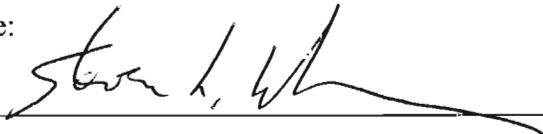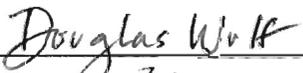MAGIC WORDS: THE PHONOLOGY OF FANTASY NEOLOGISMS

by

Kathleen Flegal
A Thesis
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty
of
George Mason University
in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree
of
Master of Arts
English

Committee:

_____   Director

_____
Douglas Wulf

_____

_____   Department Chairperson

_____   Dean, College of Humanities
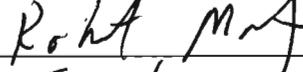Jaimie S. Cooper   and Social Sciences
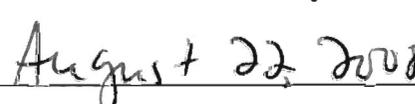
Date: _____August 22 2008_____   Fall Semester 2008
                                       George Mason University
                                       Fairfax, VA

Magic Words: the Phonology of Fantasy Neologisms

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at George Mason University

By

Kathleen M. Flegal
Bachelor of Arts
Roanoke College, 2002

Director: Steven Weinberger, Professor
Department of English

Fall Semester 2008
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA

DEDICATION

To my family; Mom and Dad, for teaching me to love learning and language, Kara and Jane for being my friends as well as sisters, and for always being interested in me.

And to Dr. Ogier, for getting me involved in linguistics in the first place.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

ABSTRACT

MAGIC WORDS: THE PHONOLOGY OF FANTASY NEOLOGISMS

Kathleen M. Flegal, M.A.

George Mason University, 2008

Thesis Director: Dr. Steven Weinberger

This thesis examines the sound system of neologisms created in fantasy literature. I

noted all neologisms in fantasy novels picked from specific award lists and

recommended reading lists, then transcribed the words phonetically. After transcribing,

I examined all of the words to see what they have in common with each other and what

phonological rules they follow. Using the data thus gathered, I drew the conclusion that

fantasy neologisms do, in fact, follow phonological rules similar to those that English

language speakers follow.

Chapter 1. Introduction

This thesis will examine the phonology of fantasy neologisms. Fantasy appears

to be an essential part not just of our culture, but of the human experience, and the

fantasy literature of western culture is one of the most prolific—and therefore

available—sources of insight into this aspect of humanity. Neologisms are a vital part of

the evolution and development of language over time, and are also a reflection of a

language's phonology. Literature, phonology, and neologism have all been studied in

depth, but few have examined them as a group, determining their interaction and how

they influence one another. This paper will examine each of these elements, then look at

how they work together and, finally, see what phonological rules fantasy neologisms

may follow.

The related genres of myth, fairy tale, and fantasy have a magic to them that

captures the imagination and stimulates the intellect. One reason for this is the creative

language used in such stories. From the whimsical to the scientific-sounding, there is

something captivating about the way the writers who create these stories use special

words. In particular, fantasy writers sometimes invent words rather than just using the words we already have on hand. While creative use of language abounds in fantasy literature, neologizing is actually somewhat rare even in the fantasy genre, which one might expect to overflow with new words; Chapter 2 will discuss in more detail why neologisms are not more common. Despite their relative rarity, neologisms are still an important facet of fantasy literature, and many words now counted as part of the every day lexicon started out as literary neologisms. In this thesis, I examine fantasy stories and the sounds of language through neologisms found in fantasy.

The background literature establishes the importance of fantasy to humankind and its importance in literature, the phonology of neologism and neologism's role in literature and in language. This thesis examines all neologisms found in several award-winning and recommended fantasy novels, focusing on the function of the neologisms in the stories and the phonology of the neologisms. English grammaticality, adherence to Universal Grammar, and sound symbolism of the fantasy neologisms are examined. What this shows is that fantasy neologisms follow the same phonological rules as the rest of our language. They make use of common sound-symbolic rules, follow the rules of Universal Grammar unfailingly, and, with very few exceptions, adhere to English

phonological rules. This indicates that, even beyond fantasy neologisms, novel word

creations follow particular rules of phonology, and language is predictable in how it

permits and uses segments and words.

In Chapter 2, this thesis defines key concepts and examines the literature on

topics pertinent to the study: literature and fantasy, neologism, and phonology. This

establishes both the previous scholarship on these elements and necessary background

for this thesis. Chapter 3 describes the methods used to find and analyze the data and

presents the data itself. In Chapter 4, the focus is on analyzing the data and establishing

what rules fantasy writers follow in creating their neologisms. Finally, in Chapter 5, the

conclusions are presented. Significantly, fantasy writers do indeed follow rules of

Universal Grammar, English grammaticality, and sound symbolism when they

neologize, and the rarity of neologisms in language is reflected in the dearth neologisms

in fantasy.

Chapter 2. Review of the Literature

The study of fantasy neologisms combines several elements: fantasy literature, neologisms, and phonology. Literature and neologisms have a particular connection and a long shared history. Many words that are now part of the everyday lexicon were originally neologisms in a work of literature. Shakespeare, for example, invented many neologisms, such as "orb" and "majestic", almost all of which are now part of our day-to-day vocabulary now (Gill, 2002.). Sedia (2005) claims that fantasy literature is a particularly rich source of neologism, since the stories need to convey the differentness of the characters, settings, plots and themes contained in the works. I contend, however, that fantasy, while certainly rich in creative use of language, neologizes less frequently than Sedia believes. Fantasy may contain more neolgisms than other genres, but these neologisms are not only relatively infrequent compared to what one might expect (only 9 of the 78 books examined for this thesis contained neologisms), but also are not very different from established English words. Studying the phonology of the neologisms found in fantasy literature shows that fantasy authors, for the most part, follow the rules

of English phonology. Even in the cases in which English phonology is violated, there are no violations of universal grammar.

I. Neologism

Neologism, the set of strategies by which we invent new words, is an important element of language and is an interesting way to study phonology. Without neologism, language would not grow and change, and companies would have no way of creatively marketing their products. Imagine, for example, if neologism had ceased in English in 1885; When Dr. John Pemberton invented Coca Cola in May of 1886, his bookkeeper, Frank Robinson, would not have been able to suggest the name by which we now know it, and would perhaps be calling it "Pemberton's French Wine Coca" or "brown-colored sweet fizzy drink". (Hays, 5) Likewise, technology would not be easily describable without neologizing; what if we weren't permitted to make up words for things related to nano-technology? We would be stuck calling microprocessors "really, really, really tiny bits of metal and plastic that use electrical impulses to convey instructions to a computer's motherboard" rather than *Pentium dual-core processors.* Indeed, it was not even possible to describe the words without using neologisms in this case; both

computer and *motherboard* were neologisms of the technology industry (indeed, all words were at one point neologisms!). Laparoscopic surgery would be "an operation in which the surgeon makes a tiny incision instead of a big incision." Without the ability to make new words, there would be no way to give names to these new concepts. While that might not inhibit the development of new products, technologies or medical techniques, it would make it much more difficult to communicate these ideas to the public.

Fortunately, language does permit neologism. Marketing is allowed to invent new words for new products, technology and medicine can create words for new ideas and techniques, and most importantly for this study, writers are allowed to neologize to convey the new ideas and names that they create in their stories, which, in turn, allows for the writer to achieve verisimilitude; a sought-after achievement in literature. In studying neologism, one can gain insight into how language works and what subtle and subconscious rules are followed when language is used. As diverse as the many words in our language and the many users of them are, there are rules that are followed when words are used, when words are combined, and when new words are invented. These linguistic rules govern all aspects of language, whether or not the speakers are aware of

them. Algeo and Pyles discuss the various types of word-formation processes

encompassed by neologism, which include compounding, affixation, shifting,

shortening, blending, borrowing, and creating. Of the processes, compounding accounts

for 40% of new words that enter the language, affixation for 28%, shifting for 17%, and

so on, while creating new roots makes up less than .5%. (p. 269) This means that, for

every 1000 words that enter the language, 400 would be compounds, but fewer than 5

would be new root creations. Note that, for simplicity's sake, in the rest of this thesis I

use the terms "neologism" and "neologize" to refer exclusively to new root creations

(unless otherwise indicated), rather than to the whole set of neologistic processes. Given

the small number of new roots in language overall, it comes as no surprise that

neologizing in fantasy literature is rarer than Sedia claims.

II. Fantasy

To give context to the need for neologisms in fantasy, it is necessary to examine

fantasy literature. In order to do this, it is important to know what fantasy is, and

therefore, what literature is. Literature is "a fiction consisting of carefully arranged

words designed to stir the imagination…like other art forms, imaginative literature

7

offers pleasure and usually attempts to convey a perspective, mood, feeling, or experience. Writers transform the facts the world provides—people, places, objects—into experiences that suggest meanings." (Meyer, 1997, 3-4.) Language naturally plays a huge role in literature. One important literary goal is verisimilitude—the author seeks to make her work true to the setting, theme, and characters of the story. Even though the story is fiction, there must still be truth; in this case, truth in the story itself. The masters of literature use language to achieve this. Take, for example, Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1993) (Originally published in 1885). The novel, narrated by Huck Finn, uses slang and spelled-out dialect to take the reader into Huck's story. Huck's language reflects the fact that he is an uneducated backwoods boy: "The Widow Douglas she took me for her son, and allowed she would sivilize me; but it was rough living in the house at all time, considering how dismal regular and decent the widow was in all her ways; and so when I couldn't stand it no longer I lit out." (p. 4) Twain uses Huck's speech to create verisimilitude, allowing the reader to truly see through Huck's eyes and from his perspective, making the story real to the reader. Using a similar technique in *The Prince and the Pauper*, Twain (1964) (originally published in 1882) shows both the Elizabethan England setting and the disparity

between Tom Canty (the pauper) and Edward of Wales (the prince) through dialogue;

Tom regularly adds, "and it please ye, sir" when he answers questions from Edward.

The narrative in *The Prince and the Pauper* uses formal language as opposed to slang,

and when Tom and Edward converse, their societal roles are clear. Likewise, in *A

Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, Twain (1963) (originally published in

1889) uses the characters' dialogue to establish the differentness of Hank Morgan, a

19th-century factory superintendent who finds himself transported to 6th-century Britain.

Hank speaks like a typical 19th-century New Englander; while the characters who

belong in the 6th century use language more suited to their own time period, such as

"Marry, fair, sir, me seemeth—" (p. 19). Hank sticks out like a sore thumb, using

phrases such as "I reckon" (p. 289) and "I'll report you" (p. 15). Using these

contrasting speech patterns lets the reader see and feel Hank's confusion when he is

transported to a time not his own.

