

AG14: Agallamh le Morven Ghreumach: Neach-ionnsachaidh

Interview with Morven Graham: Gaelic Learner

Presenter: Seumas Dòmhnallach (James MacDonald)



SEUMAS:

Fàilte. Còmhla rinn an-diugh tha Morven Ghreumach, tè a rugadh air a' Ghalltachd do phàrantan aig nach robh Gàidhlig ach a tha an-diugh a' dèanamh a beòshlaint às a' chànan. Morven, tha ceangal, cha mhòr fad beatha air a bhith agadsa ris a' Ghàidhlig. Ciamar a thòisich sin?

MORVEN:

Uill, rugadh mi ann a seo ann an Slèite, agus an uairsin, nuair a bha mi dhà gu leth, ghluais mi air falbh 's rinn mi bliadhna ann am bun-sgoil shìos ann an Sasainn. Ghluais mo phàrantan air ais suas agus bha iad airson mo chur a-staigh gu ... a-staigh dhan chlas Gàidhlig, so thòisich mi ann an Clas a Dhà ann am Bun-sgoil Shlèite.

SEUMAS:

Mar sin, air Prìomh a Dhà, an do mhothaich thu gu robh sin eadar-dhealaichte seach an sgoil anns an robh thu ann an Sasainn?

MORVEN:

Chan eil cuimhn' 'am mòran diofaran a bhith ann. Tha cuimhn' 'am gu robh na clasaichean shuas a seo gu math nas lugha na bha na clasaichean shìos ann an Sasainn, ach chan eil cuimhn' 'am mòran mu dheidhinn a bhith a' faicinn gu robh cànan eadar-dhealaichte ann. Tha cuimhn' 'am gu robh an tidsear a' bruidhinn ... Cha robh mi a' tuigsinn a h-uile sian a bha i a' canail, ach tha thu ga thogail gu math luath, 's cha robh mòran dhuilgheadasan agam san sgoil.

SEUMAS:

A bheil cuimhn' agad air dad dhe na facail a dh' ionnsaich thu, dhen a' chiad fhaclan a dh' ionnsaich thu?

SEUMAS (JAMES):

Welcome. Joining us today is Morven Graham, a woman who was born in the Lowlands to non-Gaelic-speaking parents but who now earns a living in the language. Morven, you've been involved with Gaelic for most of your life. How did that begin?

MORVEN:

Well, I was born here in Sleat, and then, when I was two and a half, I moved away and I spent a year in a primary school down in England. My parents moved back up and they wanted to put me into ... into the Gaelic class, so I started in Class Two in Sleat Primary School

SEUMAS (JAMES):

So, in Primary Two, did you notice that it was different from the school you had attended in England?

MORVEN:

I don't remember there being many differences. I remember that the classes up here were much smaller than the classes down in England had been, but I don't remember much about noticing that there was a different language. I remember that the teacher spoke ... I didn't understand everything she said, but you pick it up very quickly, and I didn't have many problems in school.

SEUMAS (JAMES):

Do you remember any of the words you learnt, of the first words you learnt?

AG14: Agallamh le Morven Ghreumach: Neach-ionnsachaidh

Interview with Morven Graham: Gaelic Learner

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MORVEN:

Tha cuimhn' agam a' chiad fhacal a dh' ionnsaich mi. 'S e piseag a bh' ann. Chan eil fhios 'am carson a bha sin an fhacal a dh' ionnsaich sinn, ach feumaidh gu robh sinn a' dèanamh rudeigin anns a' bhun-sgoil mu dheidhinn beathaichean no peataichean no rudeigin.

SEUMAS:

Tha e annasach gu bheil cuimhn' agad air a' chiad fhacal mar sineach. Sin air taobh a-staigh na sgoile agus ann an raon-cluiche na sgoile. Dè mu dheidhinn aig an dachaidh? Am biodh tu a' dol dhachaidh às an sgoil agus a' bruidhinn Gàidhlig anns an dachaidh?

MORVEN:

Bhiodh. Uill, bhiodh faclan agam a bha fhios agam ann an Gàidhlig nach robh mi buileach cinnteach ann am Beurla, gu h-àraid a-thaobh obair sgoile: cumaidhean, rudan mar sin a bha sinn ag ionnsachadh ann an 's dòcha maths is rudan nach robh fhios agam ciamar a chanadh mi ann am Beurla oir cha do dh' ionnsaich mi e ann am Beurla, so bha sin doirbh dha mo phàrantan. Cha robh mo phàrantan a' bruidhinn Gàidhlig, so bha e doirbh a bhith a' tighinn dhachaidh 's cha robh fios acasan dè a bha mi a' bruidhinn mu dheidhinn nuair a bha mi a' bruidhinn mu dheidhinn an sgoil oir bha rudan agam aig an sgoil air nach robh mi buileach cinnteach am facal Beurla oir bha sinn dìreach ga ionnsachadh ann an Gàidhlig.

