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Gobbo, F.

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Tolkien and language planning: imagined words for an imaginary world

Federico Gobbo (University of Amsterdam)

1. An introduction

When I was eleven, I changed school, city, and region, in Northern Italy, and my life appeared to be completely ruined. My brother was in my mum's belly, and I felt like I was thrown in a distant, alien, world, unprepared to survive. Thus, I tried to find my way through the only tool I knew at that time: reading fantastic stories.

That summer, I had a study trip in Germany to reprise my lost mother's tongue, German – not a typo: it was not my 'mother tongue' indeed. In a bookshop, I came across a book in English with a curious title: "Player's Handbook". That book was my introduction to the world of fantasy world-playing, via the classic *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*. Back home, I spent most of my summertime in a house at the margins of wood, in the Alps, with the only company of that book and an Italian-English bilingual dictionary. I translated that book into Italian, page by page, more for despair than for passion, and ultimately that was my entering in the Realm of the English Language. I fell in love with English, because English was the language that talked about elves, fairies, and, above all, magic.

Then, summertime was over. I had to go to my new school in a town close to Milan. Lombardy was my new region where there was my house – that I couldn't still call "home". In that alien environment, I knew nobody in advance. My new school classmates put me immediately to the margins because of my accent, an accent that told everybody in a second that I was "foreign" – still Italian, but from another region, and in the 1980s that was enough to consider somebody like me "foreign".

My strategy to approach my classmates so to try to make friends was storytelling. I told them the wonders of fantasy role-playing, through which you could build a magical world of your own, magnificent and more real than the real one. As you can imagine, that sounded weird to almost all comrades; somebody even called me a freak, leaving me puzzled and helpless. However, at least one classmate listened to my story carefully. It was a girl. Her name was Beatrice -- the same name of Dante's guide to Paradise. "I'm not sure whether I understood all this stuff of complex rules, dice, character building, and so on," she told me, after listening. "And, sincerely speaking, I am not interested. However, I can lend you a book about a dragon, a treasure and a quest, that for sure will inspire you in your fictional world building." That book was *The Hobbit*.

Neil Gaiman once wrote that he found Tolkien the wrong way and that for him, a maybe nine years old, what was important in Tolkien was the poetry and the promise of a story. I don't know if I found Tolkien the right way; for sure, it was an encounter that changed my life forever. For me, at that time eleven years old, what was important was the story, and the promise of a world full of magic, which appeared to my teenage more real than the real world. That world was Middle-Earth.

Fictional worlds were not new to me at that time. I learnt reading thanks to the bookshelf of my uncle, full of Sci-Fi classics written by authors like Robert Zelazny, Philip Dick, and, of course, Isaac Asimov. I loved those books, but the vivid realism of Tolkien's diegetic world was incomparable. And the Fate brought to my desk the "Player's Handbook" on how to build fantasy diegetic worlds. To be sincere, my plan at that time was to create a diegetic world better than Tolkien's. Of course, my endeavour revealed to be a spectacular failure; on the other hand, as a side effect, eventually, I became an expert in language planning and especially in planned languages, both for communication – such as Esperanto – or for expression – such as Tolkien's.

What I immediately realised when I finished reading *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* – ça va sans dire, I could not avoid reading the whole story – was the immense evocative power of imaginary languages such as Sindarin, Quenya or the Black Speech. The challenge of every narration –especially

if fantasy in character -- is to sustain the readers' willing suspension of disbelief. In obtaining this goal, imaginary languages considerably augment verisimilitude, as they make imaginary worlds more realistic, credible, and, after all, paradoxically, more human.

After this rather non-academic introduction, what I am going to do, or, better said, what I am going to try to do in the rest of this chapter, is to explain the implicit method along with Tolkien carved his imaginary languages while writing about Middle-Earth. However, before explaining what does 'planning' mean in this context, it is important to clarify the difference between 'imagined' and 'imaginary'.

2. Wor(l)d building between imagined and imaginary

While opening his marvellous book on the language of science – i.e., natural languages used to produce original scientific results, a very exclusive club – historian Michael Gordin (2015) argues that every natural language is:

> in an important sense, imagined. [...] The things that we refer to as languages – Swahili, Mongolian, Thai, English – are not objects sitting out there in the world, like a peculiar rock or a specific yellow clapboard house. [...] If you know Russian and your neighbor knows Ukrainian, then mutual intelligibility can be quite sizable. You are communicating even though you are not speaking the same language. If you both use English, then mutual intelligibility is almost total. Almost, but not quite – and that is the essence of what I mean by "imagined." We each speak our own idiolect, our own storehouses of words put together by our own grammars. When our own specific set of language rules meshes with someone else's, we call that speaking the same language. It is an imagined convergence.