Another way writers use language to establish verisimilitude is the use of

imagery. In his short story *Soldier's Home*, Ernest Hemingway uses tight language and

indirect depictions of his characters' emotional and psychological state. Doing this,

Hemingway shows that Krebs, a soldier returned from World War I, is feeling shame

and guilt. In a conversation over breakfast, Krebs' mother has put him on the spot about religion, and "Krebs looked at the bacon fat hardening on his plate." (p. 1) This sentence, in the context of the story, builds verisimilitude by showing the character's emotions without overtly referring to them, which allows the reader to see through the character's eyes. Instead of telling us "Krebs felt bad because his mother wanted him to believe in God," or "Huck is uneducated and uncultured," or "Hank is out of place in Arthurian England," the authors use their words to show us.

All authors strive for verisimilitude in their work. Twain used dialogue and narrative to achieve it, Hemingway used spare language and imagery. One of the techniques fantasy authors use to attain the credibility of verisimilitude is neologism.

Fantasy literature is imaginative fiction dependent upon effects of strangeness of setting such as other worlds or times and of characters such as supernatural or unnatural beings. Examples include William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, and T.H. White's *The Once and Future King*. Science fiction can be seen as a form of fantasy, but the terms are not interchangeable, as science fiction usually is set in the future, often in space or on another planet, and is based on some aspect of science or

technology while fantasy is set in an imaginary (earthly) world and features the magic

of mythical beings and often those beings' interactions with humans. (Kuiper, 1995,

403) Fantasy uses magic or other supernatural elements as the foundation of the plot,

theme and setting of the work. The genre is often associated with the overall look and

feel of the early European Middle Ages, but the actual setting may be on a fictional

earth-like plane or planet. Fantasy originated with ancient myths and legends and has

traced through history up to contemporary works. (McArthrur, 1992, 398).

There is much written about the purpose and need for fantasy as a genre.

"Fantasy is a map of the terrain of our subconscious, a doorway into myth… The

purpose of fantasy first and foremost is to be a mirror of the mind, a reflection of the

soul, a playing field for the imagination. It is us." (Lake, 2006) Fantasy helps the reader

see and understand the deeper parts of himself that are not possible to see in a mirror;

he can only see those parts by using his imagination, thereby examining his mind, his

thoughts, and perhaps his soul. "Myth is generally considered a powerful stimulus to the

human feeling of meaning…Literature appeals to man's teleological cravings." (Hume,

1984, 168) That is, literature, and fantasy in particular, gives humans a sense of

understanding of and connection with the meaning of life.

Now, those who read fantasy regularly recognize that the genre is rich in creative language. Why, though? Yaguello (1998) contends that rare or unknown words tend to have greater evocative power than common, everyday words. That is, words that the reader is not familiar with have a feeling of mystery and poetry (p. 90). Since fantasy writers are, in essence, trying to create a setting that is in some way different (and therefore possibly mysterious to the reader) while still achieving verisimilitude, neologisms, because of their rarity, are a useful tool in fostering the illusion of that setting. Fantasy writers neologize to create verisimilitude, just as Twain uses Huck's language and Hemingway shows what Krebs sees. The words that fantasy writers invent create a feeling of otherness or foreignness that enhances their story, lending color to the setting, plot, theme, and characters. (Kuiper, 1995, 209) Using just a few neologisms or foreign words can foster the verisimilitude that authors seek by enhancing the plot, theme, and setting of the story.

From the above explanations, we can conclude that fantasy should seem "otherworldly" in some way, but not inhuman. It should contain some element of strangeness or imagination—magic, fairies, gods, distant lands—but humans are central to the plot and theme. Fantasy neologisms should sound "strange" or "foreign," but not

non-human. That is, they might include sounds that are not common in English (but perhaps are common in other languages), they might use illegal (but humanly possible!) English clusters, or odd syllable structures. Since the western fantasy often incorporates the look, feel, and themes of the European Middle Ages, we might expect that the language—and therefore any neologisms—will reflect that and include elements from the languages of those times. In analyzing the data for this paper, it appeared that many of the neologisms conform to the patterns of Welsh, Gaelic, or Old English words (this will be further examined in Chapter 4), reinforcing the idea that fantasy neologisms borrow from other languages or older forms of languages.

III. Neologisms In Literature

A neologism is "a new word, expression, or usage…[or] the creation or use of new words or senses." (Costello, 1997, 914) There are many examples of successful neologisms from literature. Shakespeare created approximately 2000 neologisms in his works, including now-commonplace words like *aggravate, cranny, critical, excellent, frugal, hurry, lonely, obscene,* and *radiance.* Many of Shakespeare's neologisms were simply functional shifts, like taking *majesty* and making *majestic,* but they were indeed never-before-seen words. (Gill, 2002) Likewise, Theodore Suess Geisel (Dr. Seuss) was

famous for his neologizing, and some of his words have entered the lexicon, such as

nerd and *grinch*. Without the ability to neologize, writers would lose the ability to

invent new people, places, and ideas, because they would have no concise means to

refer to them, which would make it more difficult to achieve verisimilitude. A

successful neologism should fill both the writer's need for a term to name her new

person/idea and the reader's need for understanding of the characters, plot, and theme of

the story. Sedia tells us that in fantasy literature, the neologism should look and sound

different enough to make the story feel fantastic, but should not be so difficult to

pronounce or understand that it inhibits the reader getting meaning from the word.

Additionally, neologisms should not be so common in a book that they weaken the story

by sheer volume. (2005) A successful neologism fills a need for a word to describe

someone or something new, but does not exist simply for the sake of creating a funny-

sounding word.

From the above it is evident that neologisms have a long history in literature;

now it is necessary to examine why neologisms are so common in fantasy literature. In

large part, creating new words adds flair and flavor to a story, which helps draw the

reader in. "Writers like words, and speculative fiction writers in particular like to make

them up." (Sedia, 2005) There are rules for making up words, though. Made-up words

must follow the same general principles that established words use. For example, the

English language does not have the [x] sound, so a successful neologism (one that feels

mostly familiar and comfortable with a touch of strangeness, while filling the need for a

new word) will not use that sound either. Additionally, it is humanly impossible to

produce multiple stops without intervening vowels. If one attempts to pronounce a word

made up entirely of stops, there will invariably be vowel epenthesis between the stops

to allow for the production of the sounds. Therefore, the will not recognize words made

up of all stops like [bgtkpd]. Sedia also points out that writers should also avoid using

exotic-sounding made-up words for familiar objects.

Neologizing is, for all intents and purposes, a type of language game. Yaguello

(1998) addresses aspects of language play, including rules of language that speakers

follow and how we play by breaking them. She points out that if we didn't understand

how morphemes work, we couldn't "create new words…by the process known as

neologism, which consists, precisely, of drawing anew on existing elements." (35) A

language's vocabulary can be freely expanded simply by using the available morphemes

and rules of morpho-phonological combination to construct new words. Therefore, there

are an infinite number of "virtual words" just waiting to be invented to describe new

concepts, plug lexical gaps, and re-establish symmetries (for example, if someone can

be disgruntled, shouldn't they also be able to be *gruntled*?). (40)

IV. Phonology

Now that the use and necessity of neologism and its use in literature is

established, it is necessary to examine some basics of phonology in order to understand

the elements at play in fantasy neologisms.

The following chart of the IPA alphabet shows what sounds are possible in

human language. (International Phonetic Association, 2005)

THE INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET (revised to 2005)

CONSONANTS (PULMONIC)   © 2005 IPA

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d		ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k ɡ	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ		n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	N		
Trill	ʙ			r					R		
Tap or Flap		ⱱ		ɾ		ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative				ɬ ɮ							
Approximant		ʋ		ɹ		ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant				l		ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			

Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a voiced consonant. Shaded areas denote articulations judged impossible.

CONSONANTS (NON-PULMONIC)

Clicks		Voiced implosives		Ejectives	
ʘ	Bilabial	ɓ	Bilabial	ʼ	Examples:
ǀ	Dental	ɗ	Dental/alveolar	pʼ	Bilabial
ǃ	(Post)alveolar	ʄ	Palatal	tʼ	Dental/alveolar
ǂ	Palatoalveolar	ɠ	Velar	kʼ	Velar
ǁ	Alveolar lateral	ʛ	Uvular	sʼ	Alveolar fricative

VOWELS

Front   Central   Back

Close: i y — ɨ ʉ — ɯ u
          ɪ ʏ   ʊ
Close-mid: e ø — ɘ ɵ — ɤ o
                   ə
Open-mid: ɛ œ — ɜ ɞ — ʌ ɔ
           æ   ɐ
Open: a ɶ ——— ɑ ɒ

Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a rounded vowel.

OTHER SYMBOLS

ʍ	Voiceless labial-velar fricative	ɕ ʑ	Alveolo-palatal fricatives
w	Voiced labial-velar approximant	ɺ	Voiced alveolar lateral flap
ɥ	Voiced labial-palatal approximant	ɧ	Simultaneous ʃ and x
ʜ	Voiceless epiglottal fricative		
ʢ	Voiced epiglottal fricative		Affricates and double articulations can be represented by two symbols joined by a tie bar if necessary. k͡p t͡s
ʡ	Epiglottal plosive		
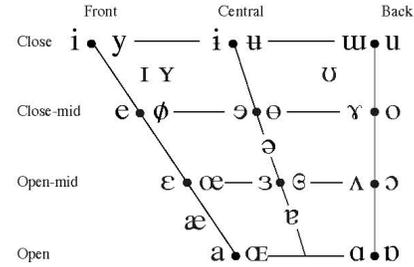
SUPRASEGMENTALS

ˈ	Primary stress
ˌ	Secondary stress
	ˌfoʊnəˈtɪʃən
ː	Long eː
ˑ	Half-long eˑ
̆	Extra-short ĕ
ǀ	Minor (foot) group
‖	Major (intonation) group
.	Syllable break ɹi.ækt
‿	Linking (absence of a break)

DIACRITICS   Diacritics may be placed above a symbol with a descender, e.g. ŋ̊

̥	Voiceless	n̥ d̥	̤	Breathy voiced	b̤ a̤	̪	Dental t̪ d̪
̬	Voiced	s̬ t̬	̰	Creaky voiced	b̰ a̰	̺	Apical t̺ d̺
ʰ	Aspirated	tʰ dʰ	̼	Linguolabial	t̼ d̼	̻	Laminal t̻ d̻
̹	More rounded	ɔ̹	ʷ	Labialized	tʷ dʷ	̃	Nasalized ẽ
̜	Less rounded	ɔ̜	ʲ	Palatalized	tʲ dʲ	ⁿ	Nasal release dⁿ
̟	Advanced	u̟	̴	Velarized	tˠ dˠ	ˡ	Lateral release dˡ
̠	Retracted	e̠	ˤ	Pharyngealized	tˤ dˤ	̚	No audible release d̚
̈	Centralized	ë	̴	Velarized or pharyngealized ɫ			
̽	Mid-centralized	e̽	̝	Raised e̝ (ɹ̝ = voiced alveolar fricative)			
̩	Syllabic	n̩	̞	Lowered e̞ (β̞ = voiced bilabial approximant)			
̯	Non-syllabic	e̯	̘	Advanced Tongue Root e̘			
˞	Rhoticity	ɚ a˞	̙	Retracted Tongue Root e̙			

TONES AND WORD ACCENTS

LEVEL			CONTOUR		
e̋ or ˥	Extra high		ě or ˩˥	Rising	
é ˦	High		ê ˥˩	Falling	
ē ˧	Mid		e᷄ ˦˥	High rising	
è ˨	Low		e᷅ ˩˨	Low rising	
ȅ ˩	Extra low		e᷈ ˧˦˧	Rising-falling	
↓	Downstep		↗	Global rise	
↑	Upstep		↘	Global fall	

Figure 1: IPA Chart

What we will see, though, is that not all of these sounds are utilized in every language.