MORVEN:

I remember the first word I learnt. It was kitten. I don't know why we learnt that word, but we must have been doing something in primary school about animals or pets or something like that.

SEUMAS (JAMES):

It's amazing that you can remember your first word like that. That was within the school and in the school playground. What about at home? Would you go home from school and speak Gaelic in the home?

MORVEN:

Yes. Well, there were terms I knew in Gaelic but wasn't sure what they were in English, especially when it came to schoolwork: shapes, things like that which we learnt about in maths for example and there were things I didn't know how to say in English because I hadn't learnt the English terms, so that was difficult for my parents. My parents didn't speak Gaelic, so it was difficult for them when I came home and they didn't understand what I was talking about when I spoke about school because I did things in school that I didn't know the English terms for because we only learnt about them in Gaelic.

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MORVEN:

'S tha cuimhn' 'am rudan mar obair dachaidh a bhith gu math doirbh oir cha robh iad eòlach air na faclan so bha tòrr ùine ga chosg a' dol tro fhaclairean agus a' coimhead suas leabhraichean airson "sentences" agus rudan mar sin. Agus bha iad eòlach air tòrr daoine anns a' choimhearsnachd aig an robh Gàidhlig 's bha iad càirdeach ris an tidsear cuideachd, so bha iad eòlach air ... Bha iad eòlach gu leòr oirre airson fòn a chur thuice a' faighneachd dè a bha seo a' ciallachadh agus ciamar a chanadh sinn seo agus ciamar a sgrìobhadh sinn rudan sìos, so bha daoine timcheall òirnn a b' urrainn gam chuideachadh nuair a bha mi gu math "stuck" leis.

SEUMAS:

An robh iad cinnteach gun do rinn iad an rud ceart a bhith ga do chur gu fòghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig?

MORVEN:

Tha mi a' smaoinichadh gu robh iad gu math toilichte gu robh dà chànan dol a bhith agam 's gun do chur iad mi a-staigh aig an aois far an robh mi òg gu leòr nach robh mi a' faighinn cus duilgheadasan leis agus cha robh cus "pressure" orm airson rudan ionnsachadh. Tha e a' tighinn thugad gu nàdarrach aig an aois sin, tha mi a' smaoinichadh. Tha thu a' togail rudan gu math soirbh.

SEUMAS:

Lean thu ort le fòghlam tron a' bhun-sgoil. Dè a thachair nuair a chaidh thu dhan an àrd-sgoil?

MORVEN:

I remember things like homework being quite difficult because they weren't familiar with the terminology so a lot of time was spent looking through dictionaries and looking up books for sentences and things like that. And they knew lots of people in the local community who spoke Gaelic and they were related to the teacher too, so they knew her ... They knew her well enough to be able to phone her to ask what this meant and how we would say that and how we would write things down, so there were people around us who could help out when I got stuck with it.

SEUMAS (JAMES):

Were they sure they had done the right thing in enrolling you in Gaelic-medium education?

MORVEN:

I think they were very happy that I would have two languages and that they had enrolled me at an age when I was young enough that I wouldn't have too many problems with it and that I wasn't under too much pressure to learn things. It comes naturally to you at that age, I think. You pick things up very easily.

SEUMAS (JAMES):

You continued your education in primary school. What happened when you went to secondary school?

AG14: Agallamh le Morven Ghreumach: Neach-ionnsachaidh

Interview with Morven Graham: Gaelic Learner

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MORVEN:

Chùm mi orm le Gàidhlig tron an àrd-sgoil. Rinn mi a' chiad 's an dàrna bliadhna tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig aig an àrd-sgoil, diofar cuspairean ann an Gàidhlig, 's an uairsin anns an treas bliadhna, thagh mi Gàidhlig agus eachdraidh tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig, 's chum mi orm mar sin suas gu na Standard Grades. 'S chum mi orm le Gàidhlig suas chun a' chòigeamh bliadhna, nuair a dh' fhàg mi an sgoil 's chaidh mi dhan a' cholaiste.

SEUMAS:

Dh' fhàg thu an sgoil. Dè rinn thu an uairsin? Dè a chur thu romhad a dhèanamh?

MORVEN:

Às dèidh an àrd-sgoil, chaidh mi gu ... Uill, thòisich mi ag obair aig Fàs Mòr. Bha mi sia deug, 's thòisich mi ag obair shuas aig an seann Fàs Mòr, agus, far an robh mi a' cleachdadh Gàidhlig. 'S an uairsin, chaidh mi air falbh chun a' cholaiste airson "mechanics" a dhèanamh, far nach robh mi a' cleachdadh Gàidhlig idir.

