

Agallamh le Leah Jaques, Neach-ionnsachaidh

Interview with Leah Jaques, Gaelic Learner

Presenter: Angela Mackay



ANGELA:

'S ann à Dallas, Texas, a tha Leah Jaques, ach tha i a-nise a' fuireach san Eilean Sgitheanach. Fàilte ort, Leah.

LEAH:

Mòran taing.

ANGELA:

Ciamar a thàinig tè à Dallas, Texas gu bhith a' fuireach san Eilean Sgitheanach agus a' bruidhinn Gàidhlig ma-thà?

LEAH:

Uill, thòisich mi air Gàidhlig ionnsachadh ann an Glaschu, agus bha mi airson mo mhac a chur go sgoil-àraich, agus bha sinn a' smaointinn an toiseach mu dheidhinn Montessori school, ach an uairsin, chuala mi mu dheidhinn foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig, agus bha mi a' faireachdainn gu robh sin fiu's na b' fheàrr, gun robh cànan ... gum biodh cànan eile aige saor 's an asgaidh, gur e rud mìorbhaileach a bh' ann, so ... Chuir mi e ann an sgoil-àraich, agus bha e toilichte an sin, agus bha mi fhìn toilichte leis an sgoil, agus gu math comhfhurtail leis na daoine a bha sinn a' tachairt riutha ann, agus, beag air bheag, bha mi a' feuchainn ri Gàidhlig a thogail. Thòisich mi ... Uill, thòisich mi gu h-oifigeil aig Colaiste Stow. Cùrsa deuchainn àrd ìre a rinn mi nuair a bha Lucas a' tòiseachadh aig a' bhun-sgoil.

ANGELA:

Agus dè na dùbhlain a bha mu do choinneamh nuair a thòisich thu a-mach?

ANGELA:

Leah Jaques comes from Dallas, Texas, but she now lives on the Isle of Skye. Welcome, Leah.

LEAH:

Thank you.

ANGELA:

How did a woman from Dallas, Texas, end up living on the Isle of Skye and speaking Gaelic?

LEAH:

Well, I started learning Gaelic in Glasgow, and I wanted to send my son to a nursery school, and at first, we thought about a Montessori school but then I heard about Gaelic-medium education, and I thought that would be even better, because of the language ... because he could learn another language for free, and that would be wonderful, so ... I sent him to nursery school, and he was happy there, and I was pleased with the school, and felt comfortable around the people who we met there, and, little by little, I tried to learn Gaelic. I started ... Well, officially, I started at Stow College. I studied a Higher course when Lucas started in the primary school.

ANGELA:

And what challenges did you face when you first started?

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LEAH:

'S e misneachd an rud as motha, agus tha mi a' smaointinn gu bheil sin an dùbhlain 's dòcha as motha a th' aig a h-uile duine.

Tha cothroman ... tha cothroman doirbh ri lorg uaireannan cuideachd airson Gàidhlig a chluinntinn, agus son a ... uill, son a bhruidhinn. Sin an rud as doirbhe. Agus dùbhlain dìreach a bhith a' tuigsinn na bha daoine ag ràdh rium. Bha sin eagalach doirbh. Bha leughadh fada na b' fhasa aig an toiseach na bha bruidhinn is èisteachd, so bha leughadh agus sgrìobhadh na ... an dà rud a thòisich mi leis, agus tha mi a' faireachdainn misneachail a-thaobh sin, ach bha blas ... bha mi draghail mu dheidhinn blas. Bha mi draghail mu dheidhinn dè an seòrsa sealbh a bh' agam air a' chànan agus cha robh mi cinnteach gur e ... gu robh còir agam a bhith ag ionnsachadh cànan aig nach robh ceangal follaiseach co-dhiù agam leis a' chànan, ach, aig an aon àm, 's e sin a tha duine a' dèanamh le gach cànan a tha iad ... tha Fraingis agus Gearmailtis agus Eadailtis, chan eil duine a' gabhail cus dragh mu dheidhinn sin. Tha iad dìreach gan feuchainn, so tha mi a' feuchainn gun a bhith a' gabhail dragh mu dheidhinn sin, ach tha sin fhathast na dhùbhlain bho àm gu àm.

ANGELA:

Agus le bhith ag ionnsachadh a' Ghàidhlig, ciamar a fhuair thu seachad air na dùbhlain a bha sin?

LEAH:

Tha misneachd ... 's e ... Feumaidh tu ga dhèanamh, 's a' cumail ort, agus a bhith a' mothachadh gur e rud nàdarra a th' ann, gu bheil sin a' tachairt ris a h-uile duine. Agus, mar sin, chan eil mi ag ràdh gum bu chòir duine a bhith a' faireachdainn dona mu dheidhinn na dùbhlain, ach dìreach gu bheil iad uabhasach fhèin nàdarra.