Gordin points out that "imagined" does not necessarily imply "imaginary", and rightly so. The difference relies upon the *diegesis*, i.e., the fictive reality where narrative occurs. We live in an imagined, extra-diegetic world, and, when we become writers or readers, we live, for that moment, in both diegetic and extra-diegetic worlds, at the same time. Human beings cannot avoid trying to make sense of the living experience in narrative terms. For somebody, there is a design above our lives; Tolkien was among that group. For others, this pretence of a design is a delusion. This is a matter of philosophy (and religion), which is out of our scope. What matters here is that, while in the case of real life -- the extra-diegetic world -- this is a matter of discussion, on the contrary, in the case of diegetic worlds, there is always a design: characters live under the design decided by the writer. Verisimilitude heavily depends on the realism behind the arts and craft of imagining the world where the plot occurs. Thus, we can reverse Gordin's argument, arguing not only that 'imagined' does not necessarily imply 'imaginary', but also that 'imaginary' implies the 'imagined'.

Tolkien played through all his life between the extra-diegetic and the diegetic, transfiguring his real-life experience in Middle-Earth. The evocative power of Middle-Earth, in my not-so-humble opinion, relies precisely on the interplay between imagined and imaginary. To illustrate such interaction, we should answer the following question: how did words and languages influence Tolkien's literary and scholarly work?

3. A philologist, but literary

The question just stated entails another question: what was Tolkien's linguistic repertoire? Being born in Bloemfontein, South Africa, where European and African languages and cultures meet (not without dramatic difficulties), in an English-speaking family, he was aware from his childhood about the fact that the world is full of natural languages that show a lot of diversity. Tolkien's language for literature writing has always been English, since his first attempt to write a story, when he was seven years old. In one of his letters, he recalled that: 'one could not say "a green great dragon", but had to say "a great green dragon". I wondered why, and still do.' (*Letters*, p. 163).

It is clear that Tolkien was not a linguist, at least not in the modern sense. He was interested in the literary power of evoking images, ideas, and, above all, worlds, through a careful study of words. Tolkien was fascinated by the history of words through the centuries. After all, philology literally means "love of words". In a letter dated 2 December 1953, he defines himself as such:

> Being a philologist, getting a large part of any aesthetic pleasure that I am capable of from the form of words (and especially from the fresh association of word-form with word-sense), I have always best enjoyed things in a foreign language, or one so remote as to feel like it (such as Anglo-Saxon).

If the 'etymological fallacy' (the mistaken belief that the word true meaning lies in its oldest recorded meaning) is anathema for a linguist, for Tolkien the aesthetic pleasure comes from etymology, and such pleasure is more important than any possible fallacy. However, such importance does not imply that he valued a priori the older as the better, as sometimes philologists do. In his essay *On translating Beowulf*, he clarifies this point very clearly:

> Words should not be used merely because they are 'old' or obsolete. The words chosen, however remote they may be from colloquial speech or ephemeral suggestions, must be words that remain in literary use, especially in the use of verse, among educated people. [...] They must need no gloss. [...] The difficulties of translators are not, however, ended with the choice of a general style of diction. They have still to find word for word [...] more than just indicating the general scope of their sense: for instance, contenting oneself with 'shield' alone to render Old English *bord*, *lind*, rand and *scyld*. The variation, the sound of different words, is a feature of the style that should to some degree be represented.

As recalled by Gilliver et al. (2006), Tolkien's first (academic) book was published in 1922, and it was A Middle English Vocabulary. The influence of his previous philological work at the Oxford English Dictionary is evident. 43,000 words in Middle English were checked: the glossary contains about 4,740 entries and nearly 6,800 definitions, with 1,900 cross-references and 236 proper names.

English philology naturally drives the philologist to Old English (often called 'Anglo-Saxon'). Unlike most colleagues that I met during my life, Tolkien's interest in his own work was not purely academic. In fact, Tolkien wanted to decline the results of his academic work in a literary way. Tolkien's biography shows clearly that he was fascinated by *Kalevala*, the Finnish national epic, compiled in the 1830s by Elias Lönnrot, who put together songs and lays from many traditional singers. Kalevala gave a mythical foundation to the Finns. Interestingly, in the same period, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm built the linguistic (grammar, dictionary) and mythological foundation (legends and fairy tales) of the Germans. Both Lönnrot and the Grimm brothers can be considered philologists in their method.

