

# II-MALTI F'SALIB IT-TOROQ

## MALTESE AT THE CROSSROADS

Ray Fabri

Il-Kunsill Nazzjonali  
tal-Ilsien Malti u  
l-Istitut tal-Lingwistika,  
l-Università ta' Malta

The National Council for  
the Maltese Language and  
the Institute of Linguistics,  
University of Malta

# Merħba bikom

Merħba      bi-kom  
welcome      with-you(pl)  
(You are) welcome

# Nirringrazzjakom

N-irringrazzja-kom

I -thank -you(pl)

I thank you

il-Malti  
the-Maltese

Maltese

L-Għarbi  
(l-element  
Semitiku)

+

l-Isqalli, it-Taljan,  
l-Ingliz  
(l-element Indo-  
Ewropew)

Arabic  
(Semitic element)  
+  
Sicilian, Italian,  
English  
(Indo-European  
element)

Il-Morfologija:  
mhux-  
konkatenattiva,  
ibbażat fuq l-għerq  
+  
konkatenattiva,  
ibbażat fuq iz-zokk

Morphology:  
non-concatenative,  
root-based  
+  
concatenative,  
stem-based

l-ilsien Malti  
df-tongue Maltese  
the Maltese language

il-lingwa Maltija  
df-tongue Maltese  
the Maltese language

l-ilsien Malti  
df-tongue Maltese  
the Maltese language

Orġini Għarbija: ibbazata fuq l-għerq

Arabic origin: root-based



*l - s - n*

l-għerq (root - radicals)

*lisen* CVCVC ‘talk’ (1st form; theme/conjugation/binyan)

*lissen* CVCCVC ‘utter/say’ (2nd form)

*tlissen* t-CVCCVC ‘be uttered’ (5th form)

*(i)lsien* CCVVC ‘tongue/language’

*(i)lsn-a* CCC-a ‘tongues/languages’

*tlissin-a* t-CVCCV-a ‘utterance’

*tlissin* t-CVCCVC ‘uttering’

*lissien* CVCCVVC ‘utterer’

*milsen* m-VCCVC ‘dictionary’ (Aquilina)

NB: VV = vokali twila, ‘ie’ = [i:]

long vowel

il-**lingwa** Maltija  
df-tongue Maltese  
the Maltese language

Origini Taljana: ibbazata fuq z-zokk

Italian origin: stem-based

*lingw-*

*lingw-iz-zokk* (stem)

<i>lingw-a</i>	tongue-FSG	‘language’
<i>lingw-i</i>	tongue-PL	‘languages’
<i>lingw-a-ġġ</i>	tongue-FSG-NOM	‘parlance/diction’
<i>lingw-ist-a</i>	tongue-DER-FSG	‘linguist’
<i>lingw-ist-i</i>	tongue-DER-PL	‘linguists’
<i>lingw-ist-ik-a</i>	tongue-DER-DER-FSG	‘linguistics’
<i>lingw-ist-ik-u</i>	tongue-DER-DER-MSG	‘linguistic’
<i>lingw-ist-iċ-i</i>	tongue-DER-DER-PL	‘linguistic(pl)’
<i>bi-lingw-i</i>	der-tongue-DER	‘bilingual’
<i>mono-lingw-i</i>	der-tongue-DER	‘monolingual’

*il-lingwa Maltija*

ġeneralment reġistru anqas formali  
generally less formal register

*l-ilsien Malti*

ġeneralment reġistru aktar formali  
generally more formal register

# Eżempju ieħor (another example)

*għ-l-m*

*għallem* 'teach'

*għalliem* 'male teacher'

*għalliema* 'female teacher'

*għalliema* 'teachers'

*is-ser* 'male teacher'

*il-miss* 'female teacher'

*it-tiċer* 'fe/male teacher'

