

Litir do Luchd-Ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Each week the West Highland Free Press publishes the text for Roddy Maclean's "Letter to Gaelic Learners" on BBC Radio nan Gaidheal (103-105 FM).

*The programme is broadcast at 11.50 every Friday morning and repeated at 7.30 pm the following Monday.**

Gheall mi dhuibh, a chàirdean, gun innsinn tuilleadh dhuibh an t-seachdain-sa mu dheidhinn an fhacail “tuathal” a tha ri lorg ann am “partan-tuathal”. ’S e facal air leth inntinneach a th’ann air sgàth ’s gu bheil e co-cheangailte ris an t-sealladh a bh’aig na Gàidheil, o shean, air a’ chruinne-cè.

Mus robh na Gàidheil air gnothach a ghabhail ri Crìosdachd, nuair a bha iad fhathast nam pàganach, bha sealladh aca air an t-saoghal a bha stèidhichte air mar a sheasadh duine ann am meadhan cearcaill, a’ coimhead a-mach a dh’ionnsaigh na h-àird an ear, an àird far am bi a’ ghrian ag èirigh. Bhiodh an àird an ear air a bheulaibh, agus bhiodh an àird an iar air a chùlaibh. Agus ’s e sin a bha na faclan sin a’ ciallachadh anns an t-seann Ghàidhlig – *an ear*, air do bheulaibh, agus *an iar*, a’ tighinn as do dhèidh.

Nise, ma tha sibh nur suidhe an-dràsta, èirichibh gu’r casan. Greasaibh oirbh! Greasaibh oirbh! Seadh, tha sin nas fheàrr. Nise, smaoinichibh air combaist. Coimheadaibh a-mach a dh’ionnsaigh na h-àird an ear, mar a bhiodh an seann draoidh. Togaibh ur làmh dheas. Tha mi’n dòchas gu bheil an tè cheart agaibh! ’S e sin *deas*, agus ’s e sin ur làmh dheas. Tha *deas* ann an Gàidhlig a’ ciallachadh an dà chuid, *right* agus *south*. *South Uist*, Uibhist a Deas. *South Africa*, Afraga a Deas.

Ach dè tha air do làimh chli air a’ chombaist? ’S e sin an àird a tuath. An latha an-diugh, ’s e *cli* neo *ceàrr* a chanas sinn anns a’ Ghàidhlig Albannaich airson *left*. Ach, o shean, bha am facal *tuath* a’ ciallachadh *left* a bharrachd air *north*.

Nise cumaibh air ur casan agus smaoinichibh air a’ ghrèin agus air slighe na grèine tron adhar. Bidh i ag èirigh anns an àird an ear, bidh i a’ gluasad a dh’ionnsaigh na h-àird a deas agus, mu dheireadh, thèid i fodha anns an àird an iar. Anns a’ mhadainn, agus tha seo cutromach, anns a’ mhadainn, aig toiseach an latha, bidh i a’ dol a dh’ionnsaigh na h-àird a deas. Canaidh sinn gur ann “deiseil” a tha i a’ dol. Tha “deiseil” a’ ciallachadh “a’ dol air slighe na grèine” neo, mar as fheàrr a thuigeas daoine an-diugh e, ’s dòcha, “air slighe spòg an uaireadair.”

Agus tha *tuathal* a’ dol calg-dhireach an aghaidh sin. Tha *tuathal* a’ ciallachadh “a’ gluasad an aghaidh na grèine” neo “an aghaidh an uaireadair”.

Ach tha ciall neo dhà eile air na faclan seo, *tuathal* agus *deiseil*, neo *deas*. Bidh fios agaibh gu bheil *deiseil* a' ciallachadh “ullamh” neo “crìochnaichte”. Ach tha am facal eile a tha càirdeach dha, *deas*, cuideachd a' ciallachadh “gasta”, neo “snasail” neo “sgileil le do chuid làmhan”. Tha *deas* co-cheangailte ri *dexter* ann an Laideann. Tha am facal Beurla *dexterous* a' tighinn às a Laidinn.