4. The need of a mythopoeia for the English

Tolkien realised that they gave a mythological foundation to their respective people, while other people, like the Welsh or the Greek, had already their foundation thanks to their rich traditions. Tolkien wanted to find the myth that is missing for the English people through philology. The only Old English epic, *Beowulf*, deals with monsters, elves and orcs., and it was the first source of inspiration for Middle-Earth. The second source was the Middle English poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, which deals with elves and other fantastic creatures. Interestingly, such poem was almost unnoticed before the critical edition by Tolkien and Eric Valentine Gordon, another philologist, in 1925.

In this perspective, he got interested in Old Norse, which can guide the analysis of Old English – and even Northern dialects of Modern English, at least in Tolkien's time – so to invent his diegetic world, whose goal was very clear to him. It is quite ironic that the success of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of The Rings* goes far beyond the British Isles, if we take the foundation of Tolkien Societies as a parameter. In fact, while the original Tolkien Society was founded in England in 1969, and Tolkien agreed to be the first president, the Dutch Tolkien Society Unquendor was founded already in 1981, few years after his departure from the real world. Thus, in missing his original goal, Tolkien achieved a much greater

goal: give to the world an original mythopoeia, which is still a source of inspiration and even a life guide for many.

I argue that such success also depends on his mastery in crafting Middle-Earth languages, which were carefully planned, after some juvenile attempts that served as preliminary results, as if they were laboratories. The importance of invented languages was acknowledged explicitly by Tolkien himself. In a famous letter to his American publisher, written in 1955, he wrote: "The invention of languages is the foundation. The 'stories' were made rather to provide a world for the languages than the reverse. To me a name comes first and the story follows." (*Letters*, p. 219)

As a novelist, Tolkien was inclined to create new words according to his needs, using his philological knowledge. In his numerous publications on the topic, Tom Shippey already showed that some words in the English language that originated from Tolkien. In the following, I show three instances of Tolkien's word creation (following Shippey's works): 'burglar', 'wraith', and 'hobbit'.

In *The Hobbit* Bilbo is called a 'burglar', a word formed by 'burgulator', someone who "breaks into mansions" (Oxford English Dictionary) and 'bourgeois', a member of the middle class. This oxymoron is the synthesis of the personal character of Bilbo. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Ringwraiths are the shadows who once possessed the Ring; but what is a 'wraith'? The Oxford English Dictionary states "of obscure origin". From the Old English 'wríðan', 'to writhe', you derive 'wreath' and (something twisted) and 'wroth' (old word for 'angry') which described the nature of Ringwraiths perfectly.

Shippey traces the word 'hobbit' in *The Denham Tracts*, a publication about folklore written by Denham, a Workshire tradesman, in the years 1840-50. Hobbits are one entry in a list of 197 supernatural creatures, as 'a class of spirits.' We do not know if Tolkien read this source – hobbits are not spirits, after all. Most probably, he reconstructed (aesthetically, without reliable sources) a plausible Old English word, *holbytl*, from 'hol' (hole) and 'bytlian' (to live in), so 'hole-liver'. As recalled by Tolkien in the 1920s, "names always generate a story in my mind." (*Letters*, p. 215), and so we can consider the incipit of *The Hobbit* 'In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit' as a sort of narrative form of a dictionary entry defining hobbits.

In the next section, I will sketch some of the main traits of Tolkien's invented languages, using the conceptual toolbox found in Interlinguistics, i.e., that branch of Linguistics that deals with planned languages, which are the extreme case studies of language planning, as they are conceived in writing before to be even put into actual use. I will focus only on language invention.

5. How Tolkien invented languages

It is important to say that Tolkien was not driven by proving any theory or other academic motives, nor by any practical purpose. In a word, his inner driving force was aesthetic. In fact, for him (from: *A secret vice*)

> in these invented languages the pleasure is keener than it can be even in learning a new language... because more personal and fresh, more open to experiment of trial and error. And it is capable of developing into an art, with refinement of the construction of the symbol, and with greater nicety in the choice of the notional-range.

