

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 **

*Ghineadh iad is rugadh iad,
Is thogadh iad is dh’fhàs
Chaidh stràc dhen t-saoghal thairis orr’,
'S mu dheireadh, fhuair iad bàs.*

'S e bàrd ainmeil a sgrìobh a' chrìomag sin de bhàrdachd. Agus innsidh mi dhuibh cò bh' ann nas fhaide dhen Litir. Ach bu mhath leam na briathran seo a chleachdadh mar dhòigh gus sealltainn nach eil a' chasaid – gu bheil a' Ghàidhlig gu math briathrach mar chànan, is gun cleachd i deich fhaclan far an dèanadh seachd a' chùis ann am Beurla - an-còmhnaidh fìor.

Ghineadh iad is rugadh iad is thogadh iad. Tha na gnìomhairean seo uile anns a' mhodh fhulangach neo, mar a chanas iad ann am Beurla, *the passive voice*. Canaidh sinn “fulangach” ris air sgàth 's gu bheil an cùisear anns an t-seantans, neo an *subject*, a' fuiling a' ghnìomh. Rugadh iad. *They were born*. Chaidh an gnìomh a dhèanamh orra.

Ma tha sibh air a bhith a' leughadh a' Bhìobaill Ghàidhlig, bidh sibh eòlach air na gnìomhairean seo – co-dhiù mar “rug” is “ghin” is “thog”. Mar eisimpleir, seo crìomag as Genesis, Caibideil còig ar fhichead: *An sin ghabh Abraham bean a-rithist, dom b' ainm Ceturah. Agus rug i dha Simran agus Iocsan, agus Medan, agus Midian, agus Isbac, agus Suah. Agus ghin Iocsan Seba, agus Dedan...*

Rug i dha Simran. Tha sin a' ciallachadh “*she bore him Zimran*” – am measg mòran eile, a rèir choltais! 'S e a th' ann an “rug” an gnìomhair “beir” anns a' mhodh spreigeach neo *active voice*, agus anns an *tràth chaithte*, neo *past tense*. 'S e “i” Ceturah agus 's i cùisear an t-seantans. Rug ise Simran.

Ach, mura h-eil sinn airson guth a ràdh oirrese, agus ma tha sinn dìreach airson a ràdh gu robh Simran air a bhreith, chanamaid “rugadh Simran”. Tha an gnìomhair a-nise anns a' mhodh fhulangach. Agus tha gnìomhairean eile ag obair anns an aon dòigh: ghin is ghineadh, thog is thogadh, rinn is rinneadh, thuir is thuirteadh, thug is thugadh, is mar sin air adhart.

Gu leòr de ghràmair ma tha! Tilleamaid don bhàrdachd. B' e an t-ùghdar Rob Donn, bàrd ainmeil an ochdamh linn deug à Cataibh. Rugadh e – agus sin an gnìomhair a-rithist – rugadh e ann an seachd ceud deug agus ceithir-deug (1714) ann an Dùthaich MhicAoidh. Anns an dàn “Marbhrann do Thriùir Sheann Fhleasgach” thug e iomradh air triùir bhràithrean a bha gu math spìocach. Bha iad math air airgead a chàrnadh is a chùmnadh,

ach cha robh iad math air a chosg. Tha e coltach gu robh iad air ionmhas mòr a thiodhacadh – gu robh iad air a chur am falach fon talamh. Gu h-iongantach, chaochail dithis dhiubh taobh a-staigh latha o chèile, agus chaidh an tiodhacadh aig an aon àm anns an aon uaigh. Seo dà rann bhon dàn:

*Aon duine 's bean on tàinig iad,
Na bràithrean ud a chuaidh,
Bha an aon bheatha thimeil ac',
'S bha 'n aodach dhen aon chlàimh:
Mun aon uair a bhàsaich iad,
'S bha 'n nàdar dhen aon bhuaidh:
Chaidh 'n aon siubhal dhaoine leo',
'S chaidh 'n sineadh san aon uaigh.*

*Bu daoine nach d' rinn briseadh iad,
Le fiosrachadh do chàch;
'S cha mhò a rinn iad aon dad,
Ris an can an saoghal "gràs";
Ach ghineadh iad, is rugadh iad,
Is thogadh iad, is dh'fhàs,
Chaidh stràc dhen t-saoghal thairis orr',
'S mu dheireadh, fhuair iad bàs.*

Agus tha e coltach – ged a dh'fheuch iomadh duine ri ionmhas nam bràithrean a lorg thairis air ùine – nach do lorgadh e. Cò aige tha fios nach eil e fon talamh ann am badeigin fhathast.

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Faclan na seachdaine: briathran: *words*; modh: *voice (gram.)*; fulangach: *passive (gram.)*; cùisear: *subject (gram.)*; spreigeach: *active (gram.)*; tràth: *tense (gram.)*; caithte: *past (gram.)*; chanamaid: *we would say*; Dùthaich MhicAoidh: *North Sutherland (the Mackay country)*; spìocach: *miserly*; tiodhacadh: *burial*; uaigh: *grave*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: chaidh stràc dhen t-saoghal thairis orr': *they had their fill of life*; gun cleachd i deich fhaclan far an dèanadh seachd a' chùis ann am Beurla: *that it (fem.) uses ten words where seven would do the job in English*; tilleamaid don bhàrdachd: *let's return to the poetry*; marbhrann do thriùir sheann fhleasgach: *elegy to three old bachelors*; bha iad math air airgead a chàrnadh is a chùmhnadh (or a chaomhnadh): *they were good at accumulating and saving money*; na bràithrean ud a chuaidh (chaidh): *those brothers who went (ie died)*; bha 'n nàdar dhen aon bhuaidh: *their nature was of the same (virtue)*; chaidh 'n aon siubhal dhaoine leo': *the same funeral procession accompanied them*; bu daoine nach d' rinn briseadh iad: *they were men who did not cause harm*; cha mhò a rinn iad aon dad: *they hardly did one thing*; ris an can an saoghal "gràs": *which the world can call "grace"*; nach do lorgadh e: *it was not found (another passive!)*

Puing ghràmair na seachdaine: ghineadh iad is rugadh iad is thogadh iad: *they were begotten and born and brought up. These verbs are all in the Past tense of the Indicative Mood of the Passive Voice. You will be familiar with rugadh and thogadh because they are used so frequently in conversation (we don't tend to say so much about ghineadh!), but it is worth remembering that many other verbs can be conjugated similarly. And, regardless of whether the verb is regular or irregular, most behave in the same way. Form the Past Tense*

of the Indicative Mood of the Active Voice (ie the form in which a subject is doing something) – and then add –adh (or –eachd). Rug mi means “I bore”, so rugadh means “I was born”. Thog mi means “I raised” so thogadh mi means “I was raised.” Similarly chuireadh e means “it was put”, rinneadh e means “it was done” and thuirteadh e means “it was said.” There are a few verbs which slip around the rule, however; one is “faic” (see). We say chunnacas e, rather than chunnaiceadh e, for “it was seen.” And note that, apart from the common ones like rugadh and thogadh, these formations tend to be restricted to more formal use of the language.

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: mu dheireadh, fhuair iad bàs: *in the end, they died.* This is one of several ways to say that somebody died. Aig a’ cheann mu dheireadh, gheibh sinn uile bàs (*in the end we all die*).

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