

Adjective Mutations in Sindarin

Adjective Mutations Overview

- Mutation of adjectives is well-established
 - A language feature already in *Gnomish Grammar*
 - Also featured in *Early Noldorin Grammar*
 - A number of examples in the 1930s
 - Commonly excepted in Neo-Sindarin practice
- However, adjectives frequently don't mutate in *The Lord of the Rings* itself
 - Lack of adjective mutation commonly known but has no obvious phonological explanation

Acceptance of Adjective Mutation

- It isn't clear when the community became aware of Sindarin adjective mutation
 - Not in Jim Allan's 1978 *An Introduction to Elvish*.
 - *galen* “green” considered distinct from *calen* “bright?” seen in *Calenhad*, *Calenardhon*
- By 2000s, adjective mutation was well-known
 - Helge Fauskanger's Sindarin pages on his *Ardalambion* website (early 2000s)
 - David Salo's *A Gateway to Sindarin* (2004)

New Ambiguity in PE23

- Publication of PE23 reopens this question in a the document *Sindarin Mutations* (SM)
 - In the case of nouns and adjectives where these were placed together, if they were in any close syntactic relation, the second had a mutated initial according to phonetic development; but this was not always observed in practice. It was normal when an adjective preceded a noun; since this was the original normal order in CE, and such collocations thus descended from the period during which the mutations developed phonetically. But when either a) the adjective was placed second, or b) two nouns were juxtaposed, there was hesitation; and in the Exilic period the regular usage adopted was not always the phonetic one (PE23/143).

Proposed Theory

- Q: Why don't adjectives always mutate in LotR?
- A: When *The Lord of the Rings* was written, adjective mutation was not feature of the language (1940s Noldorin, 1950s Sindarin)
 - Thus lack of adjective mutation was a conceptual variation rather than a phonological phenomenon
- Furthermore, *Sindarin Mutations* (SM) and *Common Eldarin Article* (CEA), written 1969, and publish 2024, are partially attempts to explain discrepancies in *The Lord of the Rings*

Similar Case: Juxtapositional Genitives

- 1930-40s noun + noun mutates, but not later
 - N. *Ennyn Đurin Aran Vória* (TI/182)
 - S. *Ennyn Durin Aran Moria* (LotR/305)
 - N. *Dagor Vregeður* (LR/280)
 - S. *Dagor Bragollach* (S/151)
 - N. *Dor Granthir* (LR/265)
 - S. *Dor Caranthir* “Land of Caranthir” (S/124)
 - N. *Inias Veleriand* (LR/202)
 - S. *Inias Beleriand* (MR/200)
 - N. *Nan Gurunír* (TI/420)
 - S. *Nan Curunír* “Valley of Saruman” (LotR/487)

Late Juxtapositional Mutations

- Noun + noun mutations rare in 1950s-60s
 - *Fui 'Ngorthrim* “Paths of the Dead” (RC/526)
 - Maybe an elided nasal-mutation: *(i)'Ngorthrim*
 - *Sarn Gebir* “Stone-spikes” (LotR/391)
 - Possibly hold-over from Noldorin conception
 - *Gil-galad*: Example of revised etymology
 - 1930s-40s: 2nd element is mutated *calad* “light”
 - Later conception: unmuted *galad* “radiance”
- This non-mutation possibly referenced in SM:
 - Noun mutation “not always observed in practice”

Adjective Mutation in LotR

- Clear mutations
 - *Parth Galen* “Green Sward” (LotR/417)
 - *Pinnath Gelin* “Green Hills” (LotR/771)
- Obvious non-mutations
 - *Barad-dûr* “Dark Tower” (LotR/555)
 - *Emyn Muil* “Drear Hills” (LotR/373)
 - *Ered Mithrin* “Grey Mountains” (LotR/1064)
 - *Fen Hollen* “Closed Door” (LotR/826)
 - *Imloth Melui* “Lovely Flowery Vale” (LotR/866)

Ambiguous Mutations in LotR

- Some “mutations” may be non-mutations as first conceived, with later revised etymology
 - *Dol Baran* “Brown Hill” originally from BARAN
 - Later *Dol Baran* “Bare Hill” from PAR
 - *Rath Dínen* “Silent Street” originally from **DIN*
 - 1948: Q. *lína*- “be silent” (PE23/76) probably < **DIN*
 - Later *Rath Dínen* “Silent Street” from **TIN*
 - *Fen Hollen* “Closed Door” from KHOL or SKOL
 - Later Tolkien said it “should be” *Fen Chollen* (RC/550)
 - *Iarwain Ben-adar* “Oldest and Fatherless” < PEN
 - Maybe noun-noun or earlier had different etymology

Summary of LotR “Mutations”

