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Features of the Maltese Language

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Malta

A History of Colonisation ²

- 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)

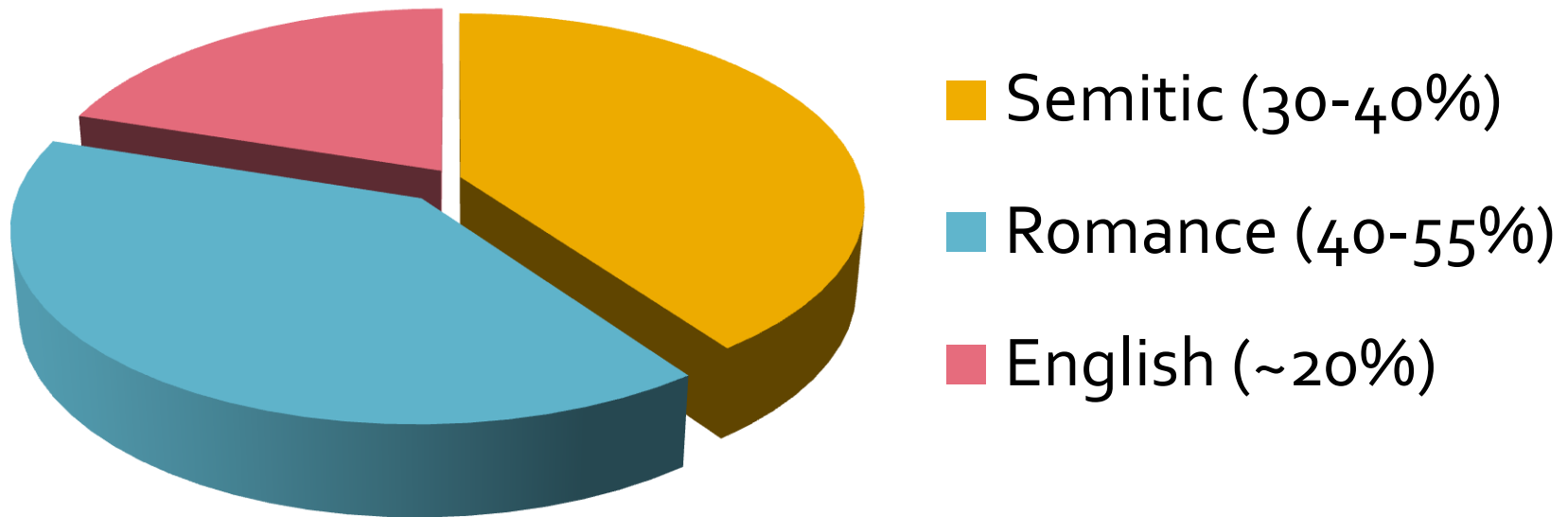- 1974 : Republic

- 2004 : European Union

Maltese: Overview [3]

- Semitic, descended from Siculo-Arabic

- Arabic morphology

- Latin alphabet, plus: Ċ Ġ Ħ Ż

- Heavily influenced by Romance & English

- Earliest texts: 1590's

- Official language: 1934

Demographics & Statistics [3]

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

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

Semitic Word Roots [1]

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

- **Ħ**-**R**-**Ġ** : Notion of "out"
  - Verb: *ħriġna* (we went out)
  - Noun: *ħarġa* (an outing)
  - Adjective: *maħruġ* (released)

Romance/English Origin Words [3]

- 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) - *iddownlowdja*
- 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
   http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Malta

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