are so hard to influence”, hinting at the stability of language practices in general. This stability in the reproduction of language practices may be *habitus* at work. It may be appropriate to state that institutional practices, which include symbolic systems, behaviours and resource management, are linked to the ‘higher-order regularities’ that may be responsible for language choice in textually-mediated social organisation a dominant feature of contemporary society, what is currently called ‘the knowledge society’ ([Stehr, 2001: 20](#)). Yet what is also interesting is the proposition by Giddens ([1984: 24](#)) vis-à-vis institutions, namely that they give solidity to social systems ‘across time and space’. Giddens ([1979: 110](#)) perceives institutions as “regularised social practices, institutions are constituted and reconstituted in the tie between the *durée* of the passing moment, and *the longue durée* of deeply sedimented time-space relations”. The modern institution may be considered a hub of concerted and co-ordinated social action in the nation-state. The nature of the modern institution is unlike social forms that were present in previous historical periods ([Giddens, 1984: 6](#)), exhibiting a distinct time-space dimension not exhibited in past institutional organisations. This time-space dimension, called time-space distanciation by Giddens

([1981: 4](#); [1984: 63](#)), one of the facilitating conditions for modern institutions, is perhaps only possible with stable routinised practices in place. Writing is arguably key to these routinised practices, particularly in forms of social organisation dependent on textual mediation. Such routinised practices are arguably best studied using a methodological approach that allows the study of social action in context.

4.3 Methodological framework: the social practice approach towards the study of writing

The next step after determining the ontological and epistemological consideration was the adoption of a methodological framework or “strategy of inquiry” ([Denzin and Lincoln, 2005: 379](#)) to find answers to the research questions presented in Chapter 1. As highlighted by Carter and Little ([2007: 1](#)), “methodology shapes and is shaped by research objectives, questions and study design”. The study of literacy practices may be undertaken using different methodological frameworks (e.g. [Barton and Hamilton, 1988: 59](#)). In understanding how language is managed in literacy practices ([Spolsky, 2005: 2163](#)), the methodological framework of choice was the social practice approach,

The view of literacy as a social practice is the starting point for the New Literacy Studies, a field of study that takes a sociocultural view of literacy by placing emphasis on the description of literacy practices of everyday day life ([Stephens, 2000: 10](#)). The social practice approach is essentially a qualitative approach towards the study of literacy practices. As an approach, also known as the ideological model of literacy ([Street, 1984](#)), it emerged as a critique of the dominant paradigms of literacy that focused on the cognitive models of literacy ([Street and Lefstein, 2007: 34](#)). Street ([1984](#)) challenged this paradigm; besides noting that it was largely untheorized, he also noted “the exponents of this model of literacy conceptualised literacy in technical terms, treating it as independent of social context, an autonomous variable whose consequences for society and cognition can be derived from its intrinsic character” ([Street, 1993: 5](#)). As a result, he called this “the autonomous model of literacy” ([Street, 1984; 1993](#)), whilst proposing a model which contextualised writing in social and cultural practices, which was called “the ideological

model”. The major contributing factor that the ideological model of literacy offers is linking reading and writing activities to cultural factors and power structures in society rather than cognitive abilities ([Szwed, 1981](#); [Street, 1993: 7](#); [Baynham, 2004](#)).

With the focus on the social practices involving the written text rather than ‘literacy-in-itself’, the contextual use of literacy is given greater attention, giving a sociohistorical perspective to its usage. The social practice approach typically emphasises the ‘local’ uses of literacy, mostly the types of activities to be found in the personal spheres of life, such as home and community ([Barton and Hamilton, 1988](#)). By focusing on the everyday activities mediated through reading and writing, different literacies are acknowledged as a central premise. Such activities were highly unlikely to have been perceived as literacy, given that perceptions were largely dependent on the type and the degree of institutional support that select literacies have had, particularly more powerful institutions such as educational and political bodies. In focusing on the ‘local’, the social practice approach was instrumental in taking a fresh look at reading and writing practices that did not have this institutional support, often described as ‘vernacular’ literacies ([Barton, 2007](#); [Blommaert, 2013](#)). This paradigm has also been instrumental in investigating social practices and multilingual literacies (eg. [Martin-Jones and Jones, 2000](#)) and translanguaging in writing (e.g. [Sebba, Mahootian and Jonsson, 2012](#)).

Perhaps the question remains as how the concept of literacy as a social practice may be understood, which is the central premise behind the framework known as the New Literacy Studies ([Barton, Hamilton and Ivanič, 2000: 1](#)). Primarily based on ethnographic methods, it is an area which defined itself as focusing on “the social practices and conceptions of reading and writing” ([Street, 1984: 1](#)). The assertion that literacy is a social practice is linked to eight propositions concerning its social character, taking the variation in literacies as linked to different activities, social institutions and power relations; hence it is also described as taking a critical approach to written language ([Barton, 2007: 28](#)). In addition, literacies are situated in time and space, looking into its situated nature within broader social, cultural and historical contexts.

The social practice approach to literacy developed its own conceptual tools, taking two core concepts, the literacy practice and the literacy event, as the basic units of analysis ([Barton, 2007: 35](#)). The term literacy practice may be defined as a social practice that involves literacy in some way. The literacy practice was conceptualised as cultural ways of utilising literacy ([Barton and Hamilton, 1988: 7](#)). The literacy event is a unit within the literacy practice. Anderson, Teale and Estrada (1980: 59) are the first to coin the term *literacy event*, as an “any action sequence, involving one or more persons, in which the production and/or comprehension of print plays a role” (quoted in [Heath, 1983: 392, footnote 2](#)); this has links to the concept of the speech event, first coined by Hymes ([1974](#)). Heath ([1983](#)) expands upon this, by referring to its beginning as when “talk revolves around a piece of writing” (pg. 386). The event is essentially any activity in which literacy has a role ([Barton and Hamilton, 1988: 7](#)). The concept of regularity is introduced by Barton ([2007: 35](#)), elaborating that this is normally a “regular event with repeated patterns of interaction” with any activity involving print; this ties in with the concept of routinisation. The focus on activities gives what Barton ([2007: 36](#)) calls the ecological approach to literacy, which is looking at the immediate context of the literacy event, citing that literacy practices “may be inferred from events which are mediated by written texts”.

These two units can be seen in parallel with the framework developed by Fairclough ([2003](#)) for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), consisting of a tripartite system of social system, social practice and social event. The social practice is the intermediate link between actions performed by the individual and their significance within the broader social structure, as explained in Section 4.2. The text is the social ‘event’, whilst the encompassing actions within which the text is created is the social ‘practice’; these two units are very similar to the literacy practice and literacy event respectively. The social practice, or in this case the literacy practice, may be only understood within a broader context ([Rouse, 2007: 505](#)). This tripartite system parallels the position Giddens’ ([1984](#)) argument on the duality of structure; this duality is echoed in the position that Fairclough and Wodak ([1997: 258; cited in Baxter, 2010: 127](#)) take with regard to language as a social practice, implying “a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it”.

The relationship between the text and broader social structure is further explained through institutional ethnography (IE), which explores textually-mediated social organisation, the social relations people participate in and the texts that co-ordinate action within what Smith (1987: 3; 1990a: 14) terms as “relations of ruling”. Relations of ruling, also referred to as ruling relations, are forms of governing that gained prominence as a form of social organisation in the Western world during the nineteenth century; these extra-local or trans-local ruling relations would include forms of “bureaucracy, the varieties of text-mediated discourse, the state, the professions and so on” (Smith, 2002: 19). Smith (1987: 3) describes these ruling relations as “a complex of organised practices”, and these ruling practices (Campbell and Gregor, 2008: 36) are also routine practices as rationally organised practices, objectified, impersonal and claiming universality and standardization (Smith, 1987: 4). Institutional ethnography (IE) does not translate into a mapping of the totality of institutional processes and practices, but rather to explore “particular corners or strands within a specific institutional complex, in ways that make visible their points of connection with other sites and courses of action” (Devault and McCoy, 2006: 17).

Once identifying texts as the social space where knowledge can be objectified and communicated (Smith, 1990b), the issue of ‘texture’ - the textual form, structure and organisation of elements within the text – needs to be addressed (Fairclough, 1995: 7). It is perhaps apt to classify language choice as an ‘order of discourse’ as well as an element of texture; it is acknowledged that choice of language is not a random occurrence and is strongly linked to topic and role relations (Fishman, 1999: 153), which has parallels with the ideational and interpersonal functions respectively. Choice of language in a text should only be analysed in context, such as the type of social relations it is activating. Embedded within networks of institutional practices and a means of representing knowledge and its communication, it may be argued that language choice in a bilingual setting is linked to *the organisation of knowledge*. Moreover, variation in language use, as well as language choice, may be perceived as connected to the *types of networks involved in the organisation of knowledge, and different types of knowledge*. Language selection is dependent on the type of ‘conceptual order’ activated in the exchange of knowledge (Smith 1990b: 212),

which would be indicative of the broader social forces that are involved in the objectification of knowledge, such as the relations of ruling:

“the practice of ruling involves the ongoing representation of the local actualities of our worlds in the standardized and general forms of knowledge that enter them into the relations of ruling. It involves the construction of the world as texts, whether on paper or in computer, and the creation of a world in texts as a site of action” ([Smith, 1987: 3](#)).

Once the text, a ‘site of action’, is perceived as a *polycentric social space* for discourses, it may be easier to conceptualise it as a social space comprising local, national and global conceptual orders.

Whilst the social practice approach has notably provided insight into ‘vernacular’ literacies (e.g. Street, [1984](#); [1993](#); [Barton and Hamilton, 1988](#); [Besnier, 1995](#)), it may also be used for the investigation of reading and writing practices in more powerful contexts. A case in point is the language situation in many Maltese organisations. In such contexts, the difference in choice of language suggests that languages may be associated with different aspects of the institution’s activities that maintain the institutional network through its own conceptual orders. As a result, the adoption of a social practice approach towards language calls for the need to understand the nature of these activities, and how they provide insight into the nature of social action in society, including language use. By focusing on the activities involving texts, the selection of language for written texts in institutional contexts may be understood as crucial to the success of the activities.

4.4 The concept of the local: its limits and further developments

The focus on ‘local literacies’ provided a new perspective on the role of reading and writing in spheres of life previously ignored in research. Whilst the shift in emphasis from ‘literacy-in-itself’ to ‘literacy-in-context’ gives researchers insight into the uses of writing within a given community, theoretical issues have been raised, such as the assumption that the ‘local’ excluded the ‘global’ by focusing mostly on the immediate context of the literacy practice, and that individual agency was independent of social structure ([Brandt](#)

[and Clinton, 2002: 338](#)). The ‘limits of the local’ highlights the need to look beyond individual agency as well as aspects of writing that may not be entirely local in nature, bringing into question the link that writing may have with contexts beyond the immediate context under observation, bringing into consideration the transcontextualising nature of the text.

The nature of local practices has been questioned, especially the issue of what elements of a local practice can be considered ‘local’ ([Brandt and Clinton, 2002](#); [Bartlett and Holland, 2002](#); [Agar, 2005](#)); in other words, how ‘bounded’ is the immediate context under observation. Whilst vernacular literacies may provide insight into the use of written language, these literacies alone do not seem to provide an explanation for the use of literacy and language use beyond the micro-level. Agar ([2005](#)) questions how much the local can be reflective of the global; he argues that whilst ethnographic research may reveal a wealth of information through local discourse, it does not provide a direct explanation for global processes. On the other hand, ‘going from the global to the local illuminates local discourse like sunlight through stained glass ([Agar, 2005: 3](#)). Applied to the use of literacy and language choice, it may be argued that macro-level influences (global) are somehow transformed when filtering down to the micro-level (local). Multiple factors could be responsible for this transformation, such as the social and cultural contexts, as well as “the limits imposed by a particular material, psychological, and social location in time and space” ([Agar, 2005: 19](#)), including human agency, which involves the adaptation of resources according to one’s needs and abilities. Taking this argument, vernacular literacies and language use may be influenced by dominant literacies and dominant languages, but this phenomenon does not explain how vernacular literacies have evolved. As a result, focusing solely on vernacular literacies may be insufficient in explaining higher-level language dynamics. Therefore the need to look beyond the local dimension and focus on higher-level literacies and languages may be necessary to understand the dynamics of written language at the micro-level, and how macro-level factors may affect language choices at the level of the ‘local’.

Taking Latour's (1993) work on modernity, Brandt and Clinton (2002: 344) argue that when investigating literacy practices, two things need to be analysed: networks and objects. Practices are increasingly interconnected via networks and objects; Latour (1993: 131) describes this interconnectedness, with special reference to the formal institutions that are part of modern life, as

“an Ariadne's thread that would allow us to pass with continuity from the local to the global, from the human to the nonhuman. It is the thread of networks of practices and instruments, of documents and translations. An organisation, a market, an institution, are not supralunar objects made of a different matter from our poor local sublunar relations (Cambrosio et al 1990)”.

In addition, Brandt and Clinton (2002) take Latour's (1993) position on the role that 'objects' play in human interaction and apply it to local practices, pointing out that “local events can have globalising tendencies and globalising effects, accomplished often through the mediation of globalising technologies” (Brandt and Clinton, 2002: 347). If such 'objects' are technologies, and by taking writing as a technology, by extension the discourses used in the social practices are also 'objects'. The spread of discourses, or even languages, can be positioned as part and parcel of globalising influences and technologies distributed via modernization, introduced in many nation-states via colonial or neo-colonial influences; as mentioned in Chapter Two, many emerging nation-states adopted the administrative practices of their past colonisers in order to gain a foothold in the dominant interstate network which took global proportions; these administrative practices, arguably a form of rationalisation, were part of the bureaucratic apparatus adopted. In the case of localised institutional practices, it may be reasoned that such routinised activities may be linked to the global superstructure via networks and objects. Discourses are also part of the continuity. However, as Agar (2005) points out, local actors may not be aware to what extent influences may be local or global.

This may also be linked to the 'spatialising' effects of literacy practices (Bartlett and Holland, 2002). In the process of social reproduction, social practices bring in the necessary 'objects' or global 'traces' into the social space that is recreated recursively in the process of social reproduction (Giddens, 1979: 5; 1984: 33). Social practices produce

the necessary social space which goes beyond the immediate, physical space; as a result, the increasingly multiple character of abstract space potentially offers indexicality ([Silverstein, 2003](#)), allowing the individual agent to ‘frame’ the desired social action by using the appropriate objects, which in this case may also include discourses. This is where the text must be reconfigured in terms of space, as an ‘object’ and part of a network referred to a knowledge exchange system which is linked to a global superstructure.

4.5 Selection of case studies, methods of data collection and analysis

For this study of literacy practices and textually-mediated social organisation, the case study appeared to be the most appropriate qualitative strategy of inquiry. Case study research is considered as a valid form of inquiry to explore a broad scope of complex issues, particularly human behaviour and social interaction ([Harrison et al., 2017: 4](#)). As a strategy, it offers research opportunities for exploratory, descriptive and explanatory purposes, which in turn influence are influenced by the type of research questions developed ([Yin, 2009: 9](#)). As an approach,

“case study research involves the study of an issue explored through one of more cases within a bounded system (i.e., a setting, a context)...[...]...in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes.” (Creswell, 2007: 73)

As a ‘bounded system’, the case is defined by time, space, and activities, and may involve the study of a person, organisation, behavioural condition, event or other social phenomenon in a real-time context ([Yin, 2012: 6](#)). As a bounded entity, the researcher may be able to intensively study phenomena in context, which is critical to understanding the case. Moreover, this approach treats the ‘bounded system’ as a ‘unit of analysis’ for more than one case for comparison.

Once the primary research questions have been developed, the next step is the selection of the unit of analysis ([Yin, 2009: 30](#)). The unit of analysis may be determined by the purpose and conditions of the study ([Harrison et al., 2017: 11](#)). One advantage of the case study approach is having either a single case or multiple cases; a pilot test case is possible, which should not be confused with a pretest ([Yin, 2009: 92](#)). The first entity, which was a small to medium enterprise (SME), provided data for the pilot study. This offered me what I call a ‘sandbox’ phase to reflect on the data collection process itself in terms of participant relations and methods of data collection. This was also an opportunity for conceptual clarification as well as research strategy, which could then be applied to the second case study. The case study was a suitable choice of strategy for unpacking the literacy practices and ruling relations were ‘unpacked’ using some key conceptual tools to help identify processes within the social organisation of knowledge.

4.5.1 Study One: selection, methods and analysis

The person participating in Study One, originally the pilot study, was a self-employed tradesman at the time of the study, specialising in the design, assembly and installation of custom-made apertures. As a business, it is classified as a small-to-medium enterprise (SME); as it employed fewer than 10 people, it would be classified a ‘micro-enterprise’ ([European Commission, 2015](#)). Access to the participant for Study One was based on family contacts within the village I lived in. This phase of data collection focused on the literacy practices of Robert (a pseudonym), who at the time of the study was in his late thirties. The selection of this person could be classified as convenience sampling ([Marshall and Rossman, 2006: 70](#)). Whilst convenience sampling in quantitative research may be regarded as non-probability sampling, and hence not possible to apply results to the general population ([Wagner, 2010: 25](#)), in qualitative research the focus is on “describing, understanding, and clarifying a human experience and therefore qualitative studies are directed at describing the aspects that make up an idiosyncratic experience” ([Dörnyei, 2007: 126](#)). In addition, whilst findings in a qualitative study may not be generalisable to the general population in probabilistic terms, findings may be transferable ([Marshall and Rossman, 2006: 42](#)).

Whilst conducting the pilot study, an approach based on the paradigm adopted by Barton and Hamilton (1988) and Ivanić et al (2009) was applied. Taking a case study by Barton and Hamilton (1988: 69) as a starting point, the study focused on a single individual, investigating a number of literacy practices; this started off looking into the ‘local’ literacy practices of the individual in the home and work domain, taking a ‘vertical slice’ of life (Barton and Hamilton, 1988: 70). Ethnographic methods were used to collect data; primary methods included a) observation of settings and events, taking field notes to document both home and work domains, b) interviews with the participant to understand how the participants makes sense of literacy (the emic perspective), as well as c) texts as material culture for analysis. The latter proved to be useful both as documents for analysis as well as for generating questions; the collection of documentation proved useful in gaining insight into the selection of language in texts.

Photography, classified as a secondary method used in ethnographic research (Marshall and Rossman, 2006: 110), was also used for data generation. It is one form of image-based research methods which is widespread in health and social science research (Clark, Prosser and Wiles, 2010: 81), and is also used in documenting literacy practices (Barton et al, 1992; Hamilton, 2000; Hodge and Jones, 2000). Using a digital camera, I photographed the texts observed while discussing them with the participant during the interviews. Photography proved to be a very valuable research tool. First, it helped me to directly document the setting and artefacts, contributing to observable evidence of texts that were part of literacy events and literacy practices. I focused solely on texts within the field under study, keeping the identity of the participant and other people who happened to be in the field anonymous. Secondly, it encouraged me to focus on the “everyday rather than the extraordinary” (Hamilton, 2000: 22); vernacular literacies tend to be “less visible and less supported” (Barton and Hamilton, 2000: 12) and hence may go unnoticed by the untrained eye. However, photographs can have their limitations (Hamilton, 2000: 18). The first limitation is the selectivity involved in generating data through visual means (Pink, 2001: 8). According to Bazin and Gray (1960: 7), this selectivity may be influenced by “the personality of the photographer ...[who]... enters into the proceedings only in his selection of the object to be photographed and by way of the purpose he has in mind.” The

issue of ‘personality’ can be linked to the ‘reflexive screens’ ([Patton, 2015: 133](#)) that may influence research. I was selective in what I photographed and thus the photographs created may have been my subjective ‘lens’ in the generation of data. A second limitation is to what extent can a photograph represent literacy practices; one can only infer so much from a photograph as “they include invisible resources, such as knowledge and feelings; they embody social purposes and values; and they are part of a constantly changing context, both spatial and temporal” ([Hamilton, 2000: 18](#)).

The initial analysis of the data involved the organisation of data into manageable form, which included the organisation of field notes from notebooks, the transcription of audio-recorded interviews followed by their translation and the categorisation of documents and photographs. In the process, I became immersed in the data. The patterns, categories and themes that emerged following an inductive analysis ([Patton, 2015: 792](#)) were reflective of the broad categories that Barton and Padmore ([1991: 62](#)), Barton and Hamilton ([1988: 152](#)) and Ivanič et al ([2009: 33 – 45](#)) observed in their own research. Once literacy practices and literacy events were identified and categorised, the text types and choice of language in the texts collected or photographed were noted. The organisation of data, its categorisation and its coding may be described as overlapping stages, as while transcribing the audio-recordings I would refer back to field notes and make note of documents and photographs for preliminary interpretation of the data. The interpretation of the data involved understanding the patterns, themes and categories and developing links to the relevant literature. Whilst it was interesting to observe how an individual manages texts in at least two different languages, it did eventually emerge that the focus on ‘local literacies’ alone was insufficient as to establish reasons for language choice in both informal and formal documentation. It was after discussing these issues with the confirmation panel it was decided that the focus should shift from home literacies to work literacies. In the process other disciplinary approaches to written language were reflected upon, and approaches such as the textography ([Swales, 1998](#)), institutional ethnography (e.g Smith, 2006) and CDA became potential options. Following the analysis of the data for Study Two, the data from Study One was revised and subjected to further analysis using the conceptualisations introduced in Study Two.

4.5.2 Study Two: selection, methods and analysis

Following this case study, the focus shifted to the use of written language at the workplace. My tutor suggested looking into a government authority and a private institution. Government authorities are institutions regulated by the government of the nation-state; knowing that Maltese authorities were more likely to abide by the language policy outlined in the constitution, it appeared to be the right 'ecology' to investigate. Locating such an entity for the study proved to be somewhat challenging in comparison to Study One. I could have considered the state vocational college I worked at, for I was well acquainted with its organisational practices and texts. As a rule, organisational texts for administrative and managerial purposes were predominantly written and published in the English language, yet staff meetings and other organisational activities involving spoken interaction were chiefly in Maltese, or a mix of both languages. However, the reason why I did not further consider this option was that I felt I needed to distance myself from institutions that may be actively involved in implementation of language policies.

Initially, I managed to locate a consultancy unit for government departments through a professional contact. However, for reasons unknown to me, research at this entity was halted in the very early stages, and participants were not keen to continue with the data gathering stage. Perhaps researching social practices involving organisational texts may have been perceived as an obstruction to the work conducted by employees, or perhaps perceived as looking into the private data of the entity, despite reassurances that such data was not necessary. It is reasonable to believe that any data regarding the operations of the institution may have been perceived as a security issue. Yet, from the beginning it was evident that there was a bifurcation between use of language for spoken and written purposes; English was predominantly, if not exclusively, the language of texts for the organisation, such as reports and PowerPoint presentation visual aids. Maltese was more likely to be the language of spoken interaction.

A second government entity was located; this was an agency involved in social welfare services responsible for prevention and intervention services. The Foundation for Welfare Services (FSWS), an organisation which falls under the Ministry for Social Welfare,

receives requests for research purposes. The website managed by the organisation provides guidelines for research requests from students and non-students alike, offering standardized forms to be filled in for processing and evaluation; these forms were available in the English language ([FWSW, 2019m](#)). I applied through the official channels, providing an overview of my doctoral research in addition to consent forms and information sheets. Part of the agreement involved giving the foundation a copy of my dissertation for their own library.

My request was circulated amongst the organisation, and several employees volunteered to participate in the study; in retrospect it is important to consider that participants are not selected, but chose to be selected ([Davies, 2008:89](#)). The participants from this agency, who are described in Chapter 6, may be described as front-line staff who deal directly with the public and also handle administrative practices; they are what Lipsky ([2010](#)) calls ‘street-level bureaucrats’. Taking terminology used by Fairclough ([1995: 38 – 39](#)), these ‘street-level bureaucrats’ are ‘subjects’ of “a social institution and who have institutional roles and identities acquired in a defined acquisition period and maintained as long-term attributes” (ibid.). The social institution they worked for was “an apparatus of verbal interaction, or an order of discourse” (ibid.), and they regularly interacted with ‘clients’ or individuals who take part in some institutional interactions. The bifurcation of language was evident in their daily work routines. Overall, Maltese was typically used with the public, both as a spoken medium and written medium, especially for informational texts, whilst English was the main language of organisational texts.

For the second case study, data collection also involved observation, interviews and the collection of texts, with the addition of participant diaries for employees who accepted to participate in the study. Participant diaries have been used successfully in studies of multilingual work places ([Bhatt and Martin-Jones, 1995](#); [Jones, Martin-Jones and Bhatt, 2000](#)) and this was extended to this study as well; moreover, it allowed participants control over what they wanted to document in terms of typical everyday work practices and the languages normally used for oral and written purposes, seeking to look into the oral/written dimension that is reportedly common in many work practices. The participant diary also

was the focus of participant interviews, bringing in not only aspects of the diary itself as a data gathering tool but also other aspects of language use. It is also important to note that unlike in the case of the pilot study, the interviews contributed to a ‘horizontal slice’ ([Barton and Hamilton, 1988: 70](#)), looking into one or several concept across different participants. As with Study One, the data collected was organised; field notes were revisited, audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and translated, the participant diaries were analysed and collected documents were noted. Texts available to the public through the agency’s website were also collected, and then organised and classified by purpose, intended audience and language. In the process, concepts from Institutional Ethnography, social theory and Critical Discourse Analysis were introduced; taking the same concepts, Study One was revisited to review the original analysis.

4.6 Researcher issues: positionality, issues and challenges

As the researcher, I needed to consider myself as the primary instrument. A traditional approach towards data collection, or in this case arguably data generation, would have positioned me as ‘neutral’ in my approach; however, following the critical turn in the social sciences and humanities, scholars now question the traditional assumptions of neutrality ([Marshall and Rossman, 2006: 4](#)). For the sake of methodological transparency, I needed to take a critical approach towards my positionality as a bilingual researcher and the responsibilities in connection with the overall research process, the researcher-participant relationships, ethical issues as well as such as issues of interpretation, transcription and translation (e.g. [Shklarov, 2007](#); [Lee, 2017](#); [Halai, 2007](#)).

4.6.1 Becoming a researcher, researcher identity and positionality

The main challenge I experienced as a researcher was the qualitative turn. It was the first time I embarked on a study of this scale using qualitative methods, having previously focused on quantitative sociolinguistics in undergraduate and post-graduate level work. Whilst I was experienced in handling telephone and face-to-face interviews for

quantitative analysis, ethnographic fieldwork has its own particular scientific tradition that “requires serious reflection as much as practical preparation and skill” ([Blommaert and Jie, 2010: 2](#)). The coursework completed as part of the PhD programme gave me some insight into the theoretical underpinnings and methods for quantitative research, however, these could be described as comparatively short, contained tasks when compared to the present study. The constant evaluation of the whole research process, the contextual nature of data, researcher positionality, the researcher-participant relationships and reflexivity were core aspects of the research journey.

The need for reflexivity was a constant in all stages in the research process. The first issue was my researcher identity and positionality. The researcher is “a central figure who influences the collection, selection, and interpretation of data” ([Finlay, 2002: 531](#)). This implies that all researchers are connected to the object of their research ([Davies, 2008: 3](#)), and as this connectivity may influence the outcome of the research process, the nature of this connectivity should be questioned. This brings about the need for reflexivity, which is the ability to reflect on one’s own position in the research process and how this may influence the research findings ([Starfield, 2010: 54](#)). This recalls what was discussed in Chapter 3, namely that synoptic knowledge is produced through the transformation of subjective experiences, and because this transformation is done through the researcher’s lens, this critical questioning is necessary. Reflexivity offers the researcher the opportunity to engage in “an explicit, self-aware meta-analysis of the research process” ([Finlay, 2002: 531](#)), ensuring the integrity and trustworthiness of research that is qualitative in nature.

In critically evaluating my position as a researcher, I acknowledged that I was a socially located person bringing my biography and subjectivities to the research process ([Cameron et al, 1992: 5](#)). As a cross-language study, it perhaps had greater significance as a bilingual researcher. Taking the argument by Li Wei ([2000b](#)) that the bilingual researcher’s identity needs to be recognised as part of the research process, I unpacked my own identity as a bilingual researcher starting with my “language biography” ([Lee, 2017: 54](#)). As a Maltese-American, I was born in the United States and spent my early childhood in California, emigrating to Malta when I was nearly eight years old. I attended Maltese state

schools and experienced the bilingual educational system where both official languages are frequently used in classroom teaching [e.g. [Camilleri, 1995](#); [Farrugia, 2017](#)]. I sat school examinations assessing competence in Maltese language and literature for admittance to post-secondary and tertiary educational institutions; at the time, the translation of texts from English into Maltese was assessed. In addition, Maltese was (and still is) the main language used in the community I lived in and as a community member I became familiar with many social, religious and political norms typical to Maltese culture. Being immersed in the ‘target culture’, I was arguably both “a cultural insider and outsider” ([Lee, 2017](#)). Whilst I may be positioned as a ‘outsider’ in view of the constraints of ethical procedures and processes underpinning my researcher role, I could also be considered an ‘insider’ as a person who had extensive involvement in the language society being investigated.

Being an ‘insider’ may have its advantages, especially for concepts and ideas typical to the culture under study. Shklarov ([2007: 535](#)) argues that

“concepts and ideas related to the culture under study can take months to understand for an English-speaking, monolingual person, whereas for a researcher who begins the study as a member of this culture, these concepts might be a natural part of his or her identity”.

As an ‘insider’, I was keenly aware that language use in Maltese society can be a highly emotional topic, eliciting very intense feelings about the use of the Maltese and English languages at grassroots level. There was the possibility that participants may not be completely comfortable talking about language, especially if language is strongly associated with nationalism and what should identify one as a Maltese citizen. From previous research I conducted on language use and language attitudes ([Bagley, 2001](#)), I was conscious of how respondents could potentially present themselves vis-à-vis questions on language. This could result in replies being compromised, such as having misgivings or guilt in connection with the use of English at the expense of Maltese.³

³ Although not related to the present study, it would be useful to point out the plight of a young Maltese woman, Emma Muscat, who participated in an Italian singing contest during 2018. It is officially

Whilst this closeness as an ‘insider’ may have offered me insight into how language is used, it was rather challenging for me to see everyday language practices from a more critical standpoint. Early in the research process I realised I needed to be an ‘outsider’ to balance my ‘insider’ status. I had taken the use of Maltese and English in written texts for granted, whether as monolingual or bilingual texts, and oblivious of parallel and complementary bilingualism in texts ([Sebba, 2012: 14 – 15](#)); it was only during a formal panel with my tutor and another member of the department that I realised that I had taken language choice in texts for granted. I understand that this was part of the linguistic landscape that most inhabitants on the Maltese islands are used to seeing on a daily basis, which could lead to a situation whereby such choices are subjected to normalization and hence unquestioned. This could be described as a blind spot that I needed to acknowledge and critically evaluate. This was an “intellectual puzzle” which involved researching the familiar, challenging my own presuppositions of language use in texts. Although there may have been more ‘reflexive screens’ such as gender, age, religion, socio-economic class, politics and power relations, it is arguable that my main ‘reflexive screen’ was most possibly language and linguistic culture.

Researcher positionality is also linked to the researcher-participant relationships that were key to the research process. Throughout the research process, my main aim was not ‘to give voice’ to the participants in the study *per se*, but rather to understand their literacy practices and the wider impact they had within broader social relations in general and the interconnectivity of textually-mediated social organisation. Prior to entering the field, I paid attention to the ethical considerations that a qualitative research project of this nature would entail. As Punch ([1994: 89](#)) points out, “most concern revolves around issues of harm, consent, deception, privacy, and confidentiality of data”. It may be fair to say that the primary concerns regarding this study were consent, deception, privacy, and confidentiality. In obtaining consent, it would be necessary to share the research objectives of the study, as outlined in the information sheet given to participants

documented that she received negative feedback from the Maltese public when she codeswitched during interviews. Using any other language than Maltese, or lack of proficiency in the language, may brand a person as unpatriotic or not worthy of being respected as a Maltese (see Bibliography: LovinMalta, 2018a; LovinMalta, 2018b).

([Appendix, Section A](#)). My research request may have been perceived as unusual, focusing on routinised and scheduled literacy practices in addition to types of the literacy involved. For example, scratch notes or forms may not have been perceived as particularly useful in researching language choice.

Participant privacy was certainly a major issue. This included issues of data protection in terms of the participants themselves, the clients they worked with and the resources they handled. There is a saying in the Maltese language making reference to the fact that anybody in Malta can be traced: *Malta żgħira u n-nies magħrufa* [literal trans. Malta is small and people are known]. Thus, I felt ethically bound to consider what could be researched, the limitations I would have as a non-member of the organisation as well as decisions on what could be presented for analysis in this study without compromising people's privacy or professional commitments. I also ensured that photographs used for this study could not be linked to any identifiable individual or any of their clients; in my opinion this was especially important in the case of participants working for the government agency discussed in Chapter 6. I also felt that being able to handle the data without the need for a third party was an advantage as it eliminated the unnecessary exposure of data to third parties, which is discussed in the section below. The second major concern was the degree to which my presence may have been intrusive. The participants were members of goal-oriented organisations, and hence any time spent at the workplace interviewing participants and observing settings and practices could have interrupted schedules and routines. My presence may have been perceived as intrusive while participants were working 'in [their] fields', and one personal concern I had was that my presence could be interpreted as assessing them rather than documenting literacy practices and language use. The research process involved sharing the reorganised field notes and transcriptions which I worked on with participants for feedback. For Study One, the photos taken proved to be the most meaningful data to review, and the field notes and transcriptions were given a cursory glance. For Study Two, anything that was not clear, questionable or perhaps not very meaningful in the re-organised field notes was not included in the final study.

4.6.2 The bilingual researcher as interpreter, transcriber and translator

Besides taking into consideration the methodological issues typically encountered in studies of a qualitative nature, I also needed to reconsider my role as a bilingual researcher. According to Shklarov ([2007: 530](#)), being a bilingual researcher means taking up a double role, functioning as both interpreter and translator, and this may be seen as having some influence on the quality of the data collected as well as its analyses. Shklarov ([2007: 530](#)) argues that the impact of language on the research process is “underestimated and underanalysed” and may be reduced to a logistical challenge. However, being a bilingual researcher is more than a technical issue in qualitative and quantitative studies, stressing that it should be regarded as “a significant variable in the research process that can influence its content, outcomes, and ethical adequacy” (*ibid.*). Hence, this was a major factor that could affect all stages of the research process.

As a bilingual researcher I was able to communicate with participants in the languages being researched. It eliminated the need for a third-party interpreter, allowing me to manage the data collection process, asking for clarification and further explanations on the spot. The preferred language of interaction was Maltese, but this did not mean interactions were exclusively in that language. At times English was used, but not as extensively as Maltese. In addition, it also meant adapting to the participant’s preferred language or language style. This may be explained by Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), a broad framework that is “aimed at predicting and explaining many of the adjustments individuals make to create, maintain, or decrease social distance in interaction” ([Giles and Ogay, 2007: 293](#)). Accommodating to my participants’ choice of language was an important step in the data collection process in connection with researcher effect. Whilst aiming at using the language that participants were comfortable with, it potentially decreased the social distance that may have been detrimental to the quality of the data collected. As a researcher looking from the ‘outside’, it was important to participate in the repertoire of the participants’ worlds as an ‘insider’, which at times felt like moving in and out of two different worlds.

There were occasions during the interviews in which both languages were used in the same stretch of discourse. The use of both languages in discourse is arguably very common amongst speakers of Maltese; I would also describe myself as engaging in the same practice in conversation. Moreover, the use of English may have been especially important when referring to particular organisational texts, revealing how members working within the organisation may refer to them in actual in their practices. Whether this can be referred to as instances of codeswitching or translanguaging is a matter of theoretical stance. The term ‘codeswitching’ is “a construct which linguists have developed to help them describe their data” ([Gardner-Chloros, 2009: 10](#)), and therefore its meaning can be dependent on the theoretical perspective the researcher adopts. The reference to ‘switching’ between languages has its origins in the early psycholinguistic studies of bilingualism, based on the assumption that alternating between two languages was like flicking an electric switch (*ibid.*, pg. 11). Theoretical models developed after the 1950s and 1960s became progressively more complex, introducing terms like ‘codemixing’ and borrowing, but the conceptual approach for the use of more than one language in a stretch of discourse was perceived as alternating between fixed, bounded entities recognised as different languages. As Mazzaferro ([2018: 2](#)) notes, “languages are not fixed or stable entities, but are continuously shaped and (re) constructed”. This conceptual practice of alternating between languages is challenged, and the term ‘translanguaging’ is now used as an alternative paradigm. Once a term used to refer to a particular pedagogical language practice ([Williams, 1994; cited in Mazzaferro, 2018](#)), translanguaging

“is not simply a process that goes between languages (cf. code switching, crossing), but beyond languages, i.e., transcending. So it challenges the conventional understanding of language boundaries between the culturally and politically labelled languages...[...]... With its emphasis on meaning making and knowledge construction, it also challenges the boundaries between language and other cognitive systems as separately encapsulated systems or modules (cf. the Modularity of Mind hypothesis; e. g., Fodor 1983)” ([Li Wei, 2016: 3 – 4](#)).

The interview is a form of social interaction that is a means of “meaning making and knowledge construction” and going ‘between’ and ‘beyond’ languages became an essential part of that process. It fits in with Lefebvre’s ([1991: 86 - 91](#)) proposition regarding the

creation of produced, i.e social, space and the intertwining of social space through language. As a result, the term ‘translanguaging’ is arguably the preferred term when referring to the use of ‘culturally and politically labelled languages’ in the same stretch of discourse.

4.6.3 Preparing data for analysis: transcription and translation of bilingual data

Prior to analysis, the interview data needed to be transcribed and translated. Transcription is “both an inevitable and problematic step in the qualitative (and quantitative) analysis of data consisting of spoken discourse” ([Kowal and O’Connell, 2014: 64](#)). As a “selective process reflecting theoretical goals and definitions” ([Ochs, 1979: 44](#)), it is important that the researcher understands the choices made vis-à-vis the need to transcribe, what to transcribe and its final representation in a written text ([Lapadat and Lindsay, 1999: 67](#)). Such selectivity for the ‘basic transcript’ is influenced by the research goals and state of the field ([Ochs, 1979: 45](#)). The use of conventions for transcription depends on what needs to be analysed; in this case I was looking for a transcript style that would allow manageability for the transcriber and readability, learnability and interpretability for the persons using the transcript ([Bruce, 1992: 145](#)). Moreover, the bilingual data needed to be translated for research to be presented in the English language.

The process of transcription involved transforming spoken data into what has been referred to as *research texts* ([Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; cited in Halai, 2007: 347](#)) or *transmuted texts* ([Halai, 2007: 347](#)). Prior to embarking on the data collection, I envisaged how I wanted the final research texts. As I was using the spoken data to understand literacy practices and texts and not for linguistic analysis, I opted for an orthographic transcription. The presentation of bilingual interview data was planned with an accompanying translation, and that involved the need to look into the spatial organisation of the data for the page layout, taking into consideration top-bottom and left-right biases ([Ochs, 1979: 45](#)). Research texts presented as data extracts in Heller ([1982](#)), Camilleri ([1995](#)), Jones ([1999](#)) and Hodge and Jones ([2000](#)) provided the idea for bilingual data; these researchers had transcribed bilingual interview data in orthographic style which was then provided

with a translation into English. Heller (1982), Camilleri (1995), Jones (1999) and Hodge and Jones (2000) used what could be described as a ‘parallel column’ style (Welsh Language Commissioner, 2014). The transcription of the original languages used during the interviews was presented in the left-hand column with the English language translation on the right-hand style. With both languages written in the Latin script and read from left to right, I felt that this would enhance the readability of the transcriptions for an audience who may feel the need to compare the original interview data with the English language version and vice-versa. I also took into consideration the need for a suitable font for the representation of both languages. Using Times New Roman for both languages, I chose to use regular font for both languages, with the exception of bold font to highlight the use of English words in the original interviews.

Whilst transcribing the original bilingual data, I reviewed which words would be considered Maltese, including loanwords, and which words were clearly not Maltese. My primary source was the two-volume Maltese-English dictionary by Aquilina (1987). As a rule of thumb, words which were entries in the dictionary were considered Maltese words; two such examples are the Maltese words for ‘telephone’ and ‘computer’, nowadays considered as part of the Maltese lexicon and spelled as ‘telefown’ and ‘kompjuter’ respectively. However, a word like ‘holiday’, which is frequently used in everyday conversation, is not considered part of the Maltese lexicon; its translation would be ‘btala’ or ‘vakanza’. Words which were taken as English words included the use of cardinal numbers, words like ‘paid’ and phrases such as ‘in the meantime’. Although not the focus of this study, it was interesting to note language choice when referring to numbers in both case studies; when Maltese was used to refer to quantities, I decided to use underline style to highlight this distinctive use.

After taking these things into consideration, I worked on the transcription of the audio files. First, I manually transcribed the spoken data, which was recorded on digital voice recorders. Prior to actual transcription, I listened to the audio files several times to acquaint myself with the quality of the recording, seeking out any stretches of the interview that may have been inaudible due to background noise or technical issues. The advantage that

I enjoyed here was that I was the person who conducted the original interviews, and thus ‘distanced data’ was not an issue ([Tilley and Powick, 2002](#)). Once I was familiar with the spoken text, I commenced with the production of the *interim texts* ([Clandinin and Connelly, 2000: 133; cited in Halai, 2007: 347](#)), using longhand for the first draft. Once this phase was ready, I listened to the audio-files again to check my first draft; after corrections, I typed out the interviews on Word, using Maltese fonts as needed. As my research focus was the experience of the participants in connection with texts, I decided to produce a transcript that focused on the content, removing any unnecessary pauses and overlaps. I relistened to the audio-files whilst going over the typed transcriptions to ensure that they were a fair representation of the spoken texts. I used regular font for the interviews, using bold font for English words.

Translation was another factor to consider. I was faced with what Shklarov ([2007](#)) calls *role dualism*, which is basically two conflicting perceptions of the bilingual researcher: “the neutral role of a faithful translator versus the active role of a creative researcher” (pg. 532). Whilst I am not a professional translator, I was perhaps better positioned to translate the data I personally collected, contextualising the “meaning making and the knowledge construction” by referring to collected texts and field notes that I had taken. In addition, I could take decisions on the nuances of meaning because of my direct involvement in the data collected. This is probably what Shklarov ([2007: 532](#)) refers to as the “creative researcher”, whereby I aimed for trustworthiness and integrity for an audience who may not be able to participate in the meaning of the original transcriptions. I translated the research texts into a monolingual English version for a non-Maltese speaking audience as a parallel text (See [Appendix, Section B](#)). As with the original transcription, I chose to use regular Times New Roman for the English language version, using bold font for English words in the original transcription.

4.7 What this study does not attempt to cover

This study does not aim to offer to provide a survey of monolingual or bilingual texts used in organisations. Whilst a quantitative analysis of organisational texts may provide information for survey-based research in terms of numbers, this study aims to focus on what could possibly be the reason why one language may be preferred for an institutional text in the absence of an explicit language scheme. It aims to look at texts and how they structure relationships among individuals involved in objectified relations, how they “objectify knowledge, organisation and decision processes, distinguishing what individuals do for themselves from what they do organisationally or discursively, thereby consulting properties of formal organisation or of discourse that cannot be attributed to individuals” ([Smith 1990b: 212ff](#)). Moreover, whilst it does not offer any specific advice for language choice in texts, it may offer insight into what could be behind the dynamics of language choice in the absence of published language schemes.

4.8 Conclusion

To conclude, whilst the current research project was guided by its research questions, it was also a journey which also demanded constant reflection and reflexivity at all stages. As will be explained in Chapter 5, what started off with a New Literacy Studies approach documenting local literacies evolved into an investigation into organisational literacy practices and organisational texts which took into consideration heuristics from other disciplines, particularly institutional ethnography.

Chapter FIVE: Texts, language and a small-to-medium enterprise (SME)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on a selection of literacy practices of a small-to-medium enterprise in a small village in the southeast of Malta. The aim of Study One was to investigate how the use of Maltese and English emerged in the literacy practices of an individual, looking for patterns that could help explain the linguistic ‘higher-order regularities’ that appear to be present in Maltese society. This involved the documentation of work-related literacy practices in context and the literacies involved in the various texts used. Language choice was analysed by taking into consideration the representation of knowledge in the texts, and how these texts were positioned in the networks they sustained amongst social actors.

During the data collection phase, the steps adopted by Barton and Hamilton (1988) were applied in conducting research about Robert’s literacy practices. These were 1) identification of domain, 2) observation of the visual environment, 3) identification and documentation of literacy events, 4) identification and analysis of texts and 5) interviewing Robert about his practices. Initially, the home and work domains were investigated, however, given that Robert spent a considerable number of hours at work, the focus shifted to this domain. A selection of social practices was documented, and textual artefacts found in the workplace were noted. This involved three interviews at the workshop. The first interview was held to get accustomed to the work environment, giving me the opportunity to take photographs of the premises, whilst the other two interviews were recorded and transcribed, first into the original language, which was mainly Maltese, and later translated into English (See Appendix B). The photographs were later reorganized and thematized according to the particular literacy practices they provided information about, some of which are included in this chapter.

This micro-enterprise was dependent on routine practices for predictable outcomes, with literacy and numeracy as integral to such routinisation. The themes here were similar to those identified by Barton and Hamilton (1988), a mixture of vernacular and dominant literacies that were not easy to classify, given that there was significant overlap between possible categories: learning and sense-making, organizing work life, communication with the public at large and working with clients. Also, taking concepts from institutional ethnography, it was evident that there are two ‘sites’ of analysis in this single environment (see [Campbell and Gregor, 2008: 29](#)), which are the local and immediate work environment and the extra-local environment, a social structure that was not immediately visible, yet key to the operations of the business.

In analysing the data, I looked for patterns in the interviews and notes taken following observation, looking into patterns of use and references made to written language. In addition to this, a selection of texts (e.g. invoices) published by larger formal organisations, was taken into account in order to look at the types of literacies and languages Robert encounters. Applying concepts from institutional ethnography, the texts were also analysed in terms of objectified relations and the ruling relations, looking at broader social and historical contexts of the literacies that he participated in, including spatiality.

5.2 Profile and background

Robert was born in Birżebbuġa, a seaside village in the South Eastern region, to into a working-class family; his parents were born and raised in the same village. Robert’s grandparents were from villages in the Harbour Region, an area which was heavily bombed during World War II, and settled in Birżebbuġa when they married in 1946. The population remained more or less stable for a number of years until it reached 10,525 in 2011 ([Birżebbuġa Local Council, 2016](#)). Birżebbuġa sees an increase in numbers during the summer season, as people from other villages spend the summer holidays in summer residences.

As for language, Birżebbuġa may be described as a village where Maltese is the main language of its native residents. Whilst there is no known published data for language use in this particular village, the 2005 National Census reports that around 94% of residents from the South East region of Malta use this language as the main spoken medium of communication in the home (NSO, 2007: xlii); this may be extended to language use in the community. Robert is also a speaker of Maltese. Acquired as a native language, Maltese was the dominant, if not exclusive language used in the home when he was a child, and the main language used with neighbours and friends, with the exception of ex-patriates living or passing through the area. He understands English to a limited degree; he feels that holding a conversation in English is challenging and seeks to rely on a third party to help him with translations, especially for work purposes. He does not speak Italian, however he does watch Italian TV stations. Whilst he would not be considered highly literate by formal educational standards, in many ways he leads a textually-rich life, which is clearly evident when investigating his work practices.

Robert's father, a welder by trade and formerly a government employee, opened his own business producing metal and aluminium fixtures when Robert was a child; this was later passed on to Robert. His mother was a homemaker. Both parents had attended the local schools until the age of 14, the school leaving age from 1946 until 1971. Robert attended school until the age of 15, attending a mainstream secondary school for boys until the age of 14, and then a trade school until the age of 15. As a boy he considered school uninteresting, and he was not keen on book reading as a hobby or otherwise.

5.3 The work domain

At the time of the study, Robert was a self-employed tradesman, specialising in aluminium fenestration. Most of the day is spent at work either in the workshop cutting and assembling doors and windows or installing them on site. A look at the Yellow Pages for the year 2013, a business telephone directory published in the English language, reveals that there were around 170 businesses listed under the heading 'Aluminium Apertures and Fixtures', and Robert's enterprise, Pace Aluminium Works, is listed (Figure 5.1). This

trade is dependent on the construction industry, which is typically a male-dominated work sphere.