"the set of sounds that are found in human languages is a subset of the sounds that

could possibly be produced by humans...Human Languages are constrained by tacit

linguistic principles, which are part of the Universal Grammar (UG)." (Weinberger,

Mss., 3) Therefore, fantasy writers have a larger set of sounds to utilize for their

neologisms than just the group allowed in English. However, they should avoid

violating the overall Universal Grammar (the underlying rules that all languages follow)

so that their their words to sound human, but foreign to the ear of the native English

speaker.

The following chart shows the subset of sounds listed on the complete IPA chart

which are used in North American English. (Weinberger, *Speech Accent Archive.*)

VOWELS

Where symbols appear in pairs, the one
to the right represents a rounded vowel.
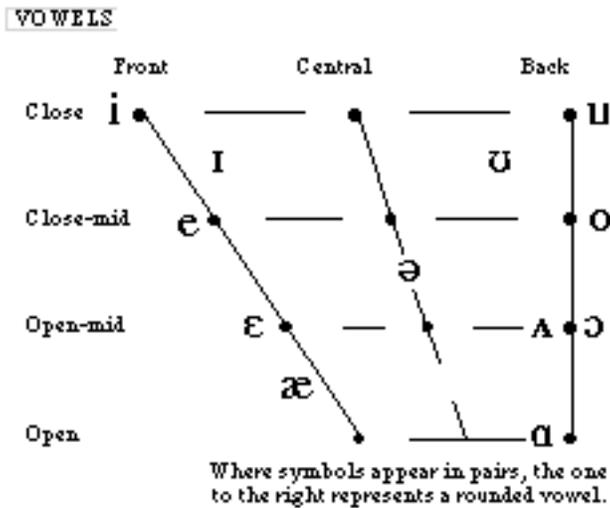
other sounds: labio-velar voiced central approximant [w]; 5 diphthongs.

Figure 2: IPA Chart of American English

With all the possible sounds in English, one might logically expect a vast

number of possible combinations to make words with (around 600 onset clusters alone,

if the total number of consonant sounds is taken and squared). However, English only

permits consonant clusters in very limited and structured combinations. There are a total

of 25 possible two-member onset clusters in English, not the 600 one might expect. The

permitted clusters include: [pl] [pɹ] [bl] [bɹ] [fl] [fɹ] [θw] [θɹ] [tw] [tɹ] [dw] [dɹ] [sl]

[sm] [sn] [sp] [st] [sk] [sf] [ʃr] [kw] [kl] [kɹ] [gɹ] [gl] [ʃm] [ʃt] [ʃp] (Weinberger, Mss. 5)

Illegal onset clusters include: *[pw] *[bw] *[fw] *[zl] *[dl] *[θl] and *[tl]

among others (Weinberger, Mss. 5). These are illegal because English does not allow

two consonants with the same place of articulation to be used in a syllable onset cluster.

Legal coda clusters are essentially the mirror image of the legal onset clusters. While

this is only a very brief and rudimentary discussion of English clusters, it helps establish

the sounds permitted in English and in language in general.

V. Fantasy and Phonology

Knowing about literature, fantasy, and phonology brings us to the point of this

paper: how the phonology and the literature play together. Is there a meaning behind the

words that authors coin? Do the sounds themselves tell us something about the words?

We know why the writers neoligize; next, how they do it and what it means will be

examined. Now that a few permitted and forbidden sounds and combinations have been

examined, it is necessary to examine what those sounds might mean, or at least, how

they could affect meaning. *Sound Symbolism* (Hinton, et. al., 1994) is the area of

linguistics that discusses the link between sound and meaning. Hinton et. al. addresses

the various types of symbolism, including corporeal (sounds such as coughing),

20

imitative (onomatopoeia), and synesthetic (tone, pitch, elongation of syllables for

emphasis) These examples show that, whether by origin or evolution, certain sounds,

classes of sounds, combinations of sounds, can have meaning attached to them by the

speaker and/or the hearer. Hinton et. al. also addresses issues such as the frequency

code, which tells us that high tones, vowels with a high 2nd formant (especially [i]) and

high frequency consonants are associated with high frequency sounds, small size,

sharpness, rapid movement, and closeness. On the other hand, low tones, vowels with a

low 2nd formant, and low frequency consonants are associated with low frequency

sounds, large size, softness, heavy; slow movements, and far distance. (Hinton, et al

1994, 325; Fromkin 2000, 521) For example, the word *tiny* indicates something very

small, but *teeny* may be even smaller. This is also commonly seen in how words are

diminutivized in English; a small dog is a "*doggie*," a small cat is a "*kitty*," and so

on. Even my name reflects this; my family often calls me Katie (I am both the youngest

and the shortest in the family!). Likewise, other languages show this phenomenon. In

German, the diminutive is indicated by adding the suffix [xɪn], and Spanish uses the

suffix [itə] (fem.) or [ito] (masc.). A former German teacher called me *Katechen*

[keɪtxɪn] (the German equivalent of Katie), and a Spanish professor called me Katiesita

[keɪtisitə]. Both of these diminutives—from two very different languages—use a high

front vowel to indicate small size. From this, it is evident that this sound-symbolic

process is pan linguistic.

Certain phoneme classes are sometimes associated with particular semantic

fields. Most commonly discussed with literature and reading in mind, this phenomenon

is best illustrated by imitative and synesthetic forms. In imitatives, stops equal abrupt

sounds and acts; continuants represent continuing sounds or acts; nasals are used for

reverberating, ringing sounds; and fricatives mimic the quick, audible motion of an

object through air. (Hinton et. al., 1994, 10) In literature, the sound of words chosen to

portray meaning plays an important role. This shows up most frequently in poetry, but

may also be present in other forms of literature and particularly in neologism. In

linguistics, the major question is, how arbitrary is language form? How much can the

form of language be tied to meaning? The answers to these questions, if they exist, are

amorphous, but it is clear that meaning and sound can never be fully separated. (Hinton,

et. al., 1994, 5)

"The sound of a word is not random. Be it the movement of the lips and tongue,

or the sensory experience of saying or reading the word, sounds create certain

associations." (Sedia, 2005) Individual segments can, themselves, create images and

impressions. [i] and [ɪ] sounds are often perceived as smaller than [e] or [o] sounds.

These impressions are important to our pictorial and verbal thinking, creating a muscle

sense that enables us to mesh all of our impressions into a more complex whole. When

we read or speak any given word, it feels a certain way. Some words may be thought

beautiful or ugly, depending on the feel of them in the mouth. "The words used to build

a fictional world…matter," (ibid) some fantasy worlds endure and some don't; some

fantasy writing is authentic and some isn't. Appropriate use of neologism increases the

chance that the story will be real and endure.

"Many authors use onomatopoeic words—words that mimic a natural sound like

crunch or *slosh*…Often we associate certain sounds with certain visual images. This

device is often used in fantasy, where good characters have pleasant-sounding names

full of vowels and lilting sounds, and the villains have names that are based on sibilants

(such as the House of *Slytherin* in the Harry Potter Books) or burdened with too many

consonants." (Sedia, 2005) This reflects what was mentioned about the rules of

neologizing on pages 13-15; English language speakers, while they may be perfectly

capable of producing the sounds, do not recognize words like [vlndŋgsr]; they simply do

not follow the rules of sound that we recognize in our subconscious.

Sound and its perceived meaning can tell us interesting things about neologism.

Kohler (1992) showed subjects two shapes—one rounded and one angular—and two

invented words ("takete" and "maluma"). He then asked them which word went with

which shape. Overwhelmingly, the subjects associated "takete" with the angular shape

and "maluma" with the rounded shape. The consensus held across a number of different

languages, indicating that there is a universal concept at work here. Other researchers

have performed similar experiments, including associating the size of an object with

words that had either a front or a back vowel (the larger object was universally

associated with the back vowel, the smaller object with the front vowel). This further

emphasizes the universality of some sound and meaning associations.

"Thus, every word, regardless of its intended meaning by its creator, will evoke

a certain response in us." (Sedia, 2005)

When fantasy writers create new words, they are essentially creating words to

cover the meanings of the concepts that they, the writers, create. "Neologism is often an

economical way of responding to the specific, sometimes ephemeral needs of

24

communication." (Yaguello, 1998, 41) In the case of fantasy neologism, this

corresponds to the author thinking, "I need a word to convey the meaning this new

concept I've defined" and coming up with a word to mean that concept. This enhances

the plot, theme, and overall feeling of the story by adding to the general sense of

differentness engendered in fantasy literature. Most of the neologisms we find in fantasy

literature should be either lexical gaps or non-English, but still possible in human

language. Contrary to alien language (which has the goal of intimidating and sounding

unhuman), fantasy neologisms should sound human, and so should not contain any non-

human sounds. Alien language seeks to intimidate or inspire fear in the reader/hearer;

fantasy language, on the other hand, should not be "scary," but merely foreign-

sounding.

To summarize, fantasy literature is characterized by strangeness (but not alien-

ness) of setting, character, and plot. To achieve this, fantasy authors often use

neologism to give their stories the proper "foreign" flavor, as neologisms allow for

different sounds than what the reader may be accustomed to. To successfully neologize,

writers must follow a number of phonological rules that govern language, how it is

formed, and how it is used. This paper will examine the English grammaticality of the

neologisms in terms of segments and syllable structure. It will then delve into the

overall compliance with UG and finally the sound symbolism present in the words. The

words will be separated into common and proper nouns because, as Chapters 3 and 4

will show, common nouns are different from proper nouns in word class and in how

they neologize. Examining the data presented in Chapter 3 will show that when fantasy

writers neologize, they follow rules of Universal Grammar, English grammaticality, and

sound symbolism.

