

Studies in Manx Gaelic inflection, 6. Initial mutation after *er* ‘Perfect tense’ in the Manx Bible

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The pattern of initial mutation of verbal nouns after *er* in the perfect tense construction is anomalous, in that some consonants are subject only to Lenition 1, while others may undergo either Lenition 1 or Nasalization. In the Manx Bible including the Apocrypha there are enough examples of the *er* Perfect construction to get a good perspective on the nature and scope of the variation in question in ‘Classical’ Manx.

Initial *p-*, *b-*, *m-*, and *s-*, are invariably subject to Lenition 1.¹

To initial vowels, including *yee-*, *n’* is added, an outcome elsewhere characteristic of Nasalization in the inflection of verbs.²

Verbs beginning with *t-*, *ch-*, *d-*, *j-*, *k-*, *g-*, *f-* are subject to variable lenition, that is, varying between Lenition 1 and Nasalization. Or, to be more precise, *some* verbs beginning with these consonants are subject to variable lenition. Most verbs beginning with *t-*, *d-*, *k-*, or *g-*, and some with initial *ch-*, undergo Lenition 1 invariably. Some verbs with initial *f-* undergo Nasalization invariably. Where there is variation, there are, for the most part, very clear lexical preferences, for instance, *goll* strongly favours Nasalization —*er n’gholl*— (79%), whereas *goaill* strongly favours Lenition 1 —*er ghoaill*— (95%).

1. Consonants *t-* and *ch-*

The following verbs beginning with *t-* are found only with Lenition 1 in the Perfect tense *er* construction in the Bible. The figures are for the number of occurrences in the *er* construction.

<i>tannaghtyn: er</i>	<i>tilgey: er hilgey</i> (27)	<i>traaue: er hraaue</i> (2)
<i>hannaghtyn</i> (8)	<i>toilchin: er hoilchin</i> (3)	<i>treishteil: er hreishteil</i>
<i>tashtey: er hashtey</i> (2)	<i>toilleil: er hooilleil</i> (4)	
<i>teaymey: er heaymey</i> (1)	<i>towse: er howse</i> (1)	<i>trial: er hrial</i> (1)
<i>thoylley: er ho(y)lley</i> (4)	<i>traastey: er hraastey</i> (1)	<i>tummey: er hummey</i> (2)

Table 1 is of *t*-initial verbs subject to variable initial mutation in the *er* construction, with the number of occurrences of each, and the percentage of Nasalization cases (rounded to whole

¹ E.g. P: *er phaagey*, *er phaartail*, *er phardooney*, *er phlaiynt*, *er phluckey*, *er phointeil*, *er phoosey*, *er phreachail*, *er phrowal*, *er phuttey*;

B: *er vaarail*, *er vaarey*, *er vaghey*, *er vaih*, *er vannaghey*, *er vashtey*, *er ve*, *er veaghey*, *er ventyn*, *er verraghtyn*, *er vioghey*, *er vishaghey*, *er voandyrys*, *er voggysagh*, *er voirey*, *er vrah*, *er vrasnaghey*, *er vreearrey*, *er vriaght*, *er vrishey*, *er vriwnys*, *er vroie*, *er vroo*, *er vuinn*, *er vuirroogh*;

M: *er vainshtyragh*, *er varkiagh*, *er varroo*, *er veeooashlaghey*, *er violaghey*, *er volley*, *er vooadaghey*, *er vooghey*;

S: *er hagney* ‘shunned’, *er harey*, *er hassoo*, *er hauail*, *er heaghney* ‘grieved’, *er heebey*, *er heeyney*, *er heidey*, *er heiy*, *er heyrey*, *er hialley*, *er hickyraghey*, *er hirrey*, *er hirveish*, *er hoaral*, *er hoiaghey*, *er hoie*, *er hoilshaghey*, *er hoilshaan*, *er hooyl*, *er hoyllaghey*, *er huill* ‘trodden’, *er hurranse*.

² A: *er n’aarlaghey*, *er n’aase*, *er n’ansoor*, *er n’astyrt*, *er n’att*;

E: *er n’eaishtagh*, *er n’eam*, *er n’eamagh*, *er n’earroo*, *er n’ee*, *er n’eeasaght*, *er n’eebyrt*, *er n’eeck*, *er n’eginagh*, *er n’eginaghey*, *er n’eiyr*, *er n’enmys*, *er n’etlagh*;

I: *er n’imman*, *er n’immeeght*, *er n’injillaghey*, *er n’insh*, *er n’irree*, *er n’iu*;

O: *er n’oanluckey*, *er n’oardaghey*, *er n’oardrail*, *er n’obbal*, *er n’obbraghey*, *er n’ooillaghey*, *er n’ouralley*,

Y: *er n’yllagh*, *er n’yymyrkey*, *er n’yymyrt*, *er n’ynsaghey*;

YEE: *er n’yeeearree*, *er n’yeeasagh*.

numbers). While *tuittym* and *taghyrt* strongly favour Nasalization, *troggal*, *tayrn* and *treigeil* favour Lenition 1, though somewhat less strongly. *Troailt* and *trostey*, neither verb having many examples, are evenly divided between the two mutations. The strongly favoured variants are indicated in bold.