In their notes on the critical edition of Tolkien's essay *A secret vice*, Dimitra Fimi and Andrew Higgins (2016) rightly point out that there were three major influences, supporting Tolkien's inner driving in inventing languages: the literary wave of Modernism, the concept of sound symbolism, and the International Auxiliary Language movement. These three major forces conceive Language as Art. In other words, languages are not a part of nature, and therefore their view on reality can be crafted like a manufacturer producing spectacles. Thus, languages can be broken and reconstructed for artistic purposes. Think of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, a masterpiece of Modernism, published in 1939, from which we obtained the name 'quark' in particle physics. Sound symbolism is a specific view on language that states that phonetics, if not phonology, is driven by symbolism, above all onomatopoeia.

This chapter is not the place to discuss the validity of such epistemic, if not ontological, view on language; what matters here is that Tolkien wholly and sincerely adhered to it. For him, prosody, rhythm and melody counted more than morphology, syntax and meaning, as they are the vehicle of the evocative power of words, their magic. In other words, let the sounds guide you, dear reader – seems to say the author – all the rest will come along.

The third major influence was the debate on the opportunity to adopt an International Auxiliary Language for international communication in Europe and the world. While that debate seems to be a matter of interest only for historians of ideas in these days, in the first decades of the 20th century opinions were hotly discussed by world-class linguists such as Ferdinand De Saussure, Otto Jespersen, Bruno Migliorini and Edward Sapir, and of course by amateurs and enthusiasts alike. In truth, the whole debate was around the opportunity to adopt Esperanto, the most successful International Auxiliary Language, or to reform it in some way (details are irrelevant for our purposes here). What is relevant is that Tolkien most probably learnt Esperanto in the years 1905-1911, being a pioneer of Scouting (Baden-Powell, the founder of Scouting, recommended learning Esperanto in the very first handbook for boys). Dimitra Fimi and Andrew Higgins (2016) We have a proof of this fact. In a manuscript, called the *Book of the Foxrook*, the young Tolkien used Esperanto for encoding the scout code (please note that he used Esperanto not for general communication but for secrecy), and wrote a poem in the language. As it was already noticed elsewhere, it is probable that the feminine gender 'inya' in Quenya, as well as the word 'orne' standing for 'tree', were deeply influenced by Esperanto. So, Esperanto plays the role of a reference, a model on how to *plan* a language. While the word 'invention' refers mainly to the perspective of the inventor, i.e. the person who conceives such a language, writing some texts in it, the word planning is much more general, and it collocates the planned language into the whole plan for the language itself, i.e., how the language should be used and by whom. In the case of Esperanto, while Tolkien was writing his literary masterpieces, the plan behind Esperanto was already twisted, at least a couple of times.

After a moment of hope to be quickly adopted as the international language of peace by the whole world, the fortunes of Esperanto turned down because of the first World War. During that terrible experience, Tolkien met a soldier who kept his mind away from the misery of the war thinking about introducing a preposition to express the accusative in Esperanto. Tolkien was fascinated by his creative power, by the fact that nobody was able to judge that soldier, everything was happening freely in his mind. In the immediate aftermath of the war, Esperanto gained new terrain. In the meantime, Tolkien started his academic career, and became a relevant person in Oxford. In 1930, the 22nd World Esperanto Congress (1211 participants from 29 different countries) was organized in Oxford. In that occasion, it was not by change that Tolkien gave an invited lecture asserting that Esperanto is the best suitable candidate to unify Europe "before it is swallowed by non-Europe". However, at the same time, he also said very clearly that he had no particular interest in participating in debate about the adoption of Esperanto. It has a reasonably high level from an aesthetic point of view, according to Tolkien, it proved to work in concrete, so the debate was pointless. Strange attitude for an academic, I would say, as it seemed that he considered purely academic discussions a complete waste of time (or perhaps this is my view, that I project over Tolkien; who knows).

In any case, the older he got, the lower the enthusiasm toward Esperanto. Eventually, the advent of the Second World War completely ruined his already tepid Esperantism: in a letter to Mr. Thompson, his American editor (draft dated 14 January 1956), Tolkien says that Esperanto and other International Auxiliary Languages "…are dead, far deader than ancient unused languages, because their authors never invented any Esperanto legends." Actually, in this case, history proved Tolkien wrong. His premise is that there are no Esperanto legends. In the same year, while he was writing those words, it came out the modernist epic poem *La infana raso* (The Infant race, 1956) by Nobel-Prize candidate William Auld (English translation in 2009). After that, let us mention at least the *Poemo de Utnoa* (The Epic of Utnoa) by the Catalan writer Abel Montagut, published originally in 1993 and recently in its second edition (2018) prove that Esperanto can produce first-class original literature, even within the science fiction genre. Interested readers can consult the encyclopaedia over Esperanto original literature by Sutton (2008). We can forgive Tolkien, as he was interested in reuniting linguistics and literary studies through the invention of his own myth – that eventually gave birth to Middle-Earth –

