Features of the Maltese Language
A History of Colonisation

- 1000 BCE: Phoenicians
- 218 BCE - 870: Romans
- 870 - 1127: Arabs (257 years)
- 1530 - 1798: Knights of St John (268 years)
- 1799 - 1964: English (165 years)
- 1974: Republic
- 2004: European Union
Maltese: Overview

- Semitic, descended from Siculo-Arabic
- Arabic morphology
- Latin alphabet, plus: ċ ġ ħ ž
- Heavily influenced by Romance & English

- Earliest texts: 1590’s
- Official language: 1934
Demographics & Statistics

- Spoken by 400,000 locals + some emigrants
- Vocabulary - roughly 41,000 words

- Semitic (30-40%)
- Romance (40-55%)
- English (~20%)
Semitic Word Roots

- **K-T-B** : Notion of “writing”
  - Verb: *kiteb* (he wrote)
  - Noun: *ktieb* (a book)
  - Adjective: *miktub* (written)

- **Ħ-R-Ġ** : Notion of “out”
  - Verb: *ħriḡna* (we went out)
  - Noun: *ħarḡa* (an outing)
  - Adjective: *maḡruḡ* (released)
Romance/English Origin Words

- **centro (It.) / centre (En.)**
  - Noun: ċentru
  - Adjective: ċentrali
  - Verb: ċentralizzat

- **industria (It.) / industry (En.)**
  - Noun: industrija
  - Adjective: industrijali
  - Verb: industrijalizzat
English loanwords

- Especially technical words
  - computer (N) - *kompjuter*
  - type (V) - *ittajpja*
  - download (V) - *iddownloaddja*

- Worse still
  - worry (V) - *iwworrija*
  - move (V) - *immuvja*

- Many loanwords not officially recognised, but very widely used.
Goals for Summer School

- No previous work in GF
- Ongoing efforts at University of Malta in Maltese NLP
- My goal:
  - Bring knowledge of GF back with me
  - Start Maltese resource grammar
References

1. Aquilina, Joseph
   “Teach Yourself Maltese” (1986)

2. History of Malta

3. Maltese Language
   http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maltese_language