Chapter 3. Methods and Data

I. Book Choice

I determined that a minimum of 100 neologisms would be necessary to

accurately study the realm of fantasy neologism. This number should give enough

variety to be certain that any phonological phenomena discovered are truly common to

the arena of fantasy neologism and not just flukes. With this in mind, books were

selected from the winners of the World Fantasy Award (founded in 1975) and/or the

Mythopoeic Award (begun in 1971, with no awards 1976-80), two major annual awards

in the fantasy literature arena. Since these books won the major awards in the field of

fantasy literature, they are good samples of the genre (since literary award winners

generally represent the best of their category, and are selected by those who know the

style best), and therefore good sources for this study. All of the books that won these

awards since their inception were examined, and all the neologisms present were noted.

Not many of the books contained neologisms (a fact which will be discussed in Chapter

4), and this netted fewer than the 100 words necessary to examine the phonology of the

whole realm of fantasy neologisms in depth, so I turned to the *The Science Fiction and Fantasy Readers' Advisory* (Buker, 2002), a guide published by the American Library Association to aid librarians and readers in selecting books in these genres. The *Advisory* includes a list of "recommended reading" books, which provided an additional 15 books to examine. The books on this list provided additional words. Because the *Advisory* is geared towards librarians, whose job it is to help readers decide what books to explore, the recommended books, like those on the award winners lists, are good examples of the genre and worth including in this study. Again, not all of the books listed contained neologisms. Only books in which neologisms were found are included in this study. The fact that of the 78 books examined only nine contained neologisms is worth noting, and will be discussed in Chapter 4. Several of the books included are part of series; however, only the book listed as the award winner or on the recommended reading list are included in this thesis. I did read the other books in the series to get the background of the book included here, but decided that only the specific books given awards or included on the recommended list would be used.

II. **Word Choice**

In searching for neologisms, I selected only words that appeared to be new root formations, since processes such as compounding, shifting, and affixing, while legitimate forms of neologism, would not provide any interesting phonological data, being simply parts of words already in existence. Not surprisingly, this cut down the number of neologisms found significantly. Many of the award-winning and recommended books not included in this study did have forms of neologism other than root creation, which affirms the idea that creative language use is in play, but does not provide useful data for this thesis. Since the number of new-root neologisms per book is not high (there is no concrete evidence of this, but it seems likely that this dearth of neologisms is due to the difficulty in creating new concepts and the need to avoid over-neologizing. This would also explain why most of the books do not contain neologisms), no criteria was set for choosing one word over another from any book, but rather every neologism found in each book was gathered. To determine which words were neologisms, any unfamiliar word was looked up in the *Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* (Random House, 2006) to determine whether it was, in fact, a new word. If the word was not listed in the dictionary, I then searched the internet using Google. If no definitions or usages of the word (other than references to the book it

29

came from) showed up online or in the dictionary, the word was determined to be a

neologism. Names (proper nouns) are examined separately from other words, because

proper nouns appear to belong to a different class of word from common nouns. This

difference exists because languages distinguish between two different categories of

noun, one that refers to objects, the other referring to individuals. These are common

and proper nouns. "We talk of a "*spoon*," "the *spoon*," "*spoons*," "*some spoons*," "*many*

spoons"; … we do not so qualify and modify proper nouns like "*Peter*" or "*Mary*.""

Therefore it is evident that thee two types or words are different classes of words.

(Katz, et al, 1974, 1) One obvious clue to the difference between types of noun (other

than the fact that we capitalize proper nouns) is the fact that, while we can use

determiners like *a, the*, or *some* with common nouns, it is rare to use any such

determiners with proper nouns. One wouldn't say, for example, "*The Frank just drove*

up" or "*Some Jane sat on the floor*". With common nouns, we can and do use these

structures, for example, "*the car is in the driveway*" or "*some water leaked on the*

floor". This syntactic difference is an indication that there may be a phonological

difference as well. More evidence of the difference in common and proper nouns comes

from medical science. It seems that the human brain differentiates between these classes

of words. A test using an EEG to measure the brain's response to common and proper

nouns showed that people process common nouns differently from proper nouns.

(Mueller and Kutas, 1996) Since there is clearly some difference between the classes of

words, they will be analyzed separately to see if there is a difference in their phonology

and how they neologize as well. We will see later in this chapter that proper noun

neologisms are far more common than common nouns, which seems to confirm this

choice.

III. Transcriptions

To transcribed the neologisms, standard English spelling-pronunciation

conventions, as laid out in Carney (1994) were followed. The following are a selection

of some of the spelling rules:

1. Vowel pronunciation is determined by the surrounding vowels and consonants. For

example, the lax vowels ([ɪ ʊ ɛ ə æ]) are generally followed by either a consonant then

the end of the word, or by multiple consonants. On the other hand, the tense vowels ([i

u e o a ɑ]) are usually followed by another vowel or a CV.

2. the [k] sound can be spelled four ways: c, -cc-, k, and -ck.

3. the [dʒ] sound can be spelled j, -ge, VgV, or -dge.

4. the [tʃ] sound is spelled -tch after a lax vowel and ch everywhere else.

There are, of course, many rules governing spelling and pronunciation, and the above

are just a sampling; Carney contains 119 pages of rules detailing the pronunciation of

every letter in all of its possible environments, totaling around 300 rules. Put most

simply, the pronunciation of each sound in a word is affected by the surrounding sounds

and letters. To illustrate, the word "car" is pronounced [kaɹ], but if we add an

orthographic e to the end, we change the sound of the vowel and produce an entirely

different word: care [kejɹ]. Similarly, the sound of a consonant is affected by its

surroundings. Take the [g] and [dʒ] pronunciations of g. If a g precedes another

consonant, an a, or an o, it is [g]; but if it occurs before e, i, or y, it is pronounced as a

[dʒ]. Both pronunciations of the orthographic g can be found in the word "gauge"

[gejdʒ]. At the beginning of the word, we have the [g] sound, but at the end (followed

by a silent e) it is pronounced as [dʒ]. Where a letter appears in the word affects its

pronunciation as well; American English speakers tend to devoice any syllable-final

consonant, regardless of whether it started out as + voice or -voice. (Ladefoged, 1996,

45) In a similar but opposite (voicing as opposed to devoicing) process, a double-t in

the middle of a word (such as butter or clutter) becomes [ɾ]. A reader "hears" these

things automatically when she reads, and so these rules, which are also reflected in

Carney, were used for transcribing the neologisms in this paper. In addition to these

orthographic conventions, audio versions were used for three of the books (audio book

use is noted in the data chart on page 40), which aided in the pronunciation of some

unfamiliar clusters. For example, the audio book reader of *The Hobbit* pronounced a *dh*

cluster as [ð], and both *c* and *ch* as [k]. I applied the insights gleaned from the audio

readings to words with similar appearance from the other books. Since only 1/3 of the

books have words transcribed from audio, stress patterns will not be included in the

analysis. More detailed discussion of the reason for this is in chapter 4.

IV. **The books**

The Crown of Dalemark by Diana Wynne Jones (1993) (1996 Mythopoeic Award for

Children's Literature winner)

This is the conclusion of a four-book series. The first novel in the series

concerns Mitt, a musician with a very powerful musical instrument. He is assigned the

task of killing Noreth, a teen who believes it's her destiny to become queen. Then the

story jumps ahead 200 years and introduces Maewen, a 13-year-old girl, who is sent

back in time to impersonate Noreth. Maewen has no knowledge of her purpose, but

adjusts to time travel and being on a quest without difficulty. Her followers accept her

as Noreth without question. There is an intriguing question about whether the

instructing voice Maewen hears in her head is good or evil (it turns out to be that of the

evil magician, Kankredin), and the idea of the Undying (godlike humans) is interesting,

as is the power given to musicians. The book is set in Dalemark, a mythical-earthly

land divided into opposing Northern and Southern earldoms.

A Hat Full of Sky by Terry Pratchett (2005) (2005 Mythopoeic Award for Children's

Literature winner)

A spunky young girl finds out that she's different and special and goes off to

learn the ways of her kind. This is the sequel to *The Wee Free Men*, in which we

learned that 9-year-old Tiffany Aching is destined to be a witch, like her grandmother

before her. Now 11, Tiffany leaves home to become an apprentice to Miss Level, an old

witch with two bodies and one mind. Comic relief and legwork are provided by

Tiffany's allies, the Nac Mac Feegle or "Pictsies" -- tiny, super-strong blue elves with

Scottish accents and blustering attitudes. This novel is set in Discworld, Pratchett's

fantasy world, which consists of a convex disc resting on the backs of four huge

elephants which are in turn standing on the back of an enormous turtle.

Summerland by Michael Chabon (2002) (2003 Mythopoeic Award for Children's

Literature winner)

Set in Clam Island, Washington, probably around present day, the story takes

place on the tip of the island, called the Summerlands, which enjoys zero rainfall and

yearlong fine weather, thanks to fairy-like creatures called ferishers. Ethan Feld, who

considers himself a really bad ball player, is recruited by Mr. Chiron "Ringfinger"

Brown to help the ferishers, in order to save their world from eradication. On the great

tree of worlds, Summerland is on the boundary between two worlds, and an especially

destructive fairy called Coyote and his followers are threatening to destroy everything.

Summerland needs heroes to counter Coyote's threat, and the heroes' journey

involves a lot of baseball, as well as encounters with giants, bat-winged goblins, sea

monsters, and other magic.

Unfinished Tales by J.R.R. Tolkien (1980) (1981 Mythopoeic Award winner)

This is a collection of odds and ends from different ages of Middle-Earth

ranging from the First Age until Sauron's defeat. Not truly a novel, but a group of

stories and bits-and-pieces about Middle-Earth edited posthumously by Tolkien's son.

Set in Middle Earth, Tolkein's fictional mortal lands. Middle Earth is located on our

Earth, in a fictional distant past (ending around 6000 years ago).

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows by J.K. Rowling (2007) (From recommended

reading list, classified as children's literature)

This is the final installment of the seven-book epic about Harry Potter, the boy

who finds out he's a wizard at age 11 and goes on to learn the ins and outs of magic

and the hidden magical world around us. Now, at age 17, Harry faces his crucial

challenge: find and destroy Voldemort's remaining horcruxes and then face down the

evil wizard himself. Everything comes down to the final battle: who lives, who dies,

and what happens to the entire wizarding world. Set in the late 20th century in Britain;

part of the story takes place at Hogwarts, a castle-turned school for young witches and

wizards in northern Britain (likely Scotland) where most of the previous installments

have taken place. This book was selected in lieu of an earlier book in the Harry Potter

series from Buker's recommended reading list.