Figure 5. 1 Business as listed in Yellow Pages (2013), in English

Robert took over the business after his father retired, who had initially started off as a self-employed tradesman working on steel and metal works in the late 1970s, later switching to aluminium when that became popular. Over his career as a skilled tradesman, he has worked with his father, on his own and also for larger companies specialising in aluminium works; while working on his own, he hired extra help when demand was high and when demand slowed down, he took up employment with larger companies. At one time he took over a small grocery shop in a suburb of Birżebbuġa, which he managed for a few years together with his former wife. However, handling two enterprises in parallel proved to be challenging, and sold off the grocery shop to focus on his main trade.

5.3.1 The premises: workshop and office

Robert was the owner of the workshop he operated, 300 metres away from the parish church, which is considered the heart of the village. The workshop was located on a main

road, one of several that connect Birżebbuġa to other town and villages. The workshop itself was not visible from the main road, but actually found behind a small complex of apartments and accessible through a drive-in under the building, leading to a small compound of garages under the aforementioned apartments. For a person driving along the road, this rather inconspicuous entrance to the drive-in was marked by a medium sized professionally-made business sign, with the name of the business in clear white letters against a red background (see Figure 5.2). The left-side border of this sign had an arrowhead pointing to the left, indicating that the workshop was accessible through the drive-in underneath the block of apartments. At the time of the study, there were two other signs near this sign. One advertised welding services on an A4-sized piece of paper, covered in plastic as protection against the elements; this was in English. The other one was a piece of grey cardboard, with a handwritten message written in black marker, informing the reader that garbage bags were not to be left in the drive-in for collection and may be subject to a citation. This was drafted in Maltese.

At the end of the tunnel, one could find a courtyard with garages all around the perimeter, with heavy-duty iron doors; some were secured with padlocks. The workshop was easily identifiable by a medium sized, professionally-made rectangular sign, with the name of the business and contact numbers. When at work, Robert would normally have his truck parked outside, a blue vehicle with the name of the business and contact details in large white letters (Figure 5.3). The vehicle is set up to handle and transport factory-cut aluminium profiles and other material, such as sheets of cut glass. At the entrance of the workshop, there was a letter box, and a handmade sign with a ‘Garage – No Parking’ warning.

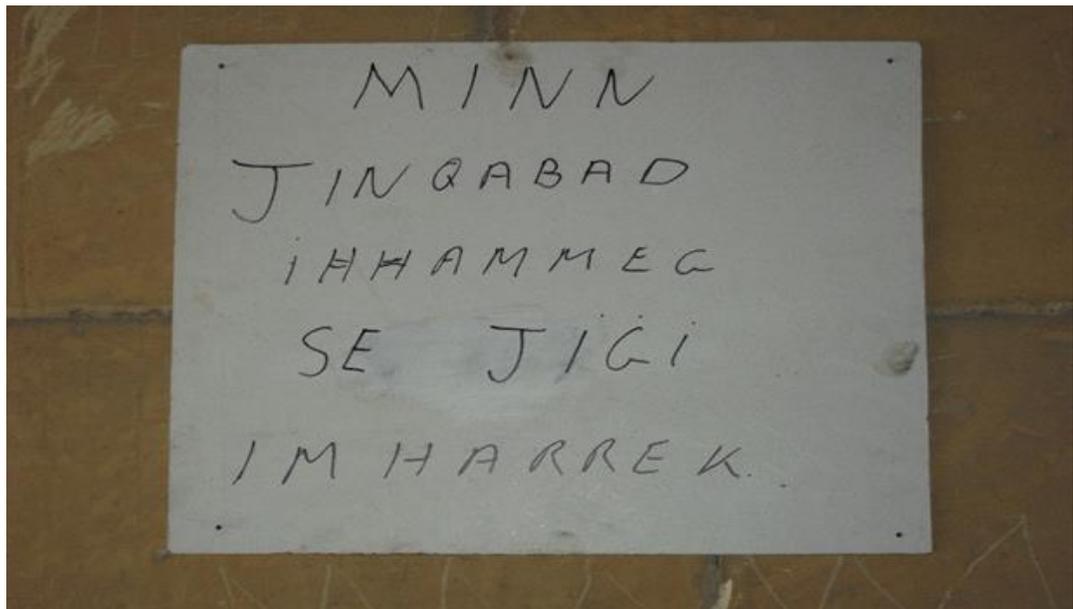


Figure 5. 2 Signage at entrance to garage complex



Figure 5. 3 Vehicle with advertising, in English

Upon entering the workshop, one could immediately notice that it is split into two sections, a brick and limestone wall dividing the workshop along its length. The section to the left was used for storage of raw material, equipment and other miscellaneous items related to the trade. Shelving was present, and the walls were utilised for the storage of items, such as tools, which also included cutting equipment. The section to the right was the main area in which much of the activity occurs; the floor was cleared, with the exception of a large worktable. Again, this was a highly organized area. The walls were used to store tools. Power points dotted the walls and keys were hung on wooden keyboards nailed to the limestone walls. Whilst walking to the large worktable, to the left there was a small room-like space which was home to tools and accessories which seem to be used frequently, as they were positioned right next to the work table. This area had top-to-bottom stainless-steel shelving; each shelf held a number of plastic and cardboard boxes which were neatly positioned next to each other, each reserved for a particular part or accessory. When labelled, they were in handwriting using a black permanent marker, either directly on the box or on masking tape used as a writeable surface.

At the back of the workshop was a small space which had been designed specifically as an area in which administration, rather than manual work, takes place. Robert created his own office after taking over from his father; in one interview he stated that he needed to change things to his liking if he were to work in this workshop. He closed off the office area by using a beige-coloured aluminium frame with thick transparent glass, approximately three feet by six feet of space dedicated to administrative work, with an aluminium and glass door completing the office area (Figure 5.4). It was in stark contrast to the rest of the workshop. Unlike the rest of the workplace, which had whitewashed walls and smooth, concrete flooring, the office had beige-coloured floor tiles, and walls were partly tiled with grey tiles.

Standing in the doorway, one could see a beige-coloured desk with a glass top, a swivel chair and a foot stool in beige imitation leather. On the desk, a number of items clearly associated with literacy was noted; as Brandt and Clinton (2002: 344) observe, the investigation of literacy practices needs to include ‘objects’, i.e. technologies, that enable literacy (see Table 5.1).

- **A fax machine primarily used to receive data from suppliers and prospective clients**
- **A cordless telephone set**
- **Diaries for taking estimates and other notes**
- **Writing material, such as pens, pencils and markers**
- **Desk calculator for tasks involving numeracy, such as quotations and basic accounting**
- **Stationery trays holding documents, a rubber stamp, a stapler, a self-retracting tape measure, his own business cards, diaries, correspondence, and a business card holder with business cards**

Table 5. 1 Literacy artefacts (objects) in workplace office



Figure 5. 4 Office set up in workshop

At the time the photographs were taken, there were two quotations for prospective clients, described in greater detail in Section 5.7. In addition, there was a price-list, which was specially commissioned for his prime client, a building contractor. This facilitated orders by using a fixed pricing system. The language used to list items was English, with pricing dependent on size of item and any additional features needed, such as double-glazed glass or frosted glass. This was presented in tabular form for easy referencing; it was also noted that some columns were filled in with handwritten amounts in euro.

At above eye-level was a shelf crammed with A4 Arch Lever files, and some other items, such as an old ledger used by his father. The files were labelled on the side, in handwriting, so that at a glance contents could be identified: utility bills, mobile phone bills, cash sales and files for each supplier Robert had dealings with, keeping invoices organized

accordingly, in addition to the latest edition of the Yellow Pages (Figure 5.4). Also noted was a document file with texts related to work, such as mathematical formulae needed for the measurement and cutting of material, and pricelists, both typed and handwritten (see Figure 5.5).

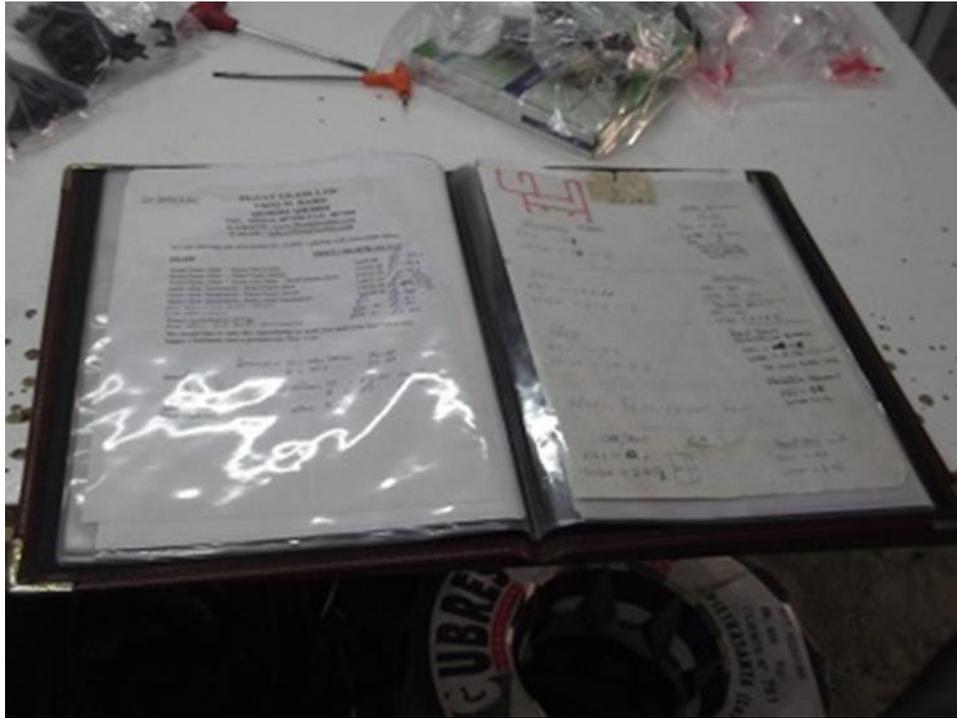


Figure 5. 5 Document file with various reference documents related to the trade

The wall was also used as a surface for an assortment of business cards. On the wall and wooden board for keys, he kept such information for easy reference, such as contact details of suppliers and other service providers, such as cherry pickers and cranes; these were in the form of handwritten notes and professionally printed business cards. It was noted that when professionally printed, the language used was typically English. One card, advertising tile laying, was a mix of Maltese and English, as shown in Figure 5.6.



Figure 5. 6 Business cards of service and goods providers

In the area beneath the shelf, there was a calendar printed by a local organisation, the South East Pigeon Club, in which he is featured as a sponsor. There were framed photographs of family members. One framed document of which Robert was extremely proud of was a Certificate of Competence issued by the Maltese Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) (Figure 5.7). Robert had learnt his trade through informal learning and apprenticeship with his father and as an employee with larger companies; it was only years later that he was able to acquire formal certification of his skills. In this office and interspaced along the walls in the workshop, there were pictures of the facades of the proposed construction projects, the purpose of which was to give potential clients an idea of what the proposed building should look like once finished. There were also pictures of completed construction projects completed by Pace Aluminium Works, the name Robert took on once he took over from his father; these served as a portfolio of past work.



Figure 5. 7 ETC Certificate of competence in the aluminium trade

5.4 Learning and sense-making: learning the trade and certification

Robert did not learn the trade through a formal apprenticeship programme. There is no known certified course for individuals interested in taking up the trade; it is mainly through working on the job that individuals learn the trade. Robert's gradual introduction to the trade is indicative of what Lave and Wenger (1991) refer to as *legitimate peripheral participation*. Hanging around his father's workshop at a young age, he started to learn about the trade informally by helping his father with various easy tasks; this included minor

tasks such as rolling up yards of rubber tubing used in fenestration ([Appendix B, Interview Two, 31:20](#)). After a while, he was taught how to assemble pre-cut aluminium profiles and inserting glass panes; as an incentive, his father offered him five Maltese lira⁴, the national currency at the time, for every window he completed. After mastering that skill, he was taught how to cut the aluminium profiles according to required measurements to make frames for doors and windows.

Learning the trade involved numeracy particular to the trade. Besides the physical aspect of the trade, such as the cutting and assembly of apertures, his father taught him the numeracy necessary for the trade to measure aluminium profiles for cutting. To facilitate this, he drew a measuring tape on the wall just above the cutting machine. Robert initially learnt how to measure using imperial units, such as inches and yards. This was probably because self-retracting measuring tapes were only available in imperial units at the time. However, this may be also due to the fact that his father was better acquainted with the imperial system which he had learnt as a schoolboy, a time when Malta was a British colony. Later, Robert learnt how to convert measurements in imperial unit to metric, by simply using measure tapes which nowadays use both numerical systems. Nowadays, all measurements are in metric units. He still used the imperial system when taking initial sketches for quotations, and then later converted measurements to metric.

After working with his father for several years, he furthered his learning and knowledge of the trade by working for other aluminium firms; these firms were much larger and had many employees. He learnt different techniques for the cutting of aluminium profiles, mastering formulae known to people in the trade, and expanding upon what he had learnt from his father. He acknowledged that working for other firms helped him to develop his knowledge of the trade, and also work more efficiently and effectively, especially with the growing competition. For example, in setting up a door, his father would first take measurements for the actual frame and after cutting the aluminium profiles and setting them up, he would take measurements for the glass needed. Robert learnt to do things

⁴ One Maltese Lira was equivalent to approximately 2.3329 euro, five Maltese Lira was set at 11.65 euro (<https://www.ecb.europa.eu/euro/changeover/malta/html/index.en.html>); this was the currency used in Malta from 1971 until the end of 2007, and on 1 January 2008, Malta adopted the euro as its official currency, and the fixed exchange rate was 0.4293 MTL per 1 euro, or 42.93 cents per euro

differently. He planned things in advance, setting up sketches and calculations in advance for every single item. Sometimes he would order the pre-cut glass from a supplier known to him, ‘*Vestru tal-ħgieġ*’ (literal translation: ‘Silvester of the glass’) in advance before having the aluminium profiles cut. He claimed that working this was extremely important because all he would need to do is simply assemble parts and fix components into place. In one interview (see Appendix, Interview A) he made reference to the importance of managing time twice, once in English, ‘time is money’ (30:15) and a second time in Maltese (43:40). The change in methodological approach towards the work involved is strongly suggestive of *practical rationalisation*, whereby a process is made more effective through calculability and efficiency in the name of economic gain ([Ritzer, 2001: 179](#)).

The numeracy particular to the trade also involved mathematical formulae that Robert referred to as *is-somma* [literal translation: *the sum*, equation]. He showed me the original sheet that he was given, with formulae for cutting various aluminium profiles, depending on style and brand (Figure 5.8). This sheet was kept in a display folder with other documents, which included price lists issued by different companies. This sheet had a number of formulae for a particular type of aluminium profile sold by Seyba Aluminium Ltd, with a cross-section of the aluminium profile drawn at the top of the page. It was noted that whoever originally drafted the sheet used a mixture of English and Maltese words; for example, ‘**window**’, ‘**glass**’ and ‘**net**’ to refer to parts, and ‘*oli*’ and ‘*wisa*’ to refer to height and width respectively (spelt as ‘*gholi*’ and ‘*wisa*’ in Standard Maltese). There was also a note in the English language, ‘**when plus frame plu**’. More text was later added to the document, by a different person, referring to other types of aluminium profiles sold by other companies, such as C3, Lautier and Ta’ Leli Qormi Aluminium. Again, the words used are from a mixture of languages, namely Maltese, Italian and English. Words such as ‘oak’ (English), ‘noce’ (Italian: hazelnut), ‘nero’ (Italian: black) and ‘perla’ (Italian: pearl) are noted, referring to the colour coating of the aluminium profiles. Maltese is used to refer to things such as ‘*sieq baxxa*’ (low leg) and ‘*portella baxxa*’ (low door). Other items are noted down, a mixture of English and Maltese, such as ‘**rail baxx**’ (low rail), ‘*portella normal*’ (normal door), and ‘**rail tont (sic) small**’ (small round rail). Pinned to a door was another document older than this, previously used by his

father. After working in the trade for years, Robert knew all these different calculations by heart.

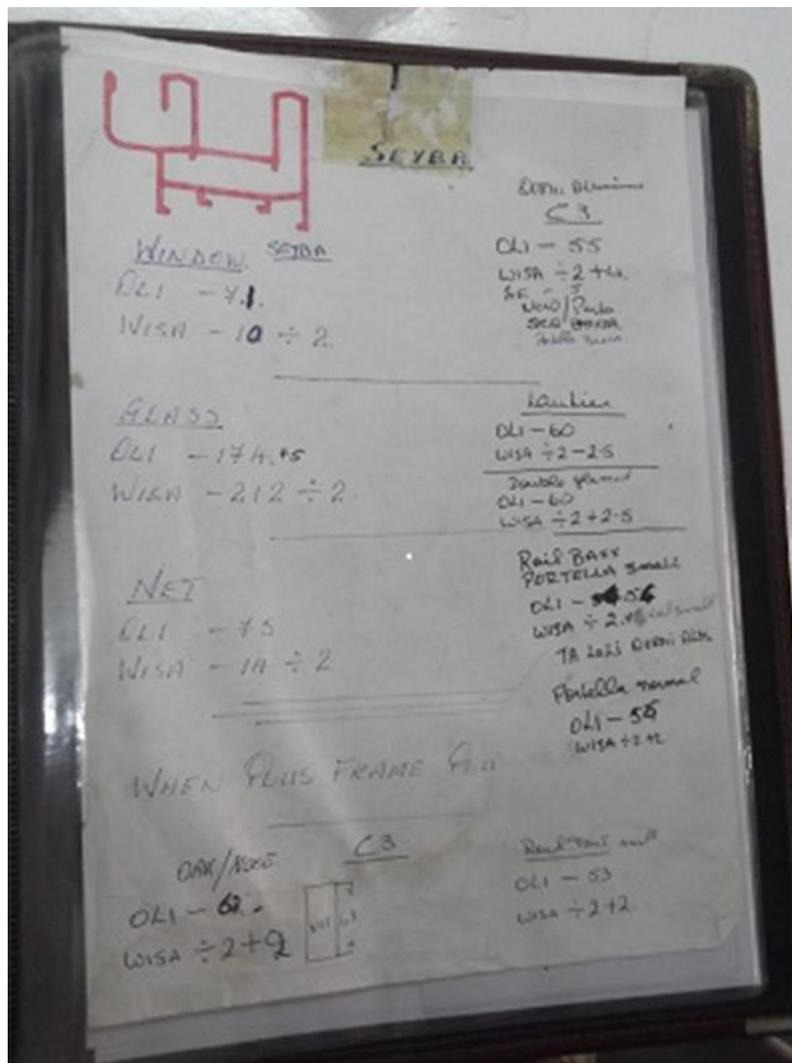


Figure 5. 8 Mathematical equations and notes in Maltese, English and Italian

Robert recalled an Italian company that had opened an aluminium factory in Malta, which eventually closed down, and buyers of aluminium profiles needed the mathematical formula for planning and cutting. According to him, these mathematical formulae vary from company to company and from product to product; this would mean that companies had to provide such formulae for their own products. Such companies were foreign, and could be based in Italy, Turkey or China, and would be willing to supply this information

to ensure that their products were used. Although not directly in contact with these companies, Robert would have encountered these decidedly extra-local influences through local agents supplying the local market.

Such local and extra-local traces could be detected in the discourses Robert used when explaining how he would calculate different measurements using ‘*is-somom*’ (literal translation: sums). Robert was noted using a mix of Maltese and English when referring to mathematical symbols and numbers whilst explaining how he managed the calculations; he used Maltese to explain the calculations involved and English to recite mathematical symbols and signs, as shown in Table 5.2 below:

	Original interview in Maltese	Translation into English
RP 19:28	<p><i>(Discussing how he applies the formula prior to cutting)</i></p> <p>“Imbagħad, per eżempju, l-gholi minus seventy-one. Il-wisa’, li hija din, minus ten division by two, u hriġt is-somma tagħha. L-istess tieqa. Biex nwaqqa’ l-qies tal-ħgieġ, hija minn barra għall-barra, l-gholi minus one seven four, u jien għamiltha plus five, biex ma naghmluhx issikkat. Il-wisa’ ‘minus two-one-oh division by two. Jekk irrid naghmlihom in-nets, l-istess. L-gholi minus seventy-five, il-wisa’ minus fourteen division by two, ta’ dan l-agent. Dan agent iehor. L-gholi minus fifty five, ara dan seventy-one, mela l-wisa’ division by two plus four. Dan il-wisa’ minus ten division by two. Ghax is-sezzions mhux kollha xorta. Qed tifhimni? Skola ma nafx, imma mohħi għal dawn l-affarijiet itini mbagħad.</p>	<p><i>(Discussing how he applies the formula prior to cutting)</i></p> <p>“Then, for example, the height is minus seventy-one; the width, which is this, minus ten division by two, and I got the formula. The same for a window. To have the measurements ready for the glass, I need to look at the outer measurements, the height minus one seven four, and I (add) plus five, so that it is not too tight. The width is minus two-one-oh division by two. If I need to do nets, I use the same procedure. The height is minus seventy-five, the width is minus fourteen division by two, at least for this agent. This is another agent. The height is minus fifty-five, and this is seventy-one, so the width is division by two plus four. This width is minus ten division by two. Because the sections are not all the same. You understand me? I’m not educated, but I can apply myself to these things.</p>

Table 5. 2 Extract from Recorded Interview One (Appendix B)

Literacy and numeracy were also used as a means of ensuring the right parts were fitted together. It was noted that sections were enumerated in pencil, and window frames resting against the wall had numbers and letters scribbled onto the inner sections. This was very

important for him, as this served as a guide to fit parts correctly and avoid errors on the job. Robert used a system of shorthand to label these parts, such as 7T or 3W; the numbers stood for the fixture as enumerated in the sketch, and the letters stood for ‘tul’ [length] and ‘wisa’ [width]. He uses Maltese to designate length and width, but he also uses English. For instance, he labelled parts such as ‘BAT’ for ‘bathroom’ and PH for ‘penthouse’. This was his personal way of labelling frames and parts; he mentioned that he goes for short forms of words, unlike his father, who would write such labels in their full form, such as ‘Penthouse’ and not ‘PH’.

The terms, abbreviations and symbols used by Robert are recognizable to individuals who are in the aluminium aperture trade, which could be described as members of a community of practice, defined by Eckert and McConnel-Ginel ([1992: 96](#)) as

“An aggregate of people who come together around a mutual engagement in some common endeavour. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations – in short, practices – emerge in the course of their joint activity around that endeavour.”

It is highly suggestive that people in this trade, which involves a number of practices, have their own discourses and own semiotics built around these work practices, clearly drawing upon Maltese, English as well as Italian as linguistic resources.

Eventually, Robert was able to obtain formal recognition of his skills, competence and knowledge through the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC), a government authority responsible for helping job seekers with employment and training, by what is known as the ‘Trade Testing System’, which was set up in order “to assess individuals who have acquired knowledge, skills and competence in a particular occupation but do not possess a formal qualification” ([JobsPlus, 2019a](#)). This is a validation system supported by the Maltese Education Act (Cap. 327, S.L 423) and recommended by the European Union ([Council Recommendation 20/12/2012, pg.1](#)), with the aim of validating informal and non-formal adult learning. His assessor was the owner of one of Malta’s largest aluminium companies, AluServ Ltd, who had asked him to set up a window. He brought

the material and tools necessary and complied with the request. The interview, he recalled, was in Maltese. Yet the certificate issued by the ETC was entirely in English (Figure 5.7).

5.5 Communicating with the public: using texts for advertising

Advertising is important to many businesses. When asked about advertising strategies, Robert recalled that when his father initially started the business, the only means of advertising used was through word of mouth. It was later on, in the late 1980s or early 1990s, that his father introduced the use of business cards with his name and trade, together with contact details. That proved to be the only strategy his father used which involved text. Robert was instrumental in introducing other strategies to advertise the business. Besides relying on customer recommendations via word of mouth, he also used advertising to attract new business, most of which is textual in nature. These strategies reveal the extent to which he relied on mediated communication to participate in relations beyond his immediate circle, which Smith calls the “ruling relations”, objectified and impersonal social relations that are typical in advanced modern societies (see [Smith: 1990b: 209](#)).

As shown in photos taken, signage was one advertising strategy. Signage was used to inform people where the workshop was to be found, guiding the individual to the workshop. The premises are clearly defined by a professionally commissioned shop sign with the name of the enterprise and contact details. These signs helped individuals to locate the workshop, which has garage doors practically identical to the other garages in the drive-in. On a typical workday, whilst Robert was at work in his workshop, the vehicle he used for work-related purposes would be parked outside the workshop. The truck had professionally done signage, providing the company name as well as contact details such as telephone and mobile numbers, in addition to an email address. The vehicle had a dual purpose. Not only was it used as a means of transport, but it was also used as an advertising strategy. This not only positions the vehicle vis-à-vis its practical usage, but also as a means of identification. This came in useful especially when the vehicle was being used on other sites.

He also made use of a custom-made board (Figure 5.9) used on newly constructed buildings, as a means of identifying the work as carried out as his, with contact details. Such a sign would be prominently displayed where it can be seen by passers-by. This is a practice found amongst other tradespeople in the construction business. The use of English is typical, especially on professionally commissioned signage. When asked why he selected English, his reply was '*Għax hekk immorru l-affarijiet*' [Translation: 'Because that's the way things are done'].



Figure 5. 9 Advertising work on projects

Besides signage meant to be displayed on buildings, Robert also used typical business advertising strategies such as business cards, passed on to prospective customers, or people who were likely to recommend him to others. The same information found on the business cards was also found on the personalized mugs that he used whilst at the workshop (Figure 5.10). Other texts that could be seen to compliment his business were tee-shirts he had specially commissioned with the name of his business. Underneath the company name was the statement 'For all kinds of aluminium works', in English. To him, it was giving his work a more professional touch. As his work uniform, he found this personalised tee-shirts particularly useful when working on off-site installations.



Figure 5. 10 Examples of textually-mediated advertising strategies

One early strategy that Robert used was stickers. These stickers were round and large enough to stick a car licence badge against the widescreen of a vehicle, which is mandatory when licencing a vehicle for road use. This was his own initiative, as his father did not rely on such strategies. Again, the language selected for the purpose was English (Figure 5.10).

The Yellow Pages was also a means of ensuring that his business is listed along other competitors on a nationwide basis (Figure 5.1). He had devised his own way of determining the success of this practice. Whenever he received enquiries from new clients, he would ask them how they got to know about the business. He then would make a note of how many callers mentioned the advert placed in the Yellow Pages, and thus would later see whether the advertising costs were worthwhile. Besides using the Yellow Pages, he also placed adverts for the business in local publications; these were published in the English language. An example of this practice was the calendar that he had in the office of his workshop, produced by a local racing pigeon club, the South East Pigeon Club in Żejtun, a neighbouring village. It was interesting to note that this calendar, which was distributed to fellow club members and sponsors, was published in the English language. He also paid for adverts placed in the annual parish magazine published in celebration of the village *fešta*, although this was not a practice he had engaged in over the last few years. Placing such adverts were considered a way of doing favours for people he knew and who

were involved in associations; the calendar advert was placed simply because a person who helped him on a part-time basis happened to be involved in that particular association. Whatever the publication, English was the language used to advertise his business.

A recent means of advertising was using Facebook. Once he had gained confidence using a computer for leisure purposes and familiarizing himself with social networking sites such as Facebook, he had a profile set up to promote his business online. This was done with help from one of his teenage daughters, and it was used to display completed projects with photos of apertures set in place. Contact details were also added. Once again, English was the language of choice here.

Seeing that Robert had a number of advertising strategies to enhance business opportunities, he was asked which strategies were most effective. He found that most business was generated via word of mouth, with past clients recommending his work to others. However, he did not underestimate the more modern methods, as he felt it gave his business what he considered a professional touch to his business endeavours.

5.6 Organizing work life: texts for record keeping and financial management

Robert kept track of his dealings by keeping records in their respective files on a shelf in his office (Figure 5.4). Documents, mainly invoices, were filed in four Arch Lever A4 sized files. Three files were primarily reserved for the main suppliers of raw material, one for each supplier: Qormi Aluminium and Ferralco Ltd., and Vestru. There was another file, labelled BuzDov, for a property developer who subcontracted work to him. Robert kept an orange-coloured file for invoices which were yet to be paid, irrespective of supplier; he called these 'Pending', using the English word for the status of these invoices. Once paid, they were filed away in their respective files. These invoices were pre-printed and came in two styles. They were either pre-printed invoice sheets to be filled in manually, or personalized computer printouts using specialized computer software. It was noted that all pre-printed text on invoices, which are locally produced, was in English, save for company details issues, such as street names (Figure 5.11).

During one interview ([Appendix B, Interview One](#)), Robert was visited by a salesperson who delivered supplies to his workshop. The conversation was in Maltese. After unloading the supplies, the salesperson presented Robert with three different invoices. Each invoice had a copy, and Robert signed the copies that the salesperson retained and returned to the suppliers for their own recordkeeping. The invoices were printed documents, with company contact details, document number, date of issue and other details such as number of pages and account number. The documents were purposely printed out with his full name, page numbers, and tabulation of items purchased by code, quantity, price per unit and total price. The document allows for the recording of the transaction as either an ‘invoice’, a ‘cash sale’ or as a ‘credit note’. The salesperson crossed out the last two items, indicating the transaction was ‘on invoice’. The items on the document were listed in English, with the exception of the address of Ferralco Ltd, which was in Maltese, “Triq il-Birrerija” (trans. *Brewery Street*). As explained previously by Robert, this invoice was later filed away in his file for pending payments. Once paid, he would make a note of it and file it in the file reserved for Ferralco Ltd.

Another event witnessed was paying a part-time assistant for work rendered that morning. Again, the conversation was in Maltese. Robert paid him twenty euro by cheque; this method of payment helped him keep track of his financial transactions. The chequebook, preprinted and issued by Bank of Valletta (BoV), a Maltese bank, was issued in the English language. He explained that he found the stub helpful in keeping track of money in the account which he opened as Pace Aluminium Works. Robert signed the cheque and included the amount to be paid on the cheque and the stub; he then instructed his part-time assistant (JM) fill in the rest, such as data and the amount to be paid in the ‘payee’ section. It was clear that English was the preferred language to refer to both the payment and the balance in the bank account. In the interview this was what occurred (see [Appendix, Section B, Interview Two](#)):

	Original interview in Maltese	Translation into English
JM 00:02	“Pay (JM) the sum of twenty euros only”. Twenty euros u daqshekk.	“Pay (JM) the sum of twenty euros only”. Twenty euros and that’s it.
	<i>(RP filled in date, amount in number and signature; JM filled in designated space with his name and amount in words)</i>	
RP 00:15	Issa jiena naghmilha hekk.	Now this is how I do it.
JM 00:18	Zomm, qabel ma naqtghu.	Wait, just before I tear it out.
RP 00:24	Mela jiena tajtu twenty euros – hawn irrid innizzilhom (<i>indicates chequebook stub</i>) qabel ma naqtghu. Nagħmel twenty hawn. Issa l-ahħar li kelli seven five eight point seventy-six (<i>refers to stub of previous cheque; gets desk calculator</i>). Seven five eight point seventy-six minus twenty - mela baqgħali fil-kont tal-bank seven three eight point seven six, sewwa? U flus għadni ma depożitajtx. Jiena baqgħali dawn biex nilgħab, u dejjem naħdem hekk, ħalli qatt ma nibla kannen fil-kont tiegħi. Dik is-sistema tiegħi. Skola ma nafx, imma idejat ikolli.	So I gave him twenty euros – I need to put that down here (<i>indicates chequebook stub</i>) before I give it to him. I put down twenty here. Now last time I issued a cheque I had seven five eight point seventy-six (<i>refers to stub of previous cheque; gets desk calculator</i>). Seven five eight point seventy-six minus twenty – so I will now have seven three eight point seven six, left at the bank, right? And I haven’t yet deposited any money. I have this amount to work with, and I always work like that, so that I never come across any problems with my account. That’s my system. I haven’t got any schooling, but I do have ideas.

Table 5. 3 Extract from Recorded Interview Two (Appendix B)

He also kept track of other expenses related to the business, such as telecommunications and utility bills; he had separate files for mobile phone bills, labelled ‘Mobile Paid’ in English, telephone bills, as well as well as utility bills, labelled in Maltese as ‘*dawl ilma*’ [literal translation: ‘*electricity water*’]. Three companies supply these services, and the invoices he received from these companies revealed a particularly interesting language practice that these companies engage in with their clients. Vodafone Malta, an international telecommunications company, is one of Malta’s largest companies, and GO plc is a local competitor, once a government entity. There is only one company responsible for the provision of electricity and water, which is EneMalta plc, and like GO plc, was also a government-owned company. Vodafone Malta issues invoices in English only, whilst GO plc and EneMalta plc issue them in both official languages as parallel bilingual texts. Figure 5.13 is an example of payment instructions included on the back page of a GO plc invoice, in a parallel bilingual text; a similar format is also available for all EneMalta plc

customers. Maltese is the first language to be encountered when reading from left to right, followed by English.

Kif thallas il-kont tieghek

 **Bid-Direct Debit** - Hlas tal-kont tieghek permezz tad-Direct Debit huwa aktar konvenjenti, fejn wara attivazzjoni ta' darba, il-kontijiet kollha jinqatgħu mill-kont bankarju tieghek. Jekk jogħġbok żur wieħed mill-hwienet tagħna u ahna nassistuk sabiex ikollok din il-faċilita.

 **My GO** - Żur www.go.com.mt/mygo sabiex ikollok aċċess għal-kontijiet tieghek, tara l-telefonati li jkun saru mil-linja fissa, tibgħat SMS b'xejn u hafna aktar. Tista wkoll tirregistra għal-ebilling, is-sistema ta' kontijiet bla karti, sempliċi u sikura.

 **Bil-posta** - Jekk jogħġbok ibgħat ċekk pagabbli lill-GO plc firmkien ma' l-avviż tal-hlas (il-biċċa ta' taħt tal-kont) lill-GO plc, P.O. Box 14, Victoria, VCT1000, Gozo. Ikteb in-Numru tal-Kont u/jew in-Numru tal-Account tieghek fuq wara taċ-ċekk. Jekk jogħġbok tibgħat flus kontanti fil-posta.

 **Hwienet tal-GO** - B'Kara, Bay Street, Mosta (PAMA Shopping Village), Paola, Valletta (South Street, self-service kiosk) u Victoria Gozo.

Aġenti tal-GO - Attard (Direct Vision), B'Bugia (Audio Images), Bormia (Call Zone), Fgura (Top Electronics), Ghaxaq (JLJ), Hamrun (Telecom), Mellieha (EPC), Mosta (Cellefonic), M'Scala (JLJ), Rabat (KVH), San Gwann (Phonebox, Telecom), San Pawl il-Baħar (Mobics), Sliema (Phonebox), Żabbar (Cellefonic), Żebbuġ (Top Electronics), Żejtun (Direct Vision), Victoria Gozo (Sound & Vision) u Xagħra Gozo (Victor's).

F'Postijiet Ohrajn - Il-kontijiet jistgħu jiġu mħallsa fil-uffiċini tal-Maltapost u kiosks tal-Maltapay. F'dawn il-postijiet jista jintalab hlas amministrattiv.

Informazzjoni Utli

Klijenti ġodda - Jekk dan hu l-ewwel kont - merħba mal-GO! Dan il-kont jista' jinkludi hlas dovut għall-parti minn xahar kif ukoll għal xahar shiħ. Jista' jkun hemm ukoll xi hlas ta' abbonament dovut.

Kuntatt magħna - Għal aktar informazzjoni fuq kontijiet tista' tagħmel kuntatt magħna permezz ta':

- **Telefon** - 80072121 jew 146 mill-GO Mobile tieghek
- **E-mail** - billing@go.com.mt
- **Posta** - GO plc, P.O. Box 40, Marsa, MRS 001, MALTA.

Jekk jogħġbok hallas il-kont tieghek sad-data indikata fuq il-faċċata tal-kont. Jekk il-pagament dovut ma jiġix riċevut, il-kumpanija tiriserva d-dritt li tiegħu azzjonijiet ulterjuri, liema azzjonijiet jistgħu jinkludu hlas ta' penali ta' Eur2.33, ristrazzjoni jew twaqqif tas-servizz tieghek, kif ukoll kull azzjoni oħra li tippermetti l-ligi.

GO plc tipproċessa l-informazzjoni personali tieghek skond il-ligi u l-termini u kundizzjonijiet viġġenti. La darba inti tuza, jew tippermetti l-użu minn terzi persuni, tas-servizz tagħna, inti tkun qiegħed awtomatikament tawtorizza lill-GO plc sabiex tiġbor tagħrif dwarek minn credit reference agencies, filwaqt li f'każ ta' nuqqas ta' hlasijiet fiż-żmien stipulati, tghaddi informazzjoni dwarek lill-credit reference agencies li, minn naha tagħhom, jistgħu jxerxu din l-informazzjoni mal-membri tagħhom. Ahna niltrasferixxu d-dettalji tieghek skond il-termini u kundizzjonijiet viġġenti jew meta nkunu awtorizzati jew obbligati naghmlu dan minn awtorita regolatorja jew qorti kompetenti skond il-ligi. Għall-aktar informazzjoni dwar kif nipproċessaw data personali, żur <https://www.go.com.mt/privacy-policy>

www.go.com.mt - Żur is-sit elettroniku tagħna għal l-ahħar informazzjoni dwar il-prodotti u s-servizzi.

How to pay your bill

 **By Direct Debit** - You may find it more convenient to pay your bill by Direct Debit. All that is required is a one time set-up, after which bills will be automatically settled out of your bank account. In order to set up this facility kindly visit one of our outlets.

 **My GO** - Visit www.go.com.mt/mygo and manage all your GO bills online, view all itemised calls from your fixed line, send free SMSes and much more. You can also sign up for ebilling. GO's paper free billing. It's easy and secure.

 **By Post** - Please send a cheque payable to GO plc together with the remittance advice slip (the bottom part of the bill) to GO plc, P.O. Box 14, Victoria, VCT1000, Gozo. Kindly write your Bill Number and/or Account Number on the back of the cheque. Please do not send cash through the post.

 **GO Outlets** - B'Kara, Bay Street, Mosta (PAMA Shopping Village), Paola, Valletta (South Street, self-service kiosk) and Victoria Gozo.

GO Dealers - Attard (Direct Vision), B'Bugia (Audio Images), Bormia (Call Zone), Fgura (Top Electronics), Ghaxaq (JLJ), Hamrun (Telecom), Mellieha (EPC), Mosta (Cellefonic), M'Scala (JLJ), Rabat (KVH), San Gwann (Phonebox, Telecom), San Pawl il-Baħar (Mobics), Sliema (Phonebox), Żabbar (Cellefonic), Żebbuġ (Top Electronics), Żejtun (Direct Vision), Victoria Gozo (Sound & Vision) and Xagħra Gozo (Victor's).

Alternative Outlets - Bills may also be settled at Maltapost outlets and Maltapay kiosks. An administration fee may apply at these payment points.

Useful Information

New Customers - If this is your first bill - welcome to the world of GO! This bill may include part month charges as well as your normal monthly charges. Any connection charges will also be shown.

Contacting us - We will be pleased to answer any billing enquiry that you might have. We can be contacted by:

- **Telephone** - 80072121 or 146 from your GO Mobile
- **E-mail** - billing@go.com.mt
- **Post** - GO plc, P.O. Box 40, Marsa, MRS 001, MALTA.

Please settle the balance due by the date indicated on the front page of your bill. In case of default, the company reserves the right to take further actions which may include late payment charges of Eur2.33, late payment interest, restriction or termination of your services, as well as any other action permitted by law.

GO plc processes your personal information in line with legal requirements and any applicable terms and conditions. By using, or allowing third parties to use our services, you are authorizing GO plc to obtain your personal data from credit reference agencies, and in the case that you default payment within the stipulated time frames, to pass on relevant information to credit reference agencies which, in turn, may distribute this information to their members. We will pass on your personal details according to the terms and conditions in place or when authorized or obliged by a competent regulatory authority or competent courts according to law. For more information on how GO processes personal data, visit www.go.com.mt/privacy-policy

www.go.com.mt - Visit our website for the latest product and service information.

Nissuggerixxu li thallas il-kont tieghek permezz tad-Direct Debit. Din il-faċilita' tassigura li l-kont jithallas awtomatikament u bl-aktar mod konvenjenti.

We suggest that you opt for paying your bill by Direct Debit. This facility ensures that bills are automatically paid in the most convenient manner.

Figure 5. 13 Payment instructions issued by GO plc (parallel bilingual text)

5.7 Working with clients

Robert was asked as to how he dealt with requests from clients. Normally, prospective clients phoned him, and he took down their name and contact details, jotting them down in a diary. Names were sometimes noted down using standard spelling, whether in English (eg. Adrian, Tony) or Maltese (*Wenzu, Ġorġ*). Sometimes he used his own spelling system irrespective of language, taking down names as if using a personal phonetic system; he describes this using a popular expression in Maltese, '*kif jinħass*' [literal translation: '*the way it sounds*']. This would mean discarding phonemes that are not realised or using different phonemic symbols to represent speech sounds. As an example, 'Arthur and Sons' was written down as 'Arter and Sons'; Maltese does not have dental fricatives, and this phoneme is frequently replaced by the respective dental fricatives. Another example of this was the name Malcolm spelt as 'Malkim'. During interviews it was noted that telephone numbers were stated in English.

After establishing the connection, he would meet with the prospective clients. Individuals normally bring pictures or photographs of apertures they want to have done, such as doors. Robert had no catalogues to show, but interacted with clients, sharing ideas he had gained through his experience in the trade. He sketched proposed works in old company diaries (Figure 5.14), or sheets of loose paper (Figure 5.15), or even the worktable at times. These diagrams include design and measurements, priced to include cost of material and labour. They are also labelled to mark what they represent, such as doors or windows, and enumerated if there is more than one aperture. He uses a mixture of terms to identify types of apertures, style, colour of aluminium and type and colour of glass, as well as other accessories. These terms are identifiable in the trade. Again, the spelling is not standard spelling, but Robert is not concerned with that. The purpose is for him to record and identify client needs using diagrams and notes. He also uses his own shorthand system, using initials instead of full words. Take for example the initials 'SL', which refer to a design called 'single leaf'. Once finalised, these sketches would be transferred to a specially printed quotation form with fields to fill in (see Figure 5.16).

Binumeracy in these sketches was noted, mainly concerning units of measurements and currency for pricing. When drawing the sketches, he took down the measurements of each aperture using imperial measurements for the length and width of each aperture. After noting down measurements in inches, he would use a measure tape to convert these units to metric. Pricing was initially worked out in Maltese lira, which was replaced by the euro in 2008. When asked how he managed two currencies, he replied that he first established prices in the old currency, and then he converted them to euro, using this exchange rate. This was not something that he did in front of the client. This was his way of working out estimates before providing prospective clients with prices in euro on the official quotation sheet. When asked why he used the Maltese lira to help him with pricing, his answer was to avoid making errors. Having got used to pricing in Maltese lira, using the euro when working on preliminary quotations would confuse him.

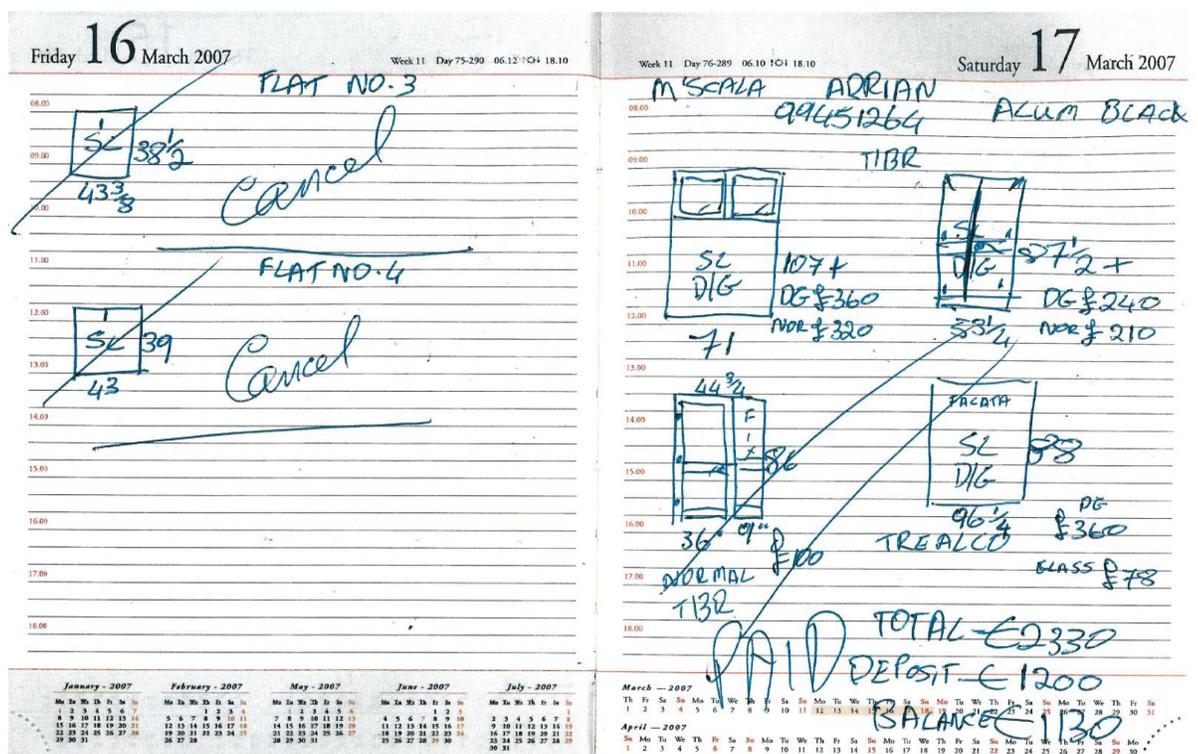


Figure 5. 14 Draft quotations with measurements and prices in diary

At the time the photographs were taken, there were two quotations for prospective clients (see Section 5.3). The photo on the left-hand side in Figure 5. 15 shows a Word document issued by BuzDov Developments Ltd, drafted in English. The document was tabulated with columns and rows, with columns clearly headed with words like ‘function’, ‘width’, ‘height’, ‘type’ and ‘notes’ and rows with descriptions of items. Robert had filled this in previously using his own handwriting, in his own form of shorthand, using a mixture of English (‘slid’ for slide, **leaf**, *door*) and Maltese, such as ‘*wisa*’ [length] and ‘*oli*’ [height] for ‘*għoli*’. For example, he made the following note: ‘W/CLEAR D/G ALUM PJUR WHITE’ [see photo], which stands for ‘white/clear double-glazed aluminium pure white’. This referred to two different things: the colour and type of glass selected for the aperture, and the colour and type of frame for the aperture. The manner ‘PJUR’ is spelt is a mix of English and Maltese orthography. Although it may appear to be non-English as far as conventional spelling is concerned, it is Robert’s spelling of ‘pure’, including the ‘j’ typically used in standard Maltese orthography to represent the semi-vowel [j]; the Maltese word for ‘pure’ is ‘*pur*’, pronounced [pu:r]; is not pronounced with a semi-vowel like [j] when transitioning between the realisation of the bilabial stop [p] and the monophthong [u:]; in addition, if Robert were thinking in Maltese, it would have probably been ‘ALUM ABJAD PUR’ [literal translation: ‘*alum white pure*’] rather than ‘ALUM PJUR WHITE’. This phrase may be considered a form of shorthand, barring the non-standard spelling of the word ‘pure’, and considered to be work-related vocabulary in the English language. On the right-hand side of Figure 5. 15 is the second quotation, a plain white A4-sized sheet of paper, with hand drawn sketches by Robert, depicting proposed aluminium products, with measurements in both imperial and metric units. Words in both Maltese (*elissi*, *tieqa*, *twieqi*) and English (D/G, **fixed**, **sliding**) were noted, as well as a mixture: such as ‘*tieqa sliding*’ (*tieqa*: Maltese for **window**). Such terminology is standard amongst skilled workers in the industry.