SEUMAS:

Seadh. 'S e ceum gu math annasach a tha sin.

MORVEN:

'S e.

SEUMAS:

A' falbh bho bhith ag obair còmhla ri clann, ag obair ann am Fàs Mòr, a' dol gu saoghal far a bheil thu ag obair ann am "mechanics". Anns an latha a th' ann, fiu 's fhathast, 's dòcha neo-àbhaisteach do bhoireannach, ach chuir thu cùl ris a' Ghàidhlig. Dh' fhalbh thu à suidheachadh Gàidhlig gu suidheachadh anns nach robh Gàidhlig.

MORVEN:

I kept up my Gaelic in secondary school. I did first and second year through the medium of Gaelic in secondary school, learning various subjects in Gaelic, and then, in third year, I chose to study Gaelic and history through Gaelic, so I carried on like that until my Standard Grades. And I carried on with Gaelic until fifth year, when I left school and went to college.

SEUMAS (JAMES):

You left school. What did you do then? What did you decide to do?

MORVEN:

After secondary school, I went to ... Well, I started working at Fàs Mòr. I was sixteen, and I started working up at the old Fàs Mòr, and where I used Gaelic. Then, I went away to college to study mechanics, where I didn't use Gaelic.

SEUMAS (JAMES):

Right. That's an unusual step.

MORVEN:

It is.

SEUMAS (JAMES):

Away from working with children, working in Fàs Mòr, going into a world where you were working in mechanics. Even in this day and age, that's unusual for a woman, but you turned your back on Gaelic. You went from a Gaelic setting to a setting without any Gaelic.

AG14: Agallamh le Morven Ghreumach: Neach-ionnsachaidh

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MORVEN:

Dh' fhalbh. Yeah. Cha robh mi a' cleachdadh Gàidhlig idir nuair a bha mi shìos aig a' cholaiste. Cha robh duine sam bith timcheall orm a bha a' bruidhinn Gàidhlig, so 's e dìreach nuair a bha mi a' tighinn suas anns na saor-làithean air ais a dh' obair aig Fàs Mòr agus air ais còmhla ri daoine shuas a seo far an robh mi a' bruidhinn Gàidhlig, 's tha e a' toirt beagan làithean Gàidhlig a' tighinn air ais thugad nuair nach eil thu ga chleachdadh airson mìosan agus rudan mar sin.

SEUMAS:

Bha thu a' mothachadh gu robh thu 's dòcha a' call na Gàidhlig gu ìre bheag air choreigin?

MORVEN:

Tha, gu ìre. Tha gu ìre mòr ann an dòigh. Tha thu a' call tòrr ... Tha na faclan agad fhathast, ach feumaidh tu smaoinichadh air dè a tha thu a' canail agus ciamar a chanas tu e agus rudan mar sin. Tha e doirbh nuair a tha thu a' tighinn air ais 's chan eil thu air a chleachdadh airson greiseag.

SEUMAS:

Uill, chan e "mechanic" a th' annad. Tha thu a-nise air ais an sàs ann am fòghlam chloinne tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig. Tha thu air cearcall a chur, mar gum bitheadh. Ciamar a thachair sin?

MORVEN:

I did. Yes. I didn't use Gaelic at all while I was down at college. There was no-one around me who spoke Gaelic, so it was just when I came up on holiday and went back to work at Fàs Mòr, back with the people up here, that I spoke Gaelic, and it takes a few days for your Gaelic to come back to you when you haven't used it for months and things like that.

SEUMAS (JAMES):

So you felt as if you were perhaps losing your Gaelic to a degree?

MORVEN:

Yes, to a degree. To a great extent in a way. You lose a lot ... You still know the vocabulary, but you have to think about what you're saying and how you say it and so on. It's hard when you come back and you haven't used it in a while.

SEUMAS (JAMES):

Well, you're not a mechanic. You are now involved in educating children through the medium of Gaelic. You've come full circle in a way. How did that happen?

AG14: Agallamh le Morven Ghreumach: Neach-ionnsachaidh

Interview with Morven Graham: Gaelic Learner

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MORVEN:

Chuir mi crìoch air na "mechanics" agam. Rinn mi trì bliadhna, agus an uairsin, as dèidh sin, bha mi ... dìreach cha robh mòran obair ann, so bha mi a' smaoineachadh gun dèanainn cùrsa ann an cùram chloinne so ma bha mi a' tighinn air ais suas a seo airson fuireach bhiodh na "qualifications" agam 's cha bhiodh agam ri dhèanamh bhon taigh. B' fheàrr leam an dèanamh aig a' cholaiste, so thòisich mi agus rinn mi dà bhliadhna ann an sin 's an uairsin, ghluais mi air ais suas air a' bhliadhna seo chaidh airson obair aig Fàs Mòr, 's bha sin glè mhath. Bha mi air ais ag obair ann an Gàidhlig, ach rinn mi an colaiste, agus rinn mi na "qualifications" a bha mi feumach air.