- Almost all adjectives in *The Lord of the Rings* as published could have been non-mutated
 - Most notable exception *calen* → *galen* “green”
- In notes after the 1st edition, Tolkien mostly said the adjectives should be mutated
 - Some etymologies revised to support this
- This means adjective non-mutation may have been the norm up through the 1st edition

Non-Mutations in Drafts of *The Lord of the Rings*

- Likely unmutated adjectives, only in drafts
 - *Dûn Caron* “Red Valley” (RS/419)
 - *Cris-caron* “Red Pass” (RS/433)
 - *Ered Myrn* “Black Mountains” (TI/124)
 - Revised to mutated compound: *Eredvyrn*
 - *Kerin-muil* “?Hidden Enclosure” (TI/364)
 - *Ennyn Dûr* “*Dark Gates” (WR/113)
 - *Nelig Myrn* and *Naglath Morn* “*Black Teeth” (WR/113, 122)
 - *Ramas Coren* “*Round Wall” (WR/288).

Mutations in Drafts of *The Lord of the Rings*

- Possible mutations appearing only in drafts
 - *Tol Galen* “Green Isle” (TI/271)
 - Another example of *calen* “green” mutation
 - *Tol Varad* “Defended Isle” (WR/326)
 - Possibly noun + noun = “*Isle of Tower”
 - *Toll-ondren* “Carrock, *Rocky Island” (TI/268)
 - Possibly compound with *gondren* “*Rocky” instead
- Altogether, more non-mutation than mutation

Adjectives in the *King's Letter*

- Counterexamples in unpublished LotR epilogue
 - *genediad Drannail* “Shire-reckoning”: likely mutation
 - Compare to *Condir i Drann* “Mayor of the Shire”
 - *erin dolothen Ethuil* “on the eighth day of Spring”
 - This may be adjective mutation of *tolothen* “eighth”
 - *Erin* might be a noun, perhaps plural of *are* = “day”
 - Compare: *erin Gwirth edwen* “the second day of April”
 - C.f noun + noun non-mutation: *Cherdir Perhael* “Mayor Samwise”
 - *erin* may be preposition [“upon”?] with mixed mutation
 - *mhellyn în phain* “all his friends”
 - Weird nasal nasal mutation of *pân*, maybe induced by *în*

Adjection Mutations in the 1930s

- 1930s: *i vegli vorn* “the black bear” (PE22/33)
- 1930s-40s Silmarillion drafts:
 - Unmutated:
 - *Amon Dengin* “Hill of Slain” (LR/314)
 - *Nan-tathren* “Land of Willows” (LR/261)
 - *Dagor Delothrin* “Terrible Battle” (LR/405)
 - Mutated:
 - *Dalath Dirnen* “Guarded Plain” (LR/299)
 - *Tol Galen* “Green Isle” (LR/305)

Adj. Mutations in *The Silmarillion*

- Unmutated:
 - *Nan-tathren* “Land of Willows” (S/120)
- Mutated:
 - *Ard-galen* “Green Region” (S/106).
 - *Ered Wethrin* “Shadowy Mountains” (S/118)
 - *Talath Dirnen* “Guarded Plain” (S/168)
 - *Tol Galen* “Green Isle” (S/123)
- Ambiguous:
 - *Dor Dínen* “Silent Land” (S/121)
 - *Talath Rhúnen* “East Vale” (S/124)
 - *Laer Cú Beleg* “Song of the Great Bow” (S/209)

Sindarin of the 1960s-70s

- Unmutated:
 - *Côf gwaeren Bel* “Windy Bay of Bel” (VT42/15)
 - *Emyn Duir* “Dark Mountains” (UT/280)
- Mutated:
 - *Bar-goll* “Hollow Dwelling” (WJ/414)
 - *Cûl Bîn* “Little Load” (RC/536)
 - *Cûl Veleg* “Bigload” (RC/536)
 - *Curunír 'Lân* “Saruman the White” (UT/390)
 - *Eryn Vorn* “Dark Wood” (RC/lxv)
 - *Nan Laur* “Valley of Gold(en Light)” (UT/253)

Vacillations for *Daer* “Great”

- 1965: *Lond Daer* “Great Haven” (UT/263).
- 1965: *Lond Daer Enedh* “Great Middle Haven” (UT/264).
- Late 1960s: *Lô Dhaer* “Great Fen” (VT42/14)
- 1970: *Athrad Daer* “Great Ford” (WJ/335) vs. *Athrad Dhaer* (WJ/338)
- 1970: *Duin Daer* “Great River” (WJ/336) vs. *Duin Dhaer* (WJ/191)

Vacillations for *Dínen* “Silent”