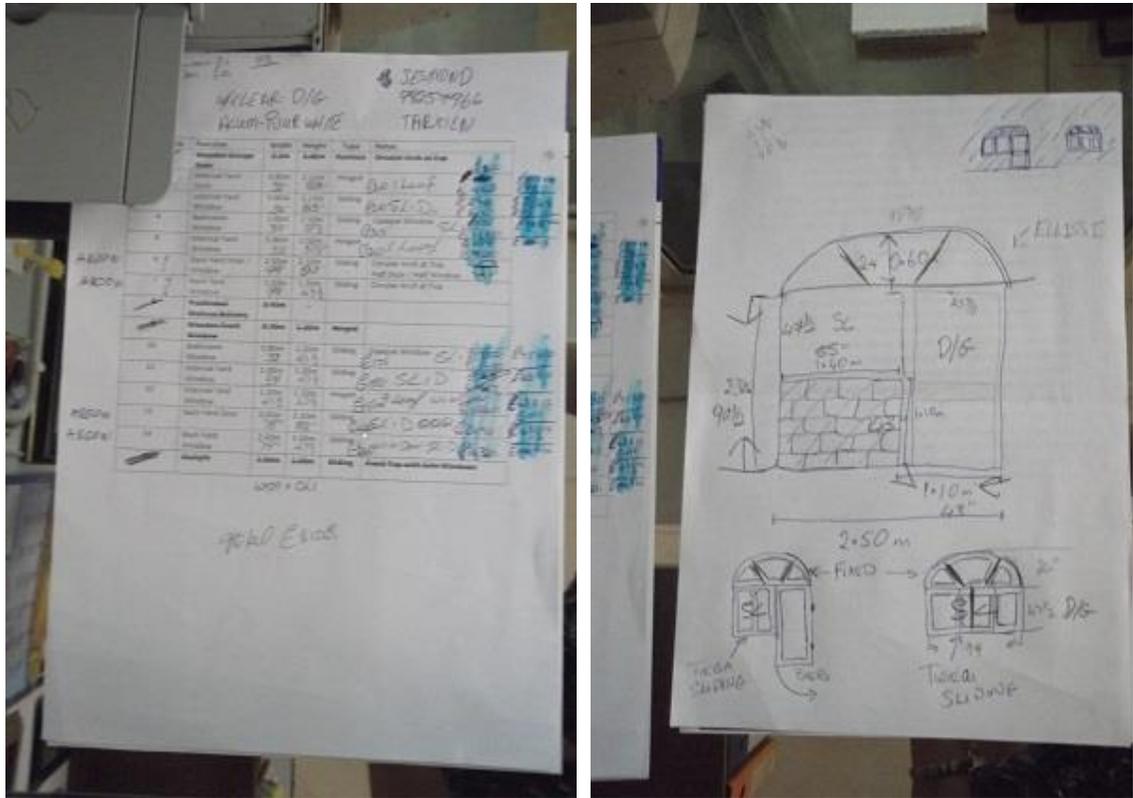


Figure 5. 15 Drafts of quotations prior to finalisation on official quotation sheet

When formalizing his estimate, he used a quotation sheet (Figure 5.16), which was in stark contrast to the diary. This document was letterheaded with the company name and contact telephone numbers. Just below this, the word ‘QUOTATION’ was clearly printed, and centralized. Fields labelled ‘Client’, ‘Address’ and ‘Tel’ (short for ‘telephone’) were for client contact details, and fields labelled ‘Date’, ‘Aluminium’ and ‘Glass’ were also noted. There was room for the sketches. At the bottom of the document, the following fields were included: ‘Total in Euro’, ‘Deposit’, ‘Balance’ and ‘Extra’. There was also a field for the client’s signature, specifically labelled as ‘Signature’. Robert had these quotation sheets designed and printed for him, and it was at his request that they include these labels, which can be interpreted as the main issues defining this impersonal economic transaction between two parties. When asked about the selection of English for the quotation sheet, the answer was that it seemed to be the ‘natural choice’.

When asked what happened after the quotation is delivered to the client, Robert said it depended on the client. If clients did not accept the quotation, there was no deal. If clients allowed too long a time to pass after the quotation was made, he would need to rework prices and perhaps see to amendments to the old quotation. If clients accepted the quotation, Robert would use it. Once the job was done, clients would be asked to sign the original quotation sheet to indicate that the job had been done to their satisfaction and used as proof that payment had been made.

PACE ALUMINIUM WORKS
Tel: 2-XXXXXX - 9-XXXXXX - 9-XXXXXX

QUOTATION

Client: _____ Date: _____
Address: _____ Aluminium _____
Tel: _____ Glass _____

TOTAL € _____
DEPOSIT _____
BALANCE _____
EXTRA _____

Signature _____

Figure 5. 16 Official quotation sheet with fields

5.8 A case of textually-mediated social organisation

The work domain revealed two things: first, that literacy was present in many work practices, and secondly, that this small business was dependent on texts for its organisation and operations. As a self-employed tradesman, he worked within a network of organisations which supplied him with the necessary resources to fulfil his own goal-oriented activities. Robert spoke about the importance of being organized, and it appears that being organized not only meant having tools and work material in order, but also the textual aspect of the business. Evaluating his past and present work practices reveals that after taking on the business, he made changes to its management in terms of administrative and financial work practices. This is evident in the office that he created for himself. Besides needing a space to carry on with his trade, which had its own literacy practices, he also needed to develop a space within the workshop specially set up for administrative practices, creating an administrative hub which connected him to other business-oriented agents in his network. Whilst he could not be compared to a large-scale organisation with separate departments for its operations, he could be described as having adapted his administrative practices to be able to fulfil contractual obligations in terms of isomorphism ([DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 148](#)). It is a case of Robert adopting the practices of larger organisations. It appears that not only did he need to adopt administrative practices such as filing orders and fulfilling payments, but he also became proficient in reading and deciphering the printed texts that he receives from suppliers. Thus, not only has he adapted practices, he also participates in the ‘orders of discourses’ that these larger organisations use in their own operations.

In adopting these practices, Robert demonstrates that broader social forces are at work within his small enterprise. He participates in what Smith ([1990b](#)) describes as the ‘relations of ruling’, the extra- or trans-local social relations that are “objectified relations of ruling [that] coordinate multiple local everyday worlds” ([Smith, 2005: 13](#)). These are practices linked to the extra-local worlds that support his business endeavours. Texts serve as an organizing force within these objectified relations, co-ordinating and concerting social action across time and space. Professional social relations tend to serve extra-local interests and are regularised and legitimised through textual mediation ([Campbell and](#)

[Gregor, 2008: 36](#)). These professional social relations may be construed as the expert systems dependent on symbolic tokens ([Giddens, 1990: 22](#)); modern society is highly dependent on disembedding mechanisms which enable time-space distanciation, and organisations are no exception. These objectified relations are to be found within expert systems that depend on symbolic tokens; in this case texts serve as symbolic tokens as they are carriers of knowledge that has been objectified for exchange across time and space. An example of such symbolic tokens are the texts that index “objectified relations” that Robert participates in, particularly as a client of service providers for utilities, telecommunications and financial services. These are arguably ideological practices that depend on texts to transform people’s activities into abstract orders which Smith refers to as conceptual orders ([Smith, 1990a: 17](#)). Thus, it appears that he ‘moves’ between roles, being a ‘member’ of a social institution as a tradesman and a ‘client’ of others ([Fairclough, 1995: 38](#)).

The selection of texts points towards an interesting language practice amongst different companies in the creation of objectified relations. For example, companies such as EneMalta and GO plc, parastatal and privatised respectively, issue invoices in both official languages in parallel bilingual texts. On the other hand, a private company like Vodafone Malta issues invoices in English only. The independent commercial companies that Robert deals with on a regular basis, such as Ferralco Ltd and Aluserv Ltd, issue invoices in English only. The financial institution that Robert used, Bank of Valletta (BoV), normally issues official documentation such as bank statements and cheque books in the English language. Whilst banks may have bilingual texts produced for marketing and informational purposes, it appears that English is the favoured language for other purposes, such as internal banking operations ([Bagley, 2001](#)). The presence, or absence, of a language in these formal texts point towards a distinct pattern whereby government-owned entities may use both official languages in the formal documents that are produced for the general public, whilst private enterprises appear to favour one language, and in this case almost invariably English. Maltese appears to be the less likely choice in texts used for “objectified relations” defined by private companies.

As for Robert, not only does he participate in such “objectified relations” with his suppliers, but he also does so with his clients and potential clients. It appears that he chose to adopt the practices of other enterprises in his network, including the choice of language for written documentation, which is English. Robert participates in his own impersonal “objectified relations” with clients in general, which is strongly evident in the documents he had produced professionally for his own administrative needs, such as providing quotations on professionally-printed, letterheaded forms, and advertising. For Robert, the choice of English for these “objectified relations” is normal and he is unlikely to question it; it is the dominant practice amongst the business community he is part of. The choice of English may be an ideological practice, becoming a dominant ideology that has undergone naturalization ([Fairclough, 1995: 41](#)).

In the process of creating “objectified relations”, spatiality becomes an important factor for textually-mediated social organisation. The “objectified relations” Robert participates in depend on time-space distancing; social space is needed to sustain such relations. Besides creating a physical space to accommodate his administrative practices, it must also be acknowledged that in adopting social practices to participate in “objectified relations” for his business venture, he needed to create the social space via texts, objects which had traces of the ‘extra-local’. Within the workshop space he not only engaged in the physical aspect of the trade, but also in the conceptual orders that are conducive to its successful outcome, depending on objectified relations that are represented and sustained by texts. Furthermore, what links him to extra-local orders are the very items that he specialises in remodelling for clients; the aluminium profiles imported from various countries with their own instructions as to how they can be remodelled locally are the ‘objects’ ([Latour, 1993](#)) that bring in traces of the extra-local, including the mathematical formulae needed. In the process of adopting and adapting practices to sustain his business objectives, he also created a social space which is polyvalent ([Lefebvre, 1991; 86](#)), shaped by the different multiple conceptual orders created by these “objectified relations”. The local, immediate space that is the workshop is also spatially affected by extra-local activities. Moreover, it appears that these conceptual orders overlap within the same abstract space that Robert works in, suggesting local and the extra-local influences in the space he works within. In fact, it may be argued that boundaries between the local and the extra-local, whether

national, transnational or international, may be difficult to demarcate as it appears that Robert's work practices, in particular the literacy practices associated with the administration of the business, strongly show "the penetration of modern institutions into the tissue of everyday life" ([Giddens, 1994: 59](#)), which is the hallmark of modernity and the embedding and disembedding that has occurred in the process of modernization. Such modernization is evident not only in the presence of textually-mediated social organisation but also in the orders of discourse that have entered the spatiality that contains everyday life.

5.9 Languages, literacies and texts for knowledge exchange

Study One provided a 'horizontal slice of life' as to how a single individual managed their daily work life with more than one language at their disposal. Robert, a native speaker of Maltese with limited communicative competence in English, was observed to face both official languages on a daily basis for work purposes, and at times Malta's third unofficial language, Italian. Whether designing aluminium fixtures, marking parts for identification or fulfilling orders, the use of these languages was observed. Maltese was his native language but was observed to use English when referring to numbers, such as mathematical calculations, pricing and money. The alternation between languages, referred to as codeswitching or translanguaging in the literature, tends to be associated with informal usage ([Gardner-Chloros, 1997; 2009](#)).

The presence of both vernacular and dominant literacies emerged in the investigation of work premises as well as the day-to-day work practices of the person selected for this study. Vernacular literacies appeared in the scratch notes around the workshop, on paper and on other surfaces. The alternation between languages was also evident in his writing; given the link between language and literacy ([Clark and Ivanič, 1997: 10](#)), this observation may be extended to the use of the mixing of languages in his vernacular literacies. In addition, it appeared that the participant relied on the use of both standard orthography as well as his own personal style of spelling. The example shown in the previous section,

'W/CLEAR D/G ALUM PJUR WHITE', may not have been considered as a form of formal, or dominant, literacy at first, as it was not written in standard orthography. However, it appears to be understood not only by himself but also by individuals working in the trade. Hence this may be defined as a work-related literacy. Similar work-related writing appeared on texts that appear to be directly related to the trade, such as references to fenestration.

The work-related texts also pointed out two things. First, Robert was part of a community of practice composed of local tradespeople in the aluminium fenestration industry, a social institution in its own right, and second, he was a person who actively engaged in a network of knowledge exchange. The text with mathematical formulae and notes (Figure 5.8) consisted of notes written by different tradespeople at different times and in different locations, suggesting that this knowledge is handed down via the network; it appears that this technical knowledge is not formally taught as an accredited course, but through informal learning. Applying Giddens' (1994: 84) analysis on expertise and expert knowledge, it becomes clear that the technical knowledge that Robert gained over the course of his involvement in the trade is a form of non-local and decentred knowledge, disembedded from local context; the document (Figure 5.8) shows that although the expertise was gained from other tradespeople in other locales, he was able to apply it to his own needs and own location. He also accumulated this expert knowledge through processes of technical specialisation that reveal "growing institutional reflexivity, such that there are regular processes of loss and reappropriation of everyday skills and knowledge" (Giddens, 1994: 84). The trade is an institution, based on synoptic knowledge devoid of any local attachment, like nature-knowledge. This kind of expertise is based on impersonal principles that can be shared within a knowledge system, what Giddens refers to as an expert system (Giddens, 1990: 22). Such an expert system is a disembedding mechanism that not only delocalises knowledge, but also involves "the reorganization of social relations across broad time-space bands" (Giddens, 1994: 85). Thus, Robert may be seen to be involved in a network that is able to share synoptic knowledge, in addition to being reflexive about his skills over the years.

The choice of language in the document with distinctive formulae is also worth noting. Taking the text as a social space ([Fairclough, 1995: 6](#)), the document may be interpreted as fulfilling both ideational and interpersonal functions, communicating knowledge through a genre understood by the technical community. The vocabulary displayed on the sheet suggests that this trade uses a particular mixture of Maltese, English and Italian, and could be considered an ‘order of discourse’ understood and used by the local community of tradespeople specializing in aluminium works. As members of this social institution, they would have their own speech community; this ‘order of discourse’ is arguably representative of a form of specialised knowledge that is “a universal in a network” ([Latour, 1993: 24](#)). As mentioned before, this is a trade that is not formally taught in educational institutions, and hence may be lacking in a degree of formalisation associated with other vocational trades that undergo formal certification and licencing, such as masonry and carpentry ([JobsPlus, 2019a](#)). As a result, it may not have an ‘order of discourse’ which depends on a standard language variety, as found in books and manuals issued by formal institutions, but one which evolved as a by-product of the construction industry. Indeed, Robert attained certification after demonstrating his skills to a local importer on behalf of the national employment and training agency. This is an instance of experience being quantified into a recognizable format within the system of objectified relations, passing into a system based on textual organisation. The certificate issued by the agency is interesting, issued in what is demonstrably a dominant literacy and a dominant ‘order of discourse’ without any language mixing; the selection of English as the sole language may signify that the text represents a different type of network, in this case the extra-local “ruling relations” that recognise skills for employment on a national and transnational level.

A selection of formal texts that Robert encounters in the work domain, produced by local organisations, index the “objectified relations” he participates in as a client. These documents are not technical in content, but rather have to do with payment for services of a commercial nature. It appears that invoices are typically presented in a dominant literacy, using formal language. Once again, taking the text as a social space in which knowledge is being structured for communication, it could be said that contents must be standardized in a format understood between the formal organisation and the client. Money is a

disembedding mechanism, a symbolic token that must be understood as “a universal in a network” (Latour, 1993: 24), and the same may be said of writing and texts. These texts co-ordinate the social relations that exist between Robert and these organisations as objectified and impersonal, as supplier and client, and these “objectified relations” are signalled by the ‘orders of discourse’ in the texts. These documents were issued by a variety of entities such as government-based organisations and private commercial institutions. The choice of language was unlike that found in the vernacular texts; in monolingual texts, English is the typical choice, whilst in bilingual texts, languages are not mixed. Choice of language may be indicative of how these impersonal social relations are structured. Moreover, these impersonal and “objectified relations” are characterised by dominant literacies and the dominant forms of the languages used. Applying Foucault’s concept of ‘order of discourse’ and the text as a ‘site of struggle’, it appears that Maltese is excluded as a language; it may be that Maltese is not likely to be the language of “objectified relations” extended across time and space for these private institutions and organisations. On the other hand, it appears that Maltese is more likely to be a language of high presence-availability, indexing co-presence rather than impersonal, objectified relations. Maltese and English appear to occupy different social spaces.

5.10 Conclusion

To conclude, the main aim was to determine what could be responsible for the ‘higher-order regularities’ responsible for the differences in the way Maltese and English are used in organisational texts. Language appears to represent different conceptual orders found in texts, indexing different social relations, in particular “objectified relations” which constitute the “ruling relations”. Moreover, such practices also suggest that for people to be able to exchange knowledge, knowledge is likely to be in a form that allows its exchange. This is why synoptic knowledge needs to be abstract knowledge, codified in a manner that allows its exchange over time and space. Knowledge is objectified and organized within discursive practices. It is possible that the two official languages are associated with forms of discursive organisation in connection with the type of social

relations that are involved, and the kind of objectified relations typical of modern institutions and organisations may be more impersonal. So far, English appears to be the more likely language to establish objectified relations; these objectified relations appear to be influenced by extra-local influences that may not be immediately evident. Maltese is more likely to be found in public texts issued by government entities. However, reasons as to why Maltese is less likely to be used for objectified relations for private institutions are not yet clear, nor why English appears to be the preferred language. At this stage it is most probable that the choice of language for written purposes depends on the type of objectified relations being indexed as well as the type of knowledge being objectified for exchange. Study Two investigates the use of literacy within a government agency, taking up the same concepts discussed in Study One for further analysis, using conceptualisations from institutional ethnography (see Smith, [1990a](#); [1990b](#)) as well as the concept of regionalisation (see [Goffman, 1959](#); [Giddens, 1981](#)).

Chapter SIX: Language and objectified relations in a government agency

6.1 Organisations for governance: a government organisation

Following the pilot study, the next step was to focus on the texts of a governmental or parastatal entity to further investigate what could be the ‘higher-order regularities’ that may be responsible for choice of language in institutional texts. The previous case study pointed towards the use of both official languages in invoices issued by governmental entities such as EneMalta, the national energy provider ([EneMalta, 2019](#)) and GO plc, a major telecommunications company that started off as the first national telecommunications company in Malta ([GO, 2019](#)). These texts are primarily intended for the general public. Government organisations serve the nation-state in a manner that is different to private, commercial entities. Scott ([2014: 119](#)) observes that the nation-state is unique in terms of its governing apparatus:

“in our own time, and since the dawn of the modern era, the nation-state has been allocated – is constituted in such a way as to exercise – special powers and prerogatives (Krasner 1993). As Streeck and Schmitter (1985: 20) pointed out, the state is not simply another actor in the environment of an organisation: ‘its ability to rely on legitimate coercion’ make it quite a distinctive type of actor. All organisations are correctly viewed as ‘governance structures’ but the state is set apart. Lindblom (1977: 21) succinctly concludes: ‘The special character of government as an organisation is simply that governments exercise authority over other organisations.’ ”

The nation-state influences all other organisations, providing the legal and institutional framework that influences governance ([Campbell and Lindberg, 1990: 637](#)). The nation-state is defined as one of the two great rationalizers of the second half of the twentieth century, having a considerable influence on most other organisations ([DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 147](#)). There is a link between organisations and rationalisation, a form of

social action defined as “the creation of cultural schemes defining means-ends relationships and standardising systems of control over activities and actors” ([Scott and Meyer, 1994: 3](#)). Organisations managed by the nation-state for its administration may be considered the interface between the individual and the nation-state. In the case of EneMalta and GO plc, these are two major organisations starting off as national entities serving the needs of the state and its residents. Also, these organisations need to be in contact with the clients they serve – the public - and so must communicate accordingly; therefore, the link between national entities and the use of bilingual texts in the public domain may not be accidental.

The second great rationaliser of the twentieth century is the professions ([DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 147](#)). According to Evetts ([1998: 52](#)), “the modern state is a state of professions”; professions are associated with a particular phase of state development and can only exist if certain environmental conditions are present. The professions “collectively constitute part of the regulating system of industrial society” (ibid.). The modern nation-state is not only dependent on professionally and technically trained personnel to develop its economy, but also to deliver services for the benefit of public well-being and health. In knowledge-based, service sector work, such personnel are to be found increasingly in organisations ([Evetts, 2012: 1](#)). In the process of influencing organisations within its jurisdiction, the nation-state is also dependent on bureaucratisation ([DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 147](#)). Rationalisation has been achieved through the process of bureaucratisation, which remains a common organisational form. Bureaucratisation is associated with a division of labour involving the information, knowledge, reasoning, decision making and control, and a complex of relations that administer, manage, and organise ([Smith, 1990b: 8](#)). This division of labour is dependent on a social structure dependent on mediated relationships, with texts connecting people through various activities, and as a result written language may play an important part in the complex processes dependent on texts. The texts that are meant to be shared amongst in-members of the organisation as well as other organisations point to the practice of rationalisation, suggesting that knowledge must be in a format conducive to efficient and effective communication amongst the various professionally and technically trained individuals

working within such networks spread over time and space, commonly working within objectified relationships that are mediated by texts.

Yet texts are not all equal in the knowledge exchange systems that are created by these networks. As will be discussed over the course of this chapter, texts are linked to social practices that may be described as *regionalised*; Giddens ([1981: 41](#)) discusses regionalisation of social practices:

“The regionalisation of locales is important in the concealment or visibility of social practices, a phenomenon of no small significance for the analysis of power relations. One mode of conceptualising the regional concealment/visibility of forms of social interaction, or episodes, is the differentiation of front and back regions suggested by Goffman (1959).”

Goffman ([1959: 114 – 129](#)) proposed that performativity within an institution could be classified into two broad categories: the back region (backstage) and the front region (frontstage). Some social practices may be found within the front region of performativity and have texts that are meant to be shared with the public, namely non-members of the organisation, whilst other social practices may be strictly back region, such as administrative practices. These social practices are routine activities involved in the exchange of knowledge within networks, and such networks may involve people from different professions, loosely linked across time and space, as will be shown in this chapter. Perhaps one way of understanding language choice in texts is by contextualising texts as carriers of synoptic knowledge circulating within objectified relations that are essentially knowledge exchange systems created for the management of knowledge; such systems are largely dependent on literacy practices and literacy events. It is suggested that choice of language (or semiotic) is strongly influenced by the type of objectified relations people participate within to pass on synoptic knowledge in the format necessary. In understanding choice of language and societal bilingualism, the issue of spatiality created by these networks and objects becomes an important factor in determining ‘higher-order regularities’ which may be traced to extra-local influences that are beyond the immediate social space.

The following chapter provides a descriptive account of the entity being analysed, followed by the analyses of a selection of literacy practices and texts involved in the exchange of objectified knowledge within objectified relations.

6.2 The government agency: social welfare services

The government entity under study is one of three agencies within the Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS) (Figure 6.1), which is an entity that is currently within the remit of the Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity; these agencies are known as *Aġenzija Appoġġ*, *Aġenzija Sapport* and *Aġenzija Sedqa*. Established in 1994, *Aġenzija Sedqa* is “a national executive and non-profit making agency that is fully-funded by the state and works in the field of substance abuse, compulsive gambling and other dependencies” ([FSWS, 2019d](#)) and is responsible for the delivery of prevention and care services. As an organisation it can lay claim to a bureaucratic apparatus for governance, with its own formal organisation, led by an operations director, a clinical director, a manager for each division within the agency, supported by the corporate services of FSWS (*ibid*). Personnel are recruited through public calls ([FSWS, 2019b](#)). It is also responsible for specialised medical services besides a variety of psycho-social of services, pointing towards multidisciplinary teams working in unison. In many respects, this government agency is like a non-profit organisation, focusing on the social wellbeing of society at large; in organisation theory, Daft ([2013: 13](#)) notes that personnel in non-profit organisations direct their efforts towards generating social impact, and their coordinated efforts include the organisation of people and resources to accomplish such ends.

Language: English · A A A SignUp SIGN IN

fsws.gov.mt

Main > SEDQA > Overview

YOU MAY BE INTERESTED

- Overview
- For Kids
- Prevention Services
- Care Services
- Supportline 179
- Downloads
- FAQs
- Weblinks
- Contact Us

Overview

MISSION STATEMENT

To plan and recommend developments and updates to the National Policy in the field of drug and alcohol abuse and compulsive gambling, and to provide service in health promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation to persons with drug and/or alcohol problems and other similar conditions, and to their families, so as to help them live a stable life and to integrate better in society.

VISION STATEMENT

Aġenzija Sedqa aims to increase public awareness of the harm caused by addictive behaviours and imparts skills in order to prevent or to delay the development of such patterns. It also supports persons who have developed an addiction and their significant others to modify their lifestyles so as to lead a healthier and more satisfying life whilst becoming productive citizens within society. Aġenzija Sedqa seeks to do this whilst maintaining high ethical and professional standards in all its interventions with every individual who seeks its assistance.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The word sedqa has been derived from the phrase of the national Maltese anthem - *seddaq il-għaqda fil-Maltin u s-sliem*. This means "to enhance" or "to consolidate". Aġenzija Sedqa is a national executive and non-profit making agency that is fully-funded by the state and works in the field of substance abuse, compulsive gambling and other dependencies. Together with Aġenzija Appoġġ and Aġenzija Sapport, it forms part of the Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS) and its remit covers the provision of care, prevention and research services with regard to drugs and alcohol abuse, compulsive gambling and other dependencies.

Prior to 1993, there were several disjointed services in the field of drug and alcohol abuse. A working committee was set up to evaluate these services, identify areas that need further attention and forward recommendations. By August 1993, the working committee presented the Meli Report (named after the chair of the working committee, then Magistrate Dr Silvio Meli), recommending a reform in the sector. This change had to include the setting up of an executive co-ordinating agency to provide services within the specific field.

In January 1994, a National co-ordinating body was set up to forward proposals for the reform mentioned in the Meli Report. By April 1994 and after consultation with various foreign professionals in related fields, a final document of what measures could be taken, was presented to the then Minister for Home Affairs and Social Development. Following that, Aġenzija Sedqa, the National Agency Against Drug and Alcohol Abuse, was officially set up on the 26th June 1994. Incidentally, the 26th June is the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

The Aġenzija Sedqa is led by an Operations Director, a Clinical Director and 3 Managers. Aġenzija Sedqa provides both Prevention and Care Services. These are continuously supported by the Corporate Services of the Foundation for Social Welfare Services.

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FSWS	APPOGG	SEDQA	CHILDWEBALERT
Overview	Out-of-Home-Care Programme	Overview	Overview
Latest News and Articles	Intake and Protection Services	Prevention Services	Latest News
Research and Reports	Health and Family Services	Care Services	Types of Online Abuse
Tenders and Public Calls	Community Services	For Kids	Report Abuse
Vacancies	Children and Young Parents Support Services	FAQs	

Figure 6. 1 Aġenzija Sedqa: overview, available in English only (FSWS, 2019d)

The agency has connections with a number of local and international organisations for professional training; the Foundation regularly invites internal, external and oversees professionals to offer its personnel continuous professional development, besides

participating in numerous conferences locally and abroad. In addition, the agency collaborates with other organisations in local and international research initiatives.

As with most other government departments and agencies in Malta, the Foundation has no explicit language scheme policy regarding language use for its operations. However, the following decision reveals its position vis-à-vis language and communication with the public:

“Conscious of the importance of handling complaints in a highly efficient and professional manner, the Foundation has committed itself to ensure that in every Agency and in prominent places in the customer care areas, boards were put up in both the Maltese and English languages with information to service users on their right to complain and the procedures that have to be followed when filing a complaint.” ([FSFW, 2014: 20](#)).

The use of both official languages is also evident in the literature given to the general public. The agency Head Office, located in Santa Venera, has offices for its personnel as well as facilities for clients who make use of its services. People visiting the agency are greeted by a receptionist in the reception area; the walls are decorated with posters in both languages promoting positive life styles, and leaflets for the general public are available for reading on the premises and for retention. In addition to literature published by the Foundation and other agencies concerned with public health, at the time while I was visiting the premises, I came across a bilingual in-house publication called SOLID, a magazine published by the Maltese Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity, aimed at public service employees engaged with the ministry.

The Foundation has its own webpage, with links to the three agencies it manages ([FSWS, 2014: 35](#); [2019a](#)). The agency also has a Facebook page which is used to inform the public about its activities ([FSWS, 2013: 15](#)). In many ways, the FSWS website offers the general public ‘virtual’ access to the foundation and its agencies, acting like a reception room in a physical building, providing information, news and articles in connection with its activities. The website is hosted in the English language, with most news items and articles published in the English language. Clicking on the ‘Research and Reports’ link under

‘Quick Links’ takes the reader to a page with downloadable reports, most of which are monolingual publications in the English language (FSWS, 2019l). Educational material for the public is available from the agency websites; the downloadable material in connection with *Agenzija Sedqa* will be discussed in Section 6.3 below.

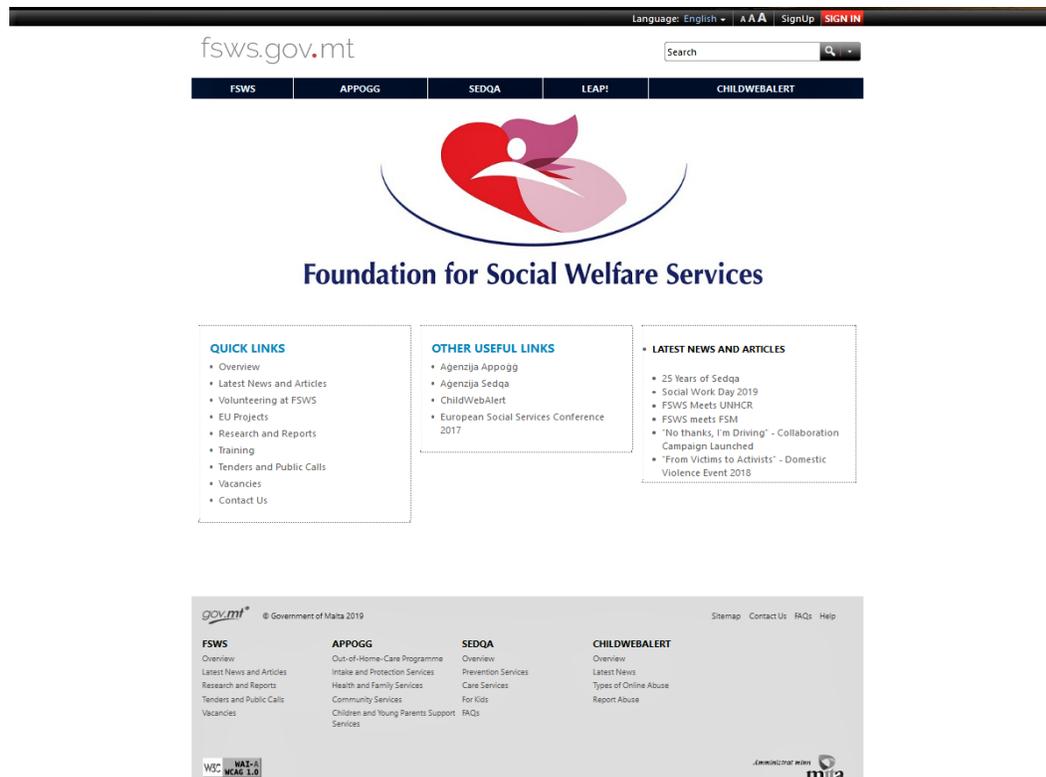


Figure 6. 2 The FSWS homepage, available in English only (FSWS, 2019a)

Under ‘Other Useful Links’ one finds a hypertext link to *Agenzija Sedqa*, the homepage, as shown in Figure 6.3 below. The ‘Quick Links’ section on the Sedqa welcome webpage (FSWS, 2019c) provides readers with background information on the agency in addition to its mission and vision statement (Figure 6.1).

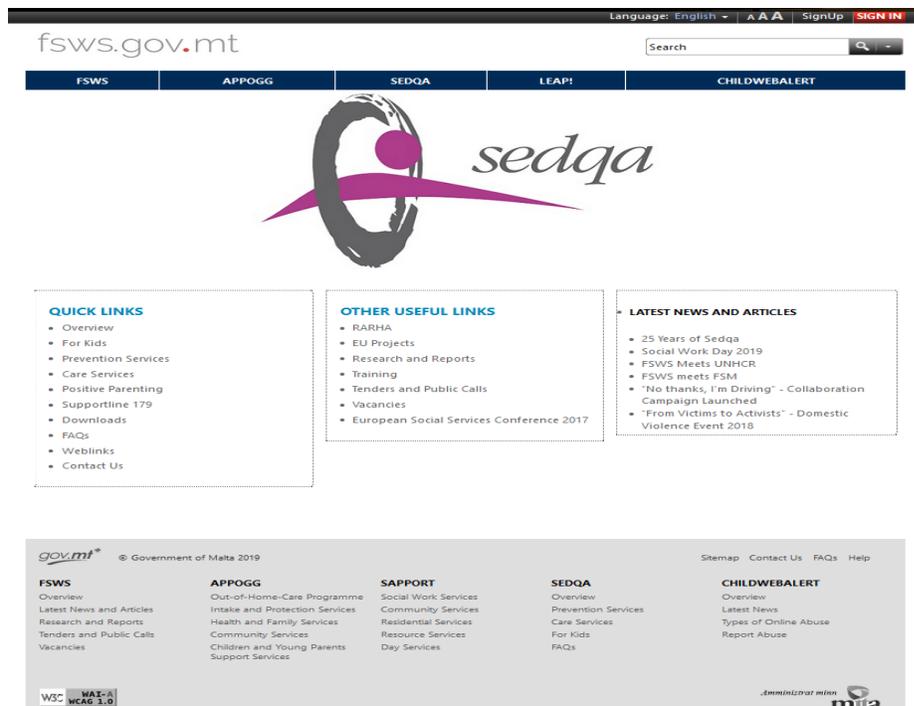


Figure 6. 3 The *Agenzija Sedqa* homepage, available in English only (FSWS, 2019c)

6.2.1 Prevention and Intervention Services: texts and social practices

Study One provided reflection for the conceptual background for this case study. Using the same conceptual framework based on institutional ethnography, this is an organisational system dependent on objectified relations of ruling and textually-mediated social organisation (Smith, 2005: 10 - 13). Unlike Study One, this was an entity that had a clear bureaucratic organisation with its own distinct departments and sections, with personnel given distinct roles and assigned specific duties.

Four personnel participated in this study, most of whom regularly participated in the delivery of prevention programmes through on-site sessions in various organisations in Malta, offering assistance and giving information for the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse; of these, one was their supervisor. For the purpose of this study, they are provided with names to protect their identity. They are Daniela, Ivy, John and Andrew. A fifth participant, Ann, co-delivered a session with John, who was the team leader for the

Daniela, Ivy and Ann. Andrew was part of the Drugs Intervention Team, dealing with clients who were combatting drug addiction and seeking recovery. These participants, all university graduates, were fluent in both official languages, and used both languages in the delivery of their work and practices. Select social practices were taken into consideration, such as the delivery of sessions off-site, and hence participating in objectified relations as a result of their professional roles. The type of relationship that these professionals have with their clients could possibly be described as secondary relationships, extending beyond family and friends and involving some form of mediation and co-presence ([Lyons, 2005: 228](#)). The particular roles that these individuals fulfilled in the course of their routine duties was of importance to the study. In direct contact with the public, these front-line public workers, or ‘street-level bureaucrats’ ([Lipsky, 1980](#)), are “public service workers who interact directly with citizens in the course of their jobs, and who have substantial discretion in the execution of their work...[and] ... supply goods and services to the public” ([Akosa and Assara, 2017](#)). In working in direct contact with the public and with their organisation, they may be described as the interface between the public and the organisation, involved in the execution of the goals of the organisation.

Data for this case study was collected using ethnographic methods as Study One, such as observation of sessions and interviews, however there were some changes in approach. Whilst focusing on the use of language and writing in social practices, this time round I introduced the participant diary ([Bhatt and Martin-Jones, 1995](#); [Jones, Martin-Jones and Bhatt, 2000](#)) to allow participants volunteering for the study to monitor their own language practices. Also, I was given the opportunity to accompany participants on their visits to schools and other community centres, observing how sessions were delivered; these are some of the social practices the facilitators engage in on a regular basis as part of their work in the public domain as street-level bureaucrats. The SPEAKING model developed by Hymes ([1974: 54 – 62](#); [Johnstone, 2000: 96](#)) was used to map the field under observation, reconstructing the observed variables during a typical session which used both oral and written language. It is used to categorise a speech event into eight different components for analysis; the term is a mnemonic for setting, participants, ends, act sequence, key, instrumentalities, norms and genre ([Hymes, 1974: 54 – 62](#)). It also proved to be an invaluable tool for initial notetaking and contextualisation of data. In the data

collection phase, I was careful to avoid any sessions or information that could potentially compromise the participants as well as the clients they worked with, such as children and adolescents.

In the analysis, I classified the off-site sessions and client intervention as the frontstage social practices ([Goffman, 1959: 114 - 129](#)) and their activities behind the scenes, such as administration and professional communication via dossiers, as backstage. A sample of texts used in these social practices were passed on to me. Other texts produced by the agency were collected for analysis. As with the social practices, texts were divided into two main categories: frontstage and backstage. The agency has in circulation a number of texts that the public may collect from its head office, from programmes delivered offsite in the community via facilitators and for download from its website. The backstage texts are organisational texts (see [Darville, 1995](#)) which are not in circulation and are used for internal operations. The distinction between the use of Maltese and English for written texts became clearer once the concept of regionalisation ([Giddens, 1981: 41](#); [Goffman, 1959: 114 - 129](#)) was applied to social practices as a starting point.

6.3 Prevention services: frontstage texts

According to their website, which is hosted in the English language, *Agenzija Sedqa* offers a series of prevention programmes designed for people of all ages. Its facilitators are trained to deliver sessions on a variety of life skills for children and teenagers, visiting educational institutions, communities and organisations around Malta as part of its national strategy. A complete list of services offered to the public are listed under Prevention and Care Services webpages of the agency (FSWS, [2019e](#); [2019f](#); [2019h](#)) providing the public with a variety of primary prevention and intervention services tailored to the needs of individuals, communities as well as other organisations. Outreach is documented in the annual statistical reports published by the agency; according to the latest annual statistical report the Primary Prevention Team recorded 1000 hours of intervention, reaching out to

nearly 39,000 individuals through its various programmes, which includes schoolchildren and the general public ([Marchand-Agius, 2019: 6](#)).

Besides interactive sessions designed to create awareness and basic knowledge on substance abuse, the agency produces educational texts which have been designed for distribution to participants of these sessions, published in both official languages. These texts may be considered as symbolic tokens, what Giddens ([1990: 22](#)) calls “media of interchange”, to be circulated amongst participants seeking to educate themselves on substance abuse and addictions. The distribution of such material is documented in the yearly statistical reports published by the agency (see Marchand-Agius, [2014](#); [2015](#); [2016](#); [2017](#); [2018](#); [2019](#)); for example, during the year 2018, over 22,000 items were distributed ([Marchand-Agius, 2019: 6](#)). Some of this literature is also available on the agency website for download; at the time of writing this included publications for use within primary and secondary schools, as well as leaflets and booklets for distribution for the general public ([FSWS, 2019i](#)). The selection of texts available for download are frontstage texts for non-members of the organisation, such as clients and the general public, and as texts provide an interesting perspective on how these objectified relations between non-members and the government agency are organised. As providers of prevention and care programmes, they aim to educate the general public of all ages and walks of life, and most of the educational material provided is either in Maltese or English, or both (See [Appendix, Section D](#)). When the agency was first launched, educational material for the general public was paper-based, but with the gradual shift to technological media, including social media, the agency also sought to add interactive CDs to its programmes, develop internet-based programmes and make use of network sites such as Facebook ([FSWS, 2013: 350](#)). This sample of ‘frontstage texts’ reveal a variety of text forms such as monolingual workbooks, monolingual versions of the same leaflet as well as single bilingual texts. Included in this list is a number of concertina-style leaflets published as a series called ‘*Nixtieq Inkun Naf Aktar Dwar/I would like to know more about*’ ([Sedqa, n.d.a](#)). Each leaflet deals with a single theme. These leaflets are also available as printed material, distributed as a set of educational material in a paper pocket, as shown in Figure 6.4. These information packs were distributed in the observed sessions designed for post-secondary students and community members. In addition to this above material, there is also a

webpage for downloadable colouring sheets featuring characters from the **T.F.A.L. 1** and **2** workbooks; the colouring sheets have no text, yet it was noted that the text introducing the webpage was in the English language ([FSWS, 2019j](#)). There are other texts that are not on the download page, such as the bilingual educational material for the **T.F.A.L. 3** programme (see Section 6.4.1). The use of these texts as symbolic tokens for circulation amongst the general public in frontstage practices will be discussed in Section 6.4 below.



Figure 6. 4 SEDQA Information Pack used for distribution to general public

6.4 Prevention services: frontstage social practices for the exchange of knowledge

Practices concerning the exchange of knowledge were organised as frontstage and backstage practices. A total of eight off-site sessions were observed, covering a selection of prevention sessions delivered in two primary state schools (five sessions), a post-secondary vocational institution (two sessions) and a football nursery (one session). These were categorised as frontstage practices as they involved *Sedqa* personnel interacting with the public. As street-level bureaucrats they were the members of the organisation

responsible for the distribution of resources, i.e. knowledge. Whilst these sessions had different audiences, they were all examples of practices involving the exchange of objectified (synoptic) knowledge by individuals participating within objectified relations. Such exchanges depended on a number of literacy events that were dependent upon the use of “media of interchange” ([Giddens, 1990: 22](#)) such as language, texts and objects circulated within routinised practices linked to global influences. These were mostly practices involving the communication of knowledge from member (expert) to non-expert (non-member). On the other hand, some literacy practices involved the flow of communication from non-members to these ‘street-level bureaucrats’, such as when class teachers were asked to provide feedback about the programme.

The exchange of knowledge via objectified relations may also be linked to the manner spatiality is impacted. For objectified knowledge to be exchanged, social space must be set up in a manner to allow the flow of symbolic tokens to take place. The social frontstage practices may occur within local spaces, however it is evident that knowledge exchange via material and media within objectified relations may also be taken as the means by which local space is ‘interpenetrated’ by global influences; in all sessions, media linking the local with the global was noted, indicating that social spaces are polyvalent spaces. Macro-level influences such as knowledge obtained from non-local sources were presented in local spaces, with *Aġenzija Sedqa* as a meso-level institution linking the local with the global. The issue of language choice for the transmission of knowledge is arguably the manifestation of such local and global influences, where the use of Maltese and English represent local space and global influences respectively.

6.4.1 Knowledge exchange, texts and language choice in a primary school setting

The sessions observed in the primary schools were part of a prevention programme offered on a national basis for Year Three pupils, who would be typically between the ages of 7 and 8. This was the B.A.B.E.S Programme (Beginning Alcohol and Addictions Basic Education Studies), an American primary prevention programme founded in 1979 ([BABES World Inc, 2015](#)). A key feature of this programme is the use of puppets for

storytelling. This programme has been delivered annually to all schools in Malta since 1995, reaching out to approximately 4000 children a year ([The Times of Malta, 2007](#)). Schoolchildren are also provided with a bilingual BABES endorsed workbook, a small pocket-sized diary and a bookmark, as shown in Figure 6.5 ([Sedqa, n.d.b](#)). These are used in class and taken home after the programme is concluded.



Figure 6. 5 The bilingual educational material for the B.A.B.E.S Programme (T.F.A.L. 3)

The two state schools visited were in the Inner Harbour Region and the Western Region respectively. Education in primary state schools is co-educational. This was an opportunity to see one of the four facilitators, referred to as Daniela in the study, bringing the programme into the pupils' classrooms as a 'street-level bureaucrat'. The programme is an example of how global influences can 'interpenetrate' the local in terms of social space channelled via a meso-level institution. In providing this service, Daniela shares knowledge with the help of objects such as written texts and puppets. Daniela delivered

the six-session programme in each school, one session a week, each lasting around 50 minutes.

The layout of the schools was typical of most state schools built over the 20th century, with two-storey buildings enclosed behind walls with gates. Playgrounds doubled as assembly spaces. Classes overlooking the playgrounds were interconnected via corridors and had large windows to allow plenty of natural light into the rooms. Besides rooms designated as classrooms, there were offices for administrative staff and other educational activities, such as libraries. All classes were equipped with desks and chairs, interactive whiteboards with projector as well as regular whiteboards. The pupils' desks and chairs faced these boards, linked together in rows or in groups. The teachers' desks were in a corner facing the children's desks, alongside the whiteboards. The wall along the teacher's desks had cupboards for pupil resources, with pupils' colour-coded exercise books and other texts in neat piles; one such textbook was the BABES Programme workbook (Figure 6.5). The classrooms were also equipped with desktop computers, which were set on desks edged against the walls. The walls were used to display educational wallcharts, produced by the teacher as well as the pupils. Learning material on the wall included learning how to tell the time, the days of the week and weather reports; the language of this learning material was predominantly in English. There were also instances of the pupils' handiwork in connection with the BABES programme, such as colouring sheets featuring the BABES puppets. The space above the seated children was also utilised; their colourful papercrafts were strung diagonally across the room. Each class had around 16 pupils. The class teacher would be present in the class during the delivery, seated at her corner desk, correcting homework or doing administrative work whilst Daniela delivered her session.

The sequence of each session would take a predictable pattern. It would start as a revision of the previous topics as the programme progresses save for the first session, leading into the theme of the day. This led to the story time slot using the BABES puppets, consolidating the theme of the day, followed by reading and writing activities using the set workbook. The final session ended with the pupils filling in the BABES certificate at the end of the workbook, which was presented in the Maltese language (Figure 6.6).

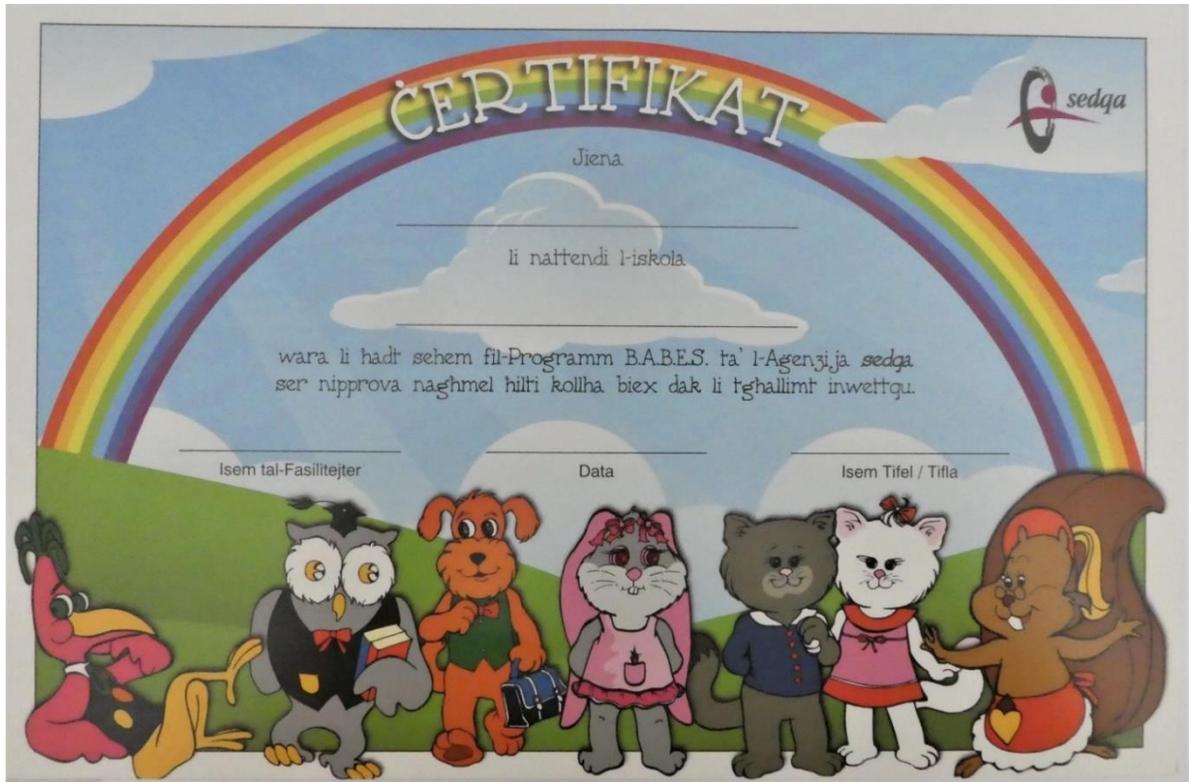


Figure 6. 6 The monolingual BABES programme certificate of participation

Knowledge exchange involved a series of literacy events, using texts such as a set of PowerPoint presentation slides for each topic and the bilingual workbook. This bilingual workbook was an example of presence in absence (Smith, 1990b: 211); in addition to providing knowledge of the set topics, it also provided pupils with contact details of the FSWS agencies as well as details of the national support line, SupportLine 179, printed on the back cover of the workbook. The inner back cover featured advice on internet usage and safety; this was presented in the English language. A small pocket-sized lined notebook with a bookmark was also provided to pupils; on the top of every page there was an inspirational message from the BABES workbook, from lesson one to lesson six, in both official languages. In the inside front cover, the poem *Jien Speċjali* [trans. *I am special*] is featured, whilst the inside back cover features a list of a child's rights (*drittijiet*) and obligations (*dmirijiet*). These were linked to the workbook, suggesting that intertextuality in the learning material plays an important part in the programme.