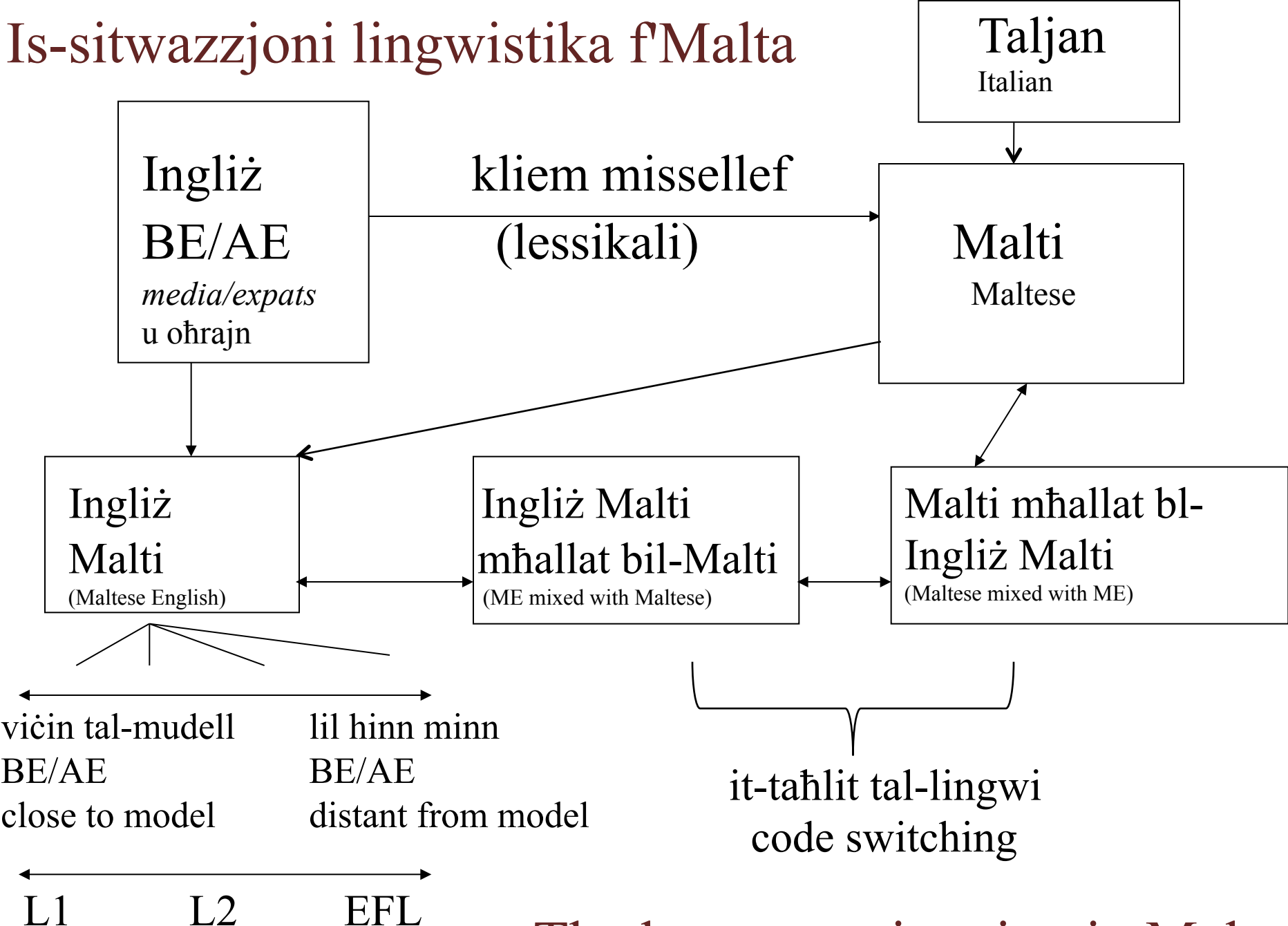
## Test: eżempju (text: an example)

Noel Turner kien il-mutur tal-Blues f'nofs il-grawnd fejn wettaq ħafna xogħol utli, imma Valletta deheru jikkontrollaw tajjeb, minkejja li bdew mingħajr Sullivan u Fenech, li lanqas biss kienu fost is-sostituti...L-ewwel taqsima ntemmet mingħajr gowls.

Noel Turner was the Blues' motor in midfield, where he did some very useful work; but Valletta seemed to control the game well, although they started without Sullivan and Fenech, who were not even present among the substitute players...The first half ended without any goals.

# The languages of Malta

# Is-sitwazzjoni lingwistika f'Malta



The language situation in Malta



Il-pożizzjoni tal-ilsien Malti

The status of the Maltese language

de jure

# Il-Kostituzzjoni The Constitution

L-ilsna nazzjonali u uffiċjali (the national and official languages)

5. (1) L-ilsien **Nazzjonali** ta' Malta huwa **l-ilsien Malti**.