In Cregeen’s dictionary, Nasalization after *er* is indicated also for *talkal*: *er dalkal*, *tannaghtyn*: *er dannaght* ~ *er dannaghtyn*, *teaystney*: *er deaystney*, *theinniu*: *er de(i)nniu*, *tummey*: *er dummey*, *tilgey*: *er dhilgey*, *toghtey*: *er doghtey*, *toiggal*: *er doiggal*, *toilliu*: *er doilliu*, *toilchin*: *er doilchin* or *er hoilchin*.

	Nasalization	N	Lenition 1	L1	Total	%N
<i>tuittym</i>	<i>er duittym</i>	95	<i>er huittym</i>	2	97	98
<i>taghyrt</i>	<i>er daghyrt</i>	27	<i>er haghryt</i>	1	28	96
<i>troailt</i>	<i>er droailt</i>	1	<i>er hroailt</i>	1	2	50
<i>trostey</i>	<i>er drostey</i>	2	<i>er hrostey</i>	2	4	50
<i>troggal</i>	<i>er droggal</i>	33	<i>er hroggal</i>	111	144	23
<i>tayrn</i>	<i>er dayrn</i>	6	<i>er hayrn</i>	38	44	16
<i>treigeil</i>	<i>er dreigeil</i>	8	<i>er hreigeil</i>	60	68	12
<i>toiggal</i>	<i>er doiggal</i>	1	<i>er hoiggal</i>	20	21	05

Table 1. Variation in *t*-initial verbs in the Perfect tense *er* construction

The following four verbs beginning with *çh*- are found only with Lenition 1 in the Perfect tense *er* construction in the Bible. The figures are for the number of occurrences in the *er* construction.

çharbaa: *er harbaa* (3)
çhea: *er hea* (5)

çhionney: *er hionney* (1)
çhymney: *er hymney* (1)

Table 2 is of *çh*-initial verbs subject to variable initial mutation in the *er* construction, with the number of occurrences of each, and the percentage of Nasalization cases (rounded to whole numbers). *Çheet* and *çherraghtyn* strongly favour Nasalization, while *çhaglym* and *çhebbal* strongly favour lenition 1. *Çhyrmaghey*, *çhyndaa* and *çhymysaghy* are more evenly balanced between the two mutations.

	Nasalization	N	Lenition 1	L1	Total	%N
<i>çheet</i>	<i>er jeet</i>	633	<i>er heet</i>	3	636	100
<i>çherraghtyn</i>	<i>er jerraghtyn</i>	8	<i>er herraghtyn</i>	3	11	73
<i>çhyrmaghey</i>	<i>er jyrmaghey</i>	3	<i>er hyrmaghey</i>	3	6	50
<i>çhyndaa</i>	<i>er jyndaa</i>	39	<i>er hyndaa</i>	50	89	44
<i>çhymysaghey</i>	<i>er jymysaghey</i>	1	<i>er hymysaghy</i>	2	3	33
<i>çhaglym</i>	<i>er jaglym</i>	4	<i>er haglym</i>	20	24	17
<i>çhebbal</i>	<i>er jebbal</i>	4	<i>er hebbal</i>	19	23	17

Table 2. Variation in *çh*-initial verbs in the Perfect tense *er* construction

Cregeen’s dictionary also gives *çhiuchey*: *er jiughey* (sic); he mentions only Nasalization forms for *çherraghtyn*, *çhymysaghey* and *çhyrmaghey*.

2. Consonants *d-* and *j-*.

Verbs beginning with *d-* are subject to Lenition 1.

<i>daunsin: er ghaunsin</i> (2)	<i>dobberan: er ghobberan</i>	<i>dreamal: er ghreamal</i> (1)
<i>deayrtey: er gheayrtey</i> ³	(4)	<i>dunverys: er ghunverys</i>
(26)	<i>dolley: er gholley</i> (3)	(3)
<i>dellal: er ghellal</i> ⁴ (38)	<i>dooney: er ghooney</i> (2)	
<i>deyre: er gheyre</i> (10)	<i>doostey: er ghoostey</i> (4)	

Of the verbs beginning with initial *j-*, *jarrood* and *jeeaghyn* exclusively take Lenition 1: *er yarrood*, *er yeeaghyn*. Of the remainder in Table 3, *jannoo* and *jiooldey* strongly favour Nasalization, while *jeigh* favours Lenition 1, in 8 cases out of 13.