Mapping the event in terms of genre, defined as “a socially ratified way of using language in connection with a particular social activity” (Fairclough, 1995: 14), verbal interaction witnessed could be identified as typical classroom talk between teacher and young pupils, following norms of expected behaviour during the session. At the beginning of the session, norms of behaviour were through a literacy event. After setting up the PowerPoint presentation, she would formally greet the class, calling them out for attention after they put their school work away. She would establish the rules for behaviour during the session. If she asked them in Maltese, the children replied in English, and Daniela would write on the whiteboard in list form: **1. Respect 2. Listen 3. Hands up.** These rules were left on the board in plain sight for the duration of the session, and if necessary, pupils would be reminded of these rules during the sessions.

Daniela was provided with information by the class teacher about language preferences before she starts her programme with each class. Maltese was the main language used by Daniela and the pupils, and translanguaging with English was noted; studies by Camilleri (1995) and Farrugia (2017) show that such translanguaging is typical in classroom exchanges in primary and secondary schools. In fact, none of the sessions could be described as monolingual. One class had sessions delivered in English, as it had a greater proportion of children who were not native speakers of Maltese. However, this did not mean that the session was delivered exclusively in English; pupils asked questions in Maltese, and Daniela switched to accommodate her audience. An example of translanguaging was the following:

Daniela: *X'għamilna f'lesson three?* [trans. *what did we do in lesson three?*]

Daniela: (prompting) *X'kien it-title tal-lezzjoni? Kien jibda bis-C.* [trans. *What was the title of the lesson? It started with a C.*]

Pupil: **Coping skills.**

The delivery of the session at times proved to be a balancing act between English and Maltese, and in the oral delivery Daniela would switch from Maltese to English and back

to Maltese to ensure children understood the content, especially when having an audience of both Maltese and non-Maltese speakers. Another literacy event observed was the filling in of the course certificate of participation; when going round the class helping pupils fill out their certificate, Daniela interacted with pupils in the language of their choice. Overall, this could be interpreted as an example of Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) (Giles and Ogay, 2007), clearly showing that Daniela was attempting to meet the needs of both Maltese and English-speaking pupils.

In delivering the sessions, Daniela mode-switched (Baynham, 1995: 156) which is defined as “the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of different linguistic modes (i.e., spoken and written)”. She frequently referred to the written language and visuals on the PowerPoint presentation slides and what she wrote on the whiteboard during her oral interaction, eliciting ‘talk around text’ (Heath, 1983: 386). The presentation slides were mainly in English, with Maltese included to clarify the English terminology at times. In the session focusing on additions, the first slide introducing the session was in English, with the word ‘**Addiction**’ featured on it, together with types of addictions: **Drugs – Cigarettes – Alcohol**. The next slide had ‘**Alcohol**’ on the top (Figure 6.7), and although the slide has English text, she used Maltese to refer to wine [trans. *inbid*] and beer [trans. *birra*] in her oral delivery.

Alcohol
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wine • Beer • Spirits: Vodka & Whisky

Figure 6. 7 Schematic representation of presentation slide used in session, in English

Some slides had only visuals and no print, which she used to elicit pupils’ reactions; when she used Maltese, she received replies from pupils in both languages. Some slides had both languages. An example of such a slide was one entitled ‘**Alcohol Effects**’, which was split into two sections, with a picture of a human brain on the left and a human liver

on the right (Figure 6.8). She presented the information primarily in Maltese as “*Dan huwa moħħna u dan huwa l-fwied*” [trans. *This is our brain and this is our liver*] and then explained what the word liver means: *bl-Ingliż ngħidulu liver* [trans. *In English we call it liver*]. Reverting back to Maltese, she explained what the primary function of the liver was.

Alcohol Effects	
(visual)	(visual)
Our brain	Our liver
Il-moħħ	Il-fwied

Figure 6. 8 Schematic representation of presentation slide instructing children which organs are affected by alcohol, in English and Maltese

The following slide was in English, which included a number (Figure 6.9). This slide elicited a common practice amongst speakers of Maltese, which is referring to numbers in the English language (Cucciardi, 1990; Camilleri, 1995). An example of this practice is when Daniela tested their understanding: *Jekk nagħlaq seventeen, nista nixrob l-alkoħol?* [trans. *If I turn **seventeen**, can I drink alcohol?*]. The answer she gave was “*Iva, minn **seventeen** il-fuq*” [trans. *Yes, from the age of **seventeen** onwards*]. Daniela referred to her own age at one point, ‘*jiena ghandi **twenty-three***’ [trans. *I am **twenty-three***]. So, whilst most of the discourse on the age limit was in Maltese, English was frequently used to refer to age. This occurred in all sessions observed for the current study.

Age you can drink alcohol
17+

Figure 6. 9 Schematic representation of presentation slide instructing children on legal drinking age in Malta, in English

Another example of mode-switching as well as switching between the two languages in written communication was when she explained the difference between different types of drugs. In the sessions focusing on addictions, Daniela would draw a quadrant on the whiteboard, using a mixture of Maltese and English on the board to highlight the distinction for doses (Figure 6.10).

Legali	Illegali
<p>OK</p> <p>1 + 1 + 1</p> <p>3</p>	<p>BAD</p> <p>6</p>

Figure 6. 10 Schematic representation of quadrant used to illustrate the difference between legal and illegal drugs, in Maltese and English

After this, there were two separate slides, one defining ‘**Legal Drugs**’ and the other ‘**Illegal Drugs**’. The written definition for each was presented in English and read out in English, and then explained in Maltese. Another example of switching between two languages in the oral and written modes was when Daniela used a slide to reinforce information from the workbook; taking a warning on drugs and alcohol from page 33 of the workbook (Figure 6.11), Daniela involved the children by asking - in Maltese - who would like to volunteer reading it out loud: “*Min ħa jaqrah din?*” [trans. *Who will read this out?*]. One boy was selected, who read it out loud in English.



Figure 6. 11 Content from bilingual workbook used with Year 3 pupils

An integral part of the session was the use of puppets for storytelling. This meaning making activity was dependent on a literacy event to signal its start, using a presentation slide with the heading ‘**Puppet Show**’, with pictures of the puppet characters. Prior to commencing the activity, she relied on another a literacy event by reminding them of the rules of behaviour written on the board; in Maltese dominant sessions, she would ask them ‘*X’inhil r-regola tiegħi waqt il-puppet show?*’ [trans. *What is my rule during the puppet show?*] or in English dominant sessions, [**What’s my rule during the puppet show?**], prompting them to recall the list on the whiteboard in English, irrespective of language used. However, what is especially interesting about this particular event is the use of objects in this activity; these puppets were extra-local influences. Making reference to Latour (1993), Brandt and Clinton (2002: 346) discuss how objects are also important in linking the local and the global:

“According to Latour, the failure to incorporate things into our conceptions of social interactions causes the “breaks” in our social theories between macro and micro, agency and social structure, the local and the global. [...] Bringing objects into play, according to Latour, allows us to understand that society exists nowhere except in local situations but also to understand that, with the help of objects, lots of

different kinds of activities can be going on in and across local situations – including aggregating, globalising, objectifying, disrupting or dislocating.”

These puppets, in addition to the printed material provided as learning aids, link the local children in each classroom with other children participating in the programme both on a local level and global level, given that the programme is offered across educational centres across the United States as well as several other countries ([BABES World Inc, 2015](#)). This is an example of spatiality involving the interpenetration of local space by globalising influences, connecting people across time and space. It also suggests that language may also carry traces of such influences; in the case of translanguaging in Maltese and English, such as numbers, the use of English may be considered as global traces in local spaces.

Another literacy event involving talk around texts was the follow up exercises in the workbook. The workbook was a parallel bilingual text, with Maltese as the first language encountered in black text, followed by English in orange text. There were three questions to consolidate the learning outcomes of the session, each with three possible answers, of which one was correct (see Figure 6.12). In the meantime, Daniela used her PowerPoint presentation to show the pupils which page they should open their books. With the target page on the whiteboard, she would ask them to open their workbooks to the same page, for instance ‘*Sibu **page twenty** malajr*’ [trans. *Find **page twenty** quickly.*] or ‘*U sibu **page twenty** please.*’ [trans. ‘*And find **page twenty** please*’]. At one time Daniela responded to a pupil’s comment about the languages used for the exercises in the workbook: ‘*Iva, waħda bil-Malti u waħda bl-Ingliż*’ [trans. ‘*Yes, one in Maltese and one in English.*’]. In classes where interaction was mainly in Maltese, the focus was on the Maltese language text. To work on this exercise, Daniela used the interactive whiteboard to indicate which boxes to be ticked. She elicited responses by asking ‘*Liema hi t-tajba – **A, B** jew **C**?*’ [trans. *Which is the correct one – **A, B** or **C**?*] to which children reply, citing the correct answer using the English pronunciation of the letters. Daniela would touch the screen to tick the correct boxes on the interactive whiteboard, while the pupils filled in their own books.

Ir-Raba' Lezzjoni
Tagħrif dwar l-alkohol u sustanzi oħra.

4

Lesson Four
Information about alcohol and drugs.

IMMARKA T-TAJBA / MARK THE CORRECT ANSWER

1. Liema minn dawn fihom l-alkohol?
Which of these contain alcohol?



A. Meraq tal-Frott
A. Fruit juice



B. Il-halib
B. Milk



C. Il-birra
C. Beer

2. Wiehed xurba huwa?
An alcoholic is?



A. Bniedem hazin
A. A bad person



B. Bniedem b'saħħtu
B. A healthy person



C. Bniedem marid
C. A sick person

IMMARKA T-TAJBA / MARK THE CORRECT ANSWER

3. Il-medicini għandhom jintużaw biss meta:
You can only take medicine when:



A. Jaġġihomlok il-habib
A. A friend gives them to you



B. Jaġġihomlok it-tabib
B. The doctor gives them to you



C. Issibhom id-dar
C. You find them at home

4. L-alkohol u l-medicina mħallta fimmkien jaġġmluk tħossok:
Alcohol and medicine mixed together makes you feel:



A. Marid
A. Sick



B. Kuntent
B. Happy



C. Aktar kapaci
C. Talented

Figure 6. 12 Exercise from bilingual workbook used with Year 3 pupils

Classroom literacy events also involved reading out material in both official languages. Each topic had a poem in each language (see Figure 6.13). In each session, children volunteered to read out aloud a stanza each. The final literacy event in the programme involves the filling in of the BABES programme certificate to be found at the end of the workbook, which facilitators sign together with the children. As mentioned above, the certificate is printed in the Maltese language (see Figure 6.6).

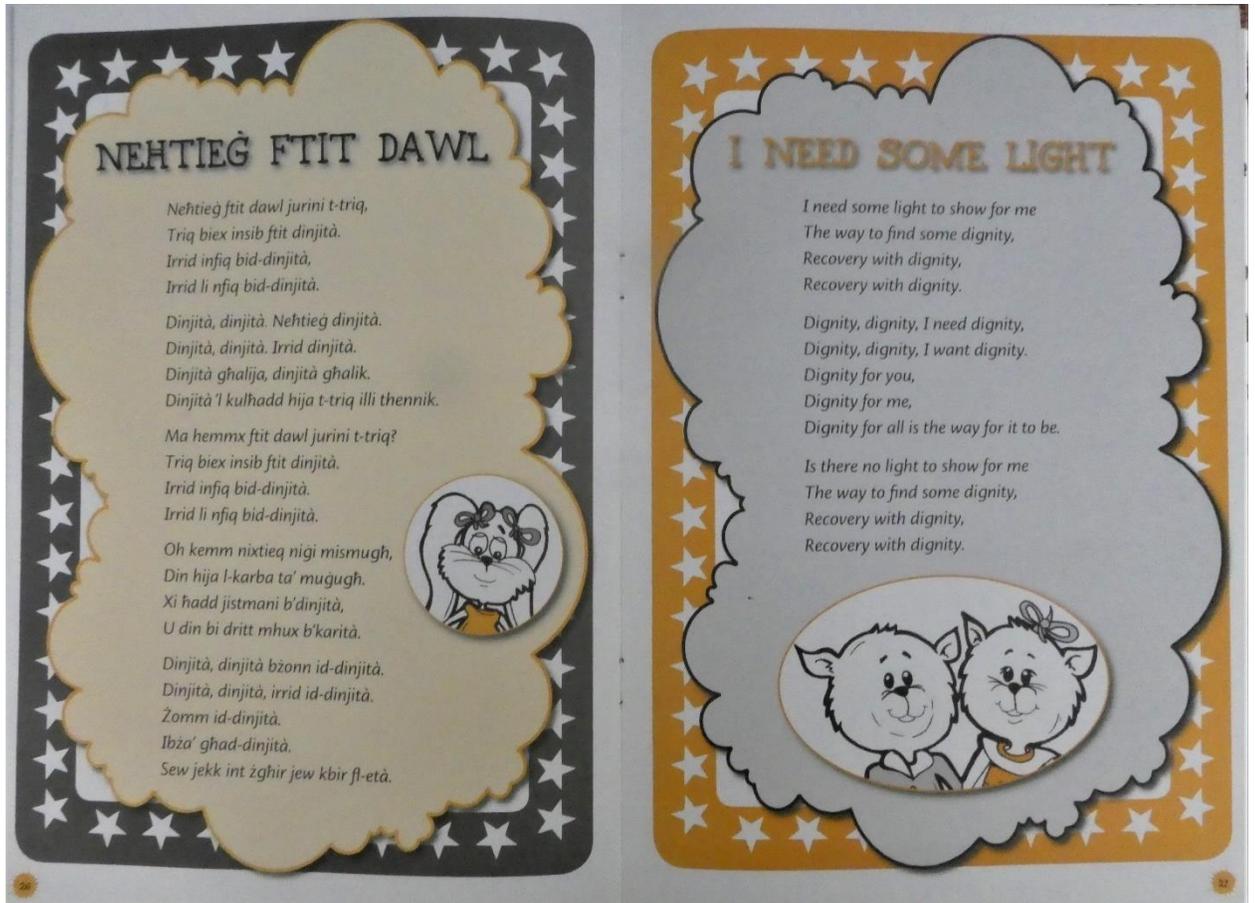


Figure 6. 13 Educational poem in Maltese and English (*Nehtieg ftit dawl/I need some light*)

Whilst the programme focused on the provision of knowledge directed towards the public, in this case young pupils, one particular literacy event of interest concerned the class teachers who actually provide the organisation with information for evaluation purposes. The BABES Programme Evaluation Sheet (see Figure 6.14) is given to teachers once the programme is completed, together with a self-addressed envelope. Available in English only, the two-page standardized form was a questionnaire focusing on all aspects of the BABES programme, allowing the teacher to provide feedback using a five-point Likert scale, the most popular type of closed-ended item, with numbers representing degrees of agreement with pre-set statements ([Dörnyei, 2007: 105](#)), with an opportunity for comments. It was interesting to note not only that such a text was in English, but the nature

of the text – a form – was significant, which will be later discussed in Section 6.5, dealing with backstage texts.

BABES Programme Evaluation Sheet

The *sefqa* Agency wishes to provide excellent services to all individuals involved in, or accessing, its programmes. The aim of the BABES programme (Beginning Alcohol and Addiction Basic Education Studies) is that of helping your students develop basic skills for happy and healthy living. By the end of the programme, the students should have become more aware of themselves and of their feelings, through:

- The building of positive self-image and high self-esteem (Session 1)
- Acquisition of skills for good decision-making so as to deal with peer pressure (Session 2)
- Changing what we *can* through the development of good coping-skills (Session 3)

Moreover, the last three sessions provide basic educational information about alcohol and other drugs (Session 4), about abuse (Session 5), and about where to get help in the case of victimization (Session 6). Whilst hoping that this goal has been accomplished successfully, we would appreciate your constructive feedback so as to improve, develop and re-evaluate the programme. We therefore encourage you to reflect on the statements put forward in this evaluation sheet.

Name of BABES Facilitator _____
 Name of School _____
 Name of Class Teacher _____
 Number of Students _____

Date of session delivery	1 st Session	2 nd Session	3 rd Session	4 th Session	5 th Session	6 th Session

The following statements discuss the structure, content and effectiveness of the BABES programme. For each statement please indicate if you; 1: Strongly disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Neither Agree or Disagree; 4: Agree or 5: Strongly Agree.

	1	2	3	4	5
1 The BABES programme is effective in reaching the above-mentioned goals.					
2 The language that the facilitators used during the delivery of the programme was sensitive to the children's level of maturity and understanding.					
3 The facilitator developed a positive relationship with the students.					
4 The type of delivery of the programme by the BABES facilitators influenced the effectiveness of the programme.					

For each statement please indicate if you; 1: Strongly disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Neither Agree or Disagree; 4: Agree or 5: Strongly Agree.

	1	2	3	4	5
5 The programme was delivered in a professional manner.					
6 45 minutes for each lesson is an appropriate length of time.					
7 Six sessions per class is an appropriate number of sessions					
8 The material presented in the BABES booklet is appropriate for year three students.					
9 If the facilitator does not have enough time the class teacher should complete the workbook material with her class.					
10 The BABES programme helped me gain further insight about my students.					

11) BABES is an effective programme.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neither Agree or Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Comments: _____

12) The BABES student booklet is useful.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neither Agree or Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Comments: _____

Further Comments or suggestions: _____

Figure 6. 14 BABES Programme Evaluation Sheet, available in English only

6.4.2 Knowledge exchange, texts and language choice in a post-secondary school setting

The sessions observed in a post-secondary vocational setting involved fewer literacy events when compared to the primary school sessions; sessions were mainly oral in delivery, with the addition of videoclips in the English language for discussion. These

sessions were offered as part of an ongoing programme in personal development (PD) for students taking key skills subjects such as Maltese, English, mathematics and science. Ivy took over the sessions, with the PD teacher present at the back of the room. These sessions were held for small groups of students; for the first session, a total of six people (five males, one female) were present, all in their late teens whilst the second session consisted of five male students. The two sessions were basically on the same theme, dealing with use of illegal drugs, the then recent changes to drug laws such as decriminalisation of some substances, and the concept of positive thinking for self-esteem.

The classrooms were equipped with the standard teacher and student desks and chairs, a whiteboard and an interactive whiteboard together with projector. Prior to the beginning of the session, students interacted amongst themselves, which was mainly in Maltese. Ivy and the teacher discussed some issues prior to the start of the session whilst setting up laptops for the session. The teacher took attendance, which was recorded electronically using MS Office Excel, just before introducing Ivy to the class.

The teacher introduced Ivy to the class as an *Aġenzija Sedqa* facilitator, highlighting her role and her subject area. He spoke to the students in Maltese, mentioning that she would be talking to them on ‘**topics relatati mal-PD u xi topics oħra**’ [trans. **topics** related to **PD** and some other **topics**]. He asked the students what they knew about Sedqa. One student pointed out the role of the agency in drug prevention; once this was established, Ivy took over to elaborate further on the agency. Ivy greeted the class with ‘**Bonġu**’ [trans. *Good morning*]. The first part of the session was about the role of *Aġenzija Sedqa* in the prevention of drug use by providing information to the general public and creating awareness. Although she mainly spoke in Maltese, she was observed to use English at times, as shown in Table 6.1 below, for both technical and non-technical terms.

Examples of translanguaging	English translation
‘Avvolja jkun hemm warning biss, hemm il-kondotta’.	Although there is only a warning , there is also conduct.
‘ Decriminalisation mhijiex easy kemm taħsbu.’	Decriminalisation is not as easy as you think.
‘ illegal highs ’tas- synthetics ’.	‘ Illegal highs ’... (of) synthetics
pakkett coke	a packet of coke
<i>jekk intkom</i> clean <i>jew m’intkomx</i>	you are either clean or you are not
<i>jrid jiffirma</i> every single day	you need to sign every single day
<i>drogi</i> synthetic	synthetic drugs
<i>Jekk tkunx</i> legal	If it’s legal

Table 6. 1 Examples of translanguaging during session with post-secondary students

Translanguaging was once again noted when talking about numbers. As part of her leading into the topic of positive thinking (*‘Illum ser nitkellmu fuq **positive thinking**. Hawn xi hadd li jista jgħidli x’inhu’*) [trans. *Today we are going to talk about **positive thinking**. Is there anybody here who can tell me what it is?*], numbers were used to for self-assessment in terms of self-esteem. For example, when Ivy asked the students to rate themselves on a scale ‘*minn **one to ten***’ [trans. *from **one to ten***], students used English to rate themselves in terms of numbers, such as ‘*Naħseb **eight***’ [trans. *I think an **eight***], ‘*Xi **seven jew eight***’ [trans. *A **seven or eight***], ‘**Nine**’, ‘**Five**’, ‘**Six**’. Ivy summarised their responses: ‘*bejn **five, seven u s-sinjorina qalet eight***’ [trans. *between **five, seven, and the young lady said eight***].

Over the course of the two talks, it emerged that the sessions did not rely heavily on texts as in the primary school sessions, such as printed books and a PowerPoint presentation. Instead, Ivy relied largely on oral delivery, which was structured around thematic videoclips used to illustrate pre-selected topics for discussion. If the definition of a text includes spoken discourse as well as “any cultural artefact” such as pictures ([Fairclough](#),

[1995: 4](#)), the discussions involving the subject matter before and after viewing videoclips may also be interpreted as ‘talk around text’. Prior to viewing them, Ivy explained that the upcoming video clips were in the English language and engaged with them to ensure that they were able to understand the content to be viewed. One was a four-minute video clip in British and American English, with an American amputee fitness trainer talking about childhood challenges and vision ([The Daily Mail, 2016](#)); another was a videoclip on positive thinking, presented in American English ([Kristen Lumen, 2014](#)). Noting that these videoclips were produced extra-locally and presented in two major varieties of English, these may be identified as ‘objects’ linking the global with the local, creating “Ariadne threads” ([Latour, 1993: 131](#)) filtering through local space. Discussion prior and after the viewings could be considered not only as talk around text, but also as talk concerning extra-local influences for local consideration. In the pre-talk to the second videoclip, Ivy translanguaged using English terminology in the original videoclip. For example, to emphasise the significance of the mind, she used terms used by the speaker, like ‘*Qisna għandna library f’ moħħna* [trans. *It’s like we have a **library** in our brain*], ‘**subconscious mind**’, ‘**files** *tal-kompjuter* [trans. **files** of the computer] and ‘**assessment**’ to link content and enhance student understanding. It is possible that translanguaging could be a means by which speakers introduce, extend and activate ‘orders of indexicality’ ([Silverstein, 2003](#)) available in abstract space ([Lefebvre, 1991](#)), indexing globalizing influences when using English.

The event involving talk around text was when Ivy handed out educational material published by *Aġenzija Sedqa* after the talk (see Figure 6.4). The students took them, looking at the concertina leaflets on each of the most common drugs available. Ivy asked them to have a look at them when they had a quiet moment. They took the mini leaflets out of the pack, going over them and asking questions such as ‘*Din x’ inhi, xammiema?* [trans. *What’s an inhalant?*], with Ivy providing answers. Hearing activity in the corridor outside, the students packed their backpacks and asked the teacher about class attendance (*L-attendance, Sir*), who was present during the session; the teacher confirmed that it was taken (‘*Saret l-attendance*’). On their way out the students said ‘**Thank you**’ to Ivy.

6.4.3 Knowledge exchange, texts and language choice in the community

This was another session designed to share knowledge regarding drug abuse; as with the sessions observed in the primary schools, this session involved a number of literacy events involving talk around text in addition to the use of videoclips and non-literacy items, such as placebo drugs for identification purposes. The two-hour session, delivered by John and Ann, was held in the evening on the premises of a prominent football club and nursery in a town found in the Outer Harbour Region as part of the community outreach programme. The purpose of this event was to inform young coaches about their role in the prevention of substance abuse.

The session was set up in the activity room was a large rectangular room; adjacent was a smaller room designated for meetings. Along two of the walls were furniture on which served to prominently display the numerous trophies the club had won in tournaments over the years. Each had a metal plaque which had the details of the tournament won. Artefacts commemorating moments of achievement in the history of the club were strategically hung on the walls of this room. There were a number of football club personnel photographed with local political figures; amongst these were also photographs and posters depicting the official commemoration of the complex, which was relatively recent. A huge PVC wall poster of the football team club was featured, with the club's name (**Town Name UTD FC**) boldly printed on it, with the team, some sitting, some standing, and the names of the players, their coach as well as their team manager. The text on this poster was exclusively in English.

Several people were present in the room, all males, who were junior and senior club members. In casual talk just before the beginning of the session, these club members interacted mainly in Maltese; some translanguaging was noticed amongst the senior officials. In total, five people were present for the session, one adult in his forties and four young coaches in their late teens and/or early twenties.

John and Ann had a table set up in the middle of the room, with a projector on the table; the wall opposite served as a screen. 'Media of interchange' included a PowerPoint presentation; the slides and the three videoclips which were shown were all in the English

language. The table was set up with written media for the participants to keep after the session. These included educational packs on drug and alcohol abuse developed by *Aġenzija Sedqa* in both Maltese and English. The facilitators' professional business cards, with their names, job title, email addresses and *Aġenzija Sedqa* contact details were also provided, which were in English. Certificates of participation had been prepared in advance, designed by Ann, each with the name of the person participating printed on the document. The certificates were A4 sized beige marbled parchment, produced by *Aġenzija Sedqa*. These certificates were in the Maltese language; a diagrammatic representation is provided in Figure 6.15 below.

As in the sessions in the primary school, the session was highly dependent on a series of literacy events involving talk around texts and included three videoclips in the English language. The PowerPoint presentation was used to support the session, indexing the main theme and subthemes of the session, starting with 'Signs and Symptoms of substance abuse' to 'Conclusion'. In the unfolding of the event, the main language used for discussion was Maltese, whilst English was used as a medium of written communication, such as the text on the PowerPoint slides and the language of video clips used. Ann and John interacted mainly in the Maltese language, translanguaging when referring to items listed on the slides. Topics were introduced by reading out an item from a slide in English, then discussed in Maltese, frequently translanguaging using both technical and non-technical words; in discussing brand names, such as **Gatorade** and **Red Bull**, the original brand name was retained. The table below provides examples of translanguaging in spoken discourse (Table 6.2). When referring to age, both presenters and participants used English when referring to age, as shown in the examples below:

- għandu **fourteen** jew **fifteen**... [trans. he's **fourteen** or **fifteen**]
- dawk li għandhom **seventeen** [trans. those who are **seventeen**]
- dawk li jkunu **twelve, thirteen** [trans. those who are **twelve, thirteen**]

Examples of translanguaging	English translation
<i>id-droga issibha aktar easy</i>	the drug is more easy to find
<i>iżzommha under control</i>	keep it under control
<i>qallek big business</i> (referring to videoclip)	he said big business (referring to big business)
<i>li huwa silent killer</i> (referring to videoclip, alcohol)	which is a silent killer (referring to videoclip, alcohol)
<i>għandek steroid abuse... steroids għandhom ħafna side-effects</i>	<i>you have steroid abuse.... steroids have many side-effects</i>
<i>inti għandek different types of steroids</i>	<i>you have different types of steroids</i>
<i>hemm loopholes kif tevita t-testijiet</i>	<i>there are loopholes as to how to avoid tests</i>
<i>...problems.... cardiac problems</i> (referring to abusive use of drugs)	<i>...problems.... cardiac problems</i> (referring to abusive use of drugs)
<i>...very easy</i> (referring to access)	<i>...very easy</i> (referring to access)
<i>l-użu tagħhom not limited to competitions...</i>	<i>their use is not limited to competitions...</i>
<i>it-tantrums li jistgħu jkollhom</i>	<i>the tantrums that they can have</i>

Table 6. 2 Examples of translanguaging in speech during session with young coaches

As in the sessions with Ivy, talk around text took place with videoclips. Using the same technique as Ivy, Ann not only introduced the fact that a videoclip was to be shown, but also the language used: *Issa għandi vidjo li huwa bl-Ingliż* [trans. *Now I have a video which is in English*]; one video also had subtitles in English. These videoclips provided information on drug abuse as well as news reports on the legality of new drugs, which appeared to be American productions, and provided the stimulus for further discussion. These were once again events which provided extra-local influences on the immediate setting; in the discussions following such videoclips, translanguaging was noted, with Maltese as the dominant language. Once again, it appeared that English may have indexed global influences in the social space created during the session; indeed, Brandt and Clinton (2002: 347) question that when studying local literacy practices, “we can ask what is

localizing and what is globalizing in what is going on”. In this case, the use of English may be linked to globalizing influences.

One activity which involved the exchange of knowledge without reliance on written texts was a communication activity that focused on oral and tactile skills. The group of participants were requested to blindfold themselves and relied on their sense of touch and language skills. They were given a set of four colourful shapes which were a basic jigsaw puzzle of two pieces; the objective was for each member to find the partner whose shape had the right grooves that fit their own shape. John explained the instructions in Maltese. Each participant needed to describe their shape, based on what they could detect using their sense of touch. The participants communicated in Maltese, and within ten minutes successfully figured out who had the matching shape.

In signalling the end of the session, Ann relied on both the written text followed by a verbal explanation. The penultimate slide had ‘**Aġenzija Sedqa**’ in bold letters, with contact details, followed by the last slide with a ‘**Thank you!**’ in the centre. Ann communicated what they could do, indicating the contact details, for further information, relying on the both written and spoken discourse in the same action. Following the end of the talk, the participants and presenters engaged in further discussion, and gathered around the table which had bilingual printed educational material, discussing the material and information elicited by the material provided; reading material included the educational leaflet packs distributed by *Sedqa* (see Figure 6.4) as well as a booklet entitled ‘*Signs and Symptoms*’, which is available in either English or Maltese ([Appendix, Section D](#)). The drug box with trays of placebo drugs, labelled in English and basics facts about each drug, was also an object to involve ‘talk around text’. It was interesting to note that this literacy event was a combination of talk around text and objects; in a way this was reminiscent of the puppet show used to teach the primary school pupils, as talk revolved mainly around objects. In the meantime, Ann handed out the certificates of attendance (Figure 6.15), which also became a literacy event involving talk around text. At one point I overheard one participant spell out his name, using the English pronunciation for letters. It was interesting to note that Maltese is the dominant language in the text, with the exception of the session title: ‘**Sports Coaching**’.

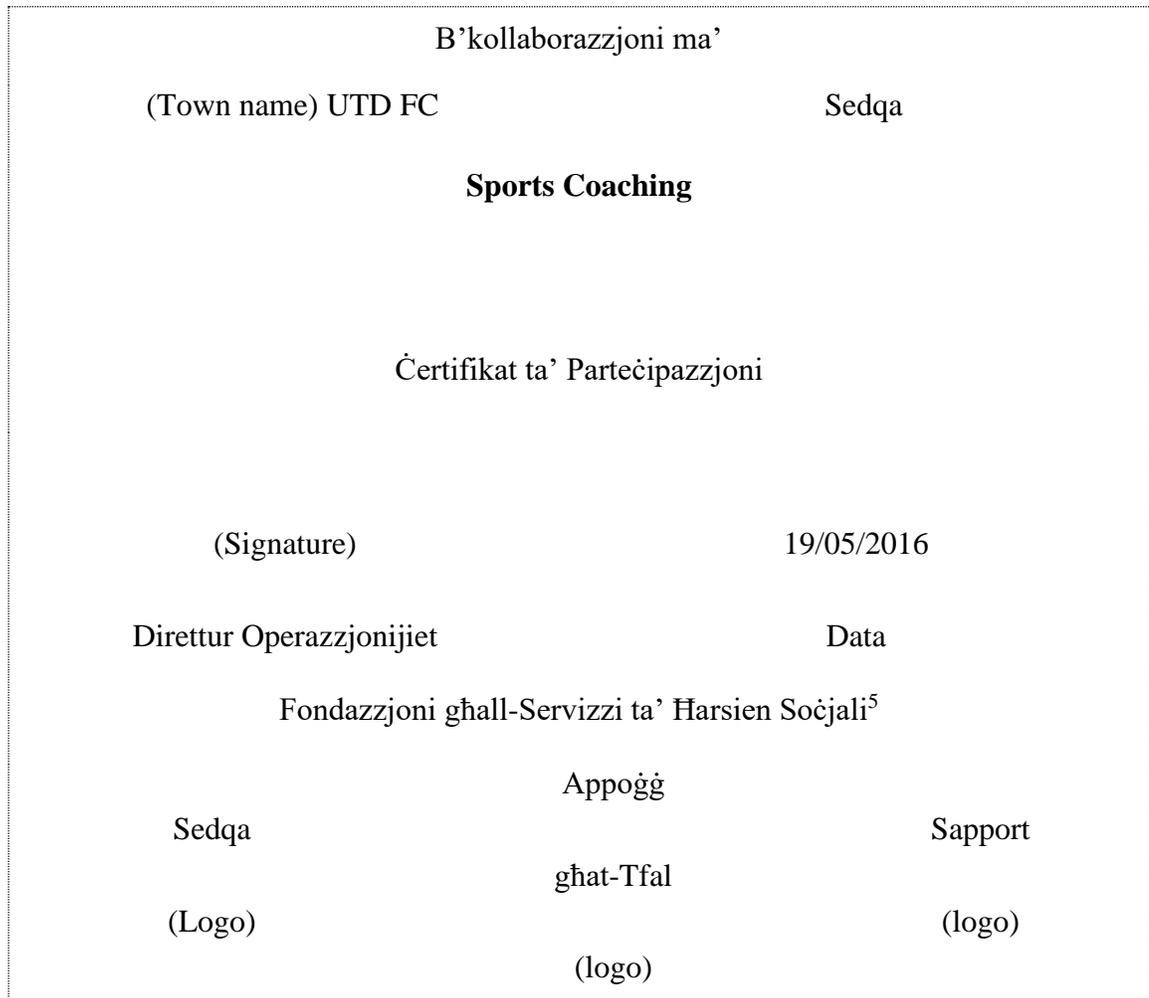


Figure 6. 15 Schematic representation of FSWS certificates distributed during community session

6.5 Prevention services: backstage social practices for the exchange of knowledge

In contrast to the frontstage texts, the backstage stage texts that these street-level bureaucrats engaged in provided a different angle to the use of language for organisational texts. After the observation phase, John provided information about some backstage social

⁵ The Maltese translation of Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS)

practices linked to those identified as frontstage. Several weeks prior to the observation of the sessions, I had given John a participant diary to record his literacy practices and use of language, with some reflection on oral language as well. Some sample organisational texts used on a regular basis within the backstage social practices were provided during the follow-up interview. These were mainly standardized forms for employees, and all were in English.

One important observation that could be made about the information provided by the participant diary, besides language choice, was the routinisation of work-related activities, irrespective as to whether they were off-site or on-site duties. It was noted that after a few weeks, activities clearly pointed towards a clear routinisation of practices: delivery of programmes, meetings, administrative tasks such as correspondence and report compiling. These social practices are essentially routinised activities; in terms of data collection, this would probably be the point whereby saturation became evident. Entrenched in this routinisation was the use of standard forms created by the organisation to manage the overall operations of the agency.

Whilst these forms may also be described as key to the creation of objective knowledge, this kind of knowledge had a different function. These documents were unlike the colourful, illustrated educational material designed for use with the public. They were essentially organisational texts for bureaucratic purposes, designed by personnel who do not lay claim to the creation of such forms; as organisational texts, they appeared to be authored by the organisation, not an individual. When filled in by the general public, bureaucratic forms may be perceived quite negatively and subject to criticism (see [Fawns and Ivanič, 2001: 80](#); [Frohlich, 1986](#)). Yet such forms may have also positive value with respect towards the operations of the agency. As a member of the institution, John commented that having to fill in forms could be rather tedious, but he recognised such forms are necessary for the management of personnel and resources. Planning the delivery of programmes in advance means the scheduling of all school programmes months before the start of the new academic year and having the necessary logistics in place, which could be quite extensive. In addition, such data is eventually used to compile reports to account

for expenditure of allocated funds, distribution of resources and outreach of the unit, as shown in Section 6.6.

The forms have a communicative function strictly for internal operations; according to Charney (1984: 131), “it may be useful to think of forms as mediating between two groups – people who fill them out, and the people who read them and act upon them”. Forms may also be considered what Fairclough (1995: 136) considers a key institutional genre, and perhaps as an exchange or transaction amongst different parties (see Miller 1984, cited in Frohlich, 1986). Whilst there may be other ways of communicating between employees, such as emails using a narrative form of communication, forms may help to structure the communication in a format familiar to the form readers. This would suggest that the form fillers would need to know what the form-readers are expecting. Two things that need to be taken into consideration is the language and layout of the form (Charney, 1984). Filling in a form may frequently entail the production and organisation of information into an acceptable format and style for its readers, a process which may also include the reduction of information for processing within objectified relations. As a result, forms are typically structured with grids and matrices that may require filling in with a check mark or cross for pre-determined categories, or a field to fill in with words or figures. As John pointed out during the interview, the issue of form language – Maltese or English – may be overridden by other concerns, such as the need to communicate using symbols such as numbers.

Besides providing a record of work, these forms also lay the groundwork for what Smith (1990a: 35-37) calls the creation of data for the ruling relations through ideological practices, destined to be shared within networks of personnel involved in the management of such data, which is mainly the management of human and material resources; ideological practices render people’s experiences and activities as abstractions. The two forms in connection with the backstage preparation of the **T.F.A.L. 3 BABES** Programme (Figure 6.16, Figure 6.17) could be classified as organisational texts designed to record and communicate information as concisely as possible between each facilitator involved in ‘objectified relations’ with other key personnel, such as the supervisor. Moreover, the texts are part of a social practice contributing to a ‘reduction in complexity’ (Lyotard,

1979: 61, citing Luhmann, 1969) via rationalisation, in this case bureaucratic rationalisation. Both documents also involve the regulation of time and space, and the management of human and material resources; names, places, times, and quantities regarding course material are noted.

B.A.B.E.S. Programme.

Name of Presenter; _____

Phase; _____

Name of School; _____

No of Class\'; _____

No Books, Note-books and Bookmarks; _____

Commencing Of Date; _____

Commencing time of session\'; _____

Date of Parents Meeting; _____

Commencing time of Parents Meeting; _____

Received By: _____

Date of Delivery; _____

Tel of School; _____

Figure 6. 16 BABES Programme datasheet, available in English only

 **Prevention Team**

B.A.B.E.S Programme _____

Name of Facilitator _____

Facilitator	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Total Cts
				Office		
				Office		
				Office		
				Office		

Figure 6. 17 Planner for BABES Programme facilitators, available in English only

Other forms designed for organisational use, which essentially focus on the regulation of human and material resources, are claim forms, petrol claim forms, annual leave requests and time off/in-lieu requests (Figures 6.18 and 6.19 below); the latter two forms are common to the whole foundation. Each form may be analysed using the three metafunctions of language: the ideational, interpersonal and textual. Each form focuses on a particular activity or representation of organisational duties, and each claim has its own form – no other form can be used in its stead. In making the necessary claims, categorisation becomes an important element here, with pre-set categories provided for employees to tick the respective boxes indicating which agency or department they belong to, signifying that the forms are common to all departments in the Foundation. The reduction of subjective knowing is transformed into objective knowledge, in a format reduced for common understanding across its transmission across objectified relations within the organisation. Once again, the subjective knowing is transformed through a process of rationalisation necessary for bureaucratic organisation, a process dependent on “*calculability, efficiency, predictability, and control* through the substitution of nonhuman for human technology” (Ritzer, 2001: 9). These forms depend on being filled with data, organised into a manner which would allow the information provided to be processed in a timely manner. Whilst the choice of English for such forms may be due to non-Maltese speakers working for the agency, it is perhaps an issue of language choice for the purpose of rationalisation. John mentioned that with such a form, the focal point is not the issue of an official language but numerical information, such as dates and total of hours claimed, backed up by reasons for the claims made. The text is a form requesting various “observables” (Smith 1990a: 38) of the employee, such as name, employee code and national identity number, besides unit number, month when extra hours were logged and VAT number if applicable. It becomes a numerical exercise quantifying information for other departments not directly involved in the activities to process, who would need to enter the data into databases for software programmes designed to process and quantify data.

One observation about this form is that personnel who eventually process the forms for record keeping and payment may not be necessarily in direct contact with the employee submitting the claim. The form passes from department to department, and prior to it being accepted by these departments, a prerequisite would be that the form is not only duly filled in but filled in with the necessary ‘orders of discourse’, arguably the ‘texture’ metafunction of the text. Therefore, if an employee wants to record extra hours put into the working week and eventually be remunerated for that, he or she must communicate the expected information via the official form created for this purpose. Moreover, it would need to be in a format understood by the people who would receive it for processing, such as personnel whose main role is payroll duties. In this respect, information must be in the acceptable format, and this would also include numerical representation such as codes, dates, hours logged and hourly rates. The same may be applied to the form designed for staff who need to claim compensation on transport costs in connection with to the delivery of off-site programmes around Malta and Gozo, with proof of such expenditure in the form of texts, such as receipts and tickets, indicative of other objectified relations.

The image shows two forms side-by-side. The left form is titled 'Foundation for Social Welfare Services' and 'Time Off In Lieu - Form'. It includes fields for Agency, Name, and a table with columns: Date, Description, No. of Hours Worked, No. of Hours Availed, Balance, Employee's Signature, and Approved. The right form is titled 'Foundation for Social Welfare Services' and 'ANNUAL VACATION LEAVE ENTITLEMENT FORM 2016'. It includes fields for Head Office (AFFOGG), Department (SED04), and Support, and a table with columns: NAME, Date of Leave, No of Hours, Applicant's Signature, Approver's Signature, Date of Approval, Annual Leave Hours, Balance, and Cancelled/Used.

Figure 6. 19 FSWS Time Off and Annual Leave Forms, available in English only

One text type that John regularly handles was the supervision sheet (see Figure 6.20), typically filled in during meetings or soon after. This text is a single A4 sized form.

The image shows a supervision meeting sheet form. At the top left, the word "Supervision" is written in a box. To its right is a "Date:" field with a line for writing. Below this is a section titled "Issues Discussed related to:" followed by several horizontal lines for notes. The next section is titled "Action Plan / Decisions Taken" and also has several horizontal lines. At the bottom, there is a "Supervisor" label and two horizontal lines for signatures.

Figure 6. 20 Supervision meeting sheet, available only in English

It fulfils an ideational function by representing a viewpoint of the world. It records the date when the activity occurs, the issues discussed followed by the action plan and decisions that may have been taken; these headings are in the English language, accompanied by a matrix or spaces to be filled in. It also has an interpersonal function. It is filled in as the result of collaboration between members of the organisation, and this also needs validation from key members participating in the event. This is where signatures vetting the contents of the form become a significant feature; as explained by John, each time a supervision sheet is filled in, it needs to be signed by at least two people. If John holds a meeting with his team, he records items discussed, signs it as the meeting

supervisor together with his staff members; if he has a meeting with his supervisor or manager, it is co-signed by John and the other party. The language of choice for recording meetings is English. Although possible, Maltese is unlikely to be used for such events as a written language. On the other hand, John mentioned that meetings are more likely to be held in Maltese; he also mentioned that some staff members prefer meetings in English. At this point it may seem that there may be some negotiating with respect to spoken language, but when contents of a meeting need to be recorded for administrative purposes, English is the language of choice.

Another work practice John highlighted was administrative support through teleworking (see Figure 6.21). John liaised with a person entrusted with administrative support working from home, and who was responsible for compiling reports, dealing with correspondence and preparing other texts such as presentations. The form used to record such activities is one used throughout the whole foundation, denoted by the foundation logo in the upper right corner and fields asking for the name of employee, agency, pay period and unit. This was the only authorised form which would be accepted for processing within the unit and beyond.

As a form, it was used for record keeping purposes as well as remuneration for work performed, requesting dates when duties were performed, time when work was performed task type and brief description. This form fulfilled an ideational function; it clearly outlined the interpersonal metafunction with employee communicating his or her duties, endorsed by both the employee and an authorised person before submission to the respective departments for processing and remuneration. During the interview, there were several references to passing on information for the compilation of statistics. The emphasis on the collection of data for statistical analysis appears to be an important aspect of the team's work, passed on to other departments.


Foundation for Social Welfare Services

Appendix 4 – Teleworking Timesheet

Name of Employee: _____ Pay Period: _____
 Agency: _____ Unit: _____

Date	Time (From – To)	Duration In Hours	Title of Tasks Carried Out (Eg. Review of Recordings; Reading/correcting of Minutes; Letters & Emails; Preparation of presentation; etc)	Brief description of Tasks Carried Out

Signature of Employee: _____ Endorsement of SAL/Manager: _____ Date: _____

Figure 6. 21 FSWS Teleworking Timesheet, available in English only

One particular form that was likely to be a mixture of frontstage and backstage text was the Parental Skills Application Form (see Figure 6.22). Unlike the other forms, this form was for the general public. Like the teacher evaluation sheet, it may be reinterpreted as a social space whereby the individual ‘interacts’ with the agency, this time requesting a service and participating in an exchange which requires ticking boxes in reply to statements and questions about the type of parenting skills course applicant may have an interest in and any additional requirements. John mentioned that the form was previously available in the Maltese language. However, problems were encountered when it was distributed amongst potential applicants; the choice of English may be less problematic due to the fact Malta has been experiencing an increase in non-Maltese speaking residents after becoming an EU member state (see [Jobsplus, 2019b](#)). Compared to the teacher evaluation sheet, it was simpler in terms of content. Actual writing was minimal, at most requesting the personal details of the applicant for contact purposes, marital status and childminding needs. It also appeared to be designed to be filled in by either the person interested in the course, or perhaps filled in with help from a representative of the agency (**Details of**

Person Being), who would be identified on the form as well (**Name of Officer**). John explained how the agency processes the applications, organising applications by region and phoning each applicant to confirm attendance for at least three different sessions. Although the form was presented in English, Maltese was commonly used in oral exchanges in face-to-face or telephone interaction. Of note is that the sheet had a section reserved for organisational backstage administrative practices, for confirmation of interest. Again, whilst the spoken interaction may be in Maltese, a record of the outcome was noted in writing using a record-keeping device set up in the English language.

The form is titled "Parental Skills REFERRAL FORM" and features the SEDQA logo at the top. It is divided into two main sections. The left section is for personal details, including fields for "Date of Intake", "Name of officer", "Agency Self Referring", "Details of Person Being" (Name & Surname, Address, E-mail Address, Phone No., Mob No.), "Status" (Married, Separated, Widowed, Single Parent/Living with partner, Remarried), "Others" (e.g., Grandmother), "Level of Education", "From where you heard about this programme?" (Facebook, Recommended by friend, Online Media, Printed Newspapers, Others), "Child Minding would be needed? YES/ NO", and "If yes, what is the age of the child/ children?". A note at the bottom states "N.B. Child minding would be provided up to 11 years of age." and "€ 12 fee would apply for each person". The right section, titled "For Office use only:", contains fields for "Date of receipt of Referral", "Accepted" (checkbox), "Not Accepted" (checkbox), and "Needs further discussion" (checkbox).