The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien (1966) (From recommended reading list)

Though the first edition was published in 1937, I used the 1966 version for this

thesis. This is the story of Bilbo Baggins, a Hobbit, who is recruited (against his better

judgment!) by Gandalf the Grey to engage in a dangerous journey. Soon 13 dwarves are

at the hobbit's house, and before he knows it, Bilbo is swept out into a perilous

adventure. The dwarves' goal is to return to their ancestral home in the Lonely

Mountains and reclaim a stolen fortune from the dragon Smaug. Along the way, they

meet giant spiders, hostile elves, ravening wolves--and, most threatening of all, an

underground-dwelling creature named Gollum from whom Bilbo wins a magical ring in

a riddling contest. Set in Tolkein's Middle Earth; located on our Earth, in a fictional

distant past ending around 6000 years ago.

A Wizard of Earthsea by Ursula K. LeGuin (1968) (from recommended reading list)

Ged, the greatest sorcerer in all Earthsea (essentially our Earth in a long-past age when dragons, wizards, and magic were still common), was called Sparrowhawk in his youth, until he gained enough wisdom and power to learn his true name. Power- and knowledge-hungry, Sparrowhawk toyed with ancient secrets and let loose a dangerous shadow on the world. This book (the first of a series of four) is the story of Sparrowhaawk's testing, including how he mastered the "words of power", tamed a dragon, and crossed death's threshold to undo the damage he had done.

In Legend Born by Laura Resnik (2000) (From recommended reading list)

Set in Sileria, a fictional island nation with a society much like the Roman Empire, that has been oppressed for thousands of years by various conquerors. The indomitable Silerians, currently under the rule of the horrible Valdani tribe, rally around a foretold hero. Tansen, the prophesied hero, joins with a thief, an assassin, a highborn lady, a wizard, and the seer who prophesied him, to defeat their mutual foe.

Rhapsody: A Child of Blood by Elizabeth Haydon (2000) (From recommended reading list)

Rhapsody, a talented singer, lives in the ancient city of Easton, and is learning musical magic. In this land, which is basically a different time or dimension of our Earth, real magic lies in music. While running from trouble caused by a former love, she bumps into two shady characters who come to her rescue. The three companions flee both human and magical forces that pursue them by climbing down the root of the Great Tree; as they pass through the fire at the center of Earth, their situation is magically transformed. They emerge not just on the other side of the world but 14 centuries in the future, when they must continue their flight.

All of these books include elements of fantasy (discussed in Chapter 2) such as magic, supernatural beings, and strange settings. The neologisms in the books should serve to add a flavor of otherness to the stories, much like herbs and spices add flavor to food; they accent and enhance the plots and themes of the books. They represent works of different authors of various cultural backgrounds.

V. **The Words and transcriptions**

Table 1 presents the neologisms found in the books listed above. The words are

grouped with the books they come from; common nouns/other words in the first column

proper nouns are listed in the second column.

Table 1: Data

Words as spelled in the text	Names as spelled in the text	IPA transcription based on standard spelling rules and audio versions	Gloss/category
From *The Crown of Dalemark* (Audio book)			
cwidder		kwɪdɹ	a musical instrument, similar to a lute or banjo
	Alhammitt	alhæmɪt	male name, also name of the great god
	Barangaralob	bəɹæŋgəɹəlɒb̥	name of a horse
	Canderack	kændəɹæk	name of a place
	Cenblith	sɛnblɪθ	name of a queen
	Cennoreth	sɛnɔɹəθ	name of a god/witch
	Chindersay	tʃɪndəɹzej	name of a place
	Cindow	sɪndow	name of a place
From *A Hat Full of Sky*			
blethers		blɛðəɹz	nonsense
Feegle		fiːgl̩	a type of fairy
hiddlins		hɪdlɪnz̥	secrets
mudlin		mʌdlɪn	useless person
pished		pɪʃt	tired
scummer		skʌmɹ	unpleasant person

40

scuggan		skʌgɪn	really unpleasant person
spavie		spejvi	another word for mudlin
waily		wejli	a cry of despair
	Kelda	kɛldə	queen of the feegles
From *Summerland*			
ferishers		feɹɪʃɛɹ̩z	small beings who ensure perfect weather
skriker		skɹajkɹ̩	a winged animal that speaks
shaggurts		ʃægɹ̩ts	a type of animal that can attack & injure a skriker
	Azmamza	əzmæmzə	the palindromic language of the skrikers
From *Unfinished Tales*			
	Huor	huɒɹ	man's name
	Hador	hadɔɹ	name of a ruling family
	Dor-lómin	dɔɹ loːmɪn	place—"the land of echoes"
	Nírnaeth Arnoediad	nɹ̩ɪnæθ aɹnowdiad	an event—"the battle of unnumbered tears"
	Mithrim	mɪθɹɪm	name of a lake and of a land of Middle

			Earth
	Tuor	tuəɹ	a man's name
	Annael	anejəl	an elf's name
	Húrin	hurɪn	a man's name
	Haudhen-Ndengin	hawðɪn ndɛŋgɪn	a place, "the hill of the slain"
	Anfauglith	ænfawglɪθ	a place, "the gasping dust"
	Edain	ədeɪn	a race of people
	Hithlum	hɪθləm	a place
	Morgoth	mɔɹgɔθ	a man's name
	Angband	aŋband	name of a fortress
	Thangorodrim	θaŋgɔɹədɹɪm	name of a mountain range, "mountains of oppression"
	Annon-in-Gelydh	ənɑn ɪn gɛlɪð	a place—name of a gate "subterranean passage"
	Noldor	nɔldɔɹ	a clan of elves
	Turgon	tɛɹgɒn	a man's name (Elven King)
	Fingolfin	fɪŋgolfɪn	a man's name (Turgon's father)
	Ulmo	ʊlmo	a man's name "lord of the seas"
	Beleriand	bɛlɛɹiand	a region of Middle Earth
	Círdan	kiɹdan	a male elf's name
	Ered Lómin	ɛɹɪd lomin	a mountain range
	Gelmir	gəlmɪɹ	a male name
	Arminas	aɹmɪnas	a male name
	Galdor	galdɔɹ	a male name

	Valinor	valınɔɹ	a place
	Cirith Ninniach	kiɹɪθ nɪniak	name of a ravine "the rainbow cleft"
	Lammoth	lamoθ	mountain range between the Great Echo and the sea.
	Drengist	dʒɹəŋgɪst	name of a firth
	Fëanor	fejanɔɹ	a man's name (greatest of the "deep elves")
	Teleri	tɛleɹi	a clan of elves, "those who come last"
	Nevrast	nɛvɹast	a place
	Beegaer	begaeɹ	name of the great sea
From *The Hobbit* (Audio book)			
	Hobbit	hɑbɪt	a person/creature
	Bilbo	bɪlbow	male name
	Gandalf	gændɑlf	a wizard's name
	Gollum	gɑlʌm	name of the creature bilbo steals the ring from
	Smaug	smaɡ	an evil dragon
	Thrain	θɹejn	a male name
	Oin	oɪn	a male name
	Gloin	gloɪn	a male name
	Balin	bɑlɪn	a male name
	Dwalin	dwɑlɪn	a male name
	Bifur	bifəɹ	a male name

	Bofur	bowfəɹ	a male name
	Bombur	bɑmbəɹ	a male name
	Azog	ɑzag̥	a male name
From *Harry Potter* (Audio book)			
acromantula		ækɹowmæntʃulə	an enormous spider
bowtruckle		bowtɹəkl̩	a creature that looks like a twig
bundimun		bʌndɪmɪn	a magic household parasite
chizpurfle		tʃɪzpɹ̩fl̩	a parasite that feeds on magical items
clabbert		klæbɹt	a tree-dwelling magical creature
snorkack		snɔɹkæk	an imaginary creature
demiguise		dɛməgajz̥	an ape-like creature that can become invisible. their fur is used for invisibility cloaks
dugbog		dʌgbɑg	a magical marsh-dwelling creature that bites humans.
erumpet		eɹʌmpɪt	a magical rhinoceros-like creature
fwooper		fwupɹ̩	a magical bird
gernumbli gardensi		gɹ̩nʌmbli gaɹdɛnsi	the "scientific" name for garden gnomes

plimpy		plɪmpi	a spherical fish
parsel(tongue/mouth)		pɑɹsl̩	the language of snakes/one who speaks snake language
muggle		mʌgl̩	a non-magical person
murtlap		məɹtlæp	a magical plant
nargle		nɑɹgl̩	an imaginary parasite
niffler		nɪfl̩ɹ	a small burrowing magical animal
puffskein		pʌfskejn	a wizard pet
thestral		θɛstɹl̩	skeletal winged horses
wrackspurt		ɹækspɹ̩t̥	an imaginary invisible insect
bubotuber		bubotubəɹ	an ugly magical plant
mimbulus mimbletonia		mɪmbjʌləs mɪmbl̩tonijə	a rare magical plant
plangentine		plændʒəntin	a magical fruit
puffapod		pʌfəpad̥	a magical plant with pink pods
snargaluff		snɑɹgəlʌf	a magical plant
horcrux		hɔɹkɹəks	an item that contains part of a wizard's soul.
quidditch		kwɪdɪtʃ	a magical sport.
From *A Wizard of Earthsea*			

	Gont	gɔnt	name of a place
	Gontish	gɔntɪʃ	from gont
	Duny	duni	a boy's name
Noth hierth malk man hiolk han meith han		nɑθ hiɹθ malk man hiɑlk han mejθ han	some of the words of power
	Kargad	kɑɹgəd	name of an empire
	Karego-At	kəɹego-æt	one of the four great lands
	Atuan	ətuən	one of the four great lands
	Hur-at-Hur	hʊɹ æt hʊɹ	one of the four great lands
	Atnini	ɛtnɪni	one of the four great lands
	Torikles	tɔɹɪklz	place
	Torheven	tɔɹhevən	name of an island
	Spevy	spejvi	place
	Karg(s)	kɑɹg̊z	name of a people
	Kargish	kɑɹgɪʃ	
	Re Albi	ɹej ælbi	a place
	Ogion	owdʒɹjən	a place
	Ged	gɛd	a male name
	Ovark	owvɑɹk	a place
	Wiss	wɪs	a place
	Hardic	hɑɹdɪk	a place
	Osskil	ɔskɪl	a place
	Perregal	peɹəgl̩	a place
	Andrades	ændɹədiz	a place
	Andrad	ændɹɛd	a place
	Andradean	ændɹədiɛn	from Andrad
	Barnisk	bɑɹnɪsk	a place