LEAH:

The main one was confidence, and I think that's probably the greatest challenge that everyone faces.

Opportunities ... it can also be hard to find opportunities to hear Gaelic spoken and also to ... well, to speak it. That's the hardest part. And the challenge of understanding what people were saying to me. That was very difficult. Reading was much easier to begin with than talking and listening, so I started out reading and writing, and I feel confident with them, but my accent was ... I was concerned about my accent. I was concerned about my entitlement to the language and I wasn't sure that ... that I should be learning a language to which I had no obvious connection, but, at the same time, that's what people do with every language they ... with French, German and Italian, no-one worries too much about that. They just have a go, so I'm having a go and not worrying too much about it, but it's still an obstacle from time to time.

ANGELA:

And when you were learning Gaelic, how did you overcome these challenges?

LEAH:

Confidence is ... it's ... You have to do it, and to keep going, and to be aware that it's natural, that it happens to everybody. And so, I'm not saying that anyone should feel bad about these obstacles, just that they are completely natural.

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ANGELA:

Thòisich thu ag ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig aig Colaiste Stow ann an Glaschu. Ghluais thu an uairsin dhan Eilean Sgitheanach agus thòisich thu air cùrsa aig Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. Ciamar a fhuair thu air adhart, ma-thà? An robh e ga dhèanamh nas fhasa dhut?

LEAH:

Oh, bha. Chan eil fhios 'am ciamar a bhithinn ag ionnsachadh Gàidhlig mura robh mi aig Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. Gabhaidh e dèanamh, ach 's e dìreach... 'S dòcha gun gabh e a dhèanamh sna h-eileanan a-muigh, nuair a tha thu ... nuair a tha na cothroman agad airson Gàidhlig a bhruidhinn agus Gàidhlig a chluinntinn. Sin an rud, ach an seo cuideachd, bha mi a' faireachdainn gu robh àite gu math stèidhte againn agus bha e furasta gu leòr coimhearsnachd agus caraidean a lorg a bha a' bruidhinn sa Ghàidhlig.

ANGELA:

Agus dè an seòrsa àite a th' aig Gàidhlig na do bheatha làitheil a-nise?

LEAH:

Tha e cho cudromach. Tha mi a' faireachdainn nach b' urrainn dhomh a bhith às aonais a-nis. Tha e cho cudromach. Tha e cho stèidhte nam bheatha, agus 's e pàirt dhìom a th' ann, agus tha mi air pàirt dhìom a lorg tron chànan.

ANGELA:

Agus dè mu dheidhinn bho seo a-mach? Dè tha romhad?

ANGELA:

You started learning Gaelic at Stow College in Glasgow. You then moved to the Isle of Skye and enrolled in a course at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. How did you get on? Did that make it easier for you?

LEAH:

Oh, yes. I don't know how I would have learnt Gaelic had I not gone to Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. It can be done, but it's just ... It might be easier in the outer isles, when you are ... when you have the opportunity to speak Gaelic and to hear Gaelic spoken. That's the thing, but here too, I felt that we were in a stable place and it was easy to join the community and to make friends who spoke Gaelic.

ANGELA:

What role does Gaelic play in your day-to-day life now?

LEAH:

It's so important. I feel I couldn't do without it now. It's so important. It's rooted in my life, and it's part of me, and I've found a part of myself through the language.

ANGELA:

And what about the future? What does it hold for you?

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LEAH:

Uill, tha mi gu math dòchasach agus gu math fosgailte. Tha mi airson cumail orm le bhith ag ionnsachadh gnàthasan-cainnte agus barrachd mu dheidhinn dòighean beatha sa Ghàidhealtachd, 's bu toigh leam Gàidhlig a theagasg. Chan eil fhios 'am buileach an e bun-sgoil a tha mi airson dèanamh, ach tha mi a' creidsinn gu bheil. Nuair a tha mo mhac beagan na bu sine, bhiodh e nas fhasa, agus dìreach a bhith a' fuireach far a bheil mi an dràsta. Tha mi cho toilichte 's cho riarachta an seo.

ANGELA:

'S mar sin dheth, tha thu toilichte do dhachaidh a dhèanamh an seo fhèin?

LEAH:

Tha. Tha, gun teagamh sam bith.

ANGELA:

Leah, tapadh leat.

LEAH:

'S e do bheatha.

LEAH:

Well, I feel quite positive and I'm open to new ideas. I want to carry on learning idioms and learn more about lifestyles in the Highlands, and I'd like to teach Gaelic. I'm not quite sure if I want to teach in primary school, but I think I do. It will be easier when my son is a little older, and I'd like to stay where I am now. I am so happy and content here.

ANGELA:

So you're happy to make your home here?

LEAH:

Yes. Yes, without a doubt.

ANGELA:

Leah, thank you.

LEAH:

You're welcome.