Figure 6. 22 Parental Skills Referral Form, available in English only

To conclude, the selection of texts identified as organisational texts (see [Darville, 1995](#)) point towards how both human and material resources are managed across time and space via texts designed for specific purposes; no one text substitutes another, indicating that each text serves a different ideational and interpersonal function. The texts designed for public use, such as application forms and evaluation sheets, are designed to initiate communication with the agency; they provide individuals with structured responses to

facilitate the process, which would be followed up by personnel who would have little or no contact with those initiating communication. On the other hand, the texts designed for internal use are for communication amongst personnel within and across departments, recording work duties, decisions taken during meetings and issues concerning time management and compensation. Whatever the trajectory they take, these texts suggest that the use of conceptual language is necessary for sharing objectified knowledge across objectified relations. In all examples shown, English is the preferred choice of language for the texts. One reason for this may be that people participating in these relations are not able to read and understand Maltese; however, it appears that this may not be the primary reason, as will be discussed in the next section.

6.6 Care services: practices for intervention and support

Andrew was a participant who was a social worker on the drug intervention team at *Aġenzija Sedqa*. He was a University of Malta alumnus who majored in social work. At the time of the data collection phase, he had been working in the field for at least ten years. He initially worked for a non-government organisation (NGO) that offered assistance to the homeless and people in need. In 2009, he joined *Aġenzija Sedqa*. Talking about his experience at both the NGO and his current role at the agency, his previous position at the NGO was largely about dealing with people going through numerous immediate crises, such as hunger, homelessness or being unable to pay utility bills. In his current role at Sedqa, he has a long-term relationship with clients at the agency, keeping in touch with clients who had undergone drug rehabilitation programmes through *Aġenzija Sedqa*. As a professional, he dealt directly with the public and did considerable front-line work. He took on new clients, maintaining relationships with clients during their 'active' phase and beyond. He met with his clients to discuss their drug use and progress, writing shorts reports or summaries about each session; his choice of language is English. His role involved consulting other professionals in his own sphere of work and from other professions, such as medical and psychological experts. Besides monitoring the behaviours of clients and recording them in writing, which included having clients submit

urine samples for lab analysis (see Section 6.6.2), he oversaw clients' progress in off-site units, such as hospitals and residential services. In addition, he presented data about his clients in court cases for related criminal charges. These various activities are coordinated through texts, and clients have a dossier that is shared amongst various professionals. The client dossier is a file consisting of a variety of documents, such as standardised forms created by organisations to be filled in by professionals from different departments within FSWS and potentially other organisations and short reports written after sessions.

As with the participants involved in prevention services, Andrew's work is strongly evident of regionalisation of locales ([Giddens, 1981: 41](#)), in terms of frontstage and backstage performativity as suggested by Goffman ([1959: 114](#)), which can be linked to language choice in organisational texts. It appears that choice of language in texts is strongly suggestive of regionalisation in terms of frontstage and backstage texts. The following description attempts to build a picture of how texts 'flow' within the objectified relations, highly dependent on lack of physical co-presence and high time/space distancing.

6.6.1 Objectified relations and language choice: the dossier as communication across time and space

Andrew and I discussed the textual element of his work at the agency in one of the rooms at the agency. This was the kind of room in which clients seeking assistance for drug abuse would meet with members of the drug intervention team. This type of room is set up for privacy, with chairs and a coffee table, and leaflets providing information on combatting drug abuse, which was discussed in terms of textual practices. This is where the dossier, a case-paper system as a knowledge device (see [Green, 1983: 153ff](#)), is frequently initiated. Assistance from the agency is textually-mediated, conforming to a set of standardised forms whereby "each individual is to be objectified as a 'running history', retrievable by anyone at any time, which will go with him as the essential definition of what he is" ([Green, 1983: 154](#)). In fact, it is the only way a client can legitimately receive assistance from *Aġenzija Sedqa* or any other agency in the group.

To enter the textually-mediated process of ruling relations represented by the welfare agency, select standardised forms must be filled in. The referral form (Figure 6.23) is the first point of entry for a person seeking assistance from the agency. This is expected to be accompanied by a confidentiality form (Figure 6.24), a 'first contact sheet' (FCS) as well as a form summarising the first contact sheet (Figure 6.25). There are some other texts that may need to be filled in, such as a 'Significant Other First Contact Sheet' (SOFCS) and the 'Aġenzija Appoġġ Child Protection Services Referral Form' (CPSRF) if children may be at risk (Figure 6.26). During the discussion it became apparent that these forms would become part of a file dedicated to the client, keeping a 'running history' of the person.

There are different ways though which a client may be referred. A client may be referred by the national health services. The client may personally phone the agency for an appointment, and the referral form is filled in by the person taking the phone call. If the person is an unscheduled drop-in, then the referral form is filled in during the first meeting; in fact, Andrew mentioned that clients were more likely to 'drop in' without an appointment, seeking help in times of crisis. The referral form is never filled in by the client, but by the professionals; the use of third person pronouns on the form is also indicative of this relationship.

The referral form reveals a number of objectified relations that the client will eventually be in contact with, either directly or indirectly as tertiary or quaternary relationships. A single, double sided form, the referral form has a header on the front sheet displaying the logo and name of the agency in both official languages; contact details are in English. The footer has a declaration that the agency is a member of the European Collaborating Centres in Addiction Studies (ECCAS); this shows that not only is the client in direct contact with the Maltese agency, but also indirectly, however distant in time and space, with transnational organisations, indicative of the tertiary relationship (Calhoun, 1992). The text is also indicative of the involvement of other personnel connected to the ruling relations, such as the administrative aspect of the ruling relations indicated by the 'Office Use Only' section, with boxes for ticking. In addition, the 'File No' reveals the need to assign numbers to each unique referral. However, as there may be more than one file number for a client across different departments, not much importance is given to the file

foundation in the header. It outlines the rights and obligations of the client. It also informs the client that he or she may be referred to other professionals working for FSWS as well as other agencies that might need to have access to personal data according to law. Andrew mentioned that the consent form was at times given to clients to take home to read and reflect on the contents, and in terms of forms, it was the only one given to them; all the other forms were the property of the agency. In the meantime, the client is informed that he or she may make a formal request – in writing - to know what information FSWS would have on him or her; such handling of data is regulated by the Data Protection Act (2002) in accordance with the Laws of Malta (Chapter 440). The client ticks the box indicating whether he is she has personally read and understood the document, or had it read to him and explained, providing a space to sign that declaration. If the client refuses to sign this document, the agency cannot provide assistance.

 <p>Dikjarazzjoni ta' Konsens</p> <p>Jien _____, li għandi in-numru tal-Karta tal-Identità _____, qed nagħti l-konsens tiegħi lill-Fondazzjoni għas-Servizzi ta' Marsien Soċjali (FSWS) sabiex din tkun tista' tiproċessa informazzjoni personali, inkluża dik l-informazzjoni ta' natura sensittiva dwari, sabiex jien ningshata l-għajjnuna meħtieġa mis-servizz tal-Istess Fondazzjoni.</p> <p>Jien nifhem li:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jekk ma nagħtix konsens, l-FSWS ma tkunx f'pożizzjoni li tipprovdi s-servizz tagħha; • Sabiex ikun assigurat li l-għajjnuna li tinghata tkun professjonali, il-professionisti involuti fil-kaz tiegħi u l-haddiema awtorizzati tal-FSWS, li jistgħu jkunu addetti ma' taqsimiet u aġenziji differenti fi hdan l-FSWS, jista' jkollhom access għall-informazzjoni personali u sensittiva dwari, skont kif titlob il-'policy' ta' kunfidenzjalità tal-FSWS; • Certa informazzjoni, li bl-ebda mod ma tista' tintuża biex tinkief l-identità tiegħi, tista' tkun ipproċessata għal skopijiet ta' statistika u ricerka; • Informazzjoni li nagħti dwar minuri li huma vittima ta' xi abbuż jew li l-FSWS tifhem li jistgħu ikunu f'riskju ta' xi abbuż, tista' tinghata lill-awtoritajiet relevanti, inkluż lill-pulizija, kemm lokalment u kemm internazzjonalment, f'ċirkostanzi fejn dan ikun għall-aħjar interess tal-minuri; • Informazzjoni dwari tista' tinghata lill-awtoritajiet relevanti, kemm lokalment u kemm internazzjonalment, inkluż lill-pulizija, f'ċirkostanzi fejn l-FSWS tara li jien nista' nkun ta' riskju kemm għallija nnifsi jew għal xi hadd ieħor, jew jekk jien nista' nkun f'riskju minhabba haddieħor, jew inkella f'ċirkostanzi fejn il-FSWS hija obligata bil-liġi li tiżvela tali informazzjoni. • Informazzjoni dwari tista' ukoll tinghadda lill-awtoritajiet relevanti li huma awtorizzati bil-liġi li jitolbu din l-informazzjoni fi-eterdizzju tal-awtorita' uffijjali tagħhom; • Il-haddiema fi hdan l-FSWS jistgħu jiġu moqjha bhala whieda f'kazijiet pendenti jew futuri fil-Qorti, u f'certu ċirkostanzi l-Qorti tista' tobbliga lill-istess haddiema sabiex jagħtu x-xhieda tagħhom jew sabiex jgħaddu xi nformazzjoni li tkun inghatat lilhom minni jew minn xi persuna oħra dwari jew dwari haddieħor; <p>Għall-fini ta' l-Att dwar il-Protezzjoni u l-Privattezza tal-Informazzjoni (Kapitlu 440 tal-Liġi ta' Malta, 2002), jien nista' nagħmel talba bil-miktub sabiex inkun naf x'informazzjoni qed iżzomm dwari l-FSWS. Jien konxju li għall-fini tal-Istess Att, il-Kontrollur ta' l-Informazzjoni fi hdan l-FSWS huwa:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Is-Sur Alfred Grixti, Kap Eżekuttiv, Fondazzjoni għas-Servizzi ta' Marsien Soċjali 212, Triq il-Kanun, Santa Venera, SVR 9034</p> <p>Jien nikkonferma li din id-dikjarazzjoni qrajtha jien stess u flimthi <input type="checkbox"/> Din id-dikjarazzjoni inqrajta u jien flimthi kollox <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Firma: _____</p> <p>Firma tal-Qarrej tad-dikjarazzjoni (jekk applikabbli): _____</p> <p>Data: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Jiena nagħti permess lill-FSWS sabiex tikkuntatjani, anke wara li jien inkun waqaf nircievi servizz mill-FSWS, jekk ikun hemm bżonn li tingabar xi statistika jew sabiex inkun mistieden/na nipparteċipa f'xi rierka li tkun qegħda ssir. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Tistgħu tikkuntatjawni fuq: _____</p> <p>Firma: _____</p> <p>_____</p>
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Figure 6. 24 Consent form (back and front) in the Maltese language

The consent form is a critical document in terms of legal issues. This text signifies a number of things: first, it activates the rights and obligations of the two parties - the client

and the agency - in writing, indicating that this is a professional relationship between a natural person and an organisation, the latter which may be considered an artificial person in legal terms. Once this document is signed, the agency cannot divulge any information to third parties not specified in the document. A case in point is when schools may contact the agency in connection with parents enlisted as clients of the agency; such requests can only be handled by the management. Andrew mentioned that there were specific guidelines, in writing, for such requests and then staff would take action once the management gave clearance for information to be shared.

Second, the consent form also refers to objectified relations within FSWS and beyond that may be involved in the client's life while seeking assistance, and such institutions may also be independent of the Foundation, such as the police and the law courts. In the case of clients having minor children both local and international police (Interpol) may be involved. This document would potentially constitute relationships with entities that are impersonal, objectified and mediated, and possibly as a mixture of both tertiary and quaternary relationships (Calhoun, [1987](#); [1992](#)). Moreover, this text is intertextual, referring to other texts, in this case the Laws of Malta; this text is part of a regulatory system that governs every individual on a national basis, and now as an EU member state, may also find such transnational influences governing his or her actions. As a text, or a social space, it connects the client with the extra-local world. In addition, the client may also allow the Foundation to use the information provided for statistical purposes even after he or she no longer makes use of services offered, or be contacted to participate in research initiatives, and such requests necessitate a separate signature. Andrew mentioned that this document is revised from time to time; if revised, minor changes are made, such as the wording of the clauses to bring it in line with current legislation. Before the creation of FSWS, the professional relationship was between the agency and the client; following organisational changes, changes were also made to the organisational forms. This has made a difference to the way information is handled by *Aġenzija Sedqa*, as it may now operate in tandem with *Aġenzija Appoġġ* and any other agency managed by the Foundation, potentially guaranteeing uniformity with respect to procedural issues across all agencies within the Foundation. In other words, this uniformity would ensure a degree of standardization of practices amongst staff.

The FCS (see Figure 6.25) is a detailed ten-page form focusing on more ‘observables’, elicited by 71 questions organised into sections such as the client’s background and history in relation to addiction, risk assessment, medical history and legal history; most of the questions were closed-ended questions with boxes for ticking or numbers to be entered, and the occasional open-ended question. This is filled in by the professional making the referral. This sheet is stored in the client’s physical file, but the information it contains is also destined to be transferred to a computer database by clerical staff, later used for other activities such as statistical analysis; this is linked to the annual statistical reports and operational reports published by the foundation (see Section 6.7). This recalls the confidentiality form that the client fills in. Becoming data in a system, types and frequency of risky behaviours become observables which collectively become data for the analysis of trends; Andrew mentioned how one local statistician could accurately predict future trends based on such observables. Besides this ten-page FCS, there is also the one-page SOFSC, very similar to the FCS, which is also presented in English. The one-page Summary Sheet (SS) focused on the client’s problem and treatment in addition to personal background (see Figure 6.25); as its name suggests, it summarises the data entered in the lengthier documents, such as the FCS.

FIRST CONTACT SHEET	
NA=Not Applicable NK=Not Known (by client) UW=UnWilling (to answer) DA=Didn't Ask (client)	
Date: [][][][][][] Interviewer: [][][][][][] RW: [][][][][][] If client under 18: Custodian to contact: [][][][][][] Landline: [][][][][][] Mobile: [][][][][][]	
1. Legal name	2. Legal surname
3. Name known as	17. Number of children
4. ID card no./Passport no.	18. DOB of children
5. Date of birth	19. With whom living (mark all that apply)
6. Contact address	<input type="checkbox"/> Alone <input type="checkbox"/> Partner <input type="checkbox"/> Mother <input type="checkbox"/> Father <input type="checkbox"/> Father's partner <input type="checkbox"/> Mother's partner <input type="checkbox"/> Sibling(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Grandparent(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Aunt/uncle <input type="checkbox"/> Friend(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Children under 18 <input type="checkbox"/> Children aged 18+ <input type="checkbox"/> Others in institution <input type="checkbox"/> Other person(s) (specify)
7. Coast of residence	20. Where living
8. Telephone numbers	<input type="checkbox"/> Private or rented accommodation (stable) <input type="checkbox"/> Homeless (unstable) <input type="checkbox"/> Institution
9. Sex	21. Lives with person(s) with a problem (mark all that apply)
10. Nationality	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, alcohol <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, drugs <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, gambling <input type="checkbox"/> No
11. Country of birth	22. Highest educational level attended
12. Preferred language of expression (please circle only 1) and level of spoken/expressed language	23. Highest educational level completed
13. Country of residence	24. Current occupation
14. Current marital status	<input type="checkbox"/> Employee → <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed → <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Homemaker <input type="checkbox"/> Summer job <input type="checkbox"/> Pensioner <input type="checkbox"/> Unfit to work <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to work <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed <input type="checkbox"/> NEET (-16) → Name of school <input type="checkbox"/> Pupil/student →
15. Outcome of previous marriage (if any)	25. Type of occupation
16. Parents' marital status (in relation to one another)	

Client's name:	Date:
Community worker's name:	
A. Client's presenting problem:	
B. Previous treatment if any:	
C. Social background:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family of Origin (Including support, awareness of problem, drug use in family, apparent problems) Partner and children if any: Friends and leisure: Employment/ Financial status: Legal issues 	

Figure 6. 25 First Contact Sheet (front page) and the single-page Summary Sheet

In the case of minors, more objectified relations are activated, involving the sister agency *Aġenzija Appoġġ* for child protection services. Two forms are filled when referring minors to child protection services, which is a four-page referral form (see Figure 6.26) and a consent form to be signed by the parent or guardian of the children being referred. The process is very similar, and the forms are slightly different; this time, 'Aġenzija Appoġġ Child Protection Services' appears in the header, together with a fax number. It appears that this can be filled in at *Aġenzija Sedqa* and a copy is faxed to *Aġenzija Appoġġ*. More personnel may become involved in the referral of a child besides *Appoġġ* or *Sedqa* staff, such as a head of school. This document also has sections for the office personnel within the child protection services unit to fill in. The consent form is very similar to the one signed by adults. The language of the referral form is English, whilst the consent form is in Maltese. Andrew commented that any documents that are passed on to the client, or that the client is allowed to read, or read to the client are normally in the Maltese language.

When initiating a file following the referral point, copies of the FCS and the consent form are made and sent to different personnel, starting with the agency clerk to enter the data into the *Sedqa* database and the medical doctor in charge of the Detox Centre, the substance misuse out-patients unit (SMOPU) managed by *Aġenzija Sedqa* and located in a different town. If necessary, a copy of this document is also sent to the Stimulants Clinic, in operation since January 2013 and managed by *Aġenzija Sedqa* as well ([FSWS, 2014: 116](#)). At this point it becomes clear that there is an element of replicability as well as a degree of traceability in the assistance offered through text-mediation, with client information kept in different units for staff working on different issues concerning the client.

Besides the activation of objectified relations concerning medical services, there are also psychological and psychotherapeutic services offered by the FSWS, inferring that the web of professional experts expands considerably beyond the first person referring the client. The four-page form called the Adult Individual Referral Form is activated (Figure 6.27); a similar form is available for families (Figure 6.28). Being an internal document, it is in English, with separate sections relating to the needs of the client in addition to the client's medical and psychosocial history. Section 13 in both forms discloses 'Other professionals currently involved with the client/family' which hints at the network of professionals from other organisations and with the potential for the unit to liaise with them. The only part of the form which is given to the client to fill in is the declaration on page four, certifying that the information provided was correct and consent was given; what is interesting about this is that it is provided in both official languages. The signature activates the relationship between the client and the organisation providing the services, with the social worker as the intermediary who also submits his or her details. As the other referrals, there is an 'For Office Use' section only to be filled in by third parties unknown to the client and the social worker. This is the gateway to new objectified relations, extending beyond the secondary relationship the client and social worker participate in, creating other secondary and potentially tertiary and quaternary relationships. In the case of the family referral form, other documents may be necessary prior to processing, pointing to the need to network with other organisations via texts representing objectified relations.

Psychological and Psychotherapeutic Services
FSWS

ADULT INDIVIDUAL REFERRAL FORM

CLIENT IS BEING REFERRED FOR: PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC/PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS ASSESSMENT

CLIENT DETAILS

SECTION 1: PERSONAL DETAILS

Name: _____ Surname: _____
D.O.B.: _____ ID / Passport No.: _____
Nationality & Ethnicity (if relevant): _____ Gender: F or M (tick or appropriate)
Country of birth: _____ Language: _____
Marital status: _____ Years in marriage: _____
Occupational status: _____ Current occupation: _____

SECTION 8: FAMILY DETAILS

8a. Is this person a parent? Yes No If yes, provide the following details:

Name & Surname of children)	D.O.B.	Age	Gender		Living in the same household? (please circle as appropriate)	
			M	F	Y	N
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8b. Please provide details about other significant people in the person's life

Name & Surname	D.O.B.	Age	Gender	Living in the same household?	Relationship to client
			M F	Y N	
			M F	Y N	
			M F	Y N	
			M F	Y N	

SECTION 2: PRE-REFERRAL CONSULTATION
Pre-referral consultation took place with: _____

SECTION 3: CONTACT DETAILS Please tick (E) if any of the following are not able to use

Home address: _____ Landline:
Mobile:
E-mail:

SECTION 4: LANGUAGES Please check the level of spoken languages used
2 = Not Applicable, 1 = Very Good, 2 = Underdeveloped, 3 = Poor, 4 = Not at all

Maltese English

SECTION 5: OTHER SERVICES RECEIVED
Is client receiving other FSWS services? Yes No
If yes, indicate which: _____

SECTION 6: DISABILITY Please tick (E) where appropriate

Intellectual Physical Psychological
 Hearing Visual Other _____

SECTION 7: REFERRER'S DETAILS

Name & Surname: _____ Agency/Org: _____
Designation: _____ Unit: _____
Date of referral: _____ Contact No: _____
Referrer's signature: _____ SAL signature: _____

FOR OFFICE USE

Referral received on: _____ File No: _____
Opening Date: _____ Family Code: _____
Closing Date: _____ Assigned Worker: _____

SECTION 10: RELEVANT HISTORY
Please include information about significant life events (e.g., bereavement, separation, losses, and transitions) and any client/family characteristics that you believe is important for us to know. Please also include information about how this client/family came to be referred to your unit/agency.

To be continued on a separate sheet if necessary

SECTION 11: MAIN CONCERNS
Why is the client being referred? Kindly provide a description of the main concerns.

To be continued on a separate sheet if necessary

SECTION 12: INTERVENTIONS UTILISED
Kindly indicate any interventions taken to address the current concerns (e.g., self-help activities, involvement in parenting groups, etc.).

To be continued on a separate sheet if necessary

SECTION 13: OTHER PROFESSIONALS CURRENTLY INVOLVED WITH THIS CLIENT/FAMILY

Name & Surname	Agency/Dept/Org	Contact details
1. _____		
2. _____		
3. _____		
4. _____		

14a. How long has this person/family been in contact with the referrer?
Is the contact with the client/family regular? Yes No
If no, why not? _____

14b. What does the person you are referring expect from this referral?

14c. Referrer's expectations of the outcome of this referral.

PLEASE FILL IN THE FOLLOWING:
I, the undersigned, confirm that the information provided above is correct and consent to this referral.

-Or/Jew-

Jien, li i-firma tiegħi tidher hawn taht, nikkonferma li qrajt u thimt l-informazzjoni hawn fuq ipprovduta u naccetta li nkun irriferuta.

Name/Issem: _____ Signature/Firma: _____
Date/Data: _____

Please ensure that all the relevant sections of this form have been completed and return it to:
The Service Area Leader
Psychological and Psychotherapeutic Services, Flat 3, Galatea Premises, St Luke's Road, Gwardamangia
PTA1027
Tel: 2295 9000

Figure 6. 27 FSWS Psychological and Psychotherapy Referral Form for Individual Adults

Psychological and Psychotherapeutic Services | FSWS

FAMILY REFERRAL FORM

PLEASE TICK AS APPROPRIATE: COUPLE FAMILY SELF-REFERRAL

Need for Child Minding Services during sessions: Preferred time for appointments: _____
 Past contact with Family Therapy Service
 Are all relevant family members aware of referral: Yes No

CLIENT DETAILS

SECTION 1: PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name Of Primary Family Member:	Family Surname:
D.O.B.:	ID / Passport No.:
Nationality & Ethnicity (if relevant):	Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> M (tick as appropriate)
Country of birth:	Current occupation:
Marital status:	Years in marriage:
Occupational status:	Language:

SECTION 2: PRE-REFERRAL CONSULTATION

Pre-referral consultation took place with: _____

SECTION 3: CONTACT DETAILS Please tick (X) if any of the following are not applicable

Home address:	Landline: <input type="checkbox"/>
	Mobile: <input type="checkbox"/>
	E-mail: <input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION 4: LANGUAGES Please specify the level of spoken language used:
 1 = Not Applicable, 2 = May Understand, 3 = Understands, 4 = Fluent, 5 = Not at all

Maltese	English
---------	---------

SECTION 5: OTHER SERVICES RECEIVED

Is client receiving other FSWS services? Yes No
If yes, include which: _____

SECTION 6: DISABILITY Please tick (X) where applicable

<input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical	<input type="checkbox"/> Psychological
<input type="checkbox"/> Hearing	<input type="checkbox"/> Visual	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

SECTION 7: REFERER'S DETAILS

Name & Surname:	Agency/Org:
Designation:	Unit:
Date of referral:	Contact No.:
Referrer's signature:	S&L signature:

FOR OFFICE USE

Referral received on:	File No.:
Deputy Date:	Family Code:
Closing Date:	Assigned Worker:

SECTION 8: FAMILY DETAILS

8A. Please provide details about members of the family you are referring

Name & Surname	Gender	D.O.B.	Age	ID Card No.	Occupation/School	Relationship
	M / F					
	M / F					
	M / F					
	M / F					
	M / F					

8B. Marital Status. Please tick (X) where applicable

<input type="checkbox"/> Partnership/Marriage	Years in partnership/marriage: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Separated	Years since separation: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Divorced	When was the divorce settled (date): _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Annulled	When was the annulment granted (date): _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

SECTION 9: FURTHER INFORMATION

Do any of the family members suffer from any medical condition (e.g. asthma, epilepsy, etc.) or disability?
 Yes No If yes, please give details, including the impact which this has on his/her life.

Has any member ever been assessed for psychological and psychiatric difficulties? Yes No
 If yes, please give details about these difficulties, including past or present prescribed medication and care.

Is anyone in the family currently under psychiatric care? Yes No
 If yes, please give details about professionals.

SECTION 10: RELEVANT HISTORY

Please include information about significant life events (e.g., bereavement, separation, losses, and transitions) and any client/family characteristics that you believe is important for us to know. Please also include information about how the client/family came to be referred to your unit/agency.

To be continued on a separate sheet if necessary

SECTION 11: MAIN CONCERNS

Kindly provide a description of the main concerns at time of referral (reason for referral), and why you think family therapy may be beneficial now (Why now?)

To be continued on a separate sheet if necessary

SECTION 12: INTERVENTIONS UNDERTAKEN

Kindly indicate any interventions taken to address the current concerns (e.g. social work interventions, parenting skills courses attended, current support if any etc.).

To be continued on a separate sheet if necessary

SECTION 13: OTHER PROFESSIONALS CURRENTLY INVOLVED WITH THE CLIENT/FAMILY

Name & Surname	Agency/Dept/Org	Contact details
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

14A. How long has this client/family been in contact with the referrer?
 Is the contact with the client/family regular? Yes No If no, why not?

14B. What does the person/family you are referring expect from this referral?
 (Different family members' expectations can be added, if relevant.)

14C. Referrer's expectations, action taken and any further comments.

PLEASE FILL IN THE FOLLOWING:

I/we, the undersigned, confirm the information provided above and consent to this referral.

-Or/Jew-

Jien/jahna, li i-firma tiegħi/lagħna tidher hawn taht, nikkonfermaw li l-informazzjoni ta' hawn fuq hija korretta u naċċettaw li nkunu r-riferuti.

Name/Issem: _____ Signature/Firma: _____
 Date/Data: _____
 Name/Issem: _____ Signature/Firma: _____
 Date/Data: _____

Please ensure that you have completed all the relevant sections of this form and attached any relevant documentation, as listed in the table below:

LIST OF DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:	
Consent Form for Minors	<input type="checkbox"/>
Care Order Report	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal Documents	<input type="checkbox"/>

Kindly return the complete referral to:

The Service Area Leader
 Psychological and Psychotherapeutic Services, Flat 3, Galeas Premises, St Luke's Road, Gwardamangia PTA1027
 Tel: 2295 9000

Figure 6. 28 FSWS Psychological and Psychotherapy Referral Form for Families

Andrew mentioned that when scheduling the client's first appointment with the psychologist, which occurs a few weeks after the first referral, they discuss the new client prior to the first clinical meeting, taking in the information provided in the forms. There may be what is called an element of detachment when treating a client through time-space distancing, in the form of "a dossier which is moved in time and space, from cabinets to tables at scheduled meetings, from institution to institution, as a rational administrative process" ([Green, 1983: 156](#)). In reflecting upon these practices, the client is aware that the agency will provide assistance, but perhaps not aware of the extensive network that constitutes that assistance, or the extent to which information about his or her condition is exchanged amongst the personnel within the organisation. This could be defined as the backstage activity which is not visible to non-members of the organisation.

Through these forms, clients end up entering the relations of ruling of the immediate organisation as well other agencies and organisations working with *Aġenzija Sedqa*. Not only do these forms reveal that the relationship between the client and the social worker involves text-mediation, but such forms may be described as texts that introduce the client to a number of objectified relations, which is typical of human service provision ([Campbell and Gregor, 2008: 36](#)). These texts provide what Smith ([1990a](#)) would describe as entering an ideological account, having "a ruling conceptual structure that makes it especially useful for organisational decisions" ([Campbell and Gregor, 2008: 38](#)). These forms may be reconceptualised as social spaces that allow the client to enter conceptual modes of governing vis-à-vis multidisciplinary health services, organising the relationship between the client and the organisation. Each document outlines the different objectified relations that the client is about to participate in: social, psychological, medical, administrative and legal. Each objectified relation may be linked to conceptual orders ([Smith, 1990a: 17](#)), each managed by ideological practices, which also include use of language. Maltese is most likely to be used for documents handled by clients; texts for internal use are unlikely to be in Maltese. On the other hand, texts shared amongst professionals working for the organisations concerned and beyond are typically in English; all technical and professional personnel use this language in common for communication of knowledge across time and space, and its use for organisational texts of this nature may be largely unquestioned. On the other hand, it is perhaps no coincidence that texts concerning legal issues are normally

presented in the Maltese language, given that the Maltese Constitution explicitly states that the official language of the courts of Malta is Maltese. Moreover, it is a text in direct contact with the client, who is more likely than not to be a resident as well as a speaker of Maltese, and hence would need to understand the legal implications involved. However, this does not mean that this form is not available in English; if necessary, it will be made available.

6.6.2 The bifurcation of consciousness: testing for drug use

In building the dossier, the objectification of knowledge becomes necessary in the creation of the ‘running history’ of the individual. Once clients are registered as needing help with drug addiction, they are offered the necessary medical services; one such service is the screening of urine. Andrew mentioned that 30 to 40 urine samples from male clients were taken on a weekly basis to be sent to the national hospital, Mater Dei Hospital, for routine analysis. Urine samples are taken on site at the agency, personally supervised by the client’s social worker to ensure that such samples are not compromised. The container is accompanied by a pink coloured A5-sized form authorised by the Maltese Department of Health (Figure 6.29 below). It is a standardized form designed for sample analysis, with pre-determined categories for authorised personnel to communicate instructions to personnel off-site. These slips of paper are specifically reserved for screening requested by *Aġenzija Sedqa*, and the **S.A** (Sedqa Agency) included on the form signifies that the document is restricted for use by the agency. Clinical details are provided by the department, and Andrew as an authorised contact person ticks the necessary boxes signalling the type of investigation required and fills in the form on behalf of the client. In order to identify samples, Andrew creates a code for the client based on the initials and the national identity card number of the client; this is done to maintain anonymity of the person needing such testing. As a result, lab personnel carrying out such tests are unable to link the samples with any particular client. If Andrew is aware of the client taking painkillers or other medication containing opiates, he communicates this by ticking a box or jotting down a note on the form. The form is then attached to the sample container and stored in

a refrigerator on the premises; samples are collected by other staff twice a week and sent to the Detox Centre, who would have their own files on the patients being treated, and from there they are despatched to the national hospital. Results are received within two weeks, forwarded to the social worker overseeing the client's progress.

Lab No.	Mater Dei Hospital	Hospital No.	AGE
Clinical Details		Surname	
S.A.		First Name	Detox D.C.T.
		ADDRESS	Sedqa St. Venera
		Ward/Dept	
Investigations Required		Consultant	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Amphetamines	Doctor's Signatre	Date
<input type="checkbox"/>	Benzos		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Methadone		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Opiates		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cannabis		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cocaine		
FOR LABORATORY USE ONLY			
DEPT. OF PATHOLOGY		Received	Reported
DH 274 - SLH 65			Signed

Figure 6. 29 Form requesting sample testing, available in English only

The form is an essential part of the process; Andrew explained that the form must be attached to the container and filled in with the necessary details, which are client code, 'care of' details and date of sample taken as otherwise the test will not be done. The other sections on the slip are not filled in as they would be unnecessary; these pink slips from *Aġenzija Sedqa* have become routine work for the Toxicology Department. Andrew maintains a working relationship with the personnel at the said department, and from time to time he meets with them to discuss some updates as well as new drugs on the market. However, if containers are not properly processed, such as having a missing pink slip or missing details, the contents will not be tested; besides accountability for samples sent for testing, all containers need sufficient identification due to legal constraints, as unauthorised testing of a container would be taken as a criminal offense. When results are later forwarded to Andrew, he would receive the pink slip together with the computer-generated

result slip from the lab via the Detox Centre; this result slip is in the English language. This suggests that data regarding such samples is also kept by the Toxicology Department.

This routine, mundane activity of recording a bodily function is perhaps indicative of what Smith would call a process of objectified knowledge, which involves a split in consciousness from knowing and experience into knowledge and facticity ([Smith 1990a: 17](#)), also referred to as a “bifurcation of consciousness”. A bodily function enters the extra-local world, known as the ‘ruling relations’. The client and the lab personnel are not in direct contact with each other, yet dependent on each other via these objectified relations. Such a connection may be described as a tertiary relationship which needs no physical co-presence and simply mediated “by machines, correspondence, or other persons, but the parties will be well aware of the relationship” ([Calhoun, 1992: 218](#)). As an objectified relation, the form passes from one expert to the next within the network of institutional relationships; before returning to the original person of contact together with a reply in the form of lab results, data is entered into different databases. Upon evaluation, the whole process, as others discussed so far, points to a process of decontextualization within networks of objectified relations sustained by a system of time-space distancing dependent on disembedding mechanisms such as expert systems and symbolic tokens ([Giddens, 1990: 22](#)).

The issue of language is of interest, as this is a form which has not been designed by *Aġenzija Sedqa*. In fact, it appears to be a standard form for all clinical interventions that need to be processed by the national hospital. The use of English appears to be influenced by organisational needs of other institutions, which in this case is a medical organisation. The selection of one language for use across different organisations may be an example of rationalisation, simplifying communicative needs across different networks and across time and space. In Malta, the language of medical and health science degrees is English. Moreover, non-Maltese medical personnel may also be employed by medical organisations in Malta, further stressing the need for a common language for communication amongst

professionals⁶. As for social workers like Andrew, they would most likely need to adapt to the system previously established by the medical institution, including its working language for written documentation.

6.6.3 Frontstage and backstage texts: seeking rehabilitation and the ruling relations

Rehabilitation services depend on a network of professionals working across different locales. In following up on clients needing assistance from other units that are managed by *Agenzija Sedqa*, Andrew must communicate via standardized forms. Such three units include *Dar l-Impenn*, *Komunità Santa Marija* and the Assessment and Stabilization Unit (ASU); all three offer in-patient services for clients who need detoxification and rehabilitation. These units are located adjacent to a quiet residential area in *Hal-Farruġ*, Luqa, a small town in the Southeast Region; the agency was also stationed here prior to its relocation to Santa Venera. Andrew explained that the residents are aware of the community, but there is little involvement. He also visits Mount Carmel Hospital, a psychiatric hospital, once a week, which is in the Western Region, in connection with his clients.

Dar l-Impenn is a small substance misuse in-patients unit (SMIPU) which provides clients with intensive detoxification programmes, and is staffed with doctors, nurses, and psychologists ([FSWS, 2019g](#)). This unit can take up to nine or ten patients at a time; according to the website, clients are referred to the hospital by medical officers. Andrew visits this unit when a client of his has been admitted for a detoxification programme. If there is a long-term action plan for client rehabilitation, *Dar l-Impenn* is considered the first stage; a detoxification programme may last from three to ten days. Apart from the medical services, socio-psychological services are also provided to motivate the client, indicating that more than one department is involved. Prior to admittance, Andrew explained that clients were given a four-page document with information and regulations

⁶ It is worth noting that medical students applying for the Doctor in Medicine and Surgery are expected to be able to speak Maltese in doctor/patient relations; non-Maltese speaking applicants would need to obtain the medical Maltese Proficiency Certificate prior to being admitted (University of Malta, 2019b)

read; the final page had two declarations for the client to sign (see Figure 6.30). The first declaration concerned the client having understood the regulations and the consequences of violating them. Clients signed and provided their national identity number, witnessed by *Dar l-Impenn* staff, and the date. The second declaration gave staff the right to conduct a body search or search personal belongings, again witnessed by a member of staff. As a document handled and read by the client, it was in the Maltese language; their signature meant that they understood the regulations while staying at *Dar l-Impenn*. Andrew explained that most of the people making use of the unit's services are Maltese, with the occasional Italian, North Africa or Sub-Saharan African national. When asked if these foreign clients spoke Maltese, Andrew replied that they would normally understand it as they would have lived amongst Maltese speakers prior to the programme, and thus would have had to interact with Maltese-speaking neighbours. Reading the information sheet, it was noted that there were a number of words that were clearly borrowed from the English language presented in italics: *cash, tracksuits, jeans, T-shirts, vests, shorts, stretched, face-cloths, shower gels, disposable, playstation, Naltrexone Challenge Test* to name a few. It was also interesting to note that whilst clients could bring books, they were not allowed to bring or use stationery, including pens.

Komunità Santa Marija is another community service offered to clients wishing to adopt a drug-free lifestyle, known for its long-term residential drug rehabilitation programme. Admission to the community is through referral by the key-worker from the Drugs Community Services at *Aġenzija Sedqa*; Andrew would be such a key-worker. The referral is also through a document, a three-page form filled in with a complete overview of the client's drug history, including medical, psychological, social and legal information (Figure 6.31). The form is entirely in the English language and is expected to be filled in using English.

Assessment for Entry to <i>Komunità Santa Marija</i>		
<p>Initial referral details to DCT</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Medical information –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GP and any psychiatric assessment (if available) _____ - Any treatment e.g. Suboxone, methadone _____ - Any psychiatric history (if available) _____ - Any medical appointments needed during residential placement _____ - Need for any detoxification medical plan (if any) prior to admission _____ 	<p>Legal issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Past court case history _____ _____ - Pending court cases and details e.g. arrest, prison sentence duration, probation etc _____ _____
<p>Drug history and treatment (include drug of choice and other details related to addiction)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Accommodation and housing issues (important to include any issues of homelessness and how these may be addressed to facilitate admission into residential programme)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any court mandated details in relation to drug rehabilitation, including any feedback from <i>mija</i> Court services _____ _____
<p>Summary of the work done by key worker in the community</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Psychological information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any case history on psychology needs e.g. referral details. Include any assessment details when available _____ - Any other assessment in relation to client's behaviour, cognitions and emotions _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any feedback from PSAAB (if applicable) _____ _____
<p>Reasons for referral to residential rehabilitation programme (include past experience of other drug treatments and programmes and any outcomes)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Family history</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family of origin history composition _____ _____ 	
<p>Social support network <small>who/which can support client while in residence and in the community</small></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family members _____ - Any significant others _____ - Other services and professionals (past and current) involved _____ - Any social contracts/care plans with other agencies involved _____ - Any other issues that need to be addressed prior to admission e.g. child care, employment, financial bank issues _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family of creation composition _____ _____ - Any other assessments and observations including: attachment styles, family patterns and dynamics, relationships etc _____ _____ 	

Figure 6. 31 Form assessing clients for entry into *Komunità Santa Marija*, available in English only

With Andrew as the key-worker for the client, he monitors the client's progress. Another document that the client is given prior to the programme is a list of items, mainly clothes and toiletries, needed for the duration of the stay and other information about items (see Figure 6.32). The list provided is in the Maltese language; if no English language version is readily available, then an impromptu translation is provided, or the client seeks to have third parties to help out. However, the Maltese version of the list has a number of items listed in the English language. Split into three columns, the items in the first two columns are the type of clothing clients are expected to bring for their stay, categorised by gender; interestingly enough, the columns are headed as 'Males' and 'Females' rather than with the Maltese equivalent '*Irgiel*' and '*Nisa*'. The third column is headed in Maltese, listing toiletries for both men and women. Upon reflection, it is perhaps no surprise that such items are popularly referred to in the English language rather than Maltese. Such items, obtainable from any supermarket or pharmacy in Malta and Gozo, would more likely than not be sold with labels in the English language; they are very unlikely to be in Maltese.

Komunita' Santa Marija

Lista ta' jwejje[li jkollu blonn resident meta jid[ol fil-Komunita'

Males	Females	
6 Qliezet ta' taht	6 Qliezet ta' taht mhux tanga	Htigijiet minimi ta' toiletries
6 pari kalzett	6 pari kalzett	Shampoo / conditioner
2 xugamani kbar	2 xugamani kbar	1 gel
2 xugamani zghar	2 xugamani zghar	1 pakettt blades
2 face cloths	2 face cloths	1 shower gel
6 T-shirts	3 bras	1 brush / pettne
4 tracksuit pants	4 T-shirts	1 deodorant
4 sweaters / jerseys	4 tracksuit pants	1 aftershave
2 pari jeans	4 sweaters / jerseys	1 shaving foam
2 qomos	2 blouses	1 hand cream (jekk trid)
2 sweatshirts	2 pyjamas	Toothbrush
2 pari pyjamas	2 pari jeans	Toothpaste
2 pari zraben	2 pari zraben	Alarm clock
Par gym shoes (slippers)	1 par slipper	
Par papocç ghas-sodda	1 par bed shoes	
Par filflop, karkur g'jax-shower	Jacket or coat	
Glekk u ngravata	Raincoat hafifa	
Gakketta	Malja ta l-ghawm	
Raincoat hafifa	Par filflop, karkur g'jax-shower	
Malja ta l-ghawm (Shorts)	Make up and hair treatment	
	Facial care creams	

- ❖ L-istaff għandu dritt jiddecedi kemm toiletries għandu b'zonn resident
- ❖ L-ebda tip ta' gojjelli (msielet, criket, brazzuletti jew gizirani) ma jistghu jiddahhlu fil-Merħba jew fil-Komunita'. Resident jista' jzomm biss ARLOGG jew CURKETT TAT-TIEG f'kaz li jkun mizzewweg.
- ❖ Il-karta ta' l-identita' jew xi dokumneti oħra jinghataw lill Unit Leader meta individwu jkun aċċett bħala resident
- ❖ Resident ma jistax idahhali aktar min €35.00. Il-flus jinghataw lill Unit Leader.
- ❖ Radios personali, walkman eċċ ma jistghux jiddahhlu fil-Unit.

GRAZZI tal-koperazzjoni tiegħek u nagħtuk Merħba fostna!

Figure 6. 32 Hand out detailing items needed for residents at *Komunita' Santa Marija*, available in Maltese

The reference to clothing suitable for court sittings points to the involvement of another institution in the client's rehabilitation. Andrew is also responsible for preparing progress reports for the court office of the agency; such work practices were documented in the participant diary as 'liaison meetings court colleagues'. When a client is scheduled to appear in court, the agency may receive a court summons. When one is received, this is discussed amongst the team and a decision is taken as to whom would need to testify. Andrew explained that a person from the agency is appointed as a court colleague to testify on the behalf of social workers; the social worker presents a formal report in writing, and the court colleague testifies on behalf of the social worker. A template of a sample report was provided for the study, which was drafted in English (see Figure 6.33). This document may be perceived as an organisational text from one organisation presented to another, from one set of objectified relations to another. Court sittings are typically held in the Maltese language, and given that the language of the courts is Maltese, sentences are normally written and read out in Maltese. However, the use of English is permissible, as

outlined in the Judicial Proceedings (Use of English Language) Act ([Chapter 189](#)), and thus documents in the English language are admissible.

 SEDQA COURT OFFICE PROGRESS REPORT	
Name [REDACTED] ID (M) Report No 1	
Key Worker: [REDACTED] Agency: Sedqa	First Contact: 5 th October, 2009 Last Contact: 26 th November, 2009
CONTACTS:	
Mr. XXX has requested Sedqa services to assist him overcoming his daily abuse of high amounts of cannabis. The high dosage rate was evidenced by the prescription of psychotropic medication upon commencing his constant decrease of substance abuse.	
Client has attended for his weekly appointments with aforementioned key worker, totaling eight (8) sessions. Mr. XXX attended for a stabilization period on a permanent residential basis at SMIPU, Dar I-impenn, between Monday 26 th and Saturday 31 st October 2009. This stay has catalyzed client's constant improvement on a personal and social level. Client is currently trying to indulge in fulltime employment, and is waiting to commence contacts with ETC - Supported Employment Section.	
The observed progress highly suggests that Mr. Xxx is not currently abusing from Cannabis, and he agreed to attend supervised urine testing on a weekly basis. However, first result, dated 18 th November 2009, resulted positive for Cannabis Metabolite due to client's high usage rates of this substance up to six (6) weeks ago upon commencement of services.	
WAY FORWARD:	
Mr. Xxx is very co-operative and always adheres to his care plan. He has been showing progress on different levels since commencement of meetings with key worker.	
Client is now trying to structure up his daily routine through a healthy lifestyle, including physical exercise, and planning to engage in lawful fulltime employment. Moreover he wants to keep attending for meetings with key	
	worker so as to reach and maintain his aim to result negative for Cannabis Metabolite in the coming weeks. I feel that client has already showed lots of progress, and has the necessary capabilities and skills to adhere to his care plan and stay clean from Cannabis abuse.
	Date: 26 th November 2009
	The above report can be used to testify in court and you can be called personally to testify on the above information.

Figure 6. 33 Template of court report, presented in English

Andrew mentioned that *Aġenzija Sedqa* previously used the European Addiction Severity Index (EuropASI) ([EMCDDA, 2019](#)) for client referrals into *Komunità Santa Marija*, now discontinued by the agency. It is interesting to note that *Aġenzija Sedqa* had had this evaluation tool translated into the Maltese language, with minor modifications made to it. According to the Sedqa Biennial Report 2001 – 2002, the Drug Services Team not only developed its assessment skills by using this tool, but it was also “adapted to the Maltese context and made available in Maltese” ([FSWS, 2002: 22](#)). This twelve-page document was used to interview the client and assess the severity of addiction using a chart. As Andrew explained, it was a document filled in by the social worker in the presence of the client, but the actual grading was done by the social worker afterwards. As this is an assessment tool used by a current client, no consent forms were needed to be signed in advance as the service was already being provided. However, the final page was a consent

form for the client to sign, allowing for a follow-up interview using the same assessment tool, in addition to providing contact details of people to be contacted in case of emergency.

Once the client has overcome the addiction, the Assessment & Stabilisation Unit (ASU) may provide further assistance to prevent a relapse. The ASU is a relatively new unit which opened in December 2012 (FSWS, 2014: 125). Clients stay at this facility for a programme that may last up to eight weeks. A separate referral form, the ASU referral form, activates the process (see Figure 6.34). Like the referral forms for First Contact and *Komunità Santa Marija*, this is also in the English language.

The figure shows two parts of a form. The left part is the 'ASU Referral Form' with the following sections:

- Contact Details:** Name, Address, Phone, Mobile, ID Nr, Date of Birth, Age.
- Addictions:** Alcohol, Drugs, Gambling, Other (Specify).
- Psychosocial Issues:** Lack of Social Support / Isolation, Unemployment, Homelessness, Family/Relationship Issues, Other (Specify).
- Date of Referral:**
- Significant Other:** Relation, Phone/Mobile.
- Other Professionals Involved:** Psychiatrist, Doctor, Psychologist, Social Worker, Others (Specify).
- Current/Previous Treatment:** Please indicate in the space provided with a C or P, for Current or Previous. Includes fields for: Sober, Mental Health Facility, Others (Specify).
- Criminal Justice Involvement:** Pending Cases, On Bail, Probation / Parole, Other (Specify).

The right part is the 'Medical Treatment' table:

Medication	Dosage	Frequency
Eg. Fluoxetine	20mg	1 - 0 - 0

Below the table are sections for:

- Significant Relevant Health Conditions (e.g. Pregnancy, Allergies, Epilepsy, etc.)
- Additional Information
- Suggested Plan of Action by Referring Agent
- Referring Agent: [] Contact Nr: []
- For Official Use: Admission Date: [] Client Key Nr: []

Figure 6. 34 ASU Referral Sheet, available only in English

The form is a A4-sized double-sided sheet filled in by the social worker, allowing him or her to communicate type of addiction, besides medical and psychosocial information by ticking boxes to indicate client’s current status, with fields to add extra information, summarising a client’s drug abuse behaviours. The ‘For Office Use’ section indicates that other professionals working within the network will have access to this. As other internal documents for professional use, this document is not handled by the client. Clients are

also provided with a set of rules and regulations about their stay, which are available in both official languages as monolingual handouts.

To conclude, the client following through the different programmes eventually ends up with a sizeable dossier touching upon medical, psychological, social and legal issues, with forms filled by a number of professional personnel as well as progress reports written by his or her social worker liaising with other professionals. Moreover, information may be stored in different locations, registered for different services in different units. For this to run smoothly, coordination of activities is paramount, with standardized procedures and forms in place. This is largely dependent on textually-mediated social organisation, dependent on bureaucratic rationalisation, using a common written language – English – for communication amongst professionals connected via networks dependent on time-space distanciation.