	Harnon	haɹnən	a place
From *In Legend Born*			
	Valdania	vældejnɪjɑ	a place
	Valdani	vældejni	the people of valdania
	Kint	kɪnt	a place
	Kintish	kɪntɪʃ	from Kint
	Cavasar	kævəsaɹ	a place
	Shaljir	ʃældʒɪɹ	a place
	Sileria	sɪleɹɪjə	a place
	Liron	liɹən	a place
	Zilon	zajlən	a place
	Illan	ɪlən	a place
	Emeldar	əmɛldəɹ	a palce
	Dalishar	dalɪʃaɹ	a mountain
	Gamalan	gæməlɪn	a place
	Alizar	ælɪzaɹ	a place
	Daishon	daɪʃən	a place
	Sirinikara	səɹɪnɪkaɹə	a river
	Mirabar	mɪɹəbaɹ	a woman's name
	Daurion	dɔɹijən	name
	Shalla	ʃalə	female slave
	Shallaheen	ʃɑləhiːn	male slave
From *Rhapsody: A Child of Blood*			
	Gwynwood	gwɪnwʊd	place name
	Realmalir	ɹɪalməliɹ	place name
	Ylorc	ɪlɔɹk	place name
	Bethe Corbiar	bɛθə kɔɹbɪjəɹ	place name
	Manteids	mæntejɪdz̪	place name

	Serendair	sɛɹɪndejɹ	place name
	Farrist	feɹɪst	a male name
	Adalian	ədælɪjɪn	place name
	Tashinar	taʃɪnaɹ	a woman's name
	Josarian	dʒowzaɹɪjɪn	a man's name
	Yahrdan	jaɹdan	name
	Hindervold	hɪndəɹvɔld	place name
	Tar'afel	taɹʔafl̩	name of a river
	Navarne	nəvaɹn	place name
	Tyrian	tiɹɪjən	place name
	Canrif	kænɹɪf	place name
	Krevensfield	kɹejvɪnsfild	place name
	Sordold	sɔɹdold	place name
	Lirin	liɹɪn	a woman's name
	Garael	gəɹeɛl	a man's name

Chapter 4 Analysis

In this chapter, the neologisms presented in Chapter 3 will be examined. To

begin, the analysis will examine some basic characteristics of the neologisms. Then the

common nouns will be examined, followed by the proper nouns. Both types of word

will be held up to the light of UG, English grammaticality, and sound symbolism, as

presented in Chapter 2. Specific examples will be presented and examined for each of

these three aspects of phonology. Finally, the examination of the data will lead to the

conclusion that neologisms do, in fact follow rules. As mentioned briefly in Chapter 3,

this thesis will not discuss stress patterns. This is because most of the words are

transcribed according to English spelling/pronunciation rules rather than audio versions

of the books. Audio versions were used for the *Hobbit* (Tolkein), *The Crown of*

Dalemark (Jones) and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (Rowling). Analyzing

stress patterns according to the rules of English spelling and pronunciation would likely

not provide any useful data for this study, as since I am unable to dis-ingrain my

knowledge of reading and pronunciation I would naturally pronounce all of the words

with standard English stress patterns.

One interesting note is that, contrary to Sedia's claim that fantasy is rich in neologism, there are very few neologisms given the total number of books examined; only 9 out of 78 books netted any neologisms at all. Fantasy may provide more neologisms than other genres, but not the mother lode that one might initially believe. This is supported by Algeo and Pyles, who, as discussed in Chapter 2, explain that of all the types of neologism, only .5 % of words that enter the lexicon are new root creations. Fantasy writers have a much easier job if they borrow their words from foreign languages or avoid neologizing by using creative settings to set the tone for their stories. This is likely because, also mentioned in Chapter 2, it is difficult to create new concepts, and authors need to avoid over-neologizing to avert the possibility of their words becoming commonplace. Many of the books included on the award winners and recommended reading lists contained words that at first appeared to be neologisms, but on further investigation I discovered were borrowed from foreign languages (frequently Welsh, Gaelic, or Latin).

I. Characteristics

The neologisms listed in chapter 3 are all nouns or noun-derived adjectives, and

the adjectives present are all derived from nouns on the list. For example, the adjective

Kintish from *In Legend Born* (Resnik), meaning from the land of Kint, comes directly

from the neologized noun *Kint*, referring to a country. This is not surprising, as it is

much more difficult to invent a new action concept (a verb) than a thing-concept (a

noun). Creating a new verb would not only be difficult for the writer, it would be hard

for the reader to accept. (Sedia, 2005) We may have no problem with reading about

new people or places with names we've never heard before, but creating a new concept

for an action is a different ball of wax; it requires suspending our understanding of the

world and its physics to include new concepts of action for which we have no reference.

Making a new noun, on the other hand, is simple to do and easy for the reader to

understand. Since a writer can freely invent people or places that the reader is not

familiar with, the writer can also invent words to identify them. The exception to this

rule appears to be in children's books, which appear—based on the evidence of the

types of neologisms in chapter 3—to invent common nouns more freely than adult

books.

Proper noun neologisms far outweigh common noun neologisms. Of the 178

neologisms included in the table on pages 39-47, 125, or more than 2/3, are names. This

large proportion of proper nouns seems to be because, as neologisms should be used only for words that have no translation—for concepts or things that don't already have words assigned to them (Sedia, 2005), it is easier to justify inventing a new word to name someone than to invent a new concept or object to which to assign a neologism. With names, there's no concern that there might already be a word to describe that individual, since the individual is a new creation. Having characters with strange-looking names is an easy way to add a dimension of fantasy otherworldliness without making the story so bizarre as to be ridiculous. Interestingly, all of the common noun neologisms occur in books that are classified as being for children (although adults certainly enjoy these books as much as children). Most likely, this is because children are more easily able to accept new linguistic concepts than adults, who have lost much of the language learning functions. This stems from the fact that a child learns languages more easily than an adult; after a certain age, the language-learning facility in the brain is less able to learn new languages. (O'Grady, et. al., 2005, 370, 403.)

II. The Common Nouns

A. English Grammaticality: clusters and syllable structure

The common nouns listed in Chapter 3 are lexical gaps. Not only are they

perfectly easy to pronounce, they also have the appearance of a modern English word.

Much like the words invented by Dr. Seuss, they appear to be words that are just

waiting to enter the lexicon. (1) lists a few examples of these common nouns:

(1)
cwidder [kwɪdɹ̩] (Jones, 1993)
blethers [blɛðəɹz] (Pratchett, 2005)
mudlin [mʌdlɪn] (Pratchett, 2005)
pished [pɪʃt] (Pratchett, 2005)
spavie [speɪvi] (Pratchett, 2005)
ferishers [feɹɪʃɛɹz̩] (Chabon, 2004)
skriker [skɹaikɹ] (Chabon, 2004)
shaggurts [ʃægɹ̩ts] (Chabon, 2004)
niffler [nɪflɹ̩] (Rowling, 2007)
bowtruckle [boutɹəkl] (Rowling, 2007)
chizpurfle [tʃɪzpɹ̩fl̩] (Rowling, 2007)
fwooper [fwupɹ̩] (Rowling, 2007)
horcrux [hɔɹkɹəks] (Rowling, 2007)
snargaluff [snaɹgəlʌf] (Rowling, 2007)
snorkack [snɔɹkæk] (Rowling, 2007)

Of the 53 common nouns listed in Chapter 3 and sampled here in (1), only one contains

an illegal cluster: fwooper [fwupɹ̩] (Rowling, 2007) contains an *[fw] onset cluster,

which is technically illegal in non-disordered English. However, the *[fw] cluster is not

difficult for a native English speaker to pronounce, and in fact, the sound occurs

frequently on syllable borders. The phrase *laugh while you can*, for example, has the

*[fw] cluster: when spoken quickly, the [f] from the end of *laugh* combines with the [w]

at the beginning of *while* to produce an *[fw] cluster. Additionally, *[fw] occurs

frequently when young children attempt to make a [fl] sound; *fluffy* becomes *fwuffy*,

for example. So, while an illegal onset cluster, *[fw] is hardly an uncommon sound in

English; it is neither difficult nor alien.

On examining the rest of the data in (1), it is evident that, not only are there no

other illegal clusters than the single one listed, but in fact, all of the sounds found in

these words are quite common in English. They do not even have the visual appearance

of foreign words. There are no other violations of English grammaticality or UG. As

mentioned on page 45 in section I of this chapter, these common noun neologisms all

come from books technically directed towards children. So the common nouns invented

by fantasy writers, while still maintaining the fantasy feel of new and different words,

do not have the element of foreign-appearance. Even in terms of syllable structures,

there is nothing new or different in (1).

Example (1) contains words that look and sound like modern English. They are

more truly lexical gaps than the proper nouns; there's not even an attempt to appear or

sound non-English. Does this mean that children's writers are more adept at

neologizing than adult's writers? Well, possibly, but it's more likely the audience.

Children play language games more frequently (although it is sometimes accidental or

part of the language learning process) than adults, and they neologize quite frequently.

Because of this, fantasy novels directed at adults necessarily depend more on neologized

names than common nouns; the writer cannot willfully create new concepts as easily as

she can for a children's story, and so must rely on names for the foreignness desired in

a fantasy story. Dr. Seuss, for example, can get away with inventing words like *grinch,*

nerd, ooblek, sneetch, and *wocket*; but an author writing for adults generally will use

odd- and foreign-looking names such as *Dor-lómin, Cirith Ninniach,* and *Annael*

(Tolkien, 1980) rather than English lexical gaps.

A number of the common nouns borrow freely from established English words.

(2)
hiddlins (Pratchett, 2005)
waily (Pratchett, 2005)
acromantula (Rowling, 2007)

The data listed in (2) are obvious borrowings from English words. *Hiddlins* clearly

comes from "hidden" and "hide", while *waily* comes from the word "wail".

Acromantula

uses the last part of the word "tarantula" to evoke the feeling of a large and dangerous

spider. These "borrowed" neologisms are further evidence that common noun

neologisms adhere to English grammaticality (and fill lexical gaps); the words in (2) are

very close to established English words.

B. Sound Sybmolism

The common nouns, with few exceptions, begin with an obstruent. The four that

do not begin with an obstruent, which are listed in, (3) begin with a vowel or glide, and

all have negative connotations.

(3)
acromantula (Rowling, 2007)
erumpet (Rowling, 2007)
wrackspurt (Rowling, 2007)

Acromantula, as mentioned in section 2 (on page 55), is an enormous, hard-to-kill, man-

eating spider. *Erumpet* is a dangerous rhinoceros-like beast with an exploding horn, and

wrackspurt is an annoying insect. Certainly, since the most prevalent syllable structure

in all language is CV (Roca and Johnson 1999, 237) it is not unexpected that so few

begin with a vowel; however, it does show that the authors are aware of this underlying

phonological preference. Perhaps the reason for the negative connotations of example

(3) is the violation of this elementary rule. If the words violate such a common

linguistic rule, there must be something "bad" about what the words express!

All but 6 of the common nouns end with an obstruent (those that don't end with

an [i] or an [ə]). While this violates language's preference for CV syllables, it also

reflects the fact that English often violates this preference by ending syllables with a

consonant and reinforces the notion that neologism creators are adhering to English

phonology. Additionally, it seems that if fantasy writers adhere too strictly to all of the

rules, the words they create may become too "ordinary" to fulfill their role as enhancers

of the strangeness of the story.