	Nasalization	N	Lenition 1	L1	Tot	%N
<i>jarrood</i>		0	<i>er yarrood</i>	26	26	0
<i>jeeaghyn</i>		0	<i>er yeeaghyn</i>	41	41	0
<i>jannoo</i>	<i>er n'yannoo</i>	919	<i>er yannoo</i>	16	935	98
<i>jiooldey</i>	<i>er n'yiooldey</i>	9	<i>er yiooldey</i>	3	12	75
<i>jeigh</i>	<i>er n'yeigh</i>	5	<i>er yeigh</i>	8	13	38

Table 3. Variation in *j*-initial verbs in the Perfect tense *er* construction

Cregeen also mentions Lenition 1 outcomes for *juail: er yuail*, and *jummal: er yummal*. For *jannoo* he gives only *er n'yannoo*.

3. Consonants *k-* (*c-*) and *g-*

Nearly all verbs beginning with /k/ (*k-* or *c-*) undergo solely Lenition 1 in the Perfect tense *er* construction. Only five verbs (Table 4) attest any case of Nasalization in this construction, and only for *cosney: er gosney* are the numbers more than negligible.

	Nasalization	N	Lenition 1	L1	Tot	%N
<i>creenaghey</i>	<i>er greenaghey</i>	1	<i>er chreenaghey</i>	1	2	50
<i>cosney</i>	<i>er gosney</i>	5	<i>er chosney</i>	53	58	08
<i>kionnaghey</i>	<i>er gionnaghey</i>	1	<i>er chionnaghey</i>	12	13	08
<i>cuirr</i>	<i>er guirr</i>	1	<i>er chuirr(ey)</i>	14	15	07
<i>coyrt</i>	<i>er goyrt</i>	2	<i>er choyrt</i>	645	647	00

Table 4. Variation in /k/-initial verbs in the Perfect tense *er* construction

Cregeen gives Nasalization outcomes for *kiangle: er giangle*, and *kionnaghey: er gionnaghey*.

³ There is one case of unmutated *er deayrtey: Dy vod ooilley yn uill chairagh hie er deayrtey er y thalloo tuittym erriu, veih fuil[l] Abel cairagh, gys fuill Zecharias* ‘That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias; *Matthew* 23.35.

⁴ There is one exceptional case of ‘Nasalization’ of *dellal* to *n'ghellal: mastey ooilley e ainjyssee cha vel unnane dy gherjaghey ee, ta ny caarjyn eck er n'ghellal dy foalsey r'ee, t'ad er hyndaa dy ve e noidyn*. ‘among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her: all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies.’ *Lamentations* 1.2. No doubt this is a hypercorrection, based on the observation that some cases of Perfect *er gh-* (though from radical *g-*) are in variation with *er n'gh-*, e.g. *er ghoaill ~ er n'ghoaill*. Though taken literally, Nasalization of initial *d-* would give *n-*, this outcome seems never to be found in Manx.

The great majority of verbs beginning with *g-* undergo exclusively Lenition 1 in the Perfect tense *er* construction, e.g. *geid: er gheid*, *gloyraghey: er ghloyraghey*, *gra: er ghra*. In the case of verbs beginning with *gi-* followed by a vowel, the mutated form is spelt either *ghi-* or *yi-*, which I take to be purely orthographic variants. Thus, for example, *gialdyn: er ghialdyn ~ er yialdyn*, *giarey: er ghiarey ~ er yiarey*, *gientyn: er ghientyn ~ er yientyn*, *giootal: er ghiootal ~ er yiootal*. The *yi-* variant is notably more frequent: 79% of cases in the Bible. Nasalization variants are found for only five verbs: *geddyn*, *gialdyn*, *gialtaghey*, *goll*, and *goaill*, and for only one of these —*goll*— is the Nasalized variant significantly more frequent (79%) than the Lenition 1 variant; see Table 5. *Goaill* has the opposite preference, with 80% Lenition 1: *er ghoaill*.⁵ *Gialtaghey* occurs only once in the Perfect construction, with a Nasalized outcome: *er n'ghialtaghey*.

	Nasalization	N	Lenition 1	L1	Tot	%N
<i>gialtaghey</i>	<i>er n'ghialtaghey</i>	1		0	1	100
<i>goll</i>	<i>er n'gholl</i>	252	<i>er gholl</i>	68	320	79
<i>goaill</i>	<i>er n'ghoaill</i>	68	<i>er ghoaill</i>	272	340	20
<i>gialdyn</i>	<i>er n'yialdyn</i>	3	<i>er yialdyn</i>	20	32	09
			<i>er ghialdyn</i>	9		
<i>geddyn</i>	<i>er n'gheddyn</i>	12	<i>er gheddyn</i>	208	220	05

Table 5. Variation in *g*-initial verbs in the Perfect tense *er* construction

In addition to its Lenition 1 variants mentioned above, *gialdyn* has an infrequent Nasalized variant, spelt *er n'yialdyn*.