Agus tha *tuathal* a' dol an aghaidh *deiseil* agus *deas* anns an t-seadh seo cuideachd. Tha e a' ciallachadh “deireannach” neo “ceàrr” neo “troimh-chèile” neo “gun a bhith ro sgileil neo sgiobalta”. Carson, ma tha, an e *partan-tuathal* a chanas sinn ri *hermit crab*? An e gu robhar a' deanamh dheth gum biodh am partan-tuathal a' gluasad an aghaidh slighe na grèine, neo an e dìreach air sgàth 's gur e beathach car neo-àbhaisteach – beathach “ceàrr” – a th'ann?

Chan eil mi buileach cinnteach mu dheidhinn sin, ach tha mi cinnteach mu dheidhinn aon rud. 'S e sin gu bheil tòrr ri ionnsachadh mu dheidhinn dualchas na Gàidhlig bhon dà fhacal sin – *tuathal* agus *deiseil*. Agus bheir sinn sùil a bharrachd air *deiseil* anns an ath litir. Ach, an-dràsta, tha mi deiseil.

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Faclan na seachdaine: partan-tuathal: *hermit crab*; air leth: *particularly*; co-cheangailte (ri): *connected (to)*; sealladh: *view*; o shean: *of old*; an cruinne-cè: *the world*; Crìosdachd: *Christianity*; combaist: *compass*; draoidh: *druid*; ullamh: *ready, finished*; crìochnaichte: *finished*; gasta: *nice*; snasail: *elegant*; deireannach: *slow, backward*; ceàrr: *wrong, awkward*; neo-àbhaisteach: *unusual*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: gheall mi dhuibh gun innsinn tuilleadh dhuibh: *I promised you (pl) that I would tell you more*; a tha ri lorg: *that is to be found*; mus robh X air gnothach a ghabhail ri Y: *before X had become involved with Y*; stèidhichte air duine a sheasadh ann am meadhan cearcaill: *based upon a man who would stand in the middle of a circle*; a dh'ionnsaigh na h-àird an ear/an iar/a deas/a tuath: *towards the east/west/south/north*; air a bheulaibh: *in front of him*; air a chùlaibh: *behind him*; as do dhèidh: *after you*; togaibh ur làmh dheas: *lift your right hand*; slighe na grèine: *the route of the sun*; tha X a' dol calg-dhìreach an aghaidh sin: *X goes directly against that (ie it is an opposite)*; an aghaidh na grèine: *anti-sunwise*; anns an t-seadh seo: *in this way*; gu robhar a' deanamh dheth: *that it was being made out*; gu bheil tòrr ri ionnsachadh mu dheidhinn dualchas na Gàidhlig: *that there is much to learn about the Gaelic heritage*; tha mi deiseil: *I am finished*.

Puing ghràmair na seachdaine: anns a' Ghàidhlig Albannaich: *in (the) Scottish Gaelic. In Litir 8 (9 July) we looked at the slenderisation of feminine nouns in the dative case. Here is another example but this time look out for the adjective, not the noun (which already has a slender vowel at the end of the word). You will see that the adjective is Albannaich, not Albannach. It is slenderised because Gàidhlig is a feminine noun and the adjective also follows the rule. A more obvious example is air do làimh dheis (on your right hand). Deas is lenited and slenderised to dheis. Here are some examples in which both noun and adjective are slenderised: fon uinneig mhòir (under the big window), air a' chaileig bhig (on the small girl), air a' ghealaich ghil (on the white moon). Here are some examples in which only the adjective is slenderised, because the noun already has a slender ending (to the ear): anns an Eaglais Bhric (in Falkirk ie the speckled church); leis a' phìob mhòir (with the great pipe ie Highland bagpipes); anns a' Ghàidhlig Mhanainnich (in [the] Manx Gaelic).*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: Greasaibh oirbh! *Hurry up! (pl.). The singular or familiar form is greas ort! If you are a parent you will find this phrase very useful with the children! Be careful, however, not to overdo its use with adults as it could be deemed impolite, unless (as I was in the letter) you are using it light-heartedly. It is a little less abrupt to put it in the interrogative ie an greas sibh oirbh beagan? Alternatively, you could say something less direct eg tha an ùine a' ruith oirnn; feumaidh sinn cabhag a dhèanamh (time is running away from us; we must make haste).*

* "Litir do Luchd-Ionnsachaidh" is funded by Comataidh Craolaidh Gàidhlig