Most of the common nouns with a possible negative connotation have a back

vowel and a nasal (however, there are also several non-negative connotable words that

also have these characteristics). While this phenomenon does not appear in any of the

literature about sound symbolism, it does indicate that there is a sound-symbolic process

occurring here: when we hear the back vowels and nasals in these negative words, we

associate them more firmly with their connotation. This may be because, as the

frequency code (Hinton et. al., 1994) shows, back vowels are associated with large size.

Often in fantasy, large size is associated with something evil like a giant or an ogre or a troll. Alien language, for instance, makes much use of back vowels as a means to give the reader/hearer a sense of the antagonistic. (Sedia, 2005, Weinberger, Mss.)

One specifically English sound-symbolic word is *scuggan* [skʌgɪn], an unpleasant person (Pratchett, 2005). In English, the syllable [ʌg] is virtually always associated with something distasteful, like something rotten found in the refrigerator. The sound one makes when confronted with something gross like this is usually *ugh*! The [sk] cluster is one we might associate with things like skunks, which are likewise disagreeable. This being so, *scuggan* has very appropriate sounds to express its meaning.

III. The Proper Nouns

A. Proper Nouns' Background: where they come from and how they work

One of the effects of neologisms is to create an aura of differentness such that aspects that seem common in our every-day world feel out of place. For instance, one of the books has names like Gwidian and Lirin (which are very different from what I encounter in my life), giving the reader a feeling of otherness. Several chapters later, the

58

book introduces two characters named Sam and Emily. Seeing such ordinary names

(that I'm used to in my day-to-day life) in the midst of the oddness engendered by the

fantasy names and words was disturbing; it made what I consider "ordinary" into the

odd, while the "odd" names in the story were normal in their setting. However foreign

they look or sound, though, none of the neologisms violate any rules of Universal

Grammar.

On examining the words, many of the neologisms look a lot like Old English

(OE), or possibly related languages like Welsh or Gaelic. Having read Old and Middle

English texts (Beowulf, Chaucer, and so on) in the original languages previously, I am

familiar with the appearance of the words; many of the proper nouns listed in Chapter 3

look very similar to these texts. (4) presents a sample of texts in OE to compare to the

neologisms in this thesis:

(4):
First lines of Beowulf in Old English (Alexander, 2005)

Hwæt! wē Gār-Dena in geār-dagum,
þeod-cyninga, þrym gefrunon,
hu ðaæþelingas ellen fremedon.
Oft Scyld Scefing sceaþena þreatum,
monegum mægþum, meodosetla ofteah,
egsode eorl. Syððan ærest wearð

feasceaft funden, he þæs frofre gebad,
weox under wolcnum, weorðmyndum þah,
oðþæt him æghwylc þara ymbsittendra
ofer hronrade hyran scolde,
gomban gyldan. Þæt wæs god cyning!

Lord's Prayer in OE (Whitelock, 1996):

Fæder ure þu þe eart on heofonum,
Si þin nama gehalgod.
To becume þin rice,
gewurþe ðin willa, on eorðan swa swa on heofonum.
Urne gedæghwamlican hlaf syle us todæg,
and forgyf us ure gyltas, swa swa we forgyfað urum gyltendum.
And ne gelæd þu us on costnunge, ac alys us of yfele. Soþlice.

The first line of the Lord's Prayer would likely be pronounced [fɑðɹ ʊɹə ðu ðɛ eɑɹt ɒn

heofənəm]; all of the sounds that exist in Modern English existed in Old English, so

while the words look very different from today's writing, the sounds are not different.

(Crowley, 1992, 43)

Compare the texts above to some of our proper noun neologisms listed in (5):

(5)
Annael [aneɪəl] (Tolkein, 1980)
Mithrim [mɪθɹɪm] (Tolkein, 1980)
Arnodiad [aɹnoediad] (Tolkein, 1980)
Noldor [nɔldɔɹ] (Tolkein, 1980)
Edain [ədeɪn] (Tolkein, 1980)
Fëanor [feɪanɔɹ] (Tolkein, 1980),

60

Yahrdan [jaɹdan] (Haydon, 2000)

Ylorc [ɪlɔɹk] (Haydon, 2000)

Sordold [sɔɹdold] (Haydon, 2000)

Garael [gəɹeɛl] (Haydon, 2000)

Cenblith [sɛnblɪθ] (Jones, 1993)

Canderack [kændəɹæk] (Jones, 1993)

Gollum [gɑlʌm] (Tolkein, 1976)

Thrain [θɹeɪn] (Tolkein, 1976)

Gloin [glɔɪn] (Tolkein, 1976)

Illan [ɪlən] (Resnik, 2000)

Sileria [sɪleɹɪjə] (Resnik, 2000)

Gamalan [gæməlɪn] (Resnik, 2000)

Noth hierth malk man hiolk han meith han [nɑθ hiɹθ malk man hiɑlk han meɪθ han]
(LeGuin, 1968)

While there may not be a one-to-one correlation between these fantasy neologisms and

OE, the neologisms in (5) certainly do have a similar Anglo-Saxon appearance; they

have similar letter combinations and arrangements, giving them a strong appearance-

similarity to the OE texts. Since the sounds of OE are likely much the same as the

sounds of Modern English (Crowley, 1992, 43), it is only the appearance of the words

that is foreign; the neologistic words in example 3 bear a distinct resemblance to the OE

words in appearance.

B. English Grammaticality: segments and syllable structure.

Of the 135 proper noun neologisms listed, one contains an illegal cluster:

(6): [ndɛŋgɪn] (Tolkein, 1980)

(6) contains an *[nd] onset cluster, which, in non-disordered English, is illegal, as it

violates the sonority sequence for an onset. The sonority sequence states that the

sonority of the segments in a syllable should decrease the farther away from the syllable

rhyme (the vowel) they are. Since the *[nd] in this case is in the onset of a syllable, it

violates English grammaticality. The cluster itself is not difficult to produce, however,

and [nd] is a common coda cluster (*and, grand, stand*, etc.). [nd] also occurs frequently

on syllable borders, with the [n] as the last segment of the first syllable and the [d] as

the first segment of the second syllable as in *pandemic* [pændɛmɪk], creating, in

essence, an [nd] cluster. So, while *[nd] is a violation as an onset cluster, it is not a

violation in codas or on borders, and so is not an out-of-the-ordinary sound in English.

In the proper noun neologisms, we do not encounter any illegal syllable

structures. English allows a fairly broad range of syllables (CV, CVC, CCVC, CVCC,

CCVCC, etc. with restrictions such as the sonority sequence), and none of the

neologisms violate these syllable structures. Additionally, the neologisms all seem to

add morphology the same way that English does—plural adds [s], [z], or [ɪz]; an

adjective derived from a noun adds [ɪʃ], as in (5):

62

(5) *Gontish* (LeGuin, 1968)

Kintish (Haydon, 2000)

Both of the neologisms in (5) come directly from neologized place names.

One other important note is that none of the neologisms violate UG in any way.

There are no non-human sounds, no humanly impossible clusters or syllable structures;

nothing alien at all. The authors all manage to give the fantasy flavor of otherness to

their stories using neologisms without attempting to sound inhuman.

C. Sound Symbolism

Close examination of the neologisms shows that there are, in fact, some common

sound symbolisms that appear repeatedly.

(6)

Huor [huəɹ] (Tolkein, 1980)

Tuor [tuəɹ] (Tolkein, 1980)

Húrin [hurɪn] (Tolkein, 1980)

Morgoth [moɹgɔθ] (Tolkein, 1980)

Turgon [tɛɹgɒn] (Tolkein, 1980)

Ulmo [ʊlmo] (Tolkein, 1980)

Galdor [galdɔɹ] (Tolkein, 1980)

Fëanor [feɪanɔɹ] (Tolkein, 1980)

Gandalf [gændɑlf] (Tolkein, 1976)

Bofur [bofəɹ] (Tolkein, 1976

Josarian [dʒoʊzaɹɪjɪn], (Haydon, 2000)

Many of the male names, such as those in (6) contain low back vowels. Admittedly, the

63

names in (6) also contain front vowels; however, it is interesting to note that the

primary vowel in most of (6) is a back vowel. This may be because the male characters

are often heroic and larger-than-life, but also because in general, men are larger than

women. Since back vowels are often associated with large size (Hinton, et. al.) it is

possible that we might also associate them with male characteristics.

(7)
Mirabar [mɪɹəbaɹ] (Resnik, 2000)
Tashinar [taʃɪnaɹ] (Haydon, 2000)
Lirin [liɹɪn] (Haydon, 2000)

Similarly, most of the female names, such as those in (7), contain high front vowels.

This is likely for the reverse of the reason that the male names contain low back

vowels: women are associated with smaller size (Hinton, et. al.).

(8)
Feegle [fiːgl̩ (Pratchett, 2005)
Kelda [kɛldə] (Pratchett, 2005)
Ferishers [feɹɪʃɛɹz̥] (Chabon, 2004)
Annael [aneɪəl] (Tolkein, 1980)
Círdan [kiɹdan] (Tolkein, 1980)

The names in (8) are all fairies and elves. As (8) shows, many of the names for fairies

and elves—which in pop culture are frequently seen as small and quick-moving—

contain high front vowels.

64

(9)
Cennoreth [sɛnɔɹəθ] (Jones, 1993)
Duny [duni] (LeGuin, 1968)

(9) Gives examples of names with both back and front vowels. *Cennoreth,* the name of

a goddess/witch, contains both a high front vowel and a low back vowel, which

effectively expresses the largeness associated with gods and the smallness associated

with females. *Duny* contains both the back [u] and the front [i]. This character is male,

but a young boy. Perhaps the reason for near-violation (it does contain a back segment,

so cannot be considered a true violator of this sound symbolic process) is that the boy is

small, and therefore has more qualities of smallness and quickness than an adult male.

Certainly, many of the neologisms listed in chapter 3 combine multiple sound

symbolisms, following some rules and breaking others; however, even this shows a

subconscious adherence to the grammatical rules of English and the UG: languages

follow some rules and break others.

Many of the place and event names also reflect these sound-symbolic processes.

(10)
Dor-lómin [dɔɹ loːmɪn] (Tolkein, 1980)
Nírnaeth Arnoediad [neɪɹnæθ aɹnoediad] (Tolkein, 1980)
Anfauglith [ænfauglθ] (Tolkein, 1980)
Thangorodrim [θaŋgɔɹədɹɪm] (Tolkein, 1980)

Ered Lómin [ɛɹɪd lomin] (Tolkein, 1980)
Lammoth [lamoθ] (Tolkein, 1980)
Atuan [ətuən] (LeGuin, 1968)
Hur-at-Hur [hʊɹ æt hʊɹ] (LeGuin, 1969)
Torikles [tɔɹɪk̩lz] (LeGuin, 1968)

The first word in (10) is "the land of echoes", and it contains both low back vowels

indicating the large size associated with a land and the space necessary to create an

echo, and nasals, which are associated with reverberation (Hinton, et. al), like an echo.