SEUMAS:

Ann an iomadh seadh, tha thu ann an suidheachadh 's dòcha gu math nas fheàrr na bhiodh feadhainn eile a th' ann an suidheachadh far a bheil thu a' dol air ais gu ìre far an robh thu fhèin nuair a thòisich thu ann am fòghlam, gun eòlas mòr sam bith agad air a' chànan, agus a-nise a' teagasg chloinne.

MORVEN:

Tha. Gu h-àraid, tha mi ag obair ann an sgoil-àraich, agus tha tòrr ... A' mhòr chuid dhen a' chlann, feumaidh mi ràdh, aig an sgoil-àraich, chan eil Gàidhlig aig na pàrantan, no tha dìreach beagan Gàidhlig aig na pàrantan. Tha e annasach coimhead an dòigh far a bheil iadsan a' bruidhinn Gàidhlig aig an sgoil-àraich ach chan eil Gàidhlig aca idir aig an taigh, 's cho math 's a tha iad air a bhith a' bruidhinn san sgoil-àraich, 's tha iad ag ionnsachadh cho luath, 's a' togail faclan gu math luath, 's fhios aca dè a tha thu a' bruidhinn mu dheidhinn nuair a bhruidhneas tu riutha 's rudan mar sin.

MORVEN:

Well, I finished my mechanics. I did three years, and after that, I was ... just there wasn't much work, so I thought I would take a childcare course so that if I did move back to live here I would already have the qualifications and I wouldn't have to study from home. I'd rather get them at college, so I started and studied for two years and then, I moved back up last year to work at Fàs Mòr, and that was great. I was working in Gaelic again, but I had been through college and I had the qualifications I needed.

SEUMAS (JAMES):

In many ways, you're perhaps in a much better situation than other people would be because in your situation, you are going back in a way to where you were when you began your education, not knowing much about the language, and now teaching children.

MORVEN:

Yes. Especially as I work in a nursery school, and a lot ... Most of the children, I must say, at the nursery, their parents don't speak Gaelic, or their parents only speak a little Gaelic. It's interesting to see how they speak Gaelic in the nursery school but there's no Gaelic at home, and just how good they are at speaking it in nursery school, and they learn so quickly, and pick up words very quickly, and they know what you're talking about when you speak to them and so on.

AG14: Agallamh le Morven Ghreumach: Neach-ionnsachaidh

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SEUMAS:

A bheil thu a' smaoin eachadh, 's dòcha ann an dòigh, gu bheil e na bhuannachd dhut fhèin, gu bheil e nas fheàrr dhut fhèin, gu bheil an t-eòlas agad air mar a bha cùisean nuair a bha thu fhèin beag anns an aon shuidheachadh?

MORVEN:

Tha mi a' smaoin eachadh, ann an dòigh, ged nach eil mòran cuimhne agam a bhith an aois sin agus ag ionnsachadh Gàidhlig, mar a tha iadsan, tha mi a' tuigsinn ... tha mi a' tuigsinn aig an ìre na pàrantan cuideachd cho doirbh 's a tha e nuair a tha iad a' faighinn bileagan dhachaidh ann an Gàidhlig no rudan a th' aca ri lìonadh a-staigh airson an sgoil-àraich 's rudan mar sin. Tha mi a' tuigsinn cho doirbh 's a tha e dhaibh agus cho doirbh 's a tha e dhan a' chlann nuair nach eil fhios aig na pàrantan aca dè, 's dòcha, dè a tha sinne a' bruidhinn mu dheidhinn aig an sgoil-àraich. Tha e doirbh.

SEUMAS:

Morven, tapadh leatsa.

MORVEN:

Tapadh leat.

SEUMAS (JAMES):

Do you think that perhaps, in a way, it's a benefit to you, that it's better for you, that you understand how things were when you were little and in the same situation?

MORVEN:

I think, in a way, although I don't remember very much about being that age and learning Gaelic the way they are, I understand ... I understand at the parental level too how difficult it is when they get leaflets at home in Gaelic or forms they have to fill in for the nursery school and so on. I understand how difficult it is for them and how difficult it is for the children when the parents don't understand what, perhaps, what we are talking about at nursery school. It is difficult.

SEUMAS (JAMES):

Morven, thank you.

MORVEN:

Thank you.