

## **Litir do Luchd-Ionnsachaidh** **le Ruairidh MacIlleathain**

*A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, written and compiled by Roddy Maclean, and specifically aimed at Gaelic learners who already have some knowledge of the language. A short vocabulary and comments on points of grammar and figures of speech are included with the text. If you have comments, Roddy can be contacted by e-mail at [roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk) \**

An do mhothaich sibh a-riamh mar a bhios cuid de Ghaidheil ag ràdh airson “*in the English language*” – “ann a mBeurla”. Chan e “ann am Beurla”, ach “ann a mBeurla”. An dèidh “ann am”, tha am “B” an ìre mhath a’ dol à fianais, don chluais co-dhiù.

Chan eil a leithid de dh’atharrachadh cumanta ann an Gàidhlig na h-Alba an-diugh, ach bha e cumanta uaireigin. ‘S e a chanas an luchd-gràmair ris “ùr-dhubhadh” neo ann am Beurla, neo ann a mBeurla ma thogras sibh - “eclipsis”. Tha e gu math cumanta fhathast ann an Gàidhlig na h-Eireann. Far an can sinne “ann am Bail’ Atha Cliath” airson “*in Dublin*”, canaidh na h-Eireannaich “i mBail’ Atha Cliath”. Far an can sinne “ann an Dùn Eideann”, canaidh na h-Eireannaich “i nDùn Eideann”.

Ach, mura h-eil e cumanta ann an Gàidhlig na h-Alba an-diugh, carson a bu chòir do luchd-ionnsachaidh aire a thoirt do dh’ùr-dhubhadh? Uill, bu chòir airson dà adhbhair. Anns a’ chiad dol a-mach, tha e toirt do ar cuimhne mar a bhios am fuaim “d” ag atharrachadh, a’ falbh gu dearbh, uaireannan, an dèidh “n”. Bidh sibh eòlach air an abairt “an-diugh”. Ach, ann am mòran àiteachan, ’s e “a-ndiugh” a chanas daoine. Cha chluinnear an “d” ann. Tha an aon rud fìor mu dheidhinn “a dh’aindeoin”. Ged is e “ain-deoin” a tha e a’ ciallachadh, ’s e “ai-ndeoin” neo “a dh’ai-ndeoin” a chanas daoine.

A bharrachd air a sin, tha an t-atharrachadh seo ann am fuaimean a’ mìneachadh dhuinn mar a fhuair sinn cuid de dh’ainmean-àite na h-Alba anns an t-seann aimsir. Mar eisimpleir, tha àite faisg air Obair Pheallaidh air a bheil *Moness* ann am Beurla. Thàinig e bhon Ghàidhlig “bun-eas”. Ach anns an t-seann Ghàidhlig, chanadh daoine, nuair a bha iad anns an àite, gu robh iad “*i mbun eas*”. Agus ’s e an “m” mar sin a thàinig tarsainn chun na Beurla aig toiseach an ainm.

Thachair an aon seòrsa rud le baile anns an Eilean Dubh air a bheil Munlochay ann am Beurla. Thàinig sin às “bun locha”, leis gu bheil am baile aig bun loch-mara, neo aig ceann loch-mara mar a chanadh mòran an-diugh. Dh’atharraich am “b” gu “m” air sgàth ’s gun canadh na daoine o shean, nuair a bha iad anns a’ bhaile, gu robh iad “i mbun locha”. Ann an dòigh car coltach ri sin, dh’atharraich àite ann an Earra-Ghaidheal, “Beinn eadar Dà Loch”, gu Meudarloch ann an Gàidhlig. Gu h-annasach, ge-tà, chaidh am “b” a ghlèidheadh ann am Beurla – ann am “Benderloch”.

Bha an sgoilear ainmeil, Uilleam MacBhàtair, dhen bheachd gur e an aon seòrsa atharrachaidh a bu choireach airson an ainm *Munro*. A rèir beul-aithris, thàinig na daoine sin às bun Abhainn Rotha ann an ceann a tuath na h-Eireann. Bha iad a' fuireach "i mbun Rotha". Ann an Gàidhlig, 's e *Rothach* a chanas sinn ri *Munro*. 'S e sin cuideigin a bhuineas don Rotha.

Ach a' tilleadh do "d" an dèidh "n", chan eil rud sam bith sìmplidh fon ghrèin. Bidh an "d" aig toiseach facail uaireannan air a ghlèidheadh nuair a bhiodh tu an dùil gum biodh e a' falbh. Tha mi a' smaoinichadh air *Beinn Dearg*. Tha *beinn* boireann. Carson, mar sin, nach can sinn Beinn Dhearg? 'S e tòimhseachan a tha sin a dh'fheumas feitheamh chun na h-ath sheachdain.

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**Faclan na seachdain:** luchd-gràmair: *grammarians*; ùr-dhubhadh: *eclipsis* (ie the elimination of the sound of a consonant following another consonant eg "d" after "n", "b" after "m"); adhbhar: *reason*; a dh'aindeoin: *in spite of*; Obair Pheallaidh: *Aberfeldy*; an t-Eilean Dubh: *the Black Isle (north of Inverness)*; Uilleam MacBhàtair: *William (WJ) Watson*.

**Abairtean na seachdain:** an do mhothaich sibh a-riamh?: *did you ever notice?*; a' dol à fianais, don chluais co-dhiù: *disappearing, to the ear at least*; bha e cumanta uaireigin: *it was common at one time*; carson a bu chòir do luchd-ionnsachaidh aire a thoirt do dh'ùr-dhubhadh?: *why should learners give attention to eclipsis?*; anns an t-seann aimsir: *in olden times*; bun loch-mara: *foot of a sea loch*; gu h-annasach, chaidh am "b" a ghlèidheadh ann am Beurla: *unusually, the "b" was preserved in English*; gur e an aon seòrsa atharrachaidh a bu choireach: *that the same sort of change was responsible for*; a rèir beul-aithris: *according to oral tradition*; nuair a bhiodh tu an dùil gum biodh e a' falbh: *when you would expect it to leave (ie not to be there)*; 's e tòimhseachan a tha sin a dh'fheumas feitheamh chun na h-ath sheachdain: *that's a puzzle that must wait until next week*.

**Puing ghràmair na seachdain:** Cha chluinnear an "d" ann: *the "d" is not heard. Have you come across this use of a terminal ann – to emphasize the finality of a statement, particularly a negative statement? In this instance, there is no suitable English translation of the word. It is idiomatic Gaelic, and probably not easily found in texts and dictionaries in this context, but it is not uncommon in everyday conversation. I could have just said cha chluinnear an "d", but the ann strengthens my assertion. Here are some other examples: thuir e nach b' urrainn dha sin a dhèanamh ann (he said he couldn't do it); cha robh e na pholasman ann (he [definitely] wasn't a policeman). Here is an example in a short conversation: Q: Tha Peigi fadalach. An do choimhead thu anns a' ghàrradh air a son, mar a dh'iarr mi ort? A: Choimhead, agus cha robh i anns a' ghàrradh ann (Q: Peggy is late. Did you look for her in the garden as I asked you? A: Yes, and she wasn't in the garden).*

**Gnàths-cainnt na seachdain:** Anns a' chiad dol a-mach: *in the first instance*.

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