

First Declension

These forms all are “happy” emotions, and the only meta-information we’re providing relates to the quality of the **reason** for the emotion. It is one of the following:

- Good reason(s)
- Foolish reason(s)
- Bad reason(s)
- No reason at all
- Despite negative circumstance(s)

It has been argued quite correctly that the English phrases “good reason(s)” and “bad reason(s)” are ambiguous, and that this ambiguity is problematic.

I understand “good” to mean “positive,” “harmonious,” “contributing to the common weal,” etc.

Eg: **I’m happy because X won the lottery.** (X can be “I”; “you”; “she”; “my cousin”; anybody, really.)

I understand “bad” to mean “negative,” “disharmonious,” “damaging to the common weal,” etc.

Eg: **I’m happy because my foe fell down the stairs.**

To complete the set:

I understand “foolish reason(s)” to run the gamut...

...from just silly... Eg: **I’m happy because we’re trying on clothes we’ll never be able to afford, and we’re in hysterics, and the poor saleslady knows what’s going on, but it’s a slow day, so she’s humoring us.**

...to truly unwise. Eg: **I’m happy because I’m in love; I know he’s wrong for me, but I love him, and being with him just makes me so happy!**

I understand “no reason” to mean, essentially, that the person isn’t willing to look at why she’s experiencing this happy emotion; it’s enough that it’s present.

Eg: **I don’t know what has made me so happy, but I’m going with it; self-examination is overrated when I’m this happy!**

The “despite negative circumstance(s)” declension is, for me, the dead giveaway that this declension was intended to convey information about “happy” emotions. An “unhappy” emotion might be **because** of a negative circumstance, but only a “happy” emotion can possibly be **despite** it.

Eg: **I know we’re so poor we’re food-insecure, and the rent and the utilities are always overdue, but we’re all together, and that makes me happy!**

Notes

Second Declension

Where the First Declension addresses only one aspect of the emotion, the “reason” for the emotion, the Second Declension addresses three distinct aspects: whether the cause of the emotion is internal or external; whether there is someone to blame for the situation giving rise to the emotion; and whether the situation can be remedied.

The fact that “remedy” is under discussion is strong evidence that the second declension is meant to describe “unhappy” emotions; I don’t know anyone who would want to “remedy” a “happy” emotion....

The fact that “blame” is under discussion is more evidence that we’re discussing “unhappy” emotions. I know of no one who’d try to “blame” another for a happy emotion—except, as has been pointed out in years-long discussions around these declensions, in jest.

That jesting would begin with “**Bíida...**” [**bíi** (SAM: declarative) + **-da** (Mood suffix: jest)] (**I say in jest**) and might very well include the word “**nínálh**” (**the one to blame**) [**nin** (**to cause**) + **-á** (**DOER**) + **-lh** (**PEJ**)]; it would not, grammatically (non-grammatical language in Láadan is, as yet, terra incognita), include a word such as “**thara**,” “**thena**” just doesn’t take that declension.

The forms the Second Declension *does* take are:

External Cause

Blame

- Remedy
- No Remedy

No Blame

- Remedy
- No Remedy

Internal Cause—Blame Impossible

- Remedy
- No Remedy

Opposites

I take as axiomatic that the opposite of a happy emotion is an unhappy emotion—and, vice versa, that the opposite of an unhappy emotion is a happy emotion.

Given the above, I would strongly advocate that any opposite of a first declension word would be cast as a second declension word, and vice versa.

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 : Before Suzette Haden Elgin died, several opposites of First Declension nouns were created, :
 : also cast in the First Declension. The second generation working with Láadan took the decision :
 : to recast these words in the Second Declension. We hope that Láadan will one day go out into :
 : the world and become a living language; we owe it to the future speakers of Láadan to craft a :
 : language that is as free of preventable error as possible—especially with regard to this essentially :
 : Láadan emotional sapience. :
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Note