The second word is "the battle of unnumbered tears" and contains nasals and fricatives,

indicating the ongoingness of the sorrow, plus a stop at the end, associated with

finality—a definite aspect of battle and death. Next on the list is a place name meaning

"the gasping dust," contains the fricatives that one might associate with the sound of a

gasp. *Thangorodrim, Ered Lómin,* and *Lammoth* are mountain ranges, and contain the

low back vowels we associate with large size and slowness (Hinton, et. al), which is

appropriate to the size and immobility of mountains. The final three neologisms in (10)

are three of the four "great lands", and all contain low back vowels, indicative of the

large size one thinks of in regard to a great land.

One other interesting note is that two of the books—with completely different

plots and themes—invented the same word, spelled differently, but pronounced the

same: *spavie* [speɪvi] (Pratchett, 2005) and *spevy* [speɪvi] (Le Guin, 1968). While this

may be no more than coincidence, it is still worth noting that two unrelated authors

would separately create the same word. This further reinforces the idea that fantasy

authors are following phonological rules when they neologize.

It would be irresponsible, having examined the ways in which writers obey the

rules of sound symbolism, not to acknowledge the fact that the writers also, in some

cases, violate these rules. While there are certainly sound-symbolic rule violations, this

does not necessarily overrule the hypothesis that writers follow rules in neologizing, but

rather it reflects on the fact that language is not rigid, and possibly reflects the need for

fantasy writers to not follow the rules too closely, which would risk making their words

predictable, thereby defying the sense of otherness that the neologisms help create.

IV. What this all means

Writers—whether they are aware of it or not—have conventions that they follow

when they neologize. This, of course, relates to Universal Grammar and the fact that all

languages have rules that speakers follow without being conscious of the rules at all. A

writer subconsciously knows, for example, that if she wants to create a positive, happy

67

character, she shouldn't name him [χulɔɹg] or the like to avoid giving the subconscious impression of negativity associated with the character. The velar fricative (a sound that implies harshness) plus the back vowels and the velar stop create a feeling of discomfort. Conversely, [χulɔɹg] would be an excellent name for a hulking, troll-like, intimidating character, whereas [alinaɹa] would be an excellent name for a positive person, with its front vowels and lack of fricatives and back-sounds.

The writers know that there are other linguistic rules to follow. They know that proper noun neologisms are preferable to common nouns (with the exception of books directed at children), they know that there are sound-symbolic processes such as vowel location associations to incorporate, they know that the words should not contain any non-human sounds. It is evident that, just as writers follow rules for the writing itself, they also follow rules when they invent new words; the words may sound foreign or borrow from older versions of English, but they for the most part do not violate any of the phonological rules that readers are accustomed to in speaking. Moreover, writers rarely, with the exception of children's books, create new common nouns; they invent chiefly proper nouns to avoid forcing the reader to accept completely new ideas and concepts.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

Fantasy neologisms are fairly rare, and those that do exist follow the same phonological rules that English does. With two exceptions, no English grammaticality is violated, and Universal Grammar is never violated. Additionally, the English grammaticality rules that are violated do not result in words that are difficult for a native English speaker to produce. In fact, the resulting sounds are not only possible for an English speaker to produce, but they are sounds that the speaker is completely familiar with. The new words are mostly names, which indicates that the writers know—consciously or not—that it is both easier to invent a name and easier for the reader to accept a new name as opposed to an entirely new concept. This shows that fantasy neologisms, while used primarily for the effect of adding verisimilitude to fantasy stories, are really not different from English. In sound symbolism, the neologisms adhere to fairly standard rules. They do occasionally violate the expected rules of sound symbolism; however this increases the words' power to add fantasy-flavor to the stories. By not rigidly following the rules, the author eliminates the

possibility that the neologisms become commonplace. Therefore, when a fantasy writer creates a new word, it is most effective if it obeys some, but not all, of the rules.

The fact that so few neologisms exist in fantasy and the fact that they violate so few rules of phonology are doubtless related. The difficulty of creating an entirely new word is reflected in the fact that only .5 % of all neologisms in the English language are pure root creations. It being so difficult to create a new concept in order to make a new word, it is no surprise that so few phonological rules are violated; it would be as difficult to accept a word that violates our accustomed phonology as it is to create a new word. In addition, the fact that few of the words violate English grammaticality seems to indicate that, for the purpose of a fantasy writer, creating a word that looks funny, even though it may sound normal to the English speaker's ear, is a technique for giving the foreign feeling sought in fantasy. Since the words are read instead of spoken, this "eye appeal" of strange-looking written words accomplishes the goal of creating a fantasy setting and theme. Writers know that there are rules to follow when they create new words, and they use the rules to create neologisms that enhance their stories by adding a different appearance to the words, creating the foreign flavor that fantasy depends on for theme and effect. Words are the tools that writers use to take their

reader into the world the writer creates, and by using neologisms like those examined in

this thesis, the writer creates a more effective tool for her purpose, achieving

verisimilitude.

Works Cited

Works Cited

Alexander, Michael, Ed. *Beowulf: Old English Edition.* Penguin Books, London, 2005.

Algeo, John and Pyles, Thomas. *The Origins and Development of the English Language*, 5th ed. Wadsworth, Boston, MA, 2004.

Buker, Derek M. *The Science Fiction and Fantasy Readers' Advisory: the Librarian's Guide to Cyborgs, Aliens, and Sorcerers.* American Library Association, Chicago, 2002.

Carney, Edward. *A Survey of English Spelling.* Routledge, New York,1993.

Chabon, Michael. *Summerland.* Miramax, New York 2002.

Costello, Robert B, Ed. *The American Heritage College Dictionary*, 3rd ed. Houghton Mifflin, New York, 1997.

Crowley, Terry. *An Introduction to Historical Linguistics.* 2nd ed. Oxford University Press, New York, 1992

Crystal, David. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1989.

Fromkin, Victoria A., Ed. *Linguistics: An Introduction to Linguistic Theory.* Blackwell Publishing, Malden, MA, 2000.

Gill, Alec. "Shakespeare." http://www.hull.ac.uk/php/cetag/1dbnewords.htm. University
      of Hull, 2002. Accessed 10/24/07

Haydon, Elizabeth. *Rhapsody: A Child of Blood.* Tor Fantasy, New York, 2000.

Hays, Jack. "Dr. John S. Pemberton (inventor of Coca-Cola)" *Nation's Restaurant
      News,* Vol. 30, pp. 120-121. February 1996.

Hemingway, Ernest. *The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway.* Simon and
      Schuster, New York, 1987.

Hinton, Leanne, et al, Eds. *Sound Symbolism.* Cambridge University Press,
      Cambridge, UK, 1994.

Hume, Kathryn. *Fantasy and Mimesis: responses to reality in Western literature.*
      Methuen, Inc., New York, 1984.

International Phonetic Association. *IPA Chart.* Department of Theoretical and Applied
      Linguistics, School of English, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki,
      Thessaloniki, Greece. 2005

Jones, Diana Wynne. *The Crown of Dalemark.* Greenwillow Books, New York, 1993.

Katz, Nancy, Baker, Erica, and Macnamara, John. "What's in a Name? A study of
      How Children Learn Common and Proper Names" *Child Development*, Vol. 45,
      No. 2. Society of Research in Child Development, 1974.

Kohler, Wolfgang. *Gestalt Psychology: An Introduction to New Concepts in Modern
      Psychology.* Liveright Publishing Corporation New York, 1992

Kuiper, Kathleen, Ed. *Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature.* Merriam-
      Webster, Incorporated, Springfield, Massachusetts, 1995

Ladefoged, Peter. *A Course in Phonetics.* Thomson Higher Education, Boston, 1996.

Lake, Jay. "The Purpose of Fantasy," *The Lotus Lyceum*, November 22, 2006.
http://lyceum.kapo.ws/?p＝70. Accessed 2/24/08.

LeGuin, Ursula K. *A Wizard of Earthsea.* Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1968.

McArthur, Tom, Ed. *The Oxford Companion to the English Language.* Oxford
University Press, New York, New York, 1992.

Meyer, Michael, Ed. *The Compact Bedford Introduction to Literature,* 4th ed. Bedford
Books of St. Martin's Press, Boston, Massachusetts, 1997.

Mueller, Horst and Kutas, Marta. "What's in a name? Electrophysiological differences
between spoken nouns, proper names, and one's own name".
http://cogprints.org/13/0/Mueller_&_Kutas.html, University of California at San
Diego, 1996. Accessed 3/31/08.

O'Grady, William, et. al., Eds. *Contemporary Linguistics: An Introduction*, 5th ed.
Bedford/St. Martin's, Boston, 2005

Ohala, John. "Cross-Language Use of Pitch: an ethological view" *Phonetica* 40: 1-18.
1983.

Pratchett, Terry. *A Hat Full of Sky.* Harper Trophy, New York, 2005.

Random House. *Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary.* Random House,
New York, 2006.

Reike, Allison. *The Senses of Nonsense.* University of Iowa Press, Iowa City, IO,
1992.

Resnik, Laura. *In Legend Born.* Tor Fantasy, New York, 2000.

Roca, Iggy and Johnson, Wyn, Eds. *A Course in Phonology*. Blackwell Publishing,
       Malden, MA, 1999.

Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Scholastic, New York, 2007.

Sedia, Ekaterina. "Making Neologisms Work in Speculative Literature"*Reflection's
       Edge*, February 2005.
       http://www.reflectionsedge.com/archives/feb2005/mnwsl_es.html   Accessed
       October 4, 2007.

Tolkein, J.R.R. Tolkein, Christopher, Ed. *Unfinished Tales*. The Ballantine Publishing
       Group, 1980.

Tolkein, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*. Ballantine Books, 1966.

Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The Modern Library, New York,
       1993.

Twain, Mark. *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. Signet Classic, New York,
       2004.

Twain, Mark. *The Prince and the Pauper*. Signet Classic, New York, 2002.

Weinberger, Steven. "Alien Phonology: Science or Fiction," Mss. George Mason
       University, Fairfax, VA.

Weinberger, Steven, Adminstrator. Speech Accent Archive. http://accent.gmu.edu/.
       George Mason University, Farifax, VA. Accessed 3/1/2008.

Whitelock, Dorothy, Ed. English Historical Documents. Routledge, Danvers, MA,
       1996.

Yaguello, Marina. *Language Through the Looking Glass: Exploring Language and Linguistics.* Oxford University Press, 1998.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Kathleen M. Flegal graduated from Herndon High School, Herndon, Virginia in 1998. She received her Bachelor of Arts in English and German from Roanoke College in 2002. She interned in Germany, then worked for several years before attending George Mason University to receive her Master of Arts in Linguistics in 2008.