

Your name: _____

Your lab section: 9am 1pm

LING 3100 - Language Sound Structures

Fall 2013

Homework 8: Elvish Alternations

Due Wednesday, November 21

The following data are from Sindarin Catherene (hereafter, Catherene), a dialect of Sindarin, the most common language spoken by the elves in Middle Earth. Catherene is mainly spoken by the elves in Lothlórien, and has some influences from the ancient Silvan language that was spoken in the region in the first age, although it is not strictly related to Silvan.*

The phonology of Catherene displays interesting alternations, exemplified by the dataset below, which shows nominal (noun) forms with various number and definiteness. Examine the data and then answer the questions that follow. All Catherene forms are written in standard IPA, with their English glosses.

SINGULAR INDEFINITE	SINGULAR DEFINITE	PLURAL DEFINITE
parf ‘a book’	ibarf ‘the book’	inmarf ‘the books’
barad ‘a tower’	ibarad ‘the tower’	inmarad ‘the towers’
mab ‘a hand’	imab ‘the hand’	inmab ‘the hands’
til ‘a horn’	idil ‘the horn’	inənil ‘the horns’
dinεθ ‘a bride’	idinεθ ‘the bride’	inənineθ ‘the brides’
nifredil ‘a winter flower’	inifredil ‘the winter flower’	inənifredil ‘the winter flowers’
kalɔn ‘a hero’	igalɔn ‘the hero’	inəɣalɔn ‘the heros’
gadɔr ‘a dungeon’	igadɔr ‘the dungeon’	inəɣadɔr ‘the dungeons’
ɣan ‘a harp’	iɣan ‘the harp’	inəɣan ‘the harps’

* Apologies to Mr. J.R.R. Tolkien for a non-canonical expansion of his Middle Earth history and languages. These data are not from Tolkien himself, but were collected during a recent field study in Middle Earth by the Sindarin scholar Ms. K.S. Phelps.

1. There are several alternations in the data. Describe these in your own words. What is changing across forms? (Hint: there are two stem alternations and one affix alternation. Look at differences between sg. indefinite and the two other forms, as well as differences within the plural definite).

2. What are the underlying forms for the following affixes (Note, \emptyset , or a null morpheme, is a possible answer)?

singular indefinite =

singular definite =

plural definite =

3. What are the underlying forms for the following stems?

book =

tower =

hand =

horn =

bride =

winter flower =

hero =

dungeon =

harp =

4. Write rules (can be in plain English or phonological rule form) to account for the alternations you see. Try to be general when describing what sounds are changing, referring to natural classes when appropriate.

Rule for stem alternation #1:

Rule for stem alternation #2:

Rule for affix alternation:

5. Explain how the stem alternations in Catherene show neutralization. (Hint: in one of the stem alternations, there is a two-way neutralization. In the other, there is a rare three-way neutralization).