6.7 Forms of objectified knowledge: agency reports and research

In discussing texts with John and Andrew, the issue of archives and statistics would come up. The agency has its own archive, and since its inception has kept all paperwork, including files of every single client who has sought help from the agency. Once the client enters the ruling relations, the information regarding the client becomes transformed into data used for the compilation of statistical reports for stakeholders at large. As noted by Smith ([1990a: 124](#)),

“the production of statistical data is part of an extensive bureaucratic and professional organisation [...]... which include, of course, the work of transforming the raw material of the world into the forms that can be processed as data”.

Whilst Smith (*ibid.*) was commenting about how such work is part of the routine work of psychiatric professionals, this may be extended to all professionals in health services. All the participants in the study are involved, one way or another, in the production of data for the agency, transforming experiences via formal rationality into forms to be processed for

data analysis. One starting point for this is the official forms that clients seeking services need to have filled in on their behalf by professional workers authorised by the agency. Besides connecting the client with the ruling relations, forms are one vehicle for such data to be entered into the bureaucratic and organisational procedures, in the discourses typically expected for various personnel to access and interpret. Data from forms are entered into databases such as Microsoft Access; Andrew mentioned using it to provide a record of clients who turned up for sessions or not. At the time of the interview the agency was planning an intranet system for data to be available online to all personnel who needed access to a client's online dossier, rather than the paper-based version. As mentioned in one of the interviews, the IT department published collected agency data and calculated the statistics every six months, detailing things such as client attendance. Such data is important as it is linked to funding and accountability, as stakeholders would need to know whether funding was justified and well-spent.

6.7.1 From knowing to knowledge: agency reports

In addition to educational material, the Sedqa website also provides the general public and other stakeholders at large with a number of research publications and agency reports for download; this link includes all research publications by the Foundation for Social Welfare Services, including *Aġenzija Sedqa*, *Aġenzija Appoġġ* and *Aġenzija Sapport* (FSWS, [2019k](#); [2019l](#)). Some of these reports are issued on an annual or biennial basis, providing the public with information about how each agency manages its human and material resources in line with its mission statement. Personnel appointed from each department submit a report on their activities, which becomes a chapter in the annual or biennial report. These texts provide technical information, including statistical reports concerning local trends linked to the objectives of each agency, including comparative analyses along the years. Prior to establishing language choice and significance of the presence or absence of an official language, the role of these texts and what they are meant to accomplish must be established first. Whilst these texts may be also considered frontstage texts within objectified relationships, they may be described as technical texts containing synoptic

knowledge based on local operations, fashioned from “the raw material of the world” ([Smith, 1990a: 124](#)). The webpage also provides readers with a number of national and international reports on other social issues, such as domestic violence, the status of children, and disability issues; these were also published in the English language. There are three *Aġenzija Sedqa* operational reports for the years 2001 – 2002, 2003 – 2004 and 2005 – 2006. After 2007, *Aġenzija Sedqa* operational reports were incorporated into a single report published by FSWS, which included the operational reports of all three agencies. There is a total of five such reports, which are discussed below, besides six annual statistical reports on *Aġenzija Sedqa*.

The three *Aġenzija Sedqa* Operations Reports published for the years 2001 to 2006 were entirely in English. An analysis of the three reports revealed a pattern in the manner agency information was presented: who was presenting information and what kind of information was being presented. Each report had a message from the minister responsible for the agency, and a section each on corporate developments, financial management and agency services, followed by an epidemiological report. What is also of note is the type of knowledge presented. These three reports invariably presented statistical data with each section being a type of mini report. Taking the data available from the Primary Prevention Services Overview for the years 2001 – 2002, the reader encounters information on the outreach of such services, such as “delivery of BABES programme to year 3 students by **sedqa** personnel reached 120 schools and approximately 9000 students”, “distribution of 40,000 TFAL workbooks” and “47 Parental Skills Courses were held reaching approximately 1000 parents” ([FSWS, 2002: 16](#)). The biennial report for 2003 – 2004 Primary Prevention Services reveals that “the BABES programme was delivered to over 95% of all state, Church and Private Schools in Malta” ([FSWS, 2004: 33](#)). On page 33 (*ibid.*), “over 100,000 leaflets, booklets and other material were distributed over this biennium”, which also included a new leaflet, PAPER CUT, designed for secondary and post-secondary schools, and which was “one of the few productions in English” (*ibid.*). In 2005, student outreach via the BABES programme was 4000, and 5000 for the year 2006 ([FSWS, 2006: 25](#)). This numerical data is based on the quantification of actual classroom experiences concerning facilitator and pupil interaction, reaching out to practically every single pupil in Year 3 that year, especially as school attendance is

compulsory from the age of 5 to 16 in Malta. Taking Smith's (1990a) perspective as to how subjective experience is reduced into objective knowledge for representation in textual format into ruling relations, it is perhaps worth reflecting how each class experience between pupils and facilitators, year after year, is reduced to figures as part of an organisational process:

“The production of knowledge is often a complex organisational and technical process that gives the knowledge produced its distinctive shape. That social and technical organisation is not apparent in the final product. Thus, a textually mediated reality incorporates the social organisation of its production and the courses of action separating it from people's lived actualities.” (Smith, 1990a: 63)

Taking the outreach recorded for the BABES programme, it must be noted how these pupils' personal experiences of the programme are part of a wider system involving the exchange of knowledge. When facilitators interact with pupils in the delivery of the programme, they are sharing objectified knowledge with the pupils. However, it does not stop there. Aside from the fact that knowledge is shared with pupils, pupils also become involved in the production of objectified knowledge. In delivering the programme, each facilitator keeps a record of how many pupils attended sessions. This is forwarded to the team supervisor, who then forwards such data; the team supervisor liaises with administrative support to compile reports to be passed on to superiors. This ends up as objectified knowledge published in the agency's operations report, after passing through “a complex and technical process that gives the knowledge produced its distinctive shape” (ibid., pg 63). And such knowledge is mediated via texts in this process, transformed through a complex process of knowledge production. The dynamic interaction between facilitator and pupils in the classes, using a mixture of Maltese and English in oral delivery as well as written text, becomes a quantitative exercise to enter the ruling relations as a report based on objectified knowledge created in the organisational processes involved from off-site activities and other actualities such as logistics for course material, information meetings for parents and post-session evaluation by teachers. These activities are also activated within objectified relations that are mediated via texts. On the other hand, pupils take home with them the educational material that they have been provided

with by the organisation. The flow of knowledge via texts is bidirectional, from organisation to pupil and eventually pupils' homes, and from pupil participation to organisation which will eventually be published in reports. The same pattern may be applied to the other contexts vis-à-vis the prevention programmes as well as the parental skills courses for adults, who are provided with educational material to take home. Participants are eventually transformed into attendance figures and outreach in reports.

The same process of knowledge production is also present in the kind of work Andrew does. In the three early reports covering care services for drug invention, the focus was not only on the types of services offered and improvements in the system, but also trends, and this would include data about the clients that the agency has taken in per year. This not only included new client referrals, but also referrals for psychotherapy. For example, during the year 2001 the total number of clients was 935, with 142 of them admitted as new clients ([FSWS, 2002: 22](#)). Emphasis is placed on quantification of clients, interventions and success rates for each year. Behaviours in terms of frequencies take centre stage. With team members like Andrew involved in referring clients for services, meeting them to discuss progress, taking samples for testing, the day-to-day actualities become hidden behind discourses and numbers to become conceptual orders within the ruling relations.

The epidemiological reports are another example of day-to-day actualities transformed into what may be termed a census of clients registered with the agency, focusing on the number of people, referred to variously as clients or substance abusers in the reports, making use of the substance misuse out-patients unit (SMOPU). Demographics such as new or registered clients, gender, age, region, educational attainment, employment and drug use behaviours become detached observables and are categorised to organise the data to determine trends. These observables must be organised and categorised before they can be used for what Smith ([1990a: 85](#)) describes as “abstract symbolic work”, in other words objectified knowledge. This data is extracted from the referral forms and other documents that social workers like Andrew need to fill in and later input into a database; some forms were noted to be pre-coded, whilst others also had ‘For official use’, sent to other departments and agencies, pointing towards personnel processing data as abstract,

detached observables from a text. Every client experiences indirect relationships beyond the direct one that they have with the professionals providing expert assistance. Calhoun (1987: 332) notes that these indirect relationships are dependent on mediation within a complex communication system. These indirect relationships do not depend on co-presence and are defined by much higher levels of time-space distanciation. Via organisational texts such as forms and reports, clients ‘enjoy’ tertiary relationships with other individuals without co-presence. What is more is that with the advent of information technology, the client may be subject to ‘quaternary relationships’ whereby information in a database may be used for other purposes beyond the client’s intervention, such as subjecting data to analysis for trends.

Both John and Andrew mentioned the need for accountability, and how budgets for the agency may influence services offered. In fact, each report included had a financial analysis summary provided by the finance department, detailing the challenges of maintaining operations with limited funding, seeking to embark on cost-cutting exercises due to numerous constraints; the summary for the year 2002 concluded that “consequently both parties and programmes expenditures and departmental expenditure were significantly curtailed to ensure effective financial management” (FSWS, 2002: 30). Hence success rates for any particular programme may become an important factor for its future operations and expressing these as ‘synoptic knowledge’ may be necessary for organisational processes scrutinising justification of the costs for running such programmes. In terms of language choice, the absence of Maltese may signal the preference for English in producing synoptic knowledge.

The reports published from 2007 reveal changes in both the organisation of knowledge and also language choice for contents, signifying that the use of Maltese and English index different kinds of objectified relations and objectified knowledge. From 2007 onwards, the Operations Report was published as a section in the FSWS operational report, which now includes reports from *Aġenzija Appoġġ* and *Aġenzija Sapport*. In these reports, some sections of the report are available in both official languages, as can be show in the table of contents, revealing a mix of parallel and complementary bilingualism. An interesting pattern of language choice emerges when looking the organisation of the contents,

especially when applying the concept of ‘objectified relations’ to the contents of the publication. As in previous reports, the contents are introduced by the Minister, the President of the Foundation as well as its Chief Executive Officer; these are the top three roles within the hierarchy, and each message provided by people fulfilling these roles is in both official languages, with the English language version preceding the Maltese version. However, the rest of the publication reveals a different pattern regarding language choice. Six departments contributed to the publication, which were 1) Administration, Social Marketing and Communications, 2) Human Resources, Training, Quality Assurance and Research, 3) *Aġenzija Appoġġ*, 4) *Aġenzija Sedqa*, 5) *Aġenzija Sapport* and 6) Finance. With the exception of the Finance Department, which issued a single progress report on expenditure in the English language, these departments provided a progress report (*rapport ta’ ħidma*) in the Maltese language with no English translation, yet all other contributions from these departments were in the English language without a Maltese version made available. In this progress report, the most senior personnel of each of these five divisions, including the operational directors of each agency, used the national language to communicate on behalf of each division. It is possible that the national language is used to signal the type of objectified relations the directors have with the reader, seeking to communicate the general progress of each division; however, synoptic knowledge is clearly communicated via English.

However, analysing the reports for later years reveals changes regarding language choice. The 2010 – 2011 report is published entirely in the English language, except for the introduction by the Chief Executive Officer of FSWS, which is available in both official languages ([FSWS, 2013](#)). A complete shift in language choice is present in the operational reports covering the years 2012 until 2017, which were published exclusively in English. However, this is not the case with frontstage texts aimed at the general public. Figure 6.35 shows two examples of such texts in the Maltese language in reaching out to the general public; one targets families whilst the other is aimed at children to participate in a competition aired by a local television station.

- community programmes and initiatives in various localities and in collaboration with several entities
- pre-adolescent groups in collaboration with Aġenzija Appoġġ
- community interventions by the Canadian drama group Life Force International in 2010
- Fresher's Week at the University of Malta campus
- yearly graduation ceremony of clients who would have successfully completed a residential rehabilitation programme at *Komunità Santa Marija*
- presentation of a donation by Malta Charities Foundation in 2010
- production of leaflet about the Agency's Family Therapy Service
- production of informative booklet aimed for pregnant drug users
- updates and reprint of publications
- in collaboration with Sedqa's Prevention team, the Marketing team facilitated a competition aimed at children on Favourite TV. A member from the Prevention team attended and facilitated a sessions with children present during the programme on a pre-agreed topic. The Marketing Department coordinated these weekly slots and also uploaded relevant information and also a competition for children on the Agency's website.



Figure 20: Sedqa Family Therapy Leaflet

Rokna tal-Gremx

Suġġett: Pressjoni mill-Hbieb

Ibghatu l-ittri tagħkom fuq:
sedqa@gov.mt

Jew bil-posta fuq:

Rokna tal-Gremx
Aġenzija Sedqa
4, Triq Braille,
Sita Venera,
SVR 1690



Figure 21: Competition by Sedqa on Favourite TV

Figure 6. 35 Page from FSWS report showing 'frontstage' texts published by Aġenzija Sedqa (2013)

6.7.2 Spatiality in texts: the ESPAD National and International Reports

Another publication in connection with *Aġenzija Sedqa* is the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD) reports. Since 1995, *Aġenzija Sedqa* has been involved in the collection of data via a structure questionnaire on substance use among 15–16-year-old secondary school children in Malta as part of a transnational endeavour amongst a number of European countries seeking to determine the extent of substance abuse amongst European teenagers ([ESPAD, 2016](#)). To date there are six national reports, and such data is incorporated within the international report published the same year, which is essentially a comparative study of drug use amongst European teenagers.

Taking the conceptual ‘unpacking’ that Smith ([1990a](#)) applies to re-evaluating ideological practices in the creation of formal knowledge, these six national reports may be re-interpreted as a complex of organisational and administrative procedures highly dependent on textual mediation, transforming subjective knowing into objective knowledge. As Smith ([1990a: 80](#)) observes, “the knowing of participants is captured in the objectified knowledge mediating ruling”. Each report is a series of concerted and co-ordinated social practices, mediated by texts and motivated by a single, common objective (see [Smith 1990a: 69](#)), which in this instance is determining trends in teenage drug use. In terms of language, the national ESPAD reports are published entirely in English ([Sedqa, 1997: 6](#); [Sedqa, 2002: 14](#); [Sedqa, 2005: 15](#); [Sedqa, 2012a: 5](#); [Sedqa, 2012b: 17](#); [Sedqa, 2016: 19](#)). When schoolchildren were provided with questionnaires to fill in, they were given the choice of a Maltese or English language questionnaire; only the English version of the questionnaire was provided in the appendix. No information was provided as to the language preferences of the participants. The final write-up, the national report, is published in the English language sometime later. No Maltese language version of these reports appear to be in circulation. This may be the question as to how and why the transition was made from two languages to a single language.

The transition in language may partly lie in the complex web of relationships whereby the data supplied by the pupils becomes objectified knowledge in “abstract symbolic work”.

Take for example the ESPAD National Malta 2015 report, detailing the data processing prior to being used for the final report ([Sedqa, 2016: 20](#)):

“Questionnaires were examined and subsequently scanned by a commissioned company. Data was entered into a Microsoft Excel file. The data file was then delivered to the FSWS and a number of hard copies of the questionnaire were checked against the inputted data. The range of responses for all variables was also checked. Data was exported into an SPSS file and sent to the international ESPAD data manager, whereby a standardised cleaning procedure was conducted for all countries. This resulted in 0.8% of all questionnaires being discarded, mainly due to poor data quality. The SPSS database was then returned and the national data was analysed using SPSS version 23. Only data from Fifth Form students born in 1999 were included in the analysis. Data from the classroom reports were entered manually into a database.”

Subjective knowing goes through a whole process of mediation prior to becoming objective knowledge. The information provided by thousands of fifth form students in Malta on their personal habits is transformed via a process of multiple stages before it can be published as a final report. Prior to being written as a report, personal subjective experiences needed to be transformed into ‘data’ on a text. The questionnaires filled in by the students were processed by a third-party ‘commissioned company’, transforming student responses in boxes into quantifiable data using a popular electronic spreadsheet programme that is designed for the storage, organisation and management of data. At this point it is no longer an issue of using either official language for data management, but rather coding and symbols such as numbers. It may be said that these various organisations across European countries are able to coordinate and organize through what Smith ([1990a: 64](#)) describes as multiple “organisational procedures”, which in other words could be labelled as institutional textually-mediated social practices, to contribute to a single report based “on records, files, and other forms of systematically collected information and situated in extra-local relations within the apparatus of ruling” (ibid., pg 65). The data in this format was returned for further verification prior to transferring the data to another software package known for interactive statistical analysis. This was then sent to the international ESPAD data manager, responsible for vetting all data submitted by participating countries. Once data is ‘cleaned’, it was returned to the FSWS for analysis,

evaluation and to be written up as a national report. All throughout the process, the data was modified for exchange within a structured system, communicated both locally and internationally.

However, this transition from language to numerical data and then to language does not explain the transition from one language to another. This transition is more likely to be an issue of how the global influences the local, and the ESPAD report is such an example of how the global filters into local experience (see Figure 6.36). The local pupil is asked about his or her own experiences in order to determine behaviours amongst Maltese teenagers in general. The questionnaire they were presented with is a reminder that this survey is not an isolated national survey conducted by Sedqa with the assistance of a number of local organisations but being done in collaboration with at least two international bodies, the EMDDA and the Council of Europe Group Pompidou, which are also organisations set up to combat drug abuse and its trafficking. The text as a social space connects each individual pupil with people not present in the immediate environment, located in different temporal and spatial dimensions, with the direction of communication largely unilateral; the individual pupil is unlikely to receive any communication about the knowledge communicated, at least not directly.

From the individual pupil to the final report, the text may be seen as enabling the extension of social action within the complex web of relationships that are involved in the exercise called data collection, transferring knowledge along channels designed for such exchanges. These are arguably the symbolic tokens and the expert systems conceptualised by Giddens (1990: 22), two disembedding mechanisms that are hallmarks of modernity. Within an expert system, symbolic tokens represent decontextualized knowledge that can be shared along the exchange system; moreover, the production of knowledge implies that it is produced for dissemination within similar exchange systems. In this case, the knowledge is destined to be shared beyond the local experience on at least two different levels – the national and the international. It may be said that these various organisations across European countries are able to coordinate and organize through what Smith (1990a: 64) describes as multiple “organisational procedures”, which in other words could be labelled as institutional textually-mediated social practices, to contribute to a single report based

“on records, files, and other forms of systematically collected information and situated in extra-local relations within the apparatus of ruling” (Smith 1990a: 65). From a nationwide local endeavour, which is already quite complex, it becomes part of an international project, which again also hints at the complexity of the whole process, summed up in a single international report published by ESPADA.

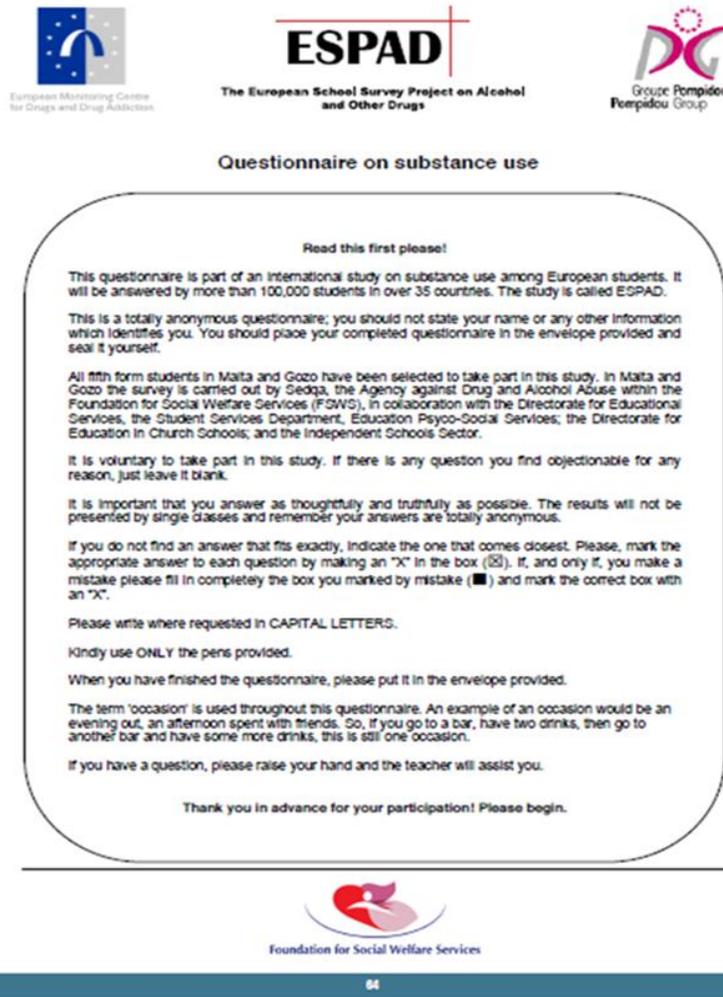


Figure 6. 36 The introduction to the ESPAD 2015 questionnaire on substance abuse (English version)

At this stage it is worth considering the issue of spatiality. Whilst such exchanges are performed in physical spaces and physical formats, such space is not ‘neutral’ space. In

what Lefebvre (1991) calls “abstract space”, and in the process of knowledge exchange between the local, immediate physical space and the global and the distant, the local space is “interpenetrated” by the global via “the worldwide networks of communication, exchange and information” (ibid., pg 86). It is here that knowledge may be perceived in terms of ‘flow’ along the symbols and signs shared amongst knowledge networks, and for the flow to be ‘unimpeded’ at any one point, individuals participating in the knowledge system dependent on high time/space distancing must be familiar with the symbols and signs and use them accordingly. Participation is through objectified relations, mainly indirect relationships that Calhoun (1987, 1992) defines as tertiary and quaternary relationships. Such knowledge is destined to be shared within mediated relationships via a disembedding mechanism such as writing (Giddens, 1981). The link between writing, language and literacy becomes evident here; “Writing is also an aspect of ‘literacy’: while ‘language’ is a semiotic system, ‘literacy’ is the ways of using, and ability to use, that semiotic system” (Clark and Ivanic, 1997: 10). Contextualising the use of a semiotic system within the social context it is being associated with, the question as to what could be regulating choice of language in the absence of a clear and overt language policy may be attributed to the disembedding mechanisms that are currently in place.

6.8 Discussion

Prior to analysing the language of the texts Daniela, Ivy, John, Ann and Andrew handle in their role as street-level bureaucrats, it is perhaps clear that evaluating the contextual aspect of these texts in terms of objectified relations and objectified knowledge (Smith, 1990a), as well as performativity (Goffman, 1959) and spatiality (e.g. Lefebvre, 1991) provides the means by which ‘higher-order regularities’ operate. As street-level bureaucrats, they are involved in objectified relations. These objectified relations are linked to the management of resources, both material and human distribution of resources, or what Giddens (1981) would define as allocative and authoritative resources respectively. The distribution of each resource type is linked to the routine social practices they engage in, and the texts involved in these practices are important. In a knowledge society, knowledge

is also a resource, and as a resource it is commonly mediated via texts within objectified relations. Managing such resources via textual mediation is frequently through a form of bureaucratic rationalisation, which involves the ‘reduction of complexity’ for transmission.

The kind of social relations that define these street-level bureaucrats and the public must also be taken into consideration. The relationship between these individuals and the public may be perceived as ‘objectified relations’ within the relations of ruling ([Smith, 1990a: 14](#)). These relations are perhaps typical of the frontstage performativity that Goffman ([1959](#)) describes. As street-level bureaucrats, they are responsible for the distribution of resources, which in this case is primarily knowledge about addictions and the dangers that these have for their health and well-being. This switch from highly interactive engagement with the general public to the more mundane administrative work is reminiscent of front stage/back stage performativity in which the self is a collection of performances spatially arranged across the geography of everyday life ([Goffman, 1959](#)). Stationed at the *Sedqa* offices in Santa Venera, a town in the central region of Malta, they travel around Malta to deliver programmes; the offices are the backstage, the centre of operations, in which administrative work and team meetings take place. The classrooms and community centres are the frontstage, the place where they interact with the public as front-line workers. This spatial organisation is also present in the case of clients seeking professional help from people like Andrew, with rooms for private sessions and the office for administrative work. In addition, this frontspace/backspace bifurcation may be interpreted in terms of power and local/extra-local relations; it is an example of “understanding how power is exercised in local settings to accomplish extra-local interests” ([Campbell and Gregor, 2008: 36](#)). Such ‘extra-local interests’ are the well-being of the general public, which would be in the national interest.

Objectified relations in modern society are designed for the exchange of objectified knowledge, and for such knowledge to be distributed within objectified relations that are largely mediated relationships across time and space, knowledge must be in the necessary form. Text types reflect this distinction. Taking again the off-site activities, this frontstage/backstage performativity is not only applied to the facilitators in terms of

physical movement through space, but also the type of texts they work with, which are quite different. Taking Daniela as an example, the types of texts she engages with are part of an educational programme designed for young pupils; these may be identified as texts involved in knowledge exchange concerning the holistic wellbeing of the young child. Moreover, they are designed to appeal to the young pupil, both in terms of visual appeal as well as style and register of language, and oral delivery is adapted to the cognitive stage of the intended audience. Thus, such knowledge must be 'packaged' in a manner which can be easily understood by the recipient, both in oral and written format. However, the rich and dynamic interaction that was witnessed in the frontstage space is later transformed into a different format for administrative purposes, focusing on the number of children present per class and other administrative issues that are clearly backstage material. An example of this is the quantification of the number of children participating in this programme published in annual reports and reported in the media. This is also objectified knowledge, but objectified for different purposes, which could be used by individuals who do not have contact with the immediate environment witnessed in the classrooms, for relationships without any co-presence with the pupils, and mediated through tertiary and quaternary relationships via texts and other means of communication technology such as databases.

Looking at the range of texts that they typically handle in the social practices they participate in, there appears to be a distinct difference between texts for frontstage and backstage literacy practices. One way of understanding texts within objectified relations is to visualise texts in terms of flow of data or information within an exchange system. In the front stage, some texts were in circulation and passed on to the participants to take home and some were retained by the personnel, such as PowerPoint presentation slides. Others were created for circulation within backstage practices. Upon reflection, it is evident that knowledge that is passed on to the general public is not the same kind or format as that passed on within objectified relations within the organisation; moreover, knowledge generated in one objectified relationship is transformed into knowledge that may be used within other objectified relations, such as data collected from pupils, clients and participants in surveys. Take for example the selection of texts handled by the Sedqa Prevention Team. Such organisational texts are perhaps starkly different to the type of texts used when delivering the BABES programme to Year 3 pupils, or post-secondary

students and other community members. On the other hand, the information that they pass on to the organisation in connection with the programme would also enter the relations of ruling created and sustained by the organisation; for example, keeping track of the number of people attending programmes is part of a practice that not only measures the success of the programme in terms of outreach but is also used for other purposes. This also occurs with clients signing up for professional assistance with social workers such as Andrew. When people seeking help for drug abuse sign up with the agency, they share information about themselves which helps the agency to categorise and diagnose the severity of the problem; whilst people are provided with medical, psychological and social assistance to help them overcome the problem, they are also quantified with a unique case number and a dossier with their case histories, shared amongst a complex of objectified relations that operate across time and space. These texts suggest that different personnel from different expert systems are engaged in practices that are interlinked, and this may also involve practices that depend on rationalisation. Choice of language for forms may also be due to institutional practices of other institutions, such as medical services, and hence the element of isomorphism in terms of language.

The creation of knowledge is also another factor to consider for language choice. The provision of information also serves other “extra-local interests” by becoming a ‘fact’ in the annual operations reports or statistical reports published by the foundation. This is precisely what Smith would identify as entering the world of facticity or objective knowledge ([1990a: 78 – 80](#)). Facticity or objective knowledge “rises in the distinctive concerting of people’s activities that breaks knowledge from the active experience of subjects and from the dialogic of activity or talk that bring before us a known-in-common object ... [...] ... the knowing of participants is captured in the objectified knowledge mediating ruling” ([Smith, 1990a: 80](#)). Such facticity is frequently represented in “abstract concepts and symbols” (*ibid.*, pg. 14). The team overall interacts with thousands of people on an annual basis, and such actual experience interaction is transformed into numbers in a text, which is then used for further processing dependent on administrative practices, which are also ideological practices. This kind of objectified knowledge may be used within what Calhoun ([1987, 1992](#)) refers to as quaternary relationships, used by personnel who use such data for purposes other than its original purpose. People accessing such data

could be journalists reporting on the outreach of such a programme, as the article by the Times of Malta (2007) shows. Objectified knowledge travels along different objectified relations (trajectories) within the ruling relations via texts.

It may be apposite to state that the flow or exchange of knowledge can only occur if the social system for the exchange is present. Knowledge is in many ways on a par with money, another disembedding mechanism, which can only be exchanged within a system established for this activity (Giddens, 1990: 22-26). The right currency is necessary for a transaction to be considered effective. The same thinking can be applied to synoptic knowledge, which can only be exchanged if is packaged in the right ‘currency’, as Lyotard (1979: 6) writes:

“It is not hard to visualise learning circulating along the same lines as money, instead of for its ‘educational’ value or political (administrative, diplomatic, military) importance; the pertinent distinction would no longer be between knowledge and ignorance, but rather, as is the case with money, between ‘payment knowledge’ and ‘investment knowledge’ – in other words, between units of knowledge exchanged in a daily maintenance framework (the reconstitution of the work force, ‘survival’) versus funds of knowledge dedicated to optimizing the performance of a project...[...]... one could similarly imagine flows of knowledge travelling along identical channels of identical nature, some of which would be reserved for the ‘decisions makers’, while the others would be used to repay each person’s perpetual debt to the social bond.”

For objectified knowledge to be exchanged through time-space distancing via texts, the issue of abstract space, or spatiality, cannot be ignored. It may also provide insight on how social space is created and maintained in terms of the local and global influences, and how social spaces “interpenetrate one another and/or superimpose themselves upon one another” (Lefebvre, 1991: 86). Social spaces whereby the global enters the local social space is through “the worldwide networks of communication, exchange and information” (ibid., pg 86). All texts revealed the presence of spatiality to varying degrees. One example of how the global penetrates the local is the introduction of the BABES programme in Maltese schools. By introducing this programme into local schools, *Aġenzija Sedqa* becomes the channel (meso-level) by which the exchange of information

between an educational organisation in North America (macro-level) and the local classroom (micro-level) is possible, bringing the global into the local; Lefebvre (1991: 86) argues that the local is not destroyed by global forces. The use of the Maltese language in the delivery of the programme suggests that local space is not replaced but may subsume the global within the local. Moreover, the children take home the learning material at the end of the programme, taking that global influence into their homes. These texts have a temporal and spatial dimension as displaced reminders of the active sessions that the pupils participated in. In the other programmes, the global also penetrates the local settings, via language and other instruments. It may be argued that in addition to social practices, translations and documents, objects are also responsible for this flow of the global into the local, and not just language: “there is an Ariadne’s thread that would allow us to pass with continuity from the local to the global, from the human to the non-human. It is the thread of networks of practices and instruments, of documents and translations” (Latour, 1993: 121). Puppets, videoclips and a printed questionnaire are such objects. Yet whilst it may be easy to link the local and the global, Latour (ibid., pg 122) observes that the networks acting as intermediary arrangements, the invisible thread, between these two extremes are obscure and not subject to investigation. These are the networks in the middle of these two extremes, “where nothing is supposed to be happening, there is almost everything” (ibid., pg 123). An example of two extremes are the printed questionnaire and the final published ESPADA report. Everything in between is ‘invisible’.

Once the texts are understood as part of the process of objectified knowledge and its exchange along networks, the issue of language choice for texts can be contextualised. In the frontstage space, both official languages were used in both oral and written texts. The classroom was the social space for high presence availability and high co-presence, involving both face-to-face interactions (see Giddens, 1981; 1990). Objectified knowledge was exchanged using the languages that the children would most likely respond to; the street level bureaucrats were responsive to the needs of their audience, translanguaging when necessary besides mode-switching with texts. However, in the backstage space, the activities of participants are reduced a different type of objectified knowledge, such as numbers, and the language of organisational texts was English; English is the language of the ruling relations in the backstage space. In addition, it is perhaps selective ‘orders of

discourse' in the English language that are applied to backstage practices. All in all, there appears to be a bifurcation between the types of written texts as well as language used within texts in the frontspace/backspace divide. This would roughly correspond with the local/extra-local distinction that Smith ([1990a](#)) associates with the relations of ruling.

6.9 Conclusion

To understand the covert dynamics of Malta's two official languages operating within institutional contexts, it was necessary to investigate a selection of texts and social practices in a government agency. This provided a means of seeking to understand what could be the 'higher-order regularities' unconsciously regulating the official languages in written texts. As a government agency, it was important to view this entity as an organisation dependent on a bureaucratic apparatus to attain organisational goals. As an organisation, it depends upon textually-mediated social organisation to communicate with the general public as well as for internal operations, whether for administrative, managerial, or professional objectives. By categorising texts based on Goffman's ([1959](#)) concept of frontstage and backstage performativity, it appears that both Maltese and English are to be found in texts used with the general public, and a shift towards English for texts for internal use.

By contextualising texts as carriers of objectified knowledge within networks of objectified relations, or as decontextualized synoptic knowledge within expert systems, it becomes evident that knowledge is socially organised. Such organisation follows clear routinised procedures, including choice of language, perhaps due to the need for specific 'orders of discourse' that may make the creation, dissemination and management of data and knowledge possible amongst a network of expert systems. The link between topic as a means of organising knowledge and language becomes clearer. One possible reason for one language over another, especially in the knowledge society, may be the need for the "reduction in complexity" ([Lyotard, 1979: 61](#)). Taking Luhmann's (1969) hypothesis, namely that "in post-industrial societies the normativity of laws is replaced by the

performativity of procedures” ([Lyotard, 1979: 46](#)), a system designed for communication of knowledge can only function if complexity is reduced:

“if all messages could circulate freely among all the individuals, the quantity of the information that would have to be taken into account before making the correct choice would delay decisions considerably, thereby lowering performativity. Speed, in effect, is a power component of the system” (Lyotard, 1979: 61).

In addition, the system “must induce the adaptation of individual aspirations to its own ends” (ibid. pg 61). In other words, the individuals involved in the system must seek to adapt their behaviours to the system. This suggests the need for conformity to a system to ensure maximum output, or at least minimise shocks to the said system. As quoted in Chapter Two, Rosner and Joachimsen ([2011: 14](#)) observed that “efforts to translate technical and scientific terms (from English) into Maltese have encountered several problems, one of them being the acceptance by the language community”. This resistance may be due to the need for conformity within a system and across systems, and hence the tendency for organisations to conform to similar systems of operation, which Meyer and Rowan ([1977: 346](#)) identify as *isomorphism*, whereby “formal organizations become matched with their environments by technical and exchange interdependencies”. It may be fair to expect various individuals working within these systems to conform to the same procedures using the same “abstract concepts and symbols” to ensure that personnel may be able to communicate via text through time and space with minimal shocks to the system. The use of structured forms, whether application forms, schedules, logistics forms, claim forms as well as referral forms, for different activities seems to point towards this practice, as personnel are guided to fill in these documents in a manner expected by the organisation. This would also involve the use of “abstract concepts and symbols” ([Smith, 1990a: 14](#)), such as numbers for quantification and identification. It is also suggested that the preference of one language over another is also part of this isomorphism.

The next question is why English emerges as the preferred language for textually-mediated social organisation. The following chapter seeks to provide an explanation as to why

English appears to be the preferred language for the social organisation of knowledge within an organisation, taking into consideration macrolevel influences.

Chapter SEVEN: Societal bilingualism and the textually-mediated organisation of knowledge in a knowledge society

7.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to reflect and conclude on the key findings of this study in connection with the three research questions presented in Chapter One, which primarily focused on what could be the ‘higher-order regularities’ influencing language use in the absence of language schemes. To recapitulate, they focused on 1) how texts contribute to routinised social action, 2) how the official languages are involved in textually-mediated social organisation and 3) why these official languages are assigned different roles (see [Section 1.4](#)). Language choice in an institutional setting may be better understood when contextualising these textually-mediated social practices as activities aimed at the social organisation of knowledge, taking objectified knowledge and objectified relations as key conceptual tools in defining the flow of knowledge within textually-mediated social practices. In addition, situated practices and texts are conducive to the creation and maintenance of the social structure which in turn reflexively shapes the same practices and texts; “repetitive activities, located in the context of time and space, have regularised consequences, unintended by those who engage in those activities, in more or less ‘distant’ time-space contexts” ([Giddens, 1984: 14](#)). Perceiving texts as critical to the production, management and dissemination of knowledge within the ruling relations sustained by institutional networks provides a clearer understanding regarding how the official languages are used in the absence of an explicit language policy regulating language use.

7.2 Textually-mediated social organisation as the extension of social action

Prior to focusing on language choice, it was necessary to reconsider the nature of the text and textually-mediated social practices (RQ 1). Social practices are considered the link between individual agency and the intangible superstructure ([Giddens, 1984](#); [Rouse, 2007](#)). With social practices as a starting point, it became necessary to understand the nature of the practice and recognise institutional practices as purposeful human activity co-ordinating social action across time and space. In the case of institutional practices, the

text becomes a critical disembedding mechanism permitting time-space distancing on a large scale for the successful outcome of a variety of goal-oriented outcomes linked to the dissemination of knowledge. The routinised practices contribute to the local ecology of the text, and because they are activities that permit the flow of social action across time and space, extra-local influences may also become part of that ecology.

In a knowledge society dependent on textually-mediated social organisation, the text becomes an organising force as shown in the two case studies. Two observations can be made about the purpose of the text. Firstly, texts are involved in the organisation and coordination of activities and people that are interconnected across time and space, prompting the extension of social action. Taking the text as a social space in which the ideational and interpersonal metafunctions operate ([Fairclough, 1995](#)), it becomes a social space for knowledge to be shared amongst people, linking individuals and prompting action in their absence; in a knowledge society, the sharing of objectified or synoptic knowledge becomes a major objective in any modern institution. Varying in number of personnel and objectives, both entities under study were goal-oriented in terms of managing resources, whether for public or private gain. In the case of institutional practices, this may be made possible primarily through a process of rationalisation involving texts; in the case of an organisation such as *Aġenzija Sedqa*, bureaucratic rationalisation plays an important part in the coordination of its activities, and from the texts present, it appears that isomorphism is necessary amongst all sister entities within the foundation as well as others serving national interest. In general, a text can ensure homogeneity within and across institutions because it is an organising force. A smaller entity like the micro-enterprise in Chapter 5 may adopt relevant textually-mediated organisational practices observed amongst larger companies for the sake of streamlining practices, including the regionalisation of practices, and in the process adopt practices to organise operations and maximise returns. Institutional practices of this nature have spread beyond economic and administrative spheres and have permeated many, if not all, sectors of society.

The second observation is that texts define relations between people, singling out whether they were members of an institution, clients or general public ([Fairclough, 1995: 38](#)). The

participants, as members of an institution, did not operate in isolation; their activities were performed with other individuals in mind, expecting some form of interaction with or without high-presence availability. Such relations were largely objectified relationships consisting mainly of indirect, impersonal relationships that were secondary, tertiary or quaternary in nature (Calhoun, [1987](#); [1992](#)). Indirect relationships of this nature are only possible when media is socially organised amongst agents who may be defined by their assigned roles, duties and expertise; such relationships are organised through the creation of networks which allow the circulation of such media of interchange to flow from agent to agent. In the exchange from person to person, knowledge is mediated in the process undergoing transformation via texts through time and space; such mediation may involve a change of language or other semiotic systems, such as numbers, which enable agents, depending on their role in the network, to process knowledge for different outcomes. In other words, knowledge may be packaged and repackaged according to agents involved.

Whilst taking the text as an organising force for knowledge and agents, the concept of spatiality must be addressed. The extension of social action across networks has contributed to the creation of social space; these objectified relations can only function when the ‘interindividual territory’ or social space allows for such media to be in circulation. Social space is not only established by practices, but also maintained by them, leading to the need for routinisation. Through the extension of social action, local spaces may become influenced by extra-local influences on a regular basis ([Lefebvre, 1991](#)). Therefore, literacy practices may be considered not only as a means of extending social action but also involved in the production of social space within the networks created.

7.3 Language choice as a means of knowledge organisation

In the absence of an explicit language scheme, the next question was what could possibly be influencing language choice in texts (RQ 2). Malta does not have language schemes delineating language use in public texts, such as the Welsh Language Policy 2017 – 2019 ([RCAHMW, 2019](#)) or the Irish Language Policy ([Government of Ireland, 2019](#)). Once texts are defined in terms of the extension of social action across time and space and the

creation of social space, it became clear that language choice was linked to the ideational and interpersonal metafunctions that texts fulfilled (Fairclough, 1995); language choice depended on the type of knowledge in circulation and for whom it was intended, indicating that the flow of knowledge was not equal. Applying Goffman's concept of performativity to the practices and texts used by the institutions revealed that there was a bifurcation in the knowledge exchange systems, pointing to a difference in language choice along frontstage and backstage texts. Knowledge destined for frontstage use was not the same as that used in backstage practices; knowledge for public consumption was linked to backstage practices, but backstage practices themselves were unlikely to be shared with the public. The frontstage texts for a government entity such as that under study show that knowledge destined for public consumption is more likely to be presented in either official language, or possibly both; on the other hand, backstage literacy practices fulfilling internal organisational needs were strongly suggestive of the need for a single working language, which was most likely to be English. Within the government agency, Maltese could be used for noting items of discussion during meetings, but not much elsewhere. Study One suggests that commercial entities are more likely to use English for the distribution of objectified knowledge amongst objectified relations, such as business-client relationships.

The selection of language for internal operations may be at odds with what would be considered appropriate for national purposes, leading to the notion of centripetal and centrifugal forces (Coulmas, 1994). In a society increasingly dependent on indirect, mediated relationships, the means of mediation becomes important. Information needs to be exchanged within a social system that allows such exchanges, and more importantly, without unnecessary restrictions or complexity. Luhmann (1969: 52) provides insight into the principle of needing "medium of interchange" (Giddens, 1990: 22) for exchange and the need to reduce the complexity that may slow down such activities, especially in a highly complex environment:

"each individual must be able to presume that the orientation of the other is somehow related to truth. The amount of complexity which exists as socially available is overwhelmingly large. The individual can only make use of it if it is presented to him in an already reduced, simplified,

prearranged form. In other words, he has to be able to depend and to rely on the processing of information by other people [...] In a highly complex environment this type of trust can no longer take the form of personal trust [...] Its typical form is trust in specialised and demonstrable abilities to process information, in functional authority and ultimately in the ability of science to function as a system of action.”

Choice of language may be due to the need to reduce complexity into an “already reduced, simplified, prearranged form” amongst individuals who trust in the workings of such an exchange system. The “reduction of complexity” may be linked to the concept of rationalisation and isomorphism; Weber ([1921/1978: 165–6](#)) perceived formal rationality, the “objectified, institutionalized, supra-individual form” ([Brubaker, 1984: 9](#)) as the driving force behind industrial capitalism, formalistic law and bureaucratic administration. Such rational, impersonal systems spread beyond the economic, legal and administrative spheres to influence all sectors of society; bureaucracy was perceived to be the form of rationalisation that would have the greatest influence ([Weber, 1958: 241](#)). Without this simplification in the choice of media, social action may not be effective, especially within a system highly dependent on time-space distanciation. Choice of language may depend on a number of factors. The use of a single language may be more rational than using two; moreover, the consistent use of a single language, not shifting in choice of language for the same kind of organisational text, is a means of reducing such complexity for knowledge exchange systems. The issue of English emerging as the primary language for backstage texts within an organisation may not only be due to it being an official language, but also due to the fact that it may be an issue of the ‘reduction of complexity’ for knowledge exchange. Moreover, it may also be the case that that individuals need to communicate using the ‘orders of discourse’ associated with their professional roles and objectified relations beyond the local. An institution or organisation may be its own ‘abstract community’ dependent on ‘disembodied integration’, and hence would need its own knowledge exchange systems for its management. Any individual working within the expert systems incorporated within an institution would expect to engage in the symbolic tokens conducive to the efficient exchange of synoptic knowledge within the system. Whilst these expert systems may appear to be ‘bounded’ in terms of institution, institutions may be working in tandem with each other in different capacities and therefore the need

for isomorphism may make different institutions adjust to having similar structures of communication, which would include ‘orders of discourse’.

The use of language for frontstage texts is also important. The selection of language may be dependent on the people participating within the knowledge exchange systems; the use of both languages used for frontstage texts may be due to the need for maximum outreach, a nationwide concern. The issue of Maltese is different to English, as Maltese is also the national language. The use of Maltese for frontstage texts may have a double function; in a society where ‘personal trust’ is no longer possible as in a traditional society, trust must be gained by using a cultural artefact that is acceptable in a modern society increasingly dependent on impersonal, mediated relations in an ‘abstract community’ dependent on ‘disembodied integration’ ([James, 1996](#)). On the other hand, language choice could be due to more practical concerns in terms of public outreach, with the well-being of a nation a priority. Modifying knowledge to fit into national concerns may be the overriding aim, adapting it to the needs of a population. However, these concerns do not exclude the use of English from circulation amongst frontstage texts in the absence of an explicit language scheme.

One issue that was noted was translanguaging in spoken discourse. In participating or observing interactions, Maltese emerged as the predominant language of spoken interaction. Maltese appears to be the more popular medium amongst speakers of Maltese, reflecting the studies referred to in Chapter One (e.g. [Sciriha, 1993](#); [1996](#); [1997](#); [1999](#); [2004](#); [Sciriha and Vassallo, 2001](#), [2006](#)) and general observations (e.g. [Caruana, 2007](#) and [Vella, 2013](#)). However, whilst Maltese is the more popular medium for spoken interaction, interaction was never strictly monolingual. Translanguaging was a common occurrence in speech, but less likely in written documentation, especially formal documentation. Such a transition may be understood as a continuum in which co-presence may be an underlying factor. One highly interesting observation was the use of English when referring to numbers and quantities in general, at least in informal oral communication. Very little has been studied in regard to this phenomenon, which merits investigation as to why this occurs. Also, the translanguaging may be an issue of repackaging objectified knowledge for sharing amongst objectified relations, varying from a setting in which Maltese is the

predominant “media of interchange” in verbal interaction with high-presence availability to the use of English in written interaction defined by low presence-availability. In defining type of objectified knowledge to be shared amongst agents defined by their role relation, spatiality becomes a factor. Moreover, if the use of Maltese and English are associated with local and global spaces, it appears that there are different ‘orders of indexicality’ within the same social spaces, as discussed in the following section.

7.4 Macro-level influences and language choice: spatiality and indexicality

With no language scheme explicitly directing choice for texts, the final research question was what could be determining language choice (RQ 3). Even if the translation of technical terms into Maltese is possible, this is being met with resistance ([Rosner and Joachimsen, 2011:14](#)). Whilst such resistance could be due to the fact that institutional practices may be stable and hence resistant to change, the clear preference for English for organisational texts is potentially the result of influences that are beyond the local, again bringing into the discussion the issue of ‘higher-order regularities’ which may be understood once spatiality is considered as a factor in the flow of knowledge, ‘denaturalising’ dominant ideologies of language use to understand language choices in texts ([Fairclough, 1995: 27](#)). Whilst institutional practices may seem confined to local issues and spaces, these practices enable the flow of knowledge along exchange systems across time and space; examples included the mathematical formulae linked to imported aluminium profiles and the ESPAD surveys. To understand how spatiality may operate in local spaces as *polyvalent* or *polycentric* spaces, it is possible to look at two different units of analysis: the nation-state and the world system.