4. Consonant *f-*

The treatment of *f*-initial words in the Perfect tense *er* construction differs from that of the consonants mentioned previously. There are some verbs that are only found with Nasalization: *faillail: er vailleil* (9), *failley: er vailley* (7), *fendeil: er vendeil* (1), and *folmaghey: er volmaghey* (1). In several others Nasalization is predominant; see Table 6. Only *fockley magh* shows a very strong preference for Lenition 1. Observe, though, that the variant of Lenition 1 found in the case of *f-* verbs might rather be seen as Lenition 1 (*f* → zero) *plus* Nasalization (*n'* before initial vowel).

	Nasalization	N	Lenition 1	L1	Tot	%N
<i>fakin</i>	<i>er vakin</i>	200	<i>er n'akin</i> ⁶	12	212	94
<i>fosley</i>	<i>er vosley</i>	31	<i>er n'osley</i>	2	33	94
<i>fuirriaght</i>	<i>er vuirriaght</i>	6	<i>er nuirraght</i>	1	7	86
<i>feaysley</i>	<i>er veaysley</i>	5	<i>er n'eaysley</i>	1	6	83
<i>freayll(ey)</i>	<i>er vreyll(ey)</i>	42	<i>er reayll(ey)</i>	26	68	62
<i>foaddey</i>	<i>er voaddey</i>	6	<i>er n'oaddey</i>	6	12	50
<i>faagail</i>	<i>er vaagail</i>	12	<i>er n'aagail</i>	19	31	39
<i>follaghey</i>	<i>er vollaghey</i>	3	<i>er n'ollaghey</i>	6	9	33
<i>fockley</i>	<i>er vockleymagh</i>	1	<i>er n'ockley(magh)</i>	28	29	03

Table 6. Variation in *f*-initial verbs in the Perfect tense *er* construction

⁵ There is one case (in the Apocrypha) where the Nasalized variant is spelt *er n'goaill*; there are also two cases of unmutated *er goaill*.

⁶ There are 5 cases of *er akin*, that is, Lenition 1 without prevocalic *n'*, all of them in the Apocrypha.

Cregeen’s dictionary generally gives both alternatives for *f*-initial verbs. This is the case for: *faagail*, *faarkey*, *faastey*, *fakin*, *faillail*, *failley*, *fanney*, *farkiaghey*, *feayraghey*, *feaysley*, *feddanagh*, *fendeil*, *festal*, *foaddey*, *fockley*, *follaghey*, *folmagh(ey)*, *fosley*, and *fuirraghtyn*.

For the following verbs, Cregeen gives only the Nasalization variant: *farbagh*, *fasney*, *fassaghey*, *feiyral*, *fenaghtyn*, *feyshtey*, *fliughey*, *fordrail*, *foudaghey*, and *freaylley* ~ *freilley*.

For these verbs Cregeen gives only the Lenition 1 variant: *farraght*, *foayraghey*, *fuillaghtyn*, and *fuinney*.

Appendix.

Cregeen F

er vaagail ~ er n’aagail
 er vaarkey ~ er n’aarkey
 er vaastey ~ er n’aastey
 er vakin ~ er naikin
 er vailleil ~ er n’ailleil
 er vailley ~ er n’ailley
 er vamlagh ~ er
 n’amlaghey
 er vanney ~ er n’anney
 er varbagh
 er varkiaghey ~ er
 n’arkiaghey
 er n’arraght
 er vasney

er vassaghey
 er veayraghey ~ er
 n’eayraghey
 er veaysley ~ er n’eaysley
 er veddanagh ~ er
 n’eddanagh
 er veiyral
 er venaghtyn
 er vendeil ~ er n’endeil
 er vestal ~ er n’estal
 er veyshtey
 er vliughey
 er voaddey ~ er n’oaddey
 er n’oayraghey

er vockley ~ er n’ockley
 er vollaghey ~ er
 n’ollaghey
 er volmagh(ey) ~ er
 n’olmagh(ey)
 er vordrail
 er vosley ~ er n’osley
 er voudaghey
 er vreaylley ~ er vreilley
 er n’uillaghtyn
 er n’uinney
 er vuirraght(yn) ~ er
 n’uirraghtyn

Cregeen G:

er n’gheddyn
 er gherrym
 er ghiallagh(ey)
 er ghialdyn ~ er
 n’ghialdyn ~ er
 yialdyn

er n’ghialtaghey
 er ghirraghey
 er ghiennaghtyn
 er yiennaghtyn
 er ghiootal
 er ghleashaghey

er ghlenney
 er ghol ~ er n’gholl
 er ghrainney
 er ghreimey
 er ghreinnaghey