(2) **L-ilsien Malti** u **l-ilsien Ingliz**

u dawk l-ilsna l-oħra li jistgħu jigu preskritti mill-Parlament

...ikunu **l-ilsna uffiċjali** ta' Malta

5. (1) The **National language** of Malta is the **Maltese language**.

(2) The **Maltese and the English** languages and such other language as may be prescribed by Parliament...shall be the **official languages** of Malta

## l-Amministrazzjoni (the Administration)

u l-Amministrazzjoni tista' għall-finijiet kollha uffiċjali tuża kull wieħed minn dawk l-ilsna:

Izda kull persuna tista' tindirizza ruħha lejn l-Amministrazzjoni f'kull wieħed mill-ilsna uffiċjali u t-twegiba tal-Amministrazzjoni għalhekk tkun b'dak l-ilsien.

and the Administration may for all official purposes use any of such languages:

Provided that any person may address the Administration in any of the official languages and the reply of the Administration thereto shall be in such language.

## Il-Qrati (the Law Courts)

(3) **L-ilsien tal-Qrati** jkun l-ilsien Malti:

Iżda l-Parlament jista' jagħmel dak il-provvediment għall-użu tal-ilsien Ingliz f'dawk il-kazijiet u taħt dawk il-kondizzjonijiet li jista' jippreskrivi.

(3) The **language of the Courts** shall be the Maltese language:

Provided that Parliament may make such provision for the use of the English language in such cases and under such conditions as it may prescribe.

## Il-Parlament (Parliament)

4) **Il-Kamra tad-Deputati** tista', meta tirregola l-proċedura tagħha, tistabbilixxi l-ilsien jew l-ilsna li għandhom ikunu wżati fi proċeduri u annotazzjonijiet parlamentari.

(4) The **House of Representatives** may, in regulating its own procedure, determine the language or languages that shall be used in Parliamentary proceedings and records.

## Il-Ligijiet (Laws)

(4). ...kull ligi għandha ssir kemm bl-ilsien Malti kif ukoll bl-ilsien Ingliz u, jekk ikun hemm xi konflitt bejn it-test Malti u t-test Ingliz ta' xi ligi, it-test Malti għandu jipprevali.

(4). ...every law shall be enacted in both the Maltese and English languages and, if there is any conflict between the Maltese and the English texts of any law, the Maltese text shall prevail.

de facto

Ir-realtà lingwistika

The linguistic reality



# Il-lingwa fl-amministrazzjoni

- Fil-prinċipju, kull korrispondenza u informazzjoni 'uffiċjali' (il-gvern, eċċ.) għandha tkun bilingwi.
- Fil-realtà, hemm tendenza li jintuża l-Ingliż, b'mod partikolari fil-kitba.

- In principle, all 'official' (government etc.) correspondence and information should be bilingual
- In reality, a strong tendency for English to be used, especially in writing

## id-diglossija (diglossia)

### Fil-prattika:

- tendenza li l-Malti jkun l-lingwa mitkellma
- t-tendenza li l-Ingliż kun il-lingwa dominanti fil-miktub (eż. is-senjaletika, eċċ.)

### In practice:

- Maltese still tends to be the spoken language
- English still tends to be the dominant written language (e.g. signage, etc.)



**OPEN**

**CLOSED**

**BACK IN 5 MINUTES**

**MIFTUH**

**MAGHLUQ**

**LURA 5 MINUTI OHRA**

Statistika mič-čensimenti

Census statistics

# Iċ-ċensiment nazzjonali tal-2005

## Il-lingwa mitkellma fid-dar

### Popolazzjoni 'l fuq mill-10 snin

Liema lingwa titkellem l-aktar id-dar?

**Total**  
362,376  
100%

**Malti**  
Maltese  
326,703  
90.5%

**Ingliz**  
English  
21,636  
5.97%

**ohra**  
other  
3,344  
0.92%

**aktar minn**  
**lingwa waħda**  
more than one  
language  
10,693  
2.95%

Which language do you speak most at home?

