

An Litir Bheag

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An Litir Bheag is a shortened and simplified version of Ruairidh's Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh (also available on the BBC website), designed for those who are at an earlier stage of learning Gaelic. The topic each week is the same as Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh so that, once the Litir Bheag is mastered, a student of the language might wish to try the full Litir. This is Litir Bheag 593 (which corresponds to Litir 897). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

A wee while ago, I saw a film about school education in Zambia. Many children receive their education through a language they don't speak to begin with. Many of the pupils were speaking Soli at home. But there were two other languages in the school – Nyanja and English.

A teacher who spoke Soli at home said that Soli is not suitable in education, at least at the level of the high school. Why? Well, they don't have words for such as 'fallopian tube'.

I was contemplating Gaelic. Do we ourselves have a word for 'fallopian tube'? Well, yes. Pìob-uighe. Literally, 'egg tube'. Pìob-uighe. It makes sense, doesn't it? It can be found on the internet in the Faclair Beag or An Seotal.

Pìob appears in other parts of the body. For example – a' phìob-sgòrnain – trachea or windpipe. Pìob-sgòrnain. A' phìob-dheas – that's 'the right bronchus' – the tube that connects the trachea with the lung. And a' phìob-chlì – the left bronchus.

There is an opinion that pìob came from Latin. It was connected to

O chionn greis, chunnaic mi film mu dheidhinn foghlam sgoile ann an Zambia. Bidh gu leòr de chloinn a' faighinn an cuid foghlaim tro chànan nach eil aca aig an toiseach. Bha mòran de na sgoilearan a' bruidhinn Soli aig an taigh. Ach bha dà chànan eile san sgoil – Njyanja agus a' Bheurla.

Thuir tidsear aig an robh Soli mar chànan dachaigh nach robh Soli freagarrach ann am foghlam, co-dhiù aig ìre na h-àrd-sgoile. Carson? Uill, chan eil faclan aca airson leithid 'fallopian tube'.

Bha mi a' meòrachadh air a' Ghàidhlig. A bheil facal againn fhìn airson 'fallopian tube'? Uill, tha. Pìob-uighe. Gu litreachail, 'egg tube'. Pìob-uighe. Tha e a' dèanamh ciall, nach eil? Gheibhear e air an eadar-lìon anns an Fhaclair Bheag no anns an t-Seotal.

Tha pìob a' nochdadh ann am pàirtean eile dhen bhodhaig. Mar eisimpleir – a' phìob-sgòrnain – trachea no windpipe. Pìob-sgòrnain. A' phìob-dheas – sin 'the right bronchus' – a' phìob a tha a' ceangal na pìoba-sgòrnain ris an sgamhan. Agus a' phìob-chlì – the left bronchus.

Tha beachd ann gun tàinig pìob bhon Laidinn. Bha e co-cheangailte ri

the sound of a musical instrument. Thus, it is natural to call an instrument a 'piob', such as piob-mhòr nan Gàidheal – the great Highland pipes.

There is also the piob-bheag – the small pipes. And the piob-uilinn of the Irish. That's the 'elbow pipes' or 'uil(l)eann pipes'. The bag is inflated by movement of the elbow.

How do we say in Gaelic, 'Do you play the bagpipes?' Like this: 'Am bi thu a' seinn na pioba?' Yes, seinn means 'play an instrument'. In old Gaelic, that was the primary meaning of the word. I was listening to a man the other day. He said that somebody was 'a' seinn na fìdhle'.

Here is a saying: Bheireadh tu cho fada a' gleusadh do phìob 's a bheireadh fear eile a' seinn port 'you'd take as long to tune your pipe as another man would to play a tune'. It represents 'you're all talk and no action'. Bheireadh tu cho fada a' gleusadh do phìob 's a bheireadh fear eile a' seinn port.

fuaim aig ionnsramaid-chiùil. Mar sin, tha e nàdarrach 'piob' a ghabhail air ionnsramaid, leithid *piob-mhòr nan Gàidheal – the great Highland pipes.*

Tha a' phìob-bheag ann cuideachd – *the small pipes.* Agus a' *phìob-uilinn* aig na h-Èireannaich. Sin na 'elbow pipes' no 'uil(l)eann pipes'. Tha a' mhala air a chur a dh'at le gluasad na h-uilinn.

Ciamar a chanas sinn ann an Gàidhlig, 'Do you play the bagpipes?' Mar seo: 'Am bi thu a' seinn na pioba?' Seadh, tha *seinn* a' ciallachadh 'play an instrument'. Anns an t-seann Ghàidhlig, b' e sin prìomh chiall an fhacail. Bha mi ag èisteachd ri fear an latha eile. Thuir e gun robh cuideigin 'a' seinn na fìdhle'.

Seo agaibh seanfhacal: Bheireadh tu cho fada a' gleusadh do phìob 's a bheireadh fear eile a' seinn port 'you'd take as long to tune your pipe as another man would to play a tune'. Tha e a' seasamh airson 'you're all talk and no action'. Bheireadh tu cho fada a' gleusadh do phìob 's a bheireadh fear eile a' seinn port.