

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 **

Tha mi a’ smaoinichadh gu bheil an t-àm ann tòimhseachan a thoirt dhuibh a-rithist. ’S fhada o nach robh fear againn anns an Litir. Agus bheir mi dhuibh aig an deireadh e. Chan eil fhios a’ m dè thug orm smaoinichadh air tòimhseachan, ach ’s dòcha gur e am pìos fealla-dhà a chuala mi an latha eile a bu choireach.

Bha balach a bha seo nach robh uabhasach – uill, canaidh sinn “èasgaidh” – mar sgoilear. Cha chanadh e mòran ri phàrantan mu dheidhinn na sgoile, agus oidhche a bha seo, aig an taigh, thòisich athair air a cheasnachadh mu dheidhinn na bha e a’ dèanamh anns an sgoil. “Bha deuchainnean agam an-diugh,” dh’aidich an gille, “ann an Saidheans is Matamataig.” “Agus ciamar a chaidh dhut leis na ceistean?” dh’fhaighnich athair. “O, ceart gu leòr,” fhreagair a mhac, “bha na ceistean furasta gu leòr.”

“Rinn thu gu math, ma thà,” thuirt athair.

“O, cha do rinn,” fhreagair am balach. “Cha do rinn idir.”

“Ciamar a tha sin?” dh’fhaighnich athair. “Thuirt thu gu robh na ceistean furasta.”

“Och uill,” thuirt an gille, “bha na ceistean furasta gu leòr, ach bha na freagairtean cianail fhèin doirbh!”

’S e facal inntinneach a th’ ann an “ceist”, agus tha e inntinneach mar a bhios daoine, bho àm gu àm, a tha gu math aineolach mu dheidhinn na Gàidhlig, a’ cur as a leth gu feum i tòrr fhaclan Beurla a thoirt a-staigh fad an t-siubhail, agus gu robh sin a’ tachairt bho chionn fhada. Chan eil iad uaireannan a’ mothachadh do na h-uibhir de dh’fhaclan-iasaid a th’ air a dhol a-steach don Bheurla. “*Questionnaire*”, mar eisimpleir. Facal Frangach. Ach canaidh sinne ann an Gàidhlig “*ceisteachan*”, facal Gàidhlig a tha co-cheangailte ri “ceist”.

Ann am Beurla nuair a tha iomadh dath air rudeigin, canaidh daoine gu bheil e “*multicoloured*”. ’S ann às a’ Laidinn a thàinig an dà phàirt dhen fhacal sin. Ach ann an Gàidhlig bidh sinn a’ cur dà fhacal Gàidhlig ri chèile, is canaidh sinn “*ioma-dhathte*.” Tha mòran eisimpleirean eile ann mar sin, far a bheil am facal Beurla air tighinn bho chànan eile, neo far a bheil e air a chur ri chèile le freumhan a thàinig bho chànan, neo cànanan, eile. Tha am facal Gàidhlig, ge-tà, gu math – uill – Gaidhealach. Seo grunn eisimpleirean eile, leis an fhacal Bheurla an toiseach, air a leantainn leis a’ Ghàidhlig.

Suburb: fo-bhaile. *Centrifugal*: meadhan-sheachnach. *Omnipotence*: uile-chumhachd. *Philanthropy*: gràdh-daonna. *Ambidextrous*: co-dheas-làmhach. *Synchronous* neo *contemporaneous*: co-thimeil.

Nise, chan eil mi ag ràdh gu bheil cànan seach cànan “nas fheàrr” nan t’ eile air sgàth sin. ’S dòcha gur e sin aon adhbhar ’s gu bheil a’ Bheurla cho neartmhor – gu bheil i a’ gabhail a-steach mòran fhaclan bho chànanan eile gu furasta. Ach chanainn cuideachd gu bheil neart aig a’ Ghàidhlig anns an t-seadh ’s gun urrainn dhuinn mòran fhaclan a chruthachadh innte gun a bhith a’ dol don Laidinn neo seann Ghrèigis.

Co-dhiù, tha an t-àm ann airson an tòimhseachain. Faodaidh sibh smaoinichadh mu dheidhinn mus coinnich sinn a-rithist.

*Triùir air muin trì
'S trì nan dèidh.
B' iad sin triùir bhràithrean,
Dol a dh'iarraidh bean dom màthair fhèin.*

Feumaidh sibh meòmhrachadh air! Agus bu chòir dhomh ràdh gun deach a chruthachadh aig àm nuair nach robh càraichean air a' Ghaidhealtachd. Nan robh duine ann an cabhaig, 's ann air muin eich a bhiodh e a' falbh. 'S dòcha gum bi sin na chuideachadh. Seo an tòimhseachan a-rithist:

*Triùir air muin trì
'S trì nan dèidh.
B' iad sin triùir bhràithrean,
Dol a dh'iarraidh bean dom màthair fhèin.*

Dè am fuasgladh? Innsibh mi dhuibh an ath sheachdain.

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Faclan na seachdaine: tòimhseachan: *riddle*; fealla-dhà: *fun, joke*; èasgaidh: *willing (as a student)*; deuchainnean: *exams*; dh'aidich e: *he admitted*; aineolach: *ignorant*; ceisteachan: *questionnaire*; neartmhor: *strong*; seann Ghrèigis: *Ancient Greek*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: chan eil fhios a'm dè thug orm smaoinichadh air X: *I don't know what made me think of X*; bha na freagairtean cianail fhèin doirbh: *the questions were really difficult*; a' cur as a leth: *accuse it*; fad an t-siubhail: *all the time*; chan eil iad a' mothachadh do na h-uibhir de dh'fhaclan-iasaid: *they are not aware of the large number of loan-words*; anns an t-seadh: *in the sense*; triùir air muin trì: *three people on the back of three*; trì nan dèidh: *three after them*; b' iad sin triùir bhràithrean: *they were three brothers*; (a') dol a dh'iarraidh bean dom màthair fhèin: *going to fetch a "wife" for their own mother*.

Puing ghràmair na seachdaine: “O, ceart gu leòr,” fhreagair a mhac: “O, okay,” replied his son. Are you comfortable with the use of the possessive adjectives in the third person singular? A mhac means “his son”, because the noun is lenited. An unlenited noun ie a mac would mean “her son”; and, of course, am mac would mean “the son.” But look at another example in the Litir: cha chanadh e mòran ri phàrantan (he would not say much to his parents). I deliberately left out the possessive adjective “a”, meaning “his”, in this instance because it is elided in speech (when preceded and followed by vowels) and because this is a common convention in Gaelic writing. This would not be the case with the feminine “a” (hers) which is pronounced and written (ie cha chanadh i mòran ri a pàrantan). Another example is thòisich athair air a cheasnachadh (his father started to interrogate him). “Her father” would be a h-athair. Note, however, that some Gaelic writers think that the masculine possessive adjective should always be written for the sake of clarity and to assist

learners. With the new “Faclair Pàrlamaid na h-Alba” being produced next year, and the need for uniformity of orthographic conventions, one hopes that such matters will soon be settled to universal satisfaction.

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: *ciamar a chaidh dhut leis na ceistean?: how did you get on with the questions? “Ciamar a chaidh dhut?” is a very common phrase which you will hear in daily use in any Gaelic home or workplace. It can be extended to other situations eg Ciamar a chaidh do Hearts an aghaidh Celtic? (how did Hearts fare against Celtic?).*

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