2005 National Census

Language spoken at home

Population over 10 years of age

# Iċ-ċensiment nazzjonali tal-2011 (2011 National Census)

**26** How well do you speak...?  
(Mark 1 circle for each language)

	Well	Average	A little	Not at all	Well	Average	A little	Not at all
Maltese	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Italian	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
French	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
German	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arabic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

⚠ Stop if you are aged 14 or less. Continue only if you are aged 15 or more

- **8.5%** ma jafux jikkomunikaw bl-Ingliż

(not able to communicate in English at all)

- **9.1%** jitkellmu biss ftit Ingliż

(speak only a little English)

- **5.4%** jitkellmu ftit bil-Malti jew xejn

(either speak a little Maltese or do not speak it at all)

# Żviluppi fis-sitwazzjoni lingwistika

Developments in the  
language situation

Dan l-aħħar:

żewġ avvenimenti li kellhom effett sinjifikanti:

- fuq il-lingwa stess the language itself
- fuq il-perċezzjoni/kuxjenza tan-nies

Recently:

two events that had a significant effects on

- the language itself
- people's perceptions/awareness



# L-ewwel avveniment

The first event



Mill-2004:

lingwa uffiċjali tal-Unjoni Ewropea

- livell soċjopolitiku oghla
- zieda fil-kuxjenza lingwistika lokalment
- zieda fl-interess fil-lingwa mill-barranin
- zieda qawwija fin-numru ta' tradutturi professjonali

Since 2004:

official language of the European Union

- higher socio-political status
- increased language awareness locally
- interest in language abroad
- high increase in number of professional translators



Mill-2004:

lingwa uffiċjali tal-Unjoni Ewropea

- nuqqas ta' interpreti
- nuqqas ta' terminoloġija (speċjalizzata)
- bżonn ta' standardizzazzjoni (eż. fl-ortografija)

Since 2004:

official language of the European Union

- a lack of interpreters
- a lack of (specialised) terminology
- a need for standardisation (e.g. orthography)

# It-tieni avveniment

## The second event

Mill-2005:

## IL-KUNSILL NAZZJONALI TAL-ILSIEN MALTI



<http://www.kunsilltalmalti.gov.mt/>

‘**jadotta** u **jippromwovi politika** u **strategija lingwistika**...u li jara li dawn jitwettqu u jigu osservati f’kull qasam tal-ħajja Maltija, għall-gid u l-iżvilupp tal-ilsien nazzjonali u l-identità tal-poplu Malti’ (ACT No. V of 2004)

Since 2005:

## The National Council for the Maltese Language

<http://www.kunsilltalmalti.gov.mt/>

‘the aim of **adopting** and **promoting** a...**language policy** and **strategy** and to verify their performance and observance in every sector of Maltese life, for the benefit and development of the national language and the identity of the Maltese people.’ (ACT No. V of 2004)



## Sfortunatamente:

- għad m'għandux post adattat
- m'għandux ir-rizorsi umani u finanżjarji biex jaħdem kif suppost
- nuqqas ta' appoġġ politiku

## Unfortunately:

- no proper adequate premises yet
- does not have adequate human and financial resources it requires
- lack of political support

# Žviluppi fit-teknologija

## Technological developments

# Numru ta' inizjattivi u proġetti imma l-iżvilupp ta' rizersi u għodod miexi bil-mod ħafna

- nuqqas ta' fondi u investment
- m'hemmx vantaġġi finanzjarji ovvjji
- nuqqas ta' esperti lokali
- preġudizzji lingwistiċi

A number of initiatives and projects but development of resources and tools moving at a slow pace

- lack of funds: no proper investment
- no obvious direct financial advantage
- lack of/limited local expertise
- linguistic prejudices



# Konkluzjoni

## Conclusion

- il-Malti: lingwa ħajja, dinamika
  - sfida 1: il-bilanċ bejn il-konservazzjoni u t-telf u l-modernizzazzjoni u r-rikkezza
  - sfida 2: li l-Malti jkun jista' jikkompeti fid-dinja digitali, fil-kuntest tal-iżviluppi teknoloġiċi mghaġġlin
- 
- Maltese: a living, dynamic language
  - challenge 1: balancing conservation and loss with modernisation and enrichment
  - challenge 2: to make sure Maltese survives in the digital world, in view of rapid technological developments