more than in delving into the Esperanto cause, something too political for him, probably, or simply too linked our extra-diegetic world. His perspective on Esperanto also entails an important consequence: Tolkien's languages are not made for humans. Tolkien's languages were done for his mythopoeic endeavour, they should talk about legends, magic, fantasy, in his diegetic world, not for buying a train ticket – or any other everyday, unmythical, use. In other words, why a (human) reader should use a language belonging to elves? This was the question. In other words, Tolkien had no interest for extra-diegetic use of Middle-Earth languages; he envisaged no fans talking in Sindarin in Tolkienian conventions or similar, as in the case of Star Trek's Klingon or Dothraki from Games of Thrones. Most likely, he wouldn't be pleased.

In the essay *A secret vice* (which, by the way, is a terrible title put in a second moment; the first title was the much more informative 'A hobby for the home') he stated clearly that inventing languages was a personal, private art form, an individual pleasure. That is why he published no grammar of any language he invented, and did not keep consistency in their evolution. In this respect, I agree with the terminology used by some Tolkien scholars who name the languages derived from Tolkien's for the purposed of Hollywood with the prefix neo: e.g., Neo-Sindarin, Neo-Quenya, and so on. Such developments are out of the scope of this paper.

In the following, we will give some samples of the languages Tolkien invented, in order to describe a methodology of language invention, which seems to be common to experienced language inventors – let us briefly mention only Alessandro Bausani, the inventor of Markuska, who shows similar patterns in language planning. For most of them, the only reliable source comes from the author directly and his essay *A secret vice*, which admittedly is not an objective view on the matter.

Recalling himself as a youngster Tolkien talks about two people who invented a jargon, which was called Animalic. Also Bausani (1974,1970) will use the same trick, talking about a "young boy" who in truth was himself.

> I knew two people once – *two* is a rare phenomenon – who constructed a language called *Animalic* almost entirely out of English animal, bird, and fish names; and they conversed in it fluently to the dismay of bystanders. I was never fully instructed in it nor a proper *Animalic*-speaker; but I remember out of the rag-bag of memory *that dog nightingale woodpecker forty* meant 'you are an ass'. Crude (in some ways) in the extreme.

Unlike Bausani, Tolkien started from the content, i.e., from the semantics. Animalic is not properly a planned language, rather it is a jargon, a way to encrypt semantics through systematic substitutions of lexemes with others. In general, there are two ways for obtaining an invented language: either you start from semantics, or you start from structure, i.e., phonetics, phonology and morphosyntax. What really makes a language a language is the originality of its structure. While Bausani followed the linguistic way, immediately inventing the structure, Tolkien followed the literary way, delving into semantics, and, one attempt after another, he achieved good results.

The second attempt is called Nevbosh, created as the step beyond Animalic. In his words: "[I] developed an idiom called Nevbosh, or the 'New Nonsense'. It still made, as these play-languages will, some pretence at being a means of limited communication." It is clear that the author did not take these attempts too seriously ("play-languages") and that the whole purpose is to be *free* from human communication. In other words, he wanted to obtain languages purely for soliloquising, no other human beings ideally should be involved. In fact, Nevbosh starts to show "the more individual and personal factor – pleasure in articulate sound, and in the symbolic use of it, independent of communication though constantly in fact entangled with it", in Tolkien's words. The very word 'Nevbosh' already give us some information about the structure: 'nev' correspond to 'new', so we have a *Lautverschiebung*, a sound shift, from [w] to [v]. Language inventors, consciously or not, start from their linguistic repertoire and, in particular, from their mother tongue, which gives the core of the language, the one linked to sounds (for the linguist: phonetics, phonotactics, and phonology). The first scholar to point out this phenomenon was Alessandro Bausani (1974,1970); for this reason, I usually refer to it as the "Bausani effect". In the case of Tolkien, we should then compare all his

invented languages to English as the reference point, as if English were the etymological basis of the new-born languages.

| Dar | fys | ma | vel | gom | co | palt | 'hoc |
| *There* | *was* | *an* | *old* | *man* | *who* | *said* | *'how* |

| Pys | go | iskili | | far | maino | woc? | |
| *Can* | *I* | *possibly* | | *carry* | *my* | *cow?* | |

| Pro | si | go | fys | do | roc | de | |
| *For* | *if* | *I* | *was* | *to* | *ask* | *it* | |

| Do | cat | ym | maino | bocte | | | |
| *To* | *get* | *in* | *my* | *pocket* | | | |

| De | volt | fac | soc | ma | taimful | | gyróc!' |
| *It* | *would* | *make* | *such* | *a* | *fearful* | | *row!'* |