In focusing on the nation-state, the focus would be on the social and historical forces shaping Maltese institutional history; Chapter Two provided an overview of extra-local influences working on the Maltese context, focusing on institutional developments and external influences. The political situation created a situation whereby extra-local influences such as non-local institutional practices ‘interpenetrated’ local space ([Lefebvre, 1991: 86](#)), modifying the local social spaces. The institutional environment that developed

provided pockets of social space for textually-mediated practices to emerge. The social space for such influences evolved when Malta transitioned from a traditional, feudal society with its own linguistic societal arrangement of High and Low languages to a modern one with greater societal fluidity characterised by political changes, including urbanisation, modernization and social mobility. With regard to language, the most influential presence in terms of modern institutional development was arguably the British colonial period. Colonialism meant the introduction of new practices, or modification of previous practices, concerning resource management, and that included language. Riney (2012: 80) notes that the presence of a pre-colonial writing system is one significant variable when evaluating languages of publication in post-colonial countries. A pre-colonial writing system would indicate the presence of established writing practices, and it must be recalled that Maltese lacked a standard writing system for centuries whilst a colony administered using other languages. With the gradual introduction of bureaucratic rationalisation for public administration of resources under British rule (Pirota, 1996), language also become a rationalising force. Weber makes clear that bureaucratic rationalization

“revolutionizes with *technical means*, in principle, as does every economic reorganization, ‘from without’: It *first* changes the material and social orders, and *through* them the people, by changing the conditions of adaptation, and perhaps the opportunities for adaptation, through a rational determination of means and ends.” (1921/1978: 1116)

In the case of textually-mediated social organisation, texts are part of the ‘technical means’ necessary for reorganisation, the ‘objects’ that are part of these practices (Reckwitz, 2002; Foucault, 1972; Latour, 1993) directing social action. In textually-mediated social practices, language becomes part of the ‘media of interchange’ for resource management, key to the extension of social action. In its post-colonial history, Malta retained English language as one of the two official languages, rather than Italian, for political expediency. The use of English as a linguistic resource, however, may lie in looking beyond the history and the political borders of the Maltese nation-state and take the global world system as a unit of analysis, based on Wallerstein’s socio-historical model known as world systems analysis (WSA).

As described in Chapter Three, WSA is a model concerning structures contributing to the flow in commodity exchange on a global level, including structures of knowledge ([Wallerstein, 2006: 1](#)). Proponents of the world-systems analysis argue that

“the social reality within which we live and which determines what our options are has not been the multiple national states of which we are citizens but something larger, which we call a world-system. We have been saying that this world system has had many institutions – states and the interstate system, productive firms, households, classes, identity groups of all sorts – and that these institutions form a matrix which permits the system to operate but at the same time stimulates both the conflicts and the contradictions which permeate the system.” ([Wallerstein, 2006: x](#))

Borders created by nation-states are ‘interpenetrated’ by the structures of knowledge that connect core, periphery and semi-periphery states in the inter-state system. This ‘interpenetration’ of knowledge structures is the driving force transforming nation-states into becoming multiple spaces, or *polyvalent* spaces, necessary for interstate networks to flow. Such links are not only for the exchange of commodities, but also for knowledge; DiMaggio and Powell ([1983: 147](#)) argue that “the engine of rationalisation and bureaucratisation has moved from the competitive marketplace to the nation-state and the professions”, seeking to make institutions similar in structure, suggesting that these knowledge exchange systems worldwide need to be similar. In a knowledge society, the need for systems permitting the exchange of knowledge would become a priority, and hence the need to reduce the complexity into forms of exchange that would guarantee its transmission. The ‘interpenetration’ of social spaces creates an ecology which is subject to orders of indexicality ([Silverstein, 2003](#); [Blommaert, 2007: 117](#)), forms of social order that originate from centres “to which people orient when they produce indexical trajectory in semiosis” ([Blommaert, 2007: 118](#)). Indeed, Blommaert ([2007: 119](#)) insists that any social ecology is polycentric: “every environment in which humans convene and communicate is almost by definition polycentric, in the sense that more than one possible centre can be distinguished”. In a polycentric space with multiple social layers or frames ([Goffman, 1974: 21](#)), the potential to invoke or activate an indexical order is always present. Even seemingly monocentric locales are potentially polycentric; whether in a classroom instructing children on prevention strategies, providing a quotation for a client

or filling in forms for professional assistance, the necessary ‘indexical trajectory in semiosis’ will be activated because the social space for it has been created. Traces of the global in the local may also occur through objects ([Latour, 1993](#)) such as puppets and videoclips. These are also forms of semiosis for meaning making.

The interpenetration of social space by global forces is also possible by the knowledge circulated by the professional and technical agents; the flow of knowledge is enabled by the experts participating within the expert systems through language or ‘orders of discourse’. Applying the WSA, Malta had the social space ready within the interstate system in terms of knowledge exchange, having inherited not only institutions of governance using English, but also an educational system which used English as the language of further and higher education to produce its local professional and technical staff. Knowledge exchange does not stop at political borders. It is perhaps not surprising that professionals engage in this language without any formal policy guiding this decision. The link created through the use of English, which is now also a global language, maintains the social space necessary for the continuous flow of knowledge exchange to, across and from knowledge workers. If Maltese had to be used in its stead, it could affect the flow of knowledge across expert systems forming the extralocal ruling relations. Maltese is more likely to be used for frontstage texts by public entities, serving a different exchange system. The use of Maltese may be widespread across the nation-state when taken as a nation-state, but it recedes to peripheral status in the WSA, relegated to ‘local pockets of order’ ([Hägerstrand, 1985: 207](#)). Thus in investigating the ecology of writing and language, the orders of indexicality contained within polycentric space would need to be acknowledged, going beyond the idea that space and roles are bounded.

7.5 Limitations of the study

As a study, it has its limitations. This study attempted to take a critical approach towards societal bilingualism by looking at social practices involving texts. One major limitation of this study is arguably the number and choice of institutions for this study. As a qualitative study focusing on the select texts of two distinctively different institutions, it is

not able to provide generalisations regarding language choice and knowledge exchange flows across Maltese institutions in general. Institutions vary in purpose, size, operations and historical background, and the language dynamics noted in the two institutions under study may not be transferable to other institutions in Malta. Variation in language choice may be subject to other ‘higher-order regularities’ not identified in this study.

Another limitation was the selection of practices and texts. First of all, the researcher as research tool is always subject to limitations, filtering the richness of social reality through a lens that may be influenced as to what may be considered as data. The study focused on select practices and texts that gave a ‘horizontal’ slice of life of participants involved in the study; it was not possible to follow a greater number of practices typical to the institutions in seeking to ascertain whether there are similarities or differences within or across frontstage and backstage practices. An example of this was not investigating practices involving on-site installation of apertures, or off-site visits involving awareness in other venues such as workplaces and other community members. The selection of texts was also restricted, linked to the literacy practices discussed in the study. Thus, it may be argued that such practices and texts may not be representative of the typical flows of knowledge, or incomplete.

Another issue which may have also imposed limitations on the current study was the length of time taken to collect data as well as the length of time between data collection phases. Whilst writing, new theoretical developments in the fields of language policy, institutional ethnography, social theory and critical human geography may not have been noted. Moreover, research was restricted to largely publications available in the English language.

7.6 Implications of the study

The current study focused on language choice in written texts, which may provide insight into theoretical issues concerning written language in sociolinguistic study. As Blommaert (2013) points out, sociolinguistic interest has mainly been on spoken language, with written language as an afterthought. Written language may be arguably different than

spoken language in terms of the temporal and spatial dimensions that it appears to occupy, and with the increase in mediated relationships dependent on written media, choice of language for texts may not take the same trajectories that spoken language does. The nature of mediated relationships in a knowledge society and textually-mediated social organisation may be challenging when using heuristics created to understand language patterns, such as the domain, especially popular in early language studies. Fishman (1980) had noted that categorisation of language in a modern society was not possible, especially due to the changing nature of relationships in an increasingly urbanised society. The issue of domain and domain loss (Haberland, 2005) may also be explained by reconsidering the ecology of language following the ‘interpenetration’ of social space, positioning the ecology of language as more fluid than previously treated or thought. The written text, once treated as a means of the extension of human action in terms of time and space, may require a different approach. Researchers working on the social dimension of language and bilingualism may find the temporal-spatial dynamics of oral and written language critical to understanding language use, especially in bilingual contexts.

Another issue worth investigation by researchers is language diversity in organisations. Fishman (1980: 5) had noted that the work sphere was “the dominant arena of human affairs” hinting at the significance of this form of social organisation in modern society, as well as the difficulty of the social compartmentalisation of language in this context. In addition to the isomorphism noted amongst institutional entities within any given nation-state, there is also the issue of organisations facing the internationalisation of business (Gunnarsson et al, 1999: 9). This study focused on institutions within a country with stable ‘within group’ societal bilingualism, however insights into language choice may be extended to other language scenarios, such as the multinational corporation, whereby language diversity within the organisation is frequently a challenge to manage (e.g. Fredrikssen, Barner-Rasmussen and Piekkari, 2006: 419; Luo and Shenko, 2006: 321). The work sphere may be taken as a hub of knowledge exchange dependent on networks of objectified relations that follow set practices and projected outcomes, cutting across national boundaries. With the increasing dependence rise of tertiary and quaternary relationships, rationalisation may become a factor in language choice, giving rise to the new scenarios of heteroglossia. Whilst institutions are faced with potentially different, if

not various, orders of discourse, rationalisation may come across as the ‘reduction of complexity’, influencing language choice in internal and external operations. Choice of language in organisations may be dependent on the objectified knowledge involved, the agents participating in objectified relationships, and whether practices involving texts could be classified as backstage and frontstage practices (see [Goffman, 1959](#)). All in all, the focus on social practices for language use in texts may provide insight into how language is managed, with or without a company language policy. This study may therefore be useful to human resources practitioners, managers and administrative personnel in general, especially in multilingual organisations.

In addition, this study may be of interest to language policy makers in an increasingly diverse and multilingual world. Language policy makers may be those involved in the development of macro-level language policies and language schemes as well as educators working in multilingual classes. Policy makers would need to understand the hidden dynamics that may render official language policies or language schemes a failure or a success, as pointed out in Chapter One. In a knowledge society increasingly reliant on mediated relationships, understanding what may be contributing to ‘higher-order regularities’ may be especially valuable when drafting such policies and schemes. This is probably an important step in the development of successful language policies. Educators in increasingly multilingual and multi-ethnic societies are also faced with challenges of language choice and language use in classrooms and other educational settings. Educational policy makers as well as educational establishments and their teachers may find a practice-based approach to understanding spoken and written language both valuable and practical. Moreover, this could lead to a grassroots approach to educational policy, taking a tailored bottom-up approach as opposed to a top-bottom ‘one-size fits all’ language policy, for the benefit of pupils taught and assessed in the official languages promoted by the establishment.

7.7 Conclusion: the messiness of bilingualism

As far as written texts in public spheres are concerned, the use of language may appear to be haphazard in the absence of an explicit language policy. Such language use may be difficult to categorise using a structural-functional approach; as pointed out in the introduction, Fishman ([1980: 5](#)) observed how difficult it was to compartmentalise the allocation of languages in modern society, citing modernisation as the stimulus for societal changes such as ‘open networks’, ‘fluid social networks’, ‘the rationalisation of the work sphere’, ‘urbanisation’, ‘massification and mobility’ as factors leading to different societal arrangements with regard to social bilingualism. What needs to be acknowledged is that categorisation of the Maltese and English languages in a modern, knowledge society is challenging, if not impossible.

Understanding societal bilingualism without an explicit language policy makes practices the starting point, as Spolsky ([2005: 2163](#)) argues. Whilst societal bilingualism in Maltese society may appear ‘messy’ in this regard, as the richness of social life may actually make it difficult to categorise language use ([Smith 1990b: 3](#)), within this richness are forms of order created and maintained by agents:

“But the world is full of order even when disorderly and disorganised. For people are forever at work coordinating and co-ordering their activities, latching on and operating the coordinative schemata built into language, taking direction [...] recognising and coordinating activities with the social organised properties of things.” ([Smith, 1990b: 2 – 3](#))

The observation that order is “operating [through] the coordinative schemata built into language” shows the capacity for language as a means of social organisation, and choice of language as schemata strongly suggests that knowledge has an effect on its choice. Moreover, this order may seem elusive, especially in a knowledge society increasingly dependent on time-space distancing and disembedding mechanisms; a complete inventory of mediated relationships and potential indexical orders would be challenging to document, and thus difficult to provide a complete description of such an environment (*ibid.*, pg 3). However, by understanding the nature of textually-mediated practices and

how they interconnect across time and space as the extension of social action, it may become clearer as to how language choice in written contexts may be accounted for.

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Appendices

A. Consent form and information sheet



Participant information sheet

Working project title: Institutional situated practices, texts and language: a study of organisational bilingual practices in Malta

Researcher: Melissa J. Bagley (Malta)
email: m.bagley@lancaster.ac.uk; mjbagley@gmail.com;
mobile: +356 99828883; telephone: +356 21657392

You are invited to take part in this research study. Please take time to read the following information carefully before you decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of this study?

I am carrying out this study as part of my doctoral studies in the Department of Linguistics and English Language. The aim of the study is to explore *societal bilingualism in Malta*, looking into the use of the English and Maltese languages in organisations (including government organisations), focusing on the use of languages used in texts used by such organisations.

What does the study entail?

My study will involve the compilation of a 'textography' of an organisation, using data collection techniques which include interviews with employees about their work practices, observing several procedures at work, and collecting samples of documents typically used in the management of the organisation. This is the empirical data needed to support theory.

Why have I been invited?

I have approached you because you are an active member of the organisation under study. I am trying to understand the work procedures that you participate in, which are critical to the management of the organisation, especially those that involve reading and writing.

What will happen if I take part?

If you decide to take part, this would involve several interviews about your work, the reading and writing it involves and the general routines you participate in. I would also like to observe work processes to understand their context.

What are the possible benefits from taking part?

Taking part in this study would help to contribute the types of reading and writing involved in organisational literacies, and help to contribute to a growing body of knowledge on bilingual behaviours in Malta.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

It is unlikely that there will be any major disadvantages to taking part. Taking part would entail investing time in interviews, which may last 30-60 minutes each.

What will happen if I decide not to take part or if I don't want to carry on with the study?

If you decide not to take part in this study, this will not affect your position in the company and your relation with your employer.

Should you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time and you do not have to give a reason. If you withdraw while the study takes place or until two (2) months after it finishes, I will not use any of the information that you provided. If you withdraw later, I will use the information you shared with me for my study. (Please note that to withdraw from the study after the data was collected might not be possible in case you use a questionnaire, because the data is anonymised and the data provided by the person who wants to withdraw can therefore not be identified.)

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Any identifying information, such as names and personal characteristics, will be anonymised in the PhD thesis or any other publications of this research. The data I will collect will be kept securely. Any paper-based data will be kept in a locked cupboard. Electronic data will be stored on a password protected computer and files containing personal data will be encrypted.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only, and to work towards a fuller understanding of language use in a bilingual society. This will include my PhD thesis and other publications, for example journal articles. I am also planning to present the results of my study at academic conferences.

What if there is a problem?

If you have any queries or if you are unhappy with anything that happens concerning your participation in the study, please contact myself on the above contact details, or my supervisor, Dr Mark Sebba. His contact details are below.

Further information and contact details

*Tutor: Dr Mark Sebba, Reader in Sociolinguistics & Language Contact
Department of Linguistics,
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Tel. +44 1524 592453
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e-mail: M.Sebba@lancaster.ac.uk*

*<http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/profiles/Mark-Sebba/>
<http://www.definite.talktalk.net/FoL/>*

Research Student: Melissa J. Bagley

Thank you for considering your participation in this project.



Consent Form

Working project title: Institutional situated practices, texts and language: a study of organisational bilingual practices in Malta

1. I have read and had explained to me by Melissa J Bagley the information sheet relating to this project.
2. I have had explained to me the purposes of the project and what will be required of me, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements described in the information sheet in so far as they relate to my participation.
3. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the project any time, but no longer than two (2) months after its completion. If I withdraw after this period, the information I have provided will be used for the project.
4. I understand that all data collected will be anonymised and that my identity will not be revealed at any point.
5. I have received a copy of this consent form and of the accompanying information sheet.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

B. Chapter Five: Recorded Interviews

Recorded Interview One held in workshop on Tuesday 23 July 2013 (Work Domain)

Interviewee: RP

Interviewer: MB

Interviews were originally held in Maltese (mainly) and translated into English. Words other than Maltese (e.g. English) are denoted in bold type. Observations are included in brackets and italicized. [Background to interview – loud music from radio]

Participants	Original interview in Maltese	Translation into English
MB 00:12	Dawk in-numri għalfejn tagħmilhom? (Reference made to pieces with numbers scribbled in pencil, see photos)	Why do you do these numbers? (Reference made to pieces with numbers scribbled in pencil, see photos)
RP	[Look of disbelief]	[Look of disbelief]
MB 00:17	Bis-serjeta'. Inti mhux xorta għalik, int?	Seriously. Isn't it all the same to you?
RP 0:25	Għax jiena, meta mmur nkejjejl, nagħmel one, two, three għax nagħmel tgħaffiġa. (Interrupted by telephone call on mobile) Għidli John (pause) iġifieri inti (pause) ċaw ċaw. (To me) Issa ħa mmur sa Ħal-Tarxien malajr. Għoqodli naqra hawn. Five minutes kollox.	Because when I go and take measurements, I put down one, two, three because I'd make a mess of things (Interrupted by telephone call on mobile). Tell me, John (pause) you mean you (pause) bye bye. (To me) I'm going to Tarxien quickly. Stay here a bit. It will only take five minutes .
	[Stopped recording]	[Stopped recording]
	(Returns with sales rep and delivery of aluminium material; sales rep hands papers to RP, which are invoices for items delivered, and are signed by RP)	(Returns with sales rep and delivery of aluminium material; sales rep hands papers to RP, which are invoices for items delivered, and are signed by RP)
RP 01:00	(To John, the sales rep) Qegħed ngħidliha fuq iċ-ċaċċiż. (Has a brief chat with John, who leaves later).	(To John, the sales rep) I'm telling her about the frames. (Has a brief chat with John, who leaves later).
MB 02:50	Iva, rajt dawn in-numri u ittri. Dan xi jfisser dan id- W (in English) ?	Yes, I saw these number and letters. What does this mean, this W (in English) ?
RP 03:00	Dik 'wisgħa'.	That stands for 'width'.
MB 03:01	W – bl-Ingiliz jew bil-Malti?	W – in English or Maltese?

RP 03: 04 MB 03:06 RP 03: 09	Wisgħa. U T (<i>pronounced /ti:/</i>)? Tul. (<i>He jokes with John the sales rep</i>) Bħal V – A – T (<i>pronounced vi:/ei/ ti:</i>). VAT (<i>pronounced /væt/</i>). U anki ‘ Penthouse ’. PH (<i>pronounced /pi:/ /eɪf/</i>).	Width. And T (<i>pronounced /ti:/</i>)? Length. (<i>He jokes with John the sales rep</i>) Like V – A – T , VAT. And also ‘ Penthouse ’ – PH .
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(John leaves)

MB 04:27	<i>(Referring to aluminium)</i> Dak taqtagħhom inti jew jaqtagħhomlok?	<i>(Referring to aluminium)</i> Do you cut them or do you have them cut for you?
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RP 4:30	Jiena naqtagħhom. (<i>RP walks over to the corner set up as an office, with files of papers, and explains his record keeping</i>). Dalgħodu ċempili tal-ħgieg (<i>shows file with invoices neatly filed away, issued by Vestru, a glass cutting business. Items are neatly listed in handwriting, on a pre-printed invoice sheet with company logo, company name and contact details. RP has the original white sheets, whilst the supplier would normally retain the yellow carbon copy. All is printed, handwritten in English</i>). Qalli, “Pace, għandek karta mhux mħallsa. Qegħtlu ha nara. (<i>RP goes through filed invoice papers, classified</i> .) Issa jiena f’dawn il-ktieb għandi kollox miktub, u dan biex insib kollox jien. U sibtha. (<i>Shows me the invoice, and points to handwritten entries</i>). Ara (<i>reads off written entry in English: 5ml clear 10 sp, 5ml</i>) ‘ five millimetre clear ten space ’ u ‘ five millimetre ’ iġifieri dan double glaze (d) .	I cut them. (<i>RP walks over to the corner set up as an office, with files of papers, and explains his record keeping</i>). This morning the glass company phoned me up (<i>shows file with invoices neatly filed away, issued by Vestru, a glass cutting business. Items are neatly listed in handwriting, on a pre-printed invoice sheet with company logo, company name and contact details. RP has the original white sheets, whilst the supplier would normally retain the yellow carbon copy. All is printed, handwritten in English</i>). He said to me, “Pace, you’ve got an unpaid invoice”. I replied that I’ll check on that. (<i>RP goes through filed invoice papers, classified</i> .) Now in this file I have everything, so that I’ll find whatever I need. And I found the invoice. (<i>Shows me the invoice, and points to handwritten entries</i>). Look (<i>reads off written entry in English: 5ml clear 10 sp, 5ml</i>) ‘ five millimetre clear ten space ’ u ‘ five millimetre ’, which means this is double-glazed .
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<i>(With finger as pointer, reads out next entry in English), “Mela triple by A55 (A five five), għandi <u>tnejn</u>. (<i>Points to column designated for quantity</i>). Quantity dawn, u għandi kollox imħallas. Jiena hadd ma jgħidli li m’għandi xejn mħallas, jew mhux mħallsa. Ngħid ‘Ħa nara’ u nibda nqalleb. Ngħidlu, ‘iva għandek raġun, ha nħallsek.’</i>	<i>(With finger as pointer, reads out next entry in English), “So triple by A55 (A five five), I have <u>two</u>. (<i>Points to column designated for quantity</i>). These are quantity, and I have everything paid up. Nobody tells me that I haven’t paid my bills, or any bill for that matter. I’ll just say that I’ll check things and I start going</i>
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Kollox għandi hekk. Tal-mobajl? Għaliha. Tad-dawl u ilma? Dawn kollha **expensives (sic)**. Għat-taxxa tal-gvern, għaliha. Ara dawn, tal-BuzDov (*has separate file*), tal-kuntrattur, kollox **in order**.

(6:31) Ma ngibx l-internet għax telf ta' hin. Kieku għandi lavrant, ikolli naqra hin għaliha noqgħod nfittejt it-**tenders** għax kieku ikun xogħoli, u jien ntihi karta u ngħidli jgħamilieli, hux?

MB
06:48

U inti ovvjament ikun mhux bhal qabel. Meta bdejt ma missierek, kif kienu l-affarijiet? Kien jagħmel hekk missierek?

RP
06:53

(*RP's headshake indicating the opposite*).

MB
06:55

Ma kellux sistema hekk?

RP
06:57

Xejn. Kien jikteb kollox hu go ktieb.

MB
06:59

Mhux bhalek, bil-**files**?

RP
07:00

Mhux bil-**files**. Pitazz. Jiena għandi tlett agenti. Tal-hġieg ngħodd kollox jiena fl-aħħar tas-sena, tal-aluminju iċempilli jgħidli x'għamilt u kemm xtrajt. Imur fuq il-kompjuter u jgħidli mingħandhom xtrajt hamsin elf, tal-aċċessorji - dan li ġie issa - jgħidli xtrajt tletin elf. Ngħodd kollox jiena u spejjeż - ngħid jiena għamilt mitt elf spejjeż - u jiena ħdimt għal **fifty percent**.

Mela jiena qlajt hamsin elf, minnhom il-hamsin elf jiena nibda nagħmel **minus** -

through the file. I can tell the supplier he's right and I'll pay him. That's how I work. The mobile phone bills? They're in a separate file. Utilities? They're all **expenses (sic)**. Tax papers for the government are in a separate file. See these, by BuzDov the contractor (*has separate file*), everything is **in order**.

(6:31) I'm not connected to internet here as it would be a waste of time. If I had an apprentice, I would have more time to look for **tenders** because that would be my job; I'd give the apprentice a list of things to do and work it out for me, wouldn't I?

And obviously, you do things differently. When you first started with your father, how were things? Did your father do things the same way?

(*RP's headshake indicating the opposite*).

He didn't use a system like yours?

Nothing. He would write everything in a copybook.

Not like you, with **files**?

No **files**. A copybook. I have three agents. When it comes to the glass company, I do the accounts myself at the end of the year. The aluminium supplier calls me to tell me what I've bought and so on. He goes on to his computer and tells me that I bought fifty-thousand-euro worth of supplies. The accessories suppliers, the guy who came just now, tell me I bought thirty-thousand-euro worth of supplies. I add up everything and as for expenses - let's say I had one hundred thousand euro in expenses - and I worked for **fifty percent** of that.

So I earned fifty thousand euro, and then I deduct expenses - diesel, rent, utilities, you

	diesel, kera, dawl u ilma, qed tifhimni? Nghid suppost baqgħali so much f’idi. Mela nista’ mmur holiday għax qieghed tajjeb. Naf x’jien nagħmel jien.	get me? I say that so much should be in hand. If I’m fine, I can go on holiday . I know what I’m doing.
MB 07:55	Igifieri inti torganizza l-affarijiet. U dan inti hdimtu, mhux missierek.	You mean you organise things. And this is your way of doing things, not your father’s.
RP 08:00	Jiena. Kollox jiena.	I do everything.
MB 08:02	Kollox ivvintajt int.	You came up with this.
RP 08:07	L-idejat tiegħi, go mohħi.	The ideas are mine, in my head.
MB 08:12	U missierek, lanqas kellu sistema hekk.	And your dad, he did not have a system like this.
RP 08:14	Le ma kellux. Biċċa mejda (<i>points to old table used for coffee pots and mugs</i>), telefown. U kif kien iħallas, iżzomm record . Missieri ma kienx jagħmel bħali – dak kien iħallas cash . Jiena naħdem bi flus in-nies biex tiegħi jibqgħu hawn (<i>taps on pocket</i>). Mela. Jien, kif indaħhal il-flus nħallas. Rajt lil dak li ġie hawn? Stajt għamiltlu ċekk għall- <u>sittin ewro</u> . Għadni kemm tajtu <u>tmien mija</u> ilbieraħ. Issa jgħaddu <u>tleth xhur</u> u ngħidlu “Ħa nħallsek”. Ngħidlu “trid xi haga?”.	No, he didn’t. A table (<i>points to old table used for coffee pots and mugs</i>), telephone. And how he paid, he kept a record . My father did not use the same system as I do – he used to pay cash . I work by using other people’s money so that I have a hold on my own money (<i>taps on pocket</i>). Of course. As soon as I get paid, I pay. Did you just see that guy who was here? I could have written him a cheque for <u>sixty euro</u> . I gave him <u>eight hundred</u> yesterday. I’ll let <u>three months</u> pass and I’ll say “I’m paying you”. I’ll tell him “You do want something?”
	In the meantime , bi pjaċir, nibqa nordna, dejjem ntella’ id-dejn, fhimt. Imbagħad meta kuntrattur iħallasni sewwa, ngħidlu qatta’ zewg karti, qed tifhimni? Hekk naħdem jiena. L-affari tiegħi hekk naħdem jiena. Mela. Bħalma jaħdem kuntrattur, naħdem jien. Bl- invoice book .	In the meantime , as a sign of goodwill, I keep on placing orders, always adding to my debt, you see. Then, when a contractor pays me well, I go over to the guy and tell him I want to settle some invoices, you get me? That’s how I work. That’s the way I do business. Of course. As a contractor works, I work. Using an invoice book .
MB 09:26	Mela katina. Inti thallas meta jħallsuk.	It’s like a chain. You pay when you’re paid.

- RP** 09:31 Mela! Jiena ma nistenniex għall-flus? Of course! Don't I wait to get paid? If they want to, they can wait. So that's it.
Jekk jridu jistennew. Hekk mela.
- MB** 09:39 Tajjeb! Shabek fin-negozju hekk jahdmu? That's good! Do other people in the trade work like you?
- RP** 09:42 Hekk ma nafx. *(Switches to another file)*. Don't know if they do. *(Switches to another file)* Ara dawn kollha **invoices**. Thallast *(goes through filed invoices)*. **PAID** *(in handwriting)*. Kollha **PAID**. I was paid *(goes through filed invoices)*. **PAID** *(in handwriting)*. They're all **PAID**.
- MB** 09:55 Ara. Aghmiltha bl-Ingliż? Look. You did it in English?
- RP** 09:57 Għax hekk naf naghmilha. Issa per Because that's the way I know. Now take eżempju hadna żball, ktibna for example, we made a mistake, we wrote **CANCELLED**. S'hawnhekk mħallas down **CANCELLED**. I am paid up to jien. *(Flips through more invoices)*. Issa here. *(Flips through more invoices)*. Now jiena hawnhekk irrid immur għall-karta. here I need to look for a paper. *(Leafs through his own preprinted invoice book, with company logo and information)*.
(Leafs through his own preprinted invoice book, with company logo and information).
- MB** 10:16 Ara, dawn tiegħek. Look, these are yours.
- RP** 10:17 Mela. Din id-ditta tiegħi. Bil-mobajl, bit- Of course. This is my trademark. With the telefon, kollox, bit-telefown tal-garaxx. mobile phone number, telephone – everything, with garage telephone number.
- MB** 10:29 Iġifieri missierek ma kellux hekk. So you're saying that your father had nothing of the sort.
- RP** 10:30 Le, ma kellux. Ara dawn l-erbgha karti No, he didn't. Look at these four invoices *(flips through more invoices)*. Dawn iż- *(flips through more invoices)*. These two żewġ karti *(flips through them)* irrid niġbor invoices *(flips through them)* mean I need sebgħa telef ewro. Issa nofshom immorru to collect seven thousand euro. Now half fuq il-flett, u nofshom itihomli **cash**. Mela of them are paid in kind, the other half will jiena għandi tlett telef u hames mija **cash**, be handed over in **cash**. So I have three thousand five hundred euro in **cash**, **post-dated** čekkiġiet. **post-dated** cheques.
- (Another file)* Ara dan infatti m'għandix *(Another file)* Look at this, in fact I don't dejn miegħu – dawk iż-żewġt karti biss have any debt with him – just those two *(had signed 4 papers in all, originals and invoices only* *(had signed 4 papers in all, copies to keep)*. Jien nqis dan *(takes another file)*. Naqbad il-karti u naqbad originals and copies to keep). I take into ngħodd: ngħid għandi mela **nine – o – two** consideration this *(takes another file)*. I take the invoices and add up: I say I have – **one fifty** *(uses calculator to add up* **nine – o – two – one fifty** *(uses calculator*

amounts) dan (another amount – uses calculator) u din, fhimt? (uses calculator) Imbagħad għandi din (refers to another invoice). Daqshekk.

Mela ngħid jien għandi tlett elef u ħames mija, per eżempju dawn kollha jammontaw elf u ħames mija għall-mod tal-kelma. Mela elf u ħames mija nħallas dan, u il-kumplament nitfagħhom il-bank, halli nieħu xi haġa zgħira nteressi. (shows me chequebook).

So I say I have three thousand and five hundred, for example I have one thousand and five hundred left over for other needs. So with one thousand five hundred euro I pay this invoice, and the rest I'll put on the account and get some interest on that (shows me chequebook).

MB
12:10

Għandek kont ta' **Pace Aluminium**?

You have a **Pace Aluminium** account?

RP
12:11

Dażgur, biċ-**chequebook**.

Of course, I use a **chequebook**.

MB
12:11

Fuq missierek?

On your father's name?

RP
12:13

Fuqi. (Shows me chequebook with his name and business name).

In my name. (Shows me chequebook with his name and business name). Robert Pace

Robert Pace **Account Pace Aluminium** (Robert Pace A/C Pace Aluminium)

Account Pace Aluminium (Robert Pace A/C Pace Aluminium)

MB
12:45

(Referring to invoice book for Pace Aluminium) Issa dan li qed turini huwa bl-Ingliż. Inti għazilt li jkun bl-Ingliż jew hallejt f'idejn il-printer?

(Referring to invoice book for Pace Aluminium) Now what you are showing me is in English. Did you decide to have it in English, or did you leave it up to the printer?

RP
12:53

Id-dettalji, din tal-logo? Jiena qgħedtlu kif iridha, bil-**contacts**. Hekk ridtu. Anki il-**business cards**, hekk qegħdin.

The details? The logo details? I told him how I wanted it, with contact details. That's how I wanted it. Even the **business cards**, that's how they are.

MB
13:03

Il-kotba u l-**business cards** mingħand l-istess **printer**?

The invoice books and the **business cards** were set at the same printer's?

RP
13:11

(Shows me invoice sheet issued by supplier, preprinted with handwriting on it for items sold to RP). Ara dan, ma jafx jikteb ...ara il-**VAT number**. Lanqas tagħrafha. Ara dan qiesu **four** mhux **nine**. (Refers to another text) Ara biex ma noqgħodx nagħmel stimi kull darba, mal-BUZDOV, għamiltlu **price-list**.

(Shows me invoice sheet issued by supplier, preprinted with handwriting on it for items sold to RP). Look at this one. Look at the **VAT number**. It's illegible. Looks it's like a **four** not a **nine**. (Refers to another text) Look, so that I don't have to work out estimates everytime I do work for BUZDOV, I made him a **price-list**.

<p>RP 13:40</p>	<p>(Takes out three A3 sized sheets of paper, with BUZDOV printed on it – see photo, in English) Sewwa, window, sliding window (points to first column on first page). Ix-schedule hariġili l-kuntrattur, mbagħad għamiltlu l-price-list. Mela min dan il-qies sa dan il-qies (points to columns with sizes and prices).</p>	<p>(Takes out three A3 sized sheets of paper, with BUZDOV printed on it – see photo, in English) So, window, sliding window (points to first column on first page). The contractor issued the schedule, and made the price-list. So from this measurement to this measurement (points to columns with sizes and prices).</p>
<p>RP Cont'd</p>	<p>Mela jiena tieqa single glaze tiġi, per eżempju, one three five. Jekk jridha double glaze, nagħmel one three five plus thirty-three. Jekk jridha frosted, nagħmel one three five plus one three five, jekk ikun irid tieqa extra bl-opaque, bil-ħġieġ opaque, dejjem one three five plus dan. Dejjem dan (points to one column) plus dan (another column). L-extra hawn (points to another column along the same row).</p>	<p>So a window, single glazed, is for example, one three five. If he wants it double glazed, I do one three five plus thirty-three. If he wants it frosted, I do one three five plus one three five, if he wants an opaque window, with opaque glass, it will always be one three five plus this. It's always this (points to one column) plus this (another column). The extra is here (points to another column along the same row).</p>
<p>MB 14:34</p>	<p>Mela dan il-baži (I point to first column), imbagħad skont x'jrid....</p>	<p>So this is the main column (I point to first column), and then according to want he wants....</p>
<p>RP 14:39</p>	<p>Nimxu.</p>	<p>We go ahead.</p>
<p>MB 14:40</p>	<p>Nimxu. Mhux tgħaqqadhom one, two, three, four. Per eżempju A u B, A u C, A u D.</p>	<p>We go ahead. Not just add on the columns one, two three four. For example A and B, A and C, A and D.</p>
<p>RP 14:45</p>	<p>Hekk hu.</p>	<p>That's it.</p>
<p>MB 14:48</p>	<p>Tal-BuzDov, huma tawhielek?</p>	<p>Did the BuzDov company give this to you?</p>
<p>RP 14:52</p>	<p>Ix-schedule huma.</p>	<p>They gave me the schedule.</p>
<p>MB 14:59</p>	<p>(Referring to handwritten prices) U dawn minn kitibhom?</p>	<p>(Referring to handwritten prices) And who wrote these?</p>
<p>RP 15:02</p>	<p>Missieri. Dak il-handwriting ta' missieri. Imma jiena għamiltha l-istima.</p>	<p>My father. That's my father's handwriting. But I worked out the estimates.</p>
<p>RP 15:15</p>	<p>Ara dan, per eżempju, railing huwa twenty euros per foot.</p>	<p>Look at this, for example, railing is twenty euros per foot.</p>
<p>MB 15:19</p>	<p>Ara mela inti għandek dawn....</p>	<p>So you have these...</p>

<p>RP 15:21 MB 15:28 RP 15:31</p>	<p>Windows, doors u railings.</p> <p>Inti organizzat hafna.</p> <p>Bil-fors trid tkun organizzat. Meta jkollok il-barter, bil-fors.</p>	<p>Windows, doors and railings.</p> <p>You're very organised.</p> <p>You have to be organised. When you barter, you have to be.</p>
<p>MB 15:50</p>	<p><i>(Change of topic)</i> Issa inti tiftakar, l-istess garaxx, imma mhux bħal lum <i>(making reference to previous mention of his father's days)</i>.</p>	<p><i>(Change of topic)</i> Now you must remember, the same garage, but not as it is today <i>(making reference to previous mention of his father's days)</i>.</p>
<p>RP 16:03</p>	<p>Kont ħdimt ma ħaddieħor.</p>	<p>I worked for others <i>(referring to employers)</i>.</p>
<p>MB 16:21</p>	<p>Iġifieri tghallimt, tghallimt meta tlaqt taħdem ma ħaddieħor.</p>	<p>Which means that you learnt, you learnt when you worked for others.</p>
<p>RP 16:28</p>	<p>Tghallimt. Dejjem nisraq.</p>	<p>I learnt. I was always 'stealing'.</p>
<p>MB 16:32</p>	<p>Ara kiek u bqajt ma missierek <i>(unfinished sentence)</i>.</p>	<p>So if you had remained with your father <i>(unfinished sentence)</i>.</p>
<p>RP 16:36</p>	<p>Kont nibqa' naħdem il-way ta' missieri.</p>	<p>I would have worked using my father's way.</p>
<p>MB 16:38</p>	<p>Iġifieri kien tajjeb li ħdimt ma' ħaddieħor.</p>	<p>So it was quite good to work for others.</p>
<p>RP 16:41</p>	<p>Dażgur. Per eżempju jiena – qed tarah din? Ħa. Din il-biċċa tieqa qegħda hekk <i>(shows window)</i> ċaċċiż qegħda hekk u l-portelli qegħdin hekk. Jiena nista' ngħidlek il-qies tal-ħġieġa, għax inwaqqa' l-qies. Ara missieri ma jafx jagħmel hekk. Per eżempju missieri, bieb, kien jaħdem iqattgħu...l-ewwel jagħmel iċ- ċaċċiż, joqgħod ikkejjel, imbagħad jagħmel il-portella, imbagħad wara jaqta' dawn, jaqta' l-ħġieġ. Jiena mhux hekk. Jiena nintefa' hemm, naqbad il-qisin kollha u nqatta' kollox f'daqqa u naqdu niġri. Hekk dal-bieb. Dawn jien għamilthom bla trouble ta' xejn.</p>	<p>Of course. For instance I – you see this? Look. This window here <i>(shows window)</i> this is the frame and these are the windows. I can tell you the size of the glass, because I have taken the measurements. See, my father doesn't work like this. For example, my father works on a door like this. He first makes the frame, he measures that, then he makes the actual door, and then after cutting that, he takes the measurements for the glass. I'm not like that. I go to the worktable, take all the measurements and cut everything at one go and assemble things after that. That's how I made that door there. I made these without any trouble.</p>

MB 17:36	Kieku missierek mhux hekk.	Your father would not have worked like that.
RP 17:40	Kieku missieri ghandu sena ikejje biex jagħmel bieb. U jiena f' siegħa nagħmlu.	If it were up to my father, he'd take forever to do a door. And I do in in an hour.
MB 17:45	Iġifieri misserek kien xorta jippjana.	Well, your father would still plan things.
RP 17:51	Il-moħħ hu kien, tal- business , u mexa l- way tiegħu. Imma jiena għandi l- way tiegħi. Xorta ġieli mmur għal fuqu, nistrieħ naqra fuqu, nieħu parir imma still , jekk moħħi jgħid għamel hekk, hekk nagħmel. Hekk naf jien, qed tifhem?	He was the brains of the business and did things his own way . But I have my own way. I still go up to him and take his advice but still , if my mind says I've got to do this, that's what I'll do. That's what I know, you get me?
RP 18:14	Għax jiena mbagħhad tlaqt, mort man-nies u kont mingħajr cutter . Jiena fuq il-bank naħdem u dejjem moħħni fil- cutter . Kif dan kont immur hdejh u nistaqsieh 'Din kif tqattagħha?', kien jgħidli 'Xi darba titgħallem.' Hadd ma jagħtihielek is-somma.	Because then I left my father's business; I joined the workforce and was without a cutter . I would always be working in the workshop and my mind would be elsewhere, thinking about the cutter . Whenever I had time I would go near the guy and ask him 'How do you cut this?', and he would answer 'One day you'll learn'. Nobody just gives you the formula.
	(18:29) U darba għamiltlu pjaċir u qalli 'Għidli l-Ingliż' – ghax l-Ingliż kien issibni. Qegħtlu ejja għamilli naqa s-somma kif nqatta'. Qalli 'Ejja ha ntihiielek'. U qagħda merfugħha għandi sal-lum. U bqajt naħdem dik il- way , u nhaffef.	(18:29) And once I did him a favour and he called me over "So tell me Englishman" – that was his way of referring to me. I told him to give me the formula. He said, 'Come over, I'll give it to you'. And I still have it to this very day. And I still work that way , and it saves me time.
MB 18:50	U tak karta kif tagħmilha.	And he gave you a paper showing you how to do work it out.
RP 18:54	Karta, u mela, u pengili l-profil.	A paper, yes of course, and he drew me the profile.
MB 18:59	Iġifieri hawnhekk qed tgħid kif taqta' l-ħgieg.	So here you're saying how to cut glass.
RP 19:20	Kif inwaqqa' d-disinn, il- window , dan is- section , ara (<i>refers to cross section of aluminium rail</i>). Dik is- section hija dik, taċ-ċaċċiż.	How I plan the design, the window , this section , look (<i>refers to cross section of aluminium rail</i>). That is the section of the frame.

<p>MB 19:22</p>	<p>Dik meta taqtagħha hekk.</p>	<p>That’s the cross-section of the profile, as when you cut it.</p>
<p>RP 19:26</p>	<p>Tač-čacčiz, iva.</p>	<p>The cross-section of the frame, yes.</p>
<p>RP 19:28</p>	<p><i>(Discussing how he applies the formula prior to cutting)</i> Imbagħad, per eżempju l-gholi, minus seventy one. Il-wisa’, li hija din, minus ten division by two, u ħriġt is-somma tagħha. L-istess tieqa, biex nwaqqa’ l-qies tal-ħġieg, hija minn barra għall-barra, l-gholi minus one seven four, u jien għamiltha plus five, biex ma nagħmluhx tahti. Il-wisa’ minus two-one-oh division by two. Jekk irrid nagħmlilhom in-nets, l-istess. L-gholi minus seventy five, il-wisa’ minus fourteen division by two, ta’ dan l-aġent. Dan aġent ieħor. L-gholi minus fifty five, ara dan seventy one, mela l-wisa’ division by two plus four. Dan il-wisa’ minus ten division by two. Għax is-sections mhux kollha xorta. Qed tifhimni? Skola ma nafx, imma mohħi għal dawn l-affarijiet itini mbagħad.</p>	<p><i>(Discussing how he applies the formula prior to cutting)</i> Then, for example, the height is minus seventy one; the width, which is this one, minus ten division by two, and I got the sum. For the same window, to have the measurements ready for the glass, I need to look at the outer measurements, the height minus one seven four, and I add plus five, so that it is not too tight. The width is minus two-one-oh division by two. If I need to do nets, I use the same procedure. The height is minus seventy five, the width is minus fourteen division by two, at least for this agent. This is another agent. The height is minus fifty five, and this is seventy one, so the width is division by two plus four. This width is minus ten division by two. Because the sections are not all the same. You get me? I’m not educated, but I can apply myself to these things.</p>
<p>MB 20:59</p>	<p>Għax inti taf li l-materjal differenti, allura trid toħroġ ricetta.</p>	<p>That’s because you know that the material varies, and so you want a recipe for that.</p>
<p>RP 20:54</p>	<p>Daqshekk hu, prosit.</p>	<p>That’s it, good.</p>
<p>MB 20:59</p>	<p>Jiena dawn il-kliem ma nafhomx. Ngħidlek ‘tieqa’ biss.</p>	<p>I don’t know these words. I’d just say ‘window’.</p>
<p>RP 21:15</p>	<p>In-nies ser jgħiduli li jridu tieqa li jinfetah għall-barra imma oħra li tinfetah il-ġewwa. Ngħidlila jien ‘bil-kontraporta’. ‘Iva’ tgħidli.</p>	<p>People will tell me they want a window that opens outwards, but then another than open inwards. I tell them, with a ‘kontraporta.’ They’ll say yes.</p>
<p>MB 21:28</p>	<p>Għax jiena ser ngħidlek ma nafx, għax xorta għalija. <i>(Referring to diagram)</i> Din x’inhil? “When plus frame pls” <i>(see photo)</i>. Oak?</p>	<p>Because I would tell you I don’t know, it’s all the same for me. <i>(Referring to diagram)</i> What’s this “When plus frame pls” <i>(see photo)</i>. Oak?</p>

RP 21:47	Oak. Noce. Dik il-kulur imbagħad. Ara somma oħra – minus sixty three division by two. Il-wisgħa division by two plus two. Daqs kemm hawn somom, u daqs kemm hawn profili! Tiġġennen	Oak. Hazelnut. That’s the colour. Look, another sum - minus sixty three division by two. The width is division by two plus two. There are so many formulae, and there are so many profiles, you’d go crazy!
MB 21:58	U dejjem skont l-aġent?	And it’s always according to agent?
RP 22:00	Skont il-materjal li se tuża, mhux l-aġent. Għax kull aġent igib l-istess, wieħed ikisser lil ieħor. X’skont ser tixtri.	According to the material used, not the agent. Because every agent will import the same, to compete with each other. It depends on what you are going to buy.
MB 22:10	Aħna għal-aluminju qegħdin ngħidu. Per eżempju, jien li ma nifhimx, għaliya kollha xorta. Fhimtni? Imma inti, mad-daqqa t’għajn, dik ta’ dik, u dak ta’ dak. Dak mhux tajjeb għal hekk.	We are talking about aluminium. For instance, for a person like me, it would be all the same to me. You get me? But you, at a glance, this is for this and that is for that. That’s not suitable for this.
RP 22:25	Dażgur. Tal-bieb ma nistax nifittjaha go tieqa; għax din section mod u dik section ieħor. Per eżempju, għas- sliding .	Of course, I can’t fit the door profiles in what is meant for a window; because that’s for one section and that’s for another section . For instance, for a sliding door.
MB 22:33	Inti qisek bilfors trid tikteb fuq karta jew xi poster dawn l-affarijiet.	It’s like you have to write these things on a piece of paper or poster.
RP 22:36	Dażgur. Għal-bidu ta, għax imbagħad inżomm go moħħi.	Of course. In the beginning, really, because then you remember these things.
MB 22:41	Imma xorta iżzommha din, avolja tgħallimtha bl-ament. Xorta żzommha.	But you’ve kept this paper anyway, although you’ve learnt it be heart. You still hang on to it.
RP 22:49	Għax ta’ kuljum, kuljum l-istess xogħol. Allura tidrah.	Because it’s something done daily, always the same work every day. So you get used to it.
MB 22:58	Pero’ xorta iżzommha din il-karta; din mhiex ser tarmiha.	However, you still hang on to this paper; you’re not going to throw it away.
RP 23:03	Le, x’tarmi? Anzi dik irrid naqbad u nisfejvjaħa gol-kompjuter. Ha nara kif ser nagħmel.	No way, throw it away? On the contrary I want to have it saved on the computer. I want to see what I can do about it.

- MB** 23:08 Tista tagħmel hekk. You can do it.
- RP** 23:10 Irrid inpingi din is-**section** nerga. Dawn, li qegħda tara hawn, nixtieq naghmel programm bil-kompjuter, u fil-laptop, illi jiena mort id-dar, qbadt din il-karta, naqbad il-qisin kollha, u noħroġ kollox bil-kompjuter. Nixtri **printer** u noħroġ kollox bil-kompjuter. I want to redraw this section again. These here, that you see now, I'd like to have a computer programme, and on my laptop, so that when I go home, I take this paper, take all the measurements, and have everything done on the computer. I buy a **printer** and have everything computerised.
- (Discuss the possibility of having it scanned)*
- MB** 23:49 Milli jidher thobb tippjanah ix-xogħol minn qabel. It seems you really like to plan your work in advance.
- RP** 23:56 Per eżempju, ejja lil'hawn (*moves to get plan of current project*). Qed tara dal-post? L-ewwel ma nqatta' ċ-ċacċiż. Nara dawn il-qisien, imbagħad dawn – **rail, rail** u **interlock** – huma dawn. L-gholi u l-wisgħa. Allura jien naf li dan l-gholi u dan l-wisgħa. **Nine – oh - four** ikbar minn **seven point five**. Fhimt? L-**interlock** huwa dik, tikklikkja mal-ġenb, mela tieqa tagħlaq wahda mal-ohra, fhimt? Trid tnaqqsilha **four millimetre (sic)** biex inti meta idahħalha, ma taħbatx, toghla. Issa, din is-sistema, jien irrid naqbad u minflok noqgħod niktibha jiena, naqbad u noħroġha bil-kompjuter. For instance, come over here (*moves to get plan of current project*). You see this place? First I cut out the frames. I look at these measurements, and then these – rail, rail and interlock. The height and the length. So I know that this is the height and this is the length. **Nine – oh - four** is larger than **seven point five**. You get me? The **interlock** is this, it clicks to the side when closing the window, you get me? You need to reduce it by **four millimetre (sic)** so that you when you insert it, it doesn't get stuck, but slightly goes up. Now, for this system, I want to do it all on computer, instead of working it out for myself every time.
- MB** 25: 05 Nahseb trid xi programm għaliha. I think there may be a programme for that.
- RP** 25: 09 Iva, programm. Per eżempju dawn il-gallariji qegħdin hekk (*points to diagrams on paper*). Ara, jien inpingi (*uses finger to direct attention to design*). Yes, a programme. For instance these balconies are like this (*points to diagrams on paper*). Look, I draw (*uses finger to direct attention to design*).
- MB** 25:15 Dawn il-gallariji qegħdin inharsu lejhom minn fuq. We're looking at these balconies from above.