# Il-Malti f'salib it-toroq

## Maltese at the crossroads



1. nimxu 'l quddiem b'aktar żviluppi mgħagħglin u investment qawwi

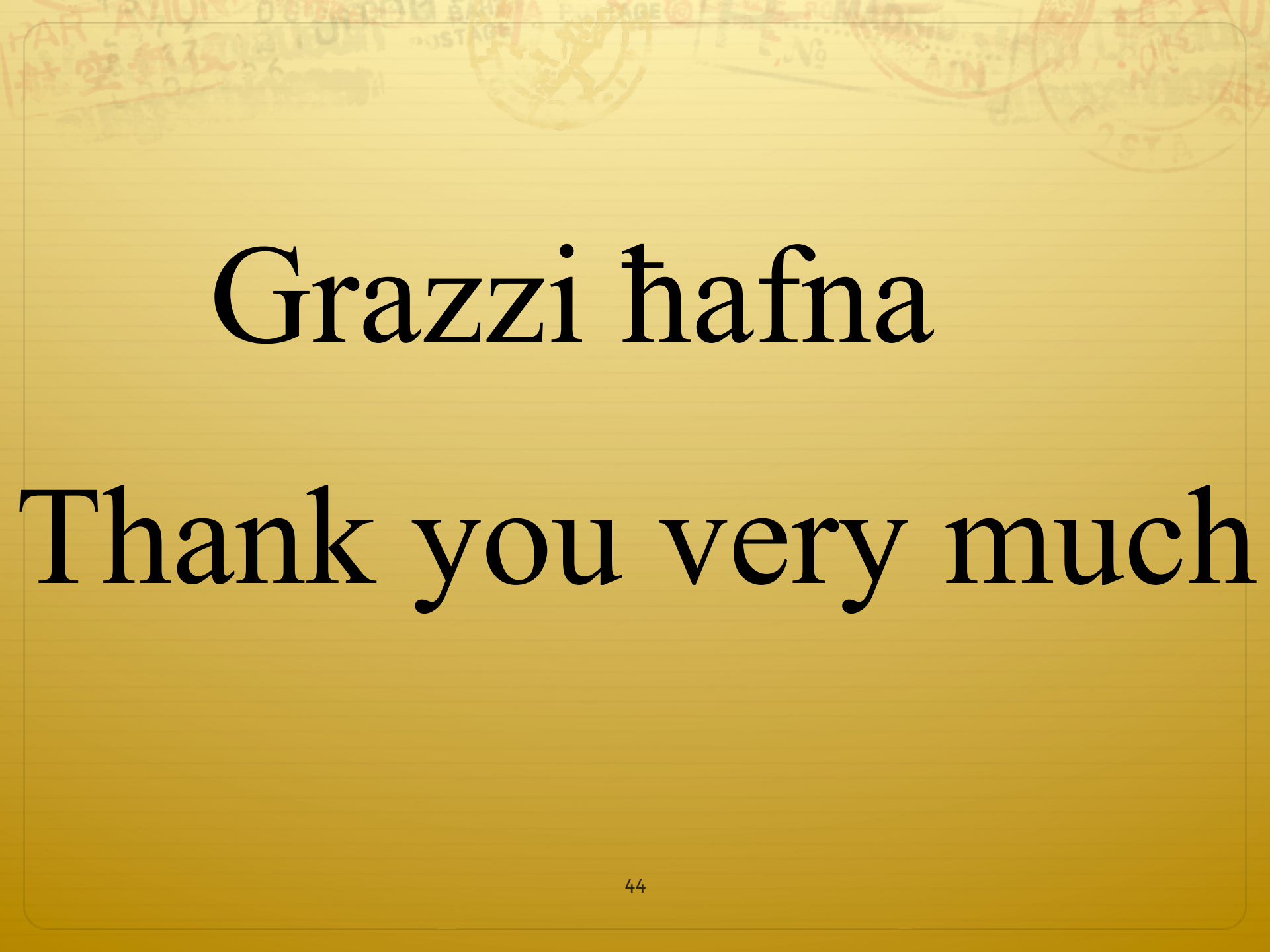
OR

2. nimxu lura b'piki żejda, u nuqqas ta' interest, appoġġ u investment

1. along the road to further, speedy development and massive investment

OR

2. down the road to self-destruction, with senseless infighting, neglect and a lack of investment

The background of the slide is a light yellow color with a subtle pattern of faint, overlapping postmarks and stamps in various colors (red, blue, black). These stamps include words like 'POSTAGE', 'AIR MAIL', and some numbers, suggesting a theme of international communication or travel.

Grazzi ħafna

Thank you very much