Table 1: specimen of Nevbosh

Table 1 shows a poem in Nevbosh, perhaps the only fragment we will ever find. Thanks to the glosses certified by the author (even if not visualised in this way, in the essay), we can immediately see that the word order of Nevbosh perfectly matches the English one, and this means that the structure of Nevbosh is still not too elaborated, and sound shifts are regular indeed. In the author's word: "In Nevbosh we see, of course, no real breaking away from 'English' [...]: alteration is mainly limited to shifting within a defined series of consonants, say for example the dentals: *d, t, ð, þ* &c. *Dar*/there; *do*/to; cat/get; volt/would." Even morphology is highly depending by English: 'fear-ful' becomes 'taim-ful', keeping the derivative morpheme '-ful' as it is. One of the easiest ways to create new 'secret' roots from a source language is inversion, and this is a strategy commonly pursued by children in inventing their secret codes; I can say this after my many-year experience in the Montessori Linguistic Laboratories where pupils (9-11) are invited to collectively produce a secret language belonging to the class (Gobbo 2019). In Nevbosh, for example, 'cow' becomes 'woc' – notably, without sound shift into [v]. Of course, taken as the only strategy, inversion is not enough to guarantee secrecy. Quickly Tolkien inserted a characteristic shared by most planned language: contact. Planned languages are contact languages, but very different from pidgins, as the latter emerged from contact between two or more populations in contact for trading (or colonialism), henceforth the base is speech, while moment zero of planned languages is written, as already explained above. In the case of Nevbosh, the author explains how he applied the strategy in this way: "so[,] roc/'*rogo*' [Latin for ask]; go/'*ego*' [Latin for I]; vel/'*vieil, vieux*' [French for old ...] Blending is seen in: volt/'*volo* [Latin], *vouloir* [French]' + 'will, would'; fys/'*fui*' [Latin] + 'was', was, were."

Nevbosh had enough structure to let Tolkien fly towards his major invented languages, that is, the languages of Middle-Earth. There is plenty of scholarly literature in Tolkien studies, especially about Sindarin and Quenya – a good starting point, written after fifty years of research, is Hofstetter (2007). I am not an expert, so I will limit myself to report some notes that Aaron Griffith (University of Utrecht) gave to the public of the Drongo language festival held in Utrecht in 2017, as, up to my knowledge, they were never published (of course, I take full responsibility of any mistake whatsoever). In comparing the phonologies between Quenya and Sindarin, the first one appears to be much simpler and more symmetric. Probably influenced by Welsh (one of the natural languages Tolkien loved), Sindarin shows Ablaut (in bold, in the following few examples): '**a**dan' is man, '**e**dain' is '**e**dain' is 'm**e**n'; '**a**nnon' is 'gate', '**e**nnyn' is 'gates'. In Welsh, we have '**a**fall' for 'apple tree' and '**e**f yll' for 'apple trees'. Conversely, Quenya shows a rich case system: unmarked (for subjects and objects), genitive, dative, locative, allative, instrumental, ablative. Nominal inflection in Quenya is different: the unmarked case for 'tree' is 'aldar', while 'trees' at the plural are 'aldars', like in English. However, beause of the complex case system, you have 'aldaron' for the genitive plural 'of trees'. The name 'Lórien' (unmarked) becomes 'Lóriendesse', meaning 'in Lorien' (locative singular, while 'Rómen', meaning 'East' (unmarked), becomes 'Rómello', meaning 'from the East' (ablative singular).

I close my small contribution in Tolkienian linguistics with Aaron Griffith's translation of a short story in Quenya that he translated (apparently, before 2017 it was still unpublished). My hope is that in the next decades the works by Tolkien will also investigated as one of the products of Interlinguistics, the science of planned languages.

Ar Sauron túle nukumna. lantaner turkildi nuhuinenna. Tarkalion ohta káre Valannar. númenheruvi arda sakkante lenéme ilúvatáren. ëari ullier ikilyanna. Númenóre ataltane.

And Sauron came humbled. The Princes of Men fell under the shadow. Tar-Kalion made war upon the Valar. The Lords of the West rent the Earth with leave of Ilúvatar. The seas should flow into the chasm. Númenor fell down.

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