RP 25: 19	Minn fuq. Hawnhekk hawn il-gallariji. Qeghdin hekk (<i>movement with finger</i>), hekk (<i>movement with finger</i>), u hekk (<i>movement with finger</i>). Dawn tal-flett tiegħi, fil-blokka fejn ser mmur noqghod. Mbagħad nikteb x'rrid. Ara, poġġaman, irid <u>tlieta</u> ; clippers irid <u>sitta</u> ; uprights , li huma viereg, irid <u>tletin</u> . Mbagħad ġibt mod ieħor – (extra?) sixty , li huma dawn, (flatsquare?) sixty . Dan il-materjal t'hawn huwa dak, qed tara? Ċaċċiż, li huwa frame , ġibt <u>sebgħa</u> . Style , li hija din, ir- rail , trid <u>ghaxra</u> . Interlock , li hija din, trid <u>erbgha</u> . U netting irrid <u>sitta</u> – ara nikbilhom li jridu netting . Dawn biss m'għandhomx netting . L-bqija kollox bin- netting .	From above. Here are the balconies. They are like this (<i>movement with finger</i>), this (<i>movement with finger</i>) and this (<i>movement with finger</i>). These are for my own flat, in the block of flats I'm moving into. Then I write down what I need. Look, handrails, I need <u>three</u> ; clippers , I need <u>six</u> , uprights , which are rods, I need <u>thirty</u> . Then I got other things, such as sixty (extra?), and sixty (flatsquare?). The material I need for this is here, you see? I need <u>seven</u> frames. The style, which is this, the rail , I need <u>ten</u> . The interlock , which is this, I need <u>four</u> . As for netting , I need <u>six</u> – I have to write that down, that they need netting . These ones here don't need netting . The rest will have netting .
MB 26: 02	Din bhalha sistema inti ha tifhimha, imma haddieħor?	You understand all this, but would anybody else?
RP 26: 06	Jekk ikun fix-xogħol tiegħi, iva jifhimha. Għax jiena, dak li jkun ntih il-karta bit-tpingija u ngħidlu qatta'.	If he's in the trade, yes, he'll understand it. Because if I give the paper to somebody who does, and I tell him to start cutting.
MB 26:18	Il-klijent ma jarahx dan il-ix-xogħol.	The client doesn't see this work.
RP 26:18	Le, m'ahniex apprezzati għax-xogħol li għandna. (<i>Points to another diagram</i>) Ara, gallarija oħra, magħluqa, pengiha il-klijent u mbagħad nohroġ il-qisin, u nibda naħdem, tifhimni?	No, we're not appreciated for the work we have. (<i>Points to another diagram</i>) Look, this is another balcony, closed off, drawn by the client, and then I take the measurements and start working, you get me?
MB 26:43	Ara, fuq din il-karta għandek clear	Look, on this paper you have clear
RP 26: 46	White clear. Single aluminium perla.	White clear. Single aluminium perla.
MB 26:53	Inti għandek hafna kejl. Kliem bhal poġġaman, clipper, uprights (<i>referring to paper</i>).	You have a lot of measuring here. Words like handrail, clipper, uprights (<i>referring to paper</i>).
RP 26:59	Kif nifhem jien.	As I understand it.

MB
27:20

Allura jekk jigi xi hadd tal-**aluminium** ser jifhmek.

So somebody in the **aluminium** trade would understand you.

(go over diagrams and terms written in the diaries. Refer to measurements next.)

RP
27:58

U n-numri għalhekk qegħdin. Ħa mmur jiena, mmur fil-post, minflok noqgħod nikteb. Anke s-sistema, differenti min ta' missieri. Mela missieri kien immur għand in-nies, ikejjejl u jikteb. *(Demonstrates this with a self-retracting metal tape measure with both imperial and metric measurements)* **main bedroom, spare bedroom, living**. Jiena mhux hekk. Jiena mmur, dħalt għand il-klijent, *(reels off numbers whilst holding extended tape measure in air)* nara il-wisgħa, **thirty-seven, thirty-seven and a quarter, forty**. Mela, **thirty seven**, għax dak l-inqas. L-għoli? Nohrog ir-rutella u nibda, mela **forty-seven, forty seven and a half**, mela **forty seven** *(sound of measure tape retracting)*. Mela jiena naqbad il-lapis u nagħmel **number one** u nagħmel **number one** mal-koxxa. Mela it-tieqa rrid innizilha **number one**, qed tifhimni? Imbagħad jekk irrid nagħmel stima – ix-xogħol ħadtu – u irrid nikkopja kollox, **one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight** (29:20). U la darba li nkun ħadtha, ngħid ndura dawra, ara din it-tieqa, **seven** **W** /'dʌb.l.ju:/, mela din kemm fiha wisgħa. **Seven T** /ti:/ hija tul. Jekk iddur dawra mejt, fuq kull waħda hemm miktub. Ara, **seven T** /ti:/. Mela din hija sett. Naf li dan il-wisgħa u dan l-għoli. Allura dak iċ-ċaccċiż *(Referring to frames stacked, resting along wall, without glass)*. Mela qtajt il-portella *(looks though frames)*. Ara fuq kull waħda – **seven, seven** u oħra **seven** *(each item)* biex jiena din ngħid ta' dik it-tieqa *(refers to parts on worktable)*. (30:15) Għax **time is money**, ma

And that's what the numbers for. I go to a place, and instead of writing. Even my way of doing things, it's different to my father's. So my father would go to clients, measure and write. *(Demonstrates this with a self-retracting metal tape measure with both imperial and metric measurements)* **main bedroom, spare bedroom, living**. I don't work that way. I go, enter the client's place *(reels off numbers whilst holding extended tape measure in air)*, I check the width, **thirty-seven, thirty-seven and a quarter, forty**. So, **thirty seven**, because that's the smallest. The height? I take out my retractable tape measure and start, so **forty-seven, forty seven and a half**, so **forty seven** *(sound of measure tape retracting)*. When I take a pencil and put down **number one**, I put down **number one** against the frame, and so I have to put down **number one**, you get me? And then, after making the estimate and getting the job, I need to recopy everything **one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight** (29:20). And once I have put down everything, I go over things, see for instance this window, **seven W (7W)**, so this is the width. **Seven T (7T)** means length. If you go round the garage, you'll find such writing on every piece. See, **seven T (7T)**. So this is a set. I know that this is the length and this is the height. So that's the frame. *(Referring to frames stacked, resting along wall, without glass)*. When I cut the door *(looks though frames)*, you see, on every one of them – **seven, seven** and another with a **seven** *(each item)* so that I can say that this belongs to this window *(refers to parts on worktable)*. (30: 15) Because **time is**

	noqghodx infittex nerga. Naf li din tmur ma dik it-tieqa.	money , I wouldn't need to look for it again. I know that this belongs to that window.
MB 30:28	Mela din is- seven (pause)	So this seven (pause)
RP 30:35	Tmur ma dik is- seven (<i>looking at separate parts on worktable, part of sliding window, to fit into frames which are resting against wall, in order</i>).	Goes with that seven there (<i>looking at separate parts on worktable, part of sliding window, to fit into frames which are resting against wall, in order</i>).
MB 30:37	Dawn mhux l-istess qisin?	Aren't these the same size?
RP 30:40	Dazgur li le. Ara kif naghmilhom. Qed tara tal- bathroom . Ktibt BAT għall- bathroom . Kieku ix-xoghol kien għall- penthouse , kieku PH (pronounced /pi:/eit/). Penthouse fil-qosor. Missieri le, tafx, kien jiktibha – PENTHOUSE . Jiena nuża PH .	Of course not. Look at how I do them. These are the bathroom ones. I wrote BAT for bathroom. If the work had been for the penthouse, it would be PH. Penthouse for short. My father, no, he would write it in full – PENTHOUSE . I use PH .
MB 31:02	Tinsiex li missierek tghallem meta kien diġa' kbir, meta tghallem is-sistema tiegħu.	Don't forget that your father learnt the trade when he was an adult, when he learnt his own way of doing things.
RP 31:06	Dażgur, mela.	Of course, sure.
MB 31:10	Inti ta' kemm bdejt?	How old were you when you started?
RP 31:12	Kelli għaxar snin. Kont niġi hawn u noqghod indaħhal dan, ara, dan il-lastiku (<i>kicks a roll of black elastic used for apertures, see photo</i>).	I was ten years old. I used to come here and put this stuff around the reels, this elastic here (<i>kicks a roll of black elastic used for apertures, see photo</i>).
MB 31:18	Kont toqghod torganizza. (Pointing at the elastic) X'ghidulu?	So you used to organise things. (Pointing at the elastic) What do they call this?
RP 31:20	Rigid . (<i>Note: short for rigid rubber hosing</i>)	Rigid . (<i>Note: short for rigid rubber hosing</i>)
MB 31:22	Iġifieri meta tmur tixtri, tghidlilhom rigid .	So, that means that when you go shopping, you tell them rigid .
RP 31:25	Iva.	Yes.
MB 31:26	Mela bdejt billi tghinu f'affarijiet zgħar.	So you started out by helping him with the small things.

RP 31:29	Mbagħad beta bdejt nikber naqra, beda jurini kif tagħmel glasstop (31:32), ngħidulu aħna.	Then, when I got older, he started to show me things, how to do a ‘ glasstop ’ (31:32), that’s what we call it.
MB 31:35	U dan x’inhu?	And what’s that?
RP 31:38	<i>(Walks to part of garage to pick up piece as example; I follow. He shows me a piece of aluminium, lots of aluminium shards, ‘dust’, which shows cutting activity in area. He picks up two aluminium pieces, taps them and clicks them together).</i>	<i>(Walks to part of garage to pick up piece as example; I follow. He shows me a piece of aluminium, lots of aluminium shards, ‘dust’, which shows cutting activity in area. He picks up two aluminium pieces, taps them and clicks them together).</i>
	(32:01) Qed tara din? Din trid taqlaghha biex tagħmel il-ħgiega. Tagħmel din hekk (<i>clicks into place</i>) u biex taqlaghha, ħa titfa il-ħgiega fuq ir- rubber . Titfa din hawn u toqghod iddahħal il-lastiku.	(32:01) You see this? You have to remove it to do the glass. You do this (<i>clicks into place</i>) and to remove it, you put the glass on the rubber . You put this bit and then you insert the rubber.
MB 32:11	Kien itik xogħol żgħir fil-bidu.	You used to give you small jobs.
RP 32:15	Iva, mbagħad bdejt inqatta’ ċ-ċacciz, li huwa dan. Mbagħad, meta rani li bdejt nieħu nteress, qalli ‘Kull tieqa li tagħmel ntik ħames liri’ (32:29) dak iż-żmien, u għamilt il-kuraġġ.	Yes, then I started to cut frames, which is this here. Then, when he saw I was interested, he told me ‘For every window you do, you have Lm5’ (32:29) then, and that was an incentive.
MB 32:35	Kont għamilt żbalji?	Did you make mistakes?
RP 32:38	Iva, darba post shiħ minflok bronz għamiltulu silver .	Yes, once I cut the wrong colour aluminium for a whole house, bronze instead of silver.
MB 32:45	Imbagħad x’gara? Missierek ma kienx rak qabel?	What happened then? Didn’t your father see you do it?
RP 32:50	Le, kien qed jaħdem fuq barra u ħallini l-garaxx nqatta’. Sibna irkabtu, għax kien popolari dak iż-żmien u irrangajna. Għall-flettijiet tal-gvern kienu, u qisien kienu kollha xorta.	No, he was working on a house and left me at the garage cutting. We found a way to resolve it, as the colour was very popular then and we fixed the problem. They were for council houses, and measurements were the same more or less.

<p>MB 33:20</p>	<p>Igifieri ghamilt zbalji fil-bidu. X’kien jghidlek? Ghax biex taqta’, trid tkun taf il-qisien.</p>	<p>So you made mistakes in the beginning. What would he tell you? Because to cut, you’d need to know the measurements.</p>
<p>RP 33:30</p>	<p>Biex naqta, kien jghidli moħħok hekk. Kien anke pingili rutella mal-ħajt biex tghallimtha. Ara, qabel ir-rutelli kienu bl-inches biss. Mela, mis-seven tal-eight, per eżempju, <u>l-ewwel</u> sinjal one-sixteen, <u>it-tieni</u> sinjal one-eight. <u>It-tielet</u> sinjal three-sixteen, <u>ir-raba’</u> sinjal kwart. Per eżempju jekk jghidlek sebgħa pulzieri u kwart, trid tmur fuq hawn (<i>example on tape measure</i>). Jekk jghidlek <u>sebgħa pulzieri</u> u five-eights, trid tmur fuq hawn (<i>provides example on a self-retracting measure tape</i>).</p>	<p>When cutting, he would tell me to focus on the job. He even drew a measuring tape on the wall (33:36) for me to learn it. You see, self-retracting measuring tapes were only available in inches. So, from seven (inches) to eight (inches), for example, the <u>first</u> marking represented one-sixteen, the <u>second</u> marking one-eighth. The <u>third</u> marking three-sixteen, the fourth is <u>one quarter</u>. (<i>example on tape measure</i>) For example, if he would say <u>seven inches</u> and five-eighths, you would need to go here (<i>provides example on a self-retracting measure tape</i>).</p>
	<p>Minn <u>sebgħa pulzieri</u> u nofs, trid tmur hawn. <u>Tlett kwarti</u> fuq hawn, seven-eights fuq hawn. Sa kemm jghidlek <u>tmien pulzieri</u>. Eh, mela biex tghallimt, tghidx kemm qadef missieri. Ġeltu jghidi tafx, kwazi vina tqajtlu minn rasu. Kont moħħ ir-riħ. Per eżempju missieri kien ipingi kollox fuq hawn, ara, għadhom hawn (<i>points to diagrams on the wall</i>). U oħra kont gibtha mingħand sieħbi. Ara missieri kien kitebhom hawn, il-minus, id-division by two, minus twenty-two (35:00). Dik kienet is-sistema ta’ missieri, tax-xiħ.</p>	<p>From <u>seven inches and a half</u>, you have to go here. <u>Three-quarters</u> on this mark, seven-eighths here. Until you get to <u>eight inches</u>. To learn all this, my father really worked hard. I nearly drove him crazy, nearly made him pop a vein in his head. Didn’t take things seriously then. For example my father would draw everything up here, look, they are still here (<i>points to diagrams on the wall</i>). And the other paper I got from my friend. See, my father had written them down here, the minus sign, the division by two, minus twenty-two (35:00). That was the old man’s system, my father’s.</p>
<p>MB 35:07</p>	<p>Din mhiex sistema li ser issib ġo skola.</p>	<p>This is not a system you’ll find in schools.</p>
<p>RP 35:11</p>	<p>Le, le. Number one, lanqas għadna naħdmu bl-inches. Kulhadd qaleb centimetres.</p>	<p>No, no. Number one, we don’t use inches anymore. Everybody had switched to centimetres.</p>
<p>MB 35:47</p>	<p>Pero’, fost tal-aluminium, kollox jiftiehem.</p>	<p>However, amongst the aluminium trade, everything is understood.</p>

RP 35:50	Dażgur. Per eżempju, missieri kellu ħabib tiegħu ma kienx jifhem ir-rutella. Kien jgħidlu ‘Gann, tmien pulzieri u ferrovija’. Ferrovija tfisser żewġ linji, li huma dawn (<i>points to the main subdivisions in an inch</i>). Ma kienx jaf jgħidlu one-eight . Kien jgħidlu <u>sitt pulzieri u ferrovija, żewġ linji</u> . Missieri kien jifhmu, u jgħidlu mela <u>sitt pulzieri u one-eighth</u> . Hawnhekk għadhom jiġu nies bl-injama (<i>picks up piece of wood to demonstrate</i>) “Għandi tieqa u dan qies tagħha (<i>use of wooden piece for actual length/width of window</i>). Min hawn s’hawn il-wisa’, u minn hawn s’hawn l-għoli. Ġeneralment anzjani.	Of course. For example, my father had a friend who did not understand the tape measure. He would tell him, John, eight inches and a train (literal translation of ‘ferrovija’). Train means two lines, which are these (<i>points to the main subdivisions in an inch</i>). He couldn’t say one-eighth . He would tell him <u>six inches and a train, two lines</u> . My father would understand him, and tell him <u>six inches and one-eighth</u> . Mind you, today I still get people coming with a piece of wood (<i>picks up piece of wood to demonstrate</i>) telling me ‘I have a window and these are the measurements (<i>use of wooden piece for actual length/width of window</i>). From here to here you have the length, and from here to here you have the width’. Usually elderly people.
MB 36:40	Ara kemm inbidlu l-affarijiet. L-anzjani mod, missierek mod, u inti mod ieħor.	Just look at much things have changed. The senior citizens, your father and now you.
RP 36:50	Hekk bdejt.	That’s how I started.
MB 36:53	Ilek taħdem tletin sena hawn – inbidlu xejn l-affarijiet?	You’ve been thirty years here now – have things changed?
RP 36:59	U dażgur!	Definitely!
MB 37: 05	Kif taħdem, il-materjal, l-għodda, kif tixtri mingħand l-agenti.	How you work, the material, the tools, how to buy from agents.
RP 37: 15	Illum, trid timxi maż-żminijiet. Number one , fiż-żmien missieri l-materjal li kien juża spiċċa. Beda dieħel il-ġdid (<i>compares an old aluminium railing with a more modern one</i>). Jekk ma timxix maż-żmien, trid tagħlaq.	Today, you have to move with the times. Number one , the material used in my father’s time is no longer available. Now new stuff is coming in (<i>compares an old aluminium railing with a more modern one</i>). If you don’t move with the times, you can close shop.
(Pause – telephone call)		
MB 39:00	(Referring to certification) Min għamilulek it-test?	(Referring to certification) Who was responsible for your test?

RP
39:10

Kien tal-AluServ (*large aluminium company in Mrieħel, Malta*). Qalli ‘Ha ntik tieqa’. Qedtlu ħa ngħib il-materjal halli naqadulek. Skantajtu. Staqsini – int qed taħdem? Iva, **self-employed**. Qali żarma u ejja miegħi. Jien qedtlu, le hija. Qedtlu tini x-xogħol **sub-contract**. Le, qalli, irridek miegħi – **foreman** inpoġġiek. Qedtlu hija, jiena drajt nidhol u noħroġ mix-xogħol meta jtini. Thallini nagħmel hekk meta nkun miegħek? Niġi miegħek kieku, mhux problema.

He was from AluServ (*large aluminium company in Mrieħel, Malta*). He told me ‘I’m going to give you a window’. I told him I’ll get the material and put it together for him. I surprised him. He waked me if I was working. I said, yes, **self-employed**. He told me, ‘Close shop and join me’. I said no way, bro. I told him to pass on work to me, **sub-contract**. He said no, he wanted me to work for him, and have me as **foreman**, I told him I got used to working at times I feel like; would you let me do that once I work for you? I’d work for you, no problem.

RP
(Cont’d)

(40:40) Veru meta jkollok ix-xogħol trid tidhol kmieni jew toħroġ tard, imma m’għandi lil had fuqi. U mela, tirsisti, u jiġi jgħidlek irridhom lesti issa. Jiena biex naqbad immur norqod nieħu siesta ma rridt xejn, mhux hekk? Mela għada ma jisbaħx? Dan ma ha jmorru mkien (*referring to work*), hawn ha jibqgħu, fuq il-mejda. (*Refers to current project*).

(40:40) It’s true that when you have work to do you have to leave for work early and end late, but I have no one telling me what to do. Imagine working hard and somebody telling me I need the work finished now. I don’t think twice about closing for a bit to have a siesta. Do you think the sun won’t rise tomorrow? These aren’t going anywhere (*referring to work*), they’re going to remain here, on the worktable (*refers to current project*).

(41:14) Bħalissa fuq din għaddej tal-BuzDov (shows me picture of block of apartments), nwaħħal il-blokkok. (*He refers to pictures of projects which he completed, on the walls*). Din sabiħa, kont għamiltha fit-**two thousand and eight. Two thousand and ten** kien tad-duluri. Hdimt ta! Il-**business** kien tajjeb. (*Referring to another design*) Ara din il-gallarija. Hekk, hekk, u hekk, bħalma urejtek f’it ilu. Issa mhux mbilli tkejjel hekk, hekk u hekk, trid tnaqqas il-ħxuna ta’ din.

(41:14) Right now I’m working on this for BuzDov (*shows me picture of block of apartments*) setting up blocks of apartments (*on wall has pictures of projects which he completed*). This was a beauty; I had done that in **two thousand and eight. Two thousand and ten** was a backbreaking year. I really worked hard! Business was good. (*Referring to another design*) Look at this balcony. This, this and this, just as I have shown you a short while ago. It’s not enough to measure this, this and this; you need to keep in mind the thickness of it.

(42: 30) Allura jiena x’għamilt biex niġi **one hundred percent**? Qtajt bičča hekk u hekk, mort fuqha fil-post, u qedt mela dan

(42: 30) So what did I do to be **one hundred percent**? I cut a piece so and so, went on site, and said to myself so this is

il-kantun, nidhol fit il-ġewwa, daqs the stone, and I calculated the size again, subgħajja biex tifhimni, u pingejt. Bqajt l-istess wisgħa. Mela l-qies irrid niehdu min din il-ponta sa din il-ponta. Jew min din il-ponta sa dan il-ħajt, qed tifhimni, mbagħad min din il-ponta sal-ħajt. Biex jiena, kif nipprezentah fil-post, jidħol bl-eżatt. Hemmhekk tidħol is-sengħa. Mhux toġħod tġħid għax hawn qiehed ‘l barra jew hawn hekk. Jiena ħdimtha u kkupjajtha, u ħdimt fuq il-dan (*referring to measurements*) u hekk jiġi.

MB
43:21
RP
43:25

Mela inti tippjana ħafna minn qabel.

Taħseb naqra b’moħħok. Ix-xogħol tiegħi mentalment u fiżikament.

So you plan quite a bit in advance.

You think a bit with your head. My work is both mental and physical.

MB
43:33

Missierek hekk kien jaħdem?

Did your father work in the same manner?

RP
43:37

Missieri kien jaħseb u jaħdem, imma kien ta’ ħafna loġħob. Jiena naqbad u naħdem u naġħmel. Illum il-ħin flus ma tistax titlef ħin (43:45).

My father used to think and work, but he took his time. I just start, work and do. Today time is money and you can’t waste time (43:45).

[End of interview]

Recorded Interview Two held in workshop on Thursday 1 August 2013

Participants* **RP: Interviewee** **MB: Interviewer** **JM: Part-time worker**

[Background – loud music from radio]

*

Original interview in Maltese

Translation into English

JM
00:02

“Pay (JM) the sum of twenty euros only”. Twenty euros u daqshekk.

“Pay (JM) the sum of twenty euros only”. Twenty euros and that’s it.

(RP filled in date, amount in number and signature; JM filled in with his name and amount in words)

RP
00:15

Issa jiena nagħmilha hekk.

Now this is how I do it.

- JM** 00:18 Zomm, qabel ma naqtghu. Wait, just before I tear it out.
- RP** 00:24 Mela jiena tajtu **twenty euros** – hawn irrid inniżżilhom (*indicates chequebook stub*) qabel ma naqtghu. Nagħmel **twenty** hawn. Issa l-aħħar li kelli **seven five eight point seventy-six** (*refers to stub of previous cheque; gets desk calculator*). **Seven five eight point seventy-six minus twenty**. Mela baqgħali fil-kont tal-bank **seven three eight point seven six**, sewwa? U flus għadni ma depożitajtx. Jiena baqgħali dawn biex nilgħab, u dejjem naħdem hekk, ħalli qatt ma nibla kannen fil-kont tiegħi. Dik is-sistema tiegħi. Skola ma nafx, imma idejat ikolli. So I gave him **twenty euros** – I need to put that down here (*indicates chequebook stub*) before I give it to him. I put down **twenty** here. Now last time I issued a cheque I had **seven five eight point seventy-six** (*refers to stub of previous cheque; gets desk calculator*). **Seven five eight point seventy-six minus twenty** – so I will now have **seven three eight point seven six**, left at the bank, right? And I haven't yet deposited any money. I have this amount to work with, and I always work like that, so that I never come across any problems with my account. That's my system. I haven't got any schooling, but I do have ideas.
- MB** 01:30 Missierek kien juża l-istess sistema? Did your father use the same system?
- RP** 01:36 Le, missieri **cash** u ċekkijiet kien juża. Mill-ewwel dak kien iħallas (*refers to previous interview on payment methods*). Jew **cash** jew ċekk, it-tnejn kien jużahom. No, my father used both **cash** and cheques. He paid promptly (*refers to previous interview on payment methods*). Either **cash** or cheque, he used them both.
- MB** 01:46 Kont kurrenti kellu, bħalek, fuq isem il-kumpanija? Did he have a current account just like you, a company current account?
- RP** 01:50 Le, dak jien għamiltu. Hu kellu kont għalih, fuq ismu, imma mhux bħali, fuq Pace Aluminium. No, I opened that. He had his own account, on his own name, but not like me, on Pace Aluminium.
- MB** 02:00 Missierek kien responsabbli għall-isem tal-kumpanija? Was your father responsible for the current company name?
- RP** 02:10 Le, qabel kien (**name and surname**) **Steel and Aluminium Works**. Jiena għamiltu **Pace Aluminium Works**. No, it used to be (**name and surname**) **Steel and Aluminium Works**. I chose **Pace Aluminium Works**.
- MB** 02:35 U dak l-**sticker**? (*Refer to sticker, pre-2002, see photo*) And that **sticker**? (*Refer to sticker, pre-2002, see photo*)
- RP** 02:45 Dawk jien għamilthom, bit-**telephone number** tad-dar tiegħi u tal-garaxx. I did those, with my home **telephone number** and the garage's.

02:50 – 06:00	<i>JM refers to Yellow Pages advert for 2013, and the sponsorship for the 2013 calendar produced by the South East Pigeon Club, Zejtun. (To photograph January 2013 page). RP mentioned that it was the only advert he placed in any publication this year - normally advertises in community leaflets such as the annual magazine produced by the local parish church for the August village festa. [Reference also made to old business cards stored – bad run, to be used for note taking.]</i>	
RP 06:00	Dawn issa qegħdin nagħmluhom, għax missieri ma kienx jagħmel advertising . Niftakarhom b'ismu, imbagħad taħt 'Għall kull xogħol ta' aluminju - prezzijiet moderati'.	We're doing those now, as my father never went for advertising . I recall the old business cards, with his name, and then underneath 'for all types of aluminium work, moderate prices'.
RP 06:00	Kull m'hawn qlibt meta hadtu jien. Ridt naħdem f'ambjent li nixtieq jien. Mhux jien qed immexxi? Mela kif jogħgob lili, mhux kif jogħgob missieri.	When I took over, I changed things completely. I wanted to work in an environment that I liked. Am I not the one running the show now? So it's got to be the way I like it, not what my father likes.
MB	Mela inti tagħmel ir-reklami.	So you are the one doing the advertising.
RP	Il- Yellow Pages , mal-festi u hekk iva (<i>mention of pigeon club calendar</i>). Imma ma rridt nagħmel xejn aktar din is-sena.	The Yellow Pages , the local feasts and that sort yes (<i>mention of pigeon club calendar</i>). But I don't want to do anything else this year
MB 07:30	<i>(RP shows me quotation sheet – in English, with price pre-printed in euro, not Maltese Lira – indicates 2008 onwards).</i> Dan fejn għamiltu inti?	<i>(RP shows me quotation sheet – in English, with price pre-printed in euro, not Maltese Lira – indicates 2008 onwards).</i> Where did you get this done?
RP 07:06	Id-DuraPrint (printer's services located in Birżebbuġa).	At DuraPrint (printer's services located in Birżebbuġa).
MB 07:40	Inti għamiltom dawn il-kliem? (<i>Read off document</i>) Client, address, telephone, date.	Did you select these words? (<i>Read off document</i>) Client, address, telephone, date
RP 07:45	Iva, hekk hu.	Yes, that's right
MB 07:46	Inti għazilt li jkunu bl-Ingliż?	Did you decide to have this in English?
RP 07:47	Iva.	Yes.
MB 07:48	U għalfejn? (<i>No answer to this question - RP skips to another topic.</i>)	And why? (<i>No answer to this question - RP skips to another topic.</i>)

- RP** 07:50 (*Explains procedure*) Hawnhekk fejn jiffirma l-klijent (points to bottom of document – signature line with ‘signature’ printed beneath it). Ma niffirmax jien, dak il-klijent. Per eżempju ghandu hġieġ **double-glaze (sic)**.
- MB** 08:05 U jekk mhux bid-**double-glaze (sic)**?
- RP** 08:07 Ma jiffirmax. Din bħal **job sheet**. Nghidlu kollox okej. Jekk iva, jiffirmali. Ghax gieli jinfaqa’ waħdu d-**double-glaze (sic)**. Allura la iffirmali, kollox sewwa. Issa jekk jinfaqa’ waħdu, u jrid iddaħħalni l-qorti, nghidlu daħħalni. Ikollu hu, u jkolli jien. Għalhekk irrid nagħmel il-laptop, biex nevita il-**hassle**, jgħidli ‘isma nfaqatli hġieġa’.
- MB** 08:31 Iġifieri l-klijent jiffirma wara li tlesti kollox?
- RP** 08:32 Dażgur. Irid jiffirma hu.
- MB** 08:36 Iġifieri jekk itellghek il-qorti, inti kopert.
- RP** 08:40 Dażgur, kollox kien okej. (*JM comments: Ghax isiru l-abbuži.*) Ara, għadni kemm ħriġt **quotation** il-Mosta. Dan huwa klijent Reno, joqgħod il-Mosta (*see photo*). Dan it-**telephone number** tiegħu, id-**date** meta għamiltielu, l-**aluminium ‘white clear double-glaze (sic)’**. Mela bħal dan il-flett **times three**. Għamiltlu l-**penthouse** għalih (*points to reference PHI on sketch*) u il-komun għalih. Tajthomlu separati u kollox b’dan il-prezz. Jiena zammejt l-originali, u lilu **photocopy**, biex jekk ibagħbasha, jiena ninduna. Dejjem hekk nagħmel. Mela ried il-gallariji prezzijiet għalihom, u hekk għamilt, bil-**marker (highlighter)** u fejn huma ‘**single**’ ukoll bil-**highlighter**, li ma jmurx jgħidli, le din bid-**double-glaze (sic)** ftehmna. Nghidlu le ‘**single**’ ara.
- MB** 10:20 Mela **SL** tfisser ‘single leaf’. X’tfisser ‘**leaf**’?
- (*Explains procedure*) This is where the client signs (points to bottom of document – signature line with ‘signature’ printed beneath it). I don’t sign that, that’s for the client. For example, when having **double-glazed** glass.
- And if the job involves no **double-glazed** glass?
- He doesn’t sign. It’s like a **job sheet**. I’ll tell him that all is ok. If yes, he’ll sign. Because sometimes **double-glazed** glass can suddenly crack. So if he signs, it means all is satisfactory. Now if the glass suddenly cracks, and he wants to take me to court, I’ll tell him go ahead. He’ll have his papers, and I’ll have mine. That’s why I want to have a laptop for work, to avoid the **hassle** in case he tells me ‘hey, the glass has cracked.’
- So you mean that the client signs after all is installed?
- Of course. He has to sign.
- So if he takes you to court, you’re covered.
- Of course, everything is ok. (*JM: People can take advantage of these things.*) Look. I’ve just issued a **quotation** for a place in Mosta. This is the client, Reno, he lives in Mosta (*see photo*). This is his **telephone number**, the date when I worked out the quotation; the **aluminium is ‘white clear double-glaze’**. So he wants apertures like this for the flat, **times three**. I worked on a **penthouse** for him (*points to reference PHI on sketch*) and the common area is separate. I gave him these quotations separately and at this price. I kept the original, and gave him a photocopy, so that if he modifies it, I’d know. I always do that. When he wanted a separate quotation for the balconies, I did so, and used a **marker (highlighter)** and wherever there is ‘**single**’ I also highlighted them, in case he may say that we originally agreed to have it done with **double-glazed** glass. I’ll tell him, no, they’re ‘single, look’.
- So **SL** means ‘single leaf’. What does ‘**leaf**’ mean?

RP 10:25	Le, il- profile huwa Tre Alco, mhux ' Export '.	No, the profile is Tre Alco, not ' Export '.
MB 10:27	Two leaf?	Two leaf?
RP 10:30	Dik bit-tnejn, bħal dak (<i>points to office door</i>). One, two . Ghax hawn minn jagħmlu six leaf , b'sitta, jew three leaf .	That means two , like that (<i>points to office door</i>). One, two . Because they can be done as ' six leaf ', with six of those, or ' three leaf '.
MB 10:32	Għalfejn ' leaf '?	Why ' leaf '?
RP 10:40	' Leaf ' bieba. ' Three leaf ' tlett portelli. Minflok bil-Malti, tlett portelli, ' three leaf '. Portella bieba. Anke meta nixtru l- aluminium ahna, ngħidlu Tre Alco ' three track '. Tlett trakki. Export three track , ikun tlett lines, one, two, three għax gejjin tlett portelli. Xorta bieb wiehed, imma l-portella tkun bi tlieta, jew b'sitta. Tal-lukandi jkunu b'sitta, tad-djar b'tlieta.	' Leaf ' means door. ' Three leaf ' three doors. Instead of using Maltese, three doors (portelli), ' three leaf '. 'Portella' means 'door'. When we purchase aluminium , we would say Tre Alco ' three track '. Three tracks. Export three track means three lines, one, two, three , because three 'portelli' are needed. It's still a door, but the door itself is composed of three parts, or of six. Doors for hotels are normally with six sections, homes have three.
	<i>(RP and JM have brief discussion about differences between residential homes and hotels, three leaf vs. six.)</i>	
MB 11:40	<i>(Referring back to quotation)</i> It-total twenty-one thousand (euro). Deposit tak?	<i>(Referring back to quotation)</i> The total is twenty-one thousand (euro). Has he given you a deposit ?
RP 11:45	Għax għadna ma ftehmnix. Mbagħad nara x'ikun baqgħa, u jkun jrid xi haġa extra , bħal nets , lifter niktiblu.	We haven't concluded the agreement yet. I will then see what's necessary, and if he needs anything extra , such as insect screens (nets), lifting machine, I'll put it down.
MB 11:50	Igifieri din għadha quotation .	So this is still a quotation .
RB 11:55	Din iva, għadha pending , imma nahseb ninety-nine point nine (<i>referring to percent</i>) din għalija.	This yes, it's still pending , but ninety-nine point nine (<i>referring to percent</i>) I think I'll get the job.
MB 12:00	X'inhi dik?	What's this?
RB 12:05	Blokka il-Mosta. Issa hekk irrid nagħmilhom il- quotations (<i>refers to pre-printed sheet in photo</i>), fuq din il-karta.	It's a block of flats in Mosta. Now this is how I want to issue quotations , (<i>refers to pre-printed sheet in photo</i>), on a form like this.
JM 12:10	Hallejtek (<i>leaves workshop</i>), narak.	Got to go (<i>leaves workshop</i>), see you.
RM 12:12	Ċaw ħi. Thank you .	Bye mate (rough translation; 'ħi' used in the sense of 'mate, pal'). Thank you .

<p>MB 12:20</p>	<p>Mela hawn, ara, din t'fisser 'single leaf', SL.</p>	<p>So here, look, this means 'single leaf', SL.</p>
<p>RB 12:29</p>	<p>Le, dik sliding. Kif nifhimha jien.</p>	<p>No, that's sliding. As I understand it.</p>
<p>MB 12:35</p>	<p>Għax SL qisha single leaf għalija.</p>	<p>Because SL looks like single leaf to me.</p>
<p>RP 12:38</p>	<p>Kieku single nikteb. Fhimtni? Ara per eżempju din klijent gabha, biex ikolli ideja kif inhi l-arkata (refers to photo brought by client). Dawn huma l-eklissi. (Note: 'single' is written as 'singil' on scratch notes)</p>	<p>I would have put down single. You get me? See, for example, this was brought along by the client, so that I have an idea of how he wants the arch (refers to photo brought by client). These are the eclipses. (Note: 'single' is written as 'singil' on scratch notes)</p>
<p>MB 12:50</p>	<p>Eklissi? Eklissi maqsuma fi tlieta?</p>	<p>Eclipses? Eclipses are split into three?</p>
<p>RP 12:52</p>	<p>Qedt tara? Waħda, tnejn, tlieta. Jekk taqsama minn nofs għandek waħda, tnejn, tlieta.</p>	<p>You see, one, two, three. If you split it in two, you get one, two, three.</p>
<p>MB 13:00</p>	<p><i>(Referring to sketches, pricing)</i> Photocopies iżżomm ta' dawn?</p>	<p><i>(Referring to sketches, pricing)</i> Do you keep photocopies of these?</p>
<p>RP 13:05</p>	<p>Photocopies għal klijent, u jiena nżomm l-originali.</p>	<p>Photocopies are for the client, I keep the original</p>
<p>MB 13:11</p>	<p>Dawn iżżomhom go file?</p>	<p>Do you keep these in a file?</p>
<p>RP 13:12</p>	<p>Le, kif inlestri, mbaġhad, narmi kollox. Once li nkun thallast u kollox, jien narmi lil' hemm.</p>	<p>No, as soon as I finish, then I toss out everything. Once I have been paid and everything, I throw things away.</p>
<p>MB 13:15</p>	<p>Ma żżomhomx għal li jista jkun?</p>	<p>Don't you keep anything, just in case?</p>
<p>RP 13:20</p>	<p>Le, narmi. Mbaġhad ikolli fid-diary, hux?</p>	<p>No, I toss out everything. I'd have it in my diary, right?</p>
<p>MB 13:26</p>	<p>Mela għandek backup.</p>	<p>So you have a backup.</p>
<p>RP 13:30</p>	<p>Mela għandi id-diary. Meta nkun tkejjilt jien, anki jekk il-post ikun ġebel u saqaf, jekk ikun irid stima, niktiblu 'erre' ('R'), iġifieri 'roughly' dan (Note: 'roughly' is written as 'rafli', but the borrowing from the English language is evident). Fhimt, minduna jiena li 'roughly'. Imbaġhad jgħidli 'ahdem', ngħidli lesti l-kisi u nergħu mmur nkejjel u nlestri għal-tquh. Imbaġhad ir-'roughly' naghmilha hekk (makes sign on paper), u ngħidlu mela din l-istima u dawn għal-tquh.</p>	<p>Sure, I have my diary. When I have measured a place, even if it is just bare stone and concrete, if he wants a quotation, I write down 'R' ('erre'), which means 'roughly' (Note: 'roughly' is written as 'rafli', but the borrowing from the English language is evident). Then he tells me to go ahead with the job, I tell him to make sure the plastering is ready and then I go and measure again, and get things ready for cutting, Then I do this to 'roughly' (makes sign on paper), and tell him the quotation is ready and things are ready for cutting.</p>

MB 13:59	Tghamillu ‘ roughly ’ fuqu?	You put ‘ roughly ’ on his copy?
RP 14:03	Le, lilu ma nagħmillu xejn. Lanqas jinterressah - dak prezz biss jinterressah. Lili biss jinterressani.	No, don’t do anything like that for him. He’s not even interested – the price is what he is interested in. This is of interest to me only.
MB 14:10	U la jaççetta l- quotation , inti taħdem hekk.	And once he accepts the quotation, you work like that.
RP 14:17	Biex jaççetta l-prezz, il- quotation ikun diġa’ harġet. Meta jaççetta l- <u>istima</u> , naqleb il-paġna, għax ikun għadda ż-żmien, u nerga naħdimha.	To have accepted the price, the quotation would have been worked out by then. When he accepts the <u>quotation</u> , I turn the page, and redo it, because the measurements would have been taken some time ago.
MB 14:29	Paġna?	Page?
RP 14:30	Fid- diary tiegħi.	In my diary .
MB 14:31	Id- diary ‘ point of reference ’ għalik.	The diary is a point of reference for you.
RP 14:32	Sewwa, daqshekk.	Right, that’s it.
MB 14:33	Mela d- diary għalik għalhekk huwa, quotations tan-nies.	So the diary is for that purpose, quotations for people.
RP 14:40	Id- diary għal-qisien. Ha nuriek (<i>retrieves a used diary from pile in office</i>). Dawk kollha nżommhom jien. Ċempili bniedem, naqbad nikteb per eżempju Martin Barman, jien għalija. Ara mort il (<i>name of company</i>), sal- Head Office , biex niehu fabbrika. U nibda, niehu l-isem u t- telephone number . Ara (<i>points to diagram</i>) mort għand dak. Lest.	The diary is for measurements. Let me show you (<i>retrieves a used diary from pile in office</i>) I keep all of those. A person phones me, I just write for instance Martin Barman, for me. Look, I went to (<i>name of company</i>), to the Head Office , to look into a factory. And I start by taking the name and telephone number . Look (<i>points to diagram</i>) I went to that person. It’s done.
MB 15:37	Ma tagħmilx dati?	Don’t you put down any dates?
RP 15:40	Le, ma nagħmel xejn. Hekk naħdem. Meta mmur nkejjel, niftakar, dik is-sistema tiegħi.	No, I don’t do anything. That’s how I work. Whenever I go to measure, I remember, that’s my system.
MB 15:49	Ara, għandek ‘ PAID ’ hawn. ‘Stella (name), Marsa (locality)’. Meta mort għand waħda, qed nassumi.	Look, you have PAID here. Stella (name), Marsa (town). That’s when you went to a client’s, I assume.
RP 15:59	Iva, mort għand waħda. Hallsitni. PAID . (<i>refers to status of client account</i>)	Yes, I visited a client. She paid. PAID . (<i>refers to status of client account</i>)

(view diaries and multiple entries)

- MB** 17:45 (MB reads off more, in English) 56, Aluminium White, Tony, Sliema. Flat number 5, Flat number 7, Flat number 6. U dawn kollha **inches** (MB refers to numbers on diagrams). Allura kif taqleb mill-**inches** imbagħad?
- (MB reads off more, in English) 56, Aluminium White, Tony, Sliema. Flat number 5, Flat number 7, Flat number 6. And these are all in **inches** (MB refers to numbers on diagrams). How do you switch from **inches** then?
- RP** 18:10 Imbagħad niftah ir-rutella u naqlibhom. Then I take out my measure tape and convert them.
- MB** 18:15 Mela l-qisien teħodhom bl-**inches**. So you take measurements in **inches**.
- RP** 18:18 Iva, meta mmur għand in-nies bl-**inches** naħdem. Yes, when I go to clients, I work in **inches**.
- MB** 18:30 (Going over entries for various localities in Malta; names: Malcolm Alum/White Main Door (18:50). See list of terms that RP uses – see diary; eg. balcony, extra work...total, deposit, balance, bamboċċ/skylight, added to quotation.) (Going over entries for Entries show various localities in Malta; names: Malcolm Alum/White Main Door (18:50). See list of terms that RP uses – see diary; eg. balcony, extra work...total, deposit, balance, bamboċċ/skylight, added to quotation.)
- U t-total? And the total?
- RP** 19:30 Dik ‘**cancelled**’. Ma ħadimhiex (reference to diary entry). That was **cancelled** – he didn’t take up my offer (reference to diary entry).
- MB** 19:35 Johnny Bonavia (name of client). Għandek hafna numri hawn. **Forty one and three fourths** u **twelve**. Imbagħad taqleb **centimetres**. Johnny Bonavia (name of client). You’ve got a lot of numbers here. **Forty one and three fourths** and **twelve**. Then you switch to **centimetres**.
- RP** 19:55 Ara, dan il-flat ta’ Mario. **Flat number one**. Look, this is Mario’s flat. **Flat number one**.
- MB** 20:03 Inti għamilthomlu liri Maltin hawn. You did them for him in Maltese lira here.
- RP** 20:10 Jiena stima bil-Maltin nagħmilha. Stimi nagħmilhom kollha liri Maltin. Imbagħad naqlibhom I work out an estimate in Maltese lira. I work out all estimates in Maltese lira. Then I convert them.
- MB** 20:30 Imbagħad taqlibhom? And then you convert them?
- RP** 20:39 Qatt ma naqleb mill-ewwel bl-ewro. Jekk nagħmel hekk, nitgerfex, għax nibda narahom ħafna. I never work out prices in euro. If I do that, I get confused, because I start seeing them as way too much.

End of interview

C. Chapter Six: Participant Diary (sample layout)

The following layout is based on Bhatt and Martin-Jones (1995).

Participant Diary (Literacy at workplace) WEEK: _____ DAY: _____

TIME	Activities: what/where/with whom?	Reading/Writing: which language/s?	Speaking/Listening: which language/s?
Morning			
Afternoon			

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D. Chapter Six: List of SEDQA publications available online to public

Text	Text type	Language
T.F.A.L. 1 (workbook)	School publication	Maltese only
T.F.A.L. 2 (workbook)	School publication	Maltese only
T.F.A.L. 5 (workbook)	School publication	Maltese only
Crossroads (Manual for teachers of Maltese)	School publication for teachers of Maltese	Maltese
Crossroads (Manual for PSD teachers)	School publication for teachers of Personal & Social Skills (PSD)	English
Nixtieq nkun naf aktar dwar id-droga	Concertina leaflet	Maltese
Nixtieq nkun naf aktar dwar addiction	Concertina leaflet	Maltese
Nixtieq nkun naf aktar dwar il-haxixa	Concertina leaflet	Maltese
Nixtieq nkun naf aktar dwar id-dipendenza teknoloġika	Concertina leaflet	Maltese
Nixtieq nkun naf aktar dwar kokaina	Concertina leaflet	Maltese
Nixtieq nkun naf aktar dwar ix-xammiema (for children)	Concertina leaflet	Maltese
Nixtieq nkun naf aktar dwar ix-xammiema (for parents)	Concertina leaflet	Maltese
I would like to know more about inhalants (for parents)	Concertina leaflet	English
Nixtieq nkun naf aktar dwar il-kokaina	Concertina leaflet	Bilingual text (each side with a different language)
Nixtieq nkun naf aktar dwar il- mephredone	Concertina leaflet	Maltese
I would like to know more about mephredone	Concertina leaflet	English
I would like to know more about LSD	Concertina leaflet	English
I would like to know more about ecstasy	Concertina leaflet	English
Preparing Tomorrow's Citizens (e-handbook for parents in five parts)	Booklet	English

Text	Text type	Language
Fatti mhux ħrejjef	Booklet	Maltese
L-Alkohol u t-Tqala	Concertina leaflet	Maltese
Sinjali u Sintomi	Booklet	Maltese
Signs and Symptoms	Booklet	English version of 'Sinjali u Sintomi'
Il-ħajja mhix loġħba!	Concertina leaflet	Maltese
Life is not a gamble (for organisations)	Concertina leaflet	English version of 'Il-ħajja mhix loġħba!'
Life is not a gamble (for general public)	Concertina leaflet	English version of 'Il-ħajja mhix loġħba!'
It's not the drinking...it's how we're drinking	Booklet	Bilingual text (tilt and turn)
Is-Sustanzi u t-Tqala Drugs and Pregnancy	Concertina leaflet	Bilingual concertina leaflet, each side with a different language (concertina, back to back)