- Silmarillion: *Dor Dínen* “Silent Land” (S/121)
 - Ambiguous for same reasons as *dínen* in LotR
 - Vacillations on root *DIN vs. *TIN
- 1970: *Dor Dhínen* (WJ/333)

Post-LotR Non-Mutations are Rare

- If we exclude *daer* and *dínen* vacillations:
 - *Côf gwaeren Bel* “Windy Bay of Bel” (VT42/15)
 - *Emyn Duir* “Dark Mountains” (UT/280)
 - *Nan-tathren* “Land of Willows” (S/120)
 - Possibly hold-over from earlier *Nan-tathrin* from 1910s
 - *Laer Cú Beleg* “Song of the Great Bow” (S/209)
 - Possibly noun + noun if *Beleg* is a name
 - “Song of Beleg’s Bow”

Other Explanations for Non-Mutation

- Overall Goal: Explain this statement in SM
 - In the case of nouns and adjectives where these were placed together, if they were in any close syntactic relation, the second had a mutated initial according to phonetic development; but this was not always observed in practice (PE23/143)
- Should consider other possibilities:
 - Specific non-mutation of *m*
 - Orthographic considerations for *dh*, *ch*

CEA Rough Notes for *m*-mutation

From rough notes associated with *Common Eldarin Article* (CEA), written at same time as SM (1969)

- Great relief if mutation of *m* could be avoided. It actually occurs v[ery] rarely in LR. Only case I can find is *Menelvagor*, I 91; *silivren* [<] *silmarin*, I 250; but not used in *Imloth Melui*, III 142, 244! *Vagor* must then < *bakār*, *bagor*. But *Menelmagar* must be [from] *magar* [given Q. *Menelmacar*]. Say *m* > *ĩ*, but *m* retained grammatically after article and in adj. concord to avoid confus[ion] with *b* (PE23/138 note #12)

Marginal Note to Main CEA Text

Revision to main text, which had $m \rightarrow v$

- This mutation [of m to $\tilde{v}$] was preserved in early records (and is reported to have been maintained in Doriath, where however the $\tilde{v}$ remained nasal). But generally it was abandoned as a [grammatical] mutation (it occurred very frequently medially and also even at [the] beginning of second elements of compounds), because of the resulting confusion with mutation of b — (after denasalizing of $\tilde{v}$) as in *morn*, black, *born*, hot, *malt*, gold, *balt*, force. The mutation was earliest given up in adjectives, cf. *Imloth Melui* (PE23/136)

Ramifications of This CEA Change

- Tolkien seems to note a discrepancy in the treatment of *m*-mutation in LotR
- Decides *m*-mutation is given up, especially for adjective mutation and the definite article
 - *m*-mutation still used for compounds (*Menelvagor*)
 - He does not mention *na vedui* “at last”
 - This mutation may be result of the preposition *na*
 - Also *pedo mellon* “speak friend” implies *m*-mutation
- I think this rule was likely invented for CEA
 - However, note non-mutation of *m* in 1910s-20s

Orthographic Conventions: *dh*, *ch*

- It is known that Tolkien avoided *dh* in drafts of *The Lord of the Rings*
 - 1940s N. *Caradras* (RS/433) and N. *Fanuidol* (TI/306) vs. later S. *Caradhras* and S. *Fanuidhol*
 - Avoids mispronunciation by English speakers
 - Gives another explanation for *Barad-dûr*
- Similar issues might apply to *h* vs *ch*
 - This was Christopher Tolkien's motivation for using *Narn i Hîn Húrin* rather than *Narn i Chîn Húrin*
 - Something similar may apply *Rohan* vs. *Rochann* and *Fen Hollen* vs. *Fen Chollen*

Examples Not Explained

- Other non-mutations (*c*, *b*) cannot be explained by non-mutation of *m* or orthography concerns
 - E.g. *Dol Baran*, *Cris-caron*, and *Ramas Coren*
 - This supports theory proposed in this talk
- Consistent counter-example: *calen* → *galen*
 - Speculative explanation: *galen* “green” < GAL
 - Jim Allen may have been right separating *galen* “green” vs. *calen* “bright”
 - This possibility was suggested to me by Vyacheslav Stepanov in private correspondence

Overall Conclusion

- Strong evidence of adjective non-mutation in *The Lord of the Rings* and its drafts
 - Sporadic mutation vs. non-mutation may therefore be the result of conceptual vacillations
 - I think this works better than any phonetic explanation
 - Counterexamples: *galen* and the *King's Letter*
- Tolkien seems to have noticed this problem in *Common Eldarin Article* (CEA)
 - Non-mutation of *m* in CEA may be motivated as explanations these discrepancies
- Unpublished Noldorin grammar may say more