

Notes on Scottish Gàidhlig and Scottish Gàidhlig Learners in Seattle

01/19/2009//Michelle LaFrance

Web-based Resources for Learners

BBC's *Beag air Bheag* (*Little by little*—a “kid’s” Gaelic learning site)

http://www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/alba/foghlam/beag_air_bheag/

Began Gàidhlig (A little taste of Scottish Gaelic: pronunciation, grammar, syntax)

<http://www.akerbeltz.org/beangaidhlig/grammar/beangramair.htm>

BBC Gaelic Radio: Radio nan *Gàidheal*

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/alba/>

Fun w/ stereotypes about *Gàidheals*: *Seasaidh Lexy* “Christmas Eve” (Episode 001)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2H-tfrMvVI>

Scottish Gaelic on Wikipedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scottish_Gaelic

Slighe nan Gàidheal: Seattle’s Scottish Gaelic Society

<http://www.Slighe.com>

Bliadhna agus Là: a year and a day among a community of Scottish Gaelic Learners

<http://students.washington.edu/mlf/documentary.html>

Notes on Pronunciation

The sounds of *Gàidhlig* are difficult and somewhat unique. You can see how to pronounce the letters of *Gàidhlig* here:

http://www.akerbeltz.org/beangaidhlig/grammar/grammar_pronunciationguide.htm

Two functions of pronunciation in *Gàidhlig* are notable and difficult for learners of North American English:

Lenition: a sound is changed into something else due to the proximity of certain letters or combinations of words. Example:

“math” (good) becomes “m~~h~~at” when preceded by an adverb like “glé,” (very);

e.g. glé mhath

Aspiration: refers to a puff of air following a consonant

AMAZING Letter Combinations: this is due to the slender to slender, broad to broad spelling rule

Example: *Gàidhealteachd*, *Naidheachd*, *Sàbhailteachd*

Notes on Basic Sentence Construction

Gàidhlig is a VSO language; this means that usually sentences start with the verb, wedge the subject between the adjectives/adverbs and direct and/or indirect objects. Examples:

Tha mi sgith an-duigh.	I am tired today.
Tha an tìde ann an-drasda hein!	The weather is in it today (nasty weather out!)
Tha i fluich agus tha I fuar!	It is wet/raining and it is cold!
Gabhaibh mo leisgeul.	Excuse me/ give me my leave.
Chunnaic mo mhàthair cù aig an doras.	My mum heard the dog at the door.

Adjectives and Word Order

in most cases, an adjective follows a noun and, if the noun is feminine, the adjective is aspirated as well. Examples:

an samhradh [m.]	the summer	a' bhàrdachd [f.]	the poetry
an samhradh buidhe	the golden summer	a' bhàrdachd Ghàidhlig	the Gaelic poetry

Questions, Negatives, and Imperatives

One of the strangest features of *Gàidhlig* is that there is no simple “yes” or “no” term. To agree/affirm or disagree/negate a sentence, you must repeat the verbal root. Examples:

Question or Imperative
Abheil thu sgith an-duigh?
An do deoch ann bheir agaibh?
Ruith thu gun both!

Negation
Chan eil mi sgith.
Cha do deoch mi bheir idir!
Obh, mo creichd! **Cha ruith** mi idir!

Feminine and Masculine Nouns and Noun Cases (Definite, Vocative, Dative, Genitive)

Feminization and masculinization of nouns has nothing to do with human gender, of course. Feminine and masculine nouns are handled differently in the various cases of *Gàidhlig*.

[f] beinn= “mountain” ► an **bheinn** “*the* mountain”
 [m] ollamh= “professor” ► an t-ollamh “*the* professor”

Noun cases often change the spelling and pronunciation of their noun.

Possession and Possessives

Another strange thing about *Gàidhlig* is that there is no know that identifies “possession” (as in I have a cold; I have/own a car.) Possession and states of being are also only dealt with through *conjugated* pronouns and expressions of states of being.

	Màthair	Athair	Càr	Eun
my	mo mhàthair	m' athair	an càr agam	an t-eun agam
your	do mhàthair	d' athair	an càr agad	an t-eun agad
his	a mhàthair	Athair	an càr aige	an t-eun aige
her	a màthair	a h-athair	an càr aice	an t-eun aice
our	ar màthair	ar n-athair	an càr againn	an t-eun again
your	ur màthair	ur n-athair	an càr agaibh	an t-eun agaibh
their	am màthair	an athair	an càr aca	an t-eun aca

This table shamelessly stolen from: <http://www.akerbeltz.org>