

English in Mind Second edition

Level 4 Unit 9

Lesson Plan

Internet signals end of an era for
Yorkshire dialectTHE
INDEPENDENT

AIMS

- to read extensively and study a text related to the Unit theme
- to develop students' skills in scanning and reading for specific information
- to develop students' skills in guessing meaning from context
- to develop awareness of phrasal verbs and to consolidate use of the passive
- to improve students' ability to debate a controversial topic

Total time (approx): 1hr 15 minutes

(Note: some exercises can be set as homework)

Reading comprehension: scanning

- 3 The aim of this stage is to give students practice is locating key specific information in a long text without necessarily having to read or understand every word. (a) Before looking at the article, invite students to discuss briefly how they think the Internet has influenced the Yorkshire dialect. Nominate one or two students to give their ideas. (b) Then ask students to read paragraphs 1 and 2 quickly to find out the meaning of the dialect words 'blashy' and 'attercop'. In (c) students are asked to read paragraphs 1 and 2 again to decide if the statements given are TRUE or FALSE, which will give them an understanding of the time frame of the effects of the Internet on the Yorkshire dialect.

Key:

- 1 *blashy* = wet weather; *attercop* = spider
- 2 The Yorkshire dialect no longer exists. = FALSE ('...the fast disappearing dialect...')
- 3 The words *blashy* and *attercop* have recently disappeared. = FALSE ('... have evidently long gone.')

Time: 10 minutes

Lead-in

- 1 Invite students to look at the title of the article and with a dictionary (if necessary) check their understanding of 'signals', 'end of an era' and 'dialect'. Elicit answers to the questions.

Key:

- 1 *signals* = 'brings about / causes'; *end of an era* = 'end of a significant (and usually long) period of time'; *dialect* = 'words/grammar used in a particular area'
- 2 Yorkshire is a large county in northern England.
- 3 A *dialect* = vocabulary/grammar used in a particular area; an *accent* = pronunciation used in a particular area. To illustrate, give the example of the southern English /bʌs/ and northern /bʊs/. In Scotland, a *bairn* is a baby, *wee* means 'small' in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Time: 5 minutes

- 2 **Pre-reading discussion.** The students will have an opportunity to discuss changes in language more extensively at the end of the lesson, but at this stage ask them to discuss these three questions briefly. This will activate their background knowledge of language and dialect in a context that they should have some knowledge of, i.e. in their own country. You might want to elicit some of their ideas in open class, which will make the stage slightly longer. Tell them that they will have a chance to discuss this in much more detail later on.

Time: 5–10 minutes

Vocabulary (1): understanding words
from context

- 4 The article contains several difficult expressions, particularly in paragraphs 3 and 4. This exercise encourages students to guess at meaning by looking at the context of unknown vocabulary, a reading skill that will help develop coping strategies for tackling more difficult texts. Do the first example with them, demonstrating how the rest of the sentence supports meaning.

Key:

- 1 *a bit sparse* (para 3) = in small amounts over a wide area (CLUE: 'Unfortunately' indicates a negative, and the rest of the sentence indicates how uniform our vocabulary has become.)
- 2 *peculiar* (para 3) = strange (CLUE: It describes a look when people are surprised or puzzled by something they have been asked.)
- 3 *transient* (para 3) = passing with time (CLUE: The next generation won't know words used by an earlier generation.)

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- 4 *the prime culprit* (para 4) = the most important cause of a problem (CLUE: The first part of the sentence indicates that there are two reasons and the fact that it is given first suggests it is the most important reason. Also, students should recognise 'prime' from 'Prime Minister', meaning the top, the most important.)
- 5 *diluted and watered down* (para 4) = reduced in concentration and made uniformly weak (CLUE: The new media are changing the situation so that everybody speaks the same way.)

Time: 15 minutes

Key:

- 1 It is believed that language is being diluted by modern media.
- 2 It is thought that people stop using dialect words in order to be like others.
- 3 Changes in the Dales way of life are blamed for the loss of dialect words.
- 4 It is believed that the Yorkshire accent is safe.
- 5 Yorkshire accents are put on by people when they are away from Yorkshire.

Time: 10 minutes

Vocabulary (2): phrasal verbs

- 5 There are several phrasal verbs in the article that are likely to be new to the students. Most of these are concentrated in paragraphs 5 and 6, which are key to understanding the article. Ask students to find the example phrasal verb in paragraph 4. ('An international language is *coming in* ...' = starting to be used) and elicit the meaning. Then invite them to read paragraphs 4 to 8 and find the phrasal verbs that have meanings similar to the expressions in the exercise.

Key:

- 1 appear different from the rest (para 5) = *stand out*
- 2 acquiring (language) (para 5) = *picking up*
- 3 be like others (para 5) = *fit in*
- 4 were adopted (para 6) = *(got) taken up*
- 5 use their pronunciation for a special purpose (para 8) = *put (their accent) on*

Time: 10 minutes

Grammar: the passive

- 6 This exercise links to the grammar focus in the Unit and provides further practice in the use of the passive. You may omit the activity if your students are already confident in its use. Ask students to look at the example and then complete the sentences based on the article.

e.g. The research found that few people use Yorkshire dialect.

It was found that the Yorkshire dialect is used by few people.

Discussion

- 7 *The Local Dialect Preservation Society*. The lesson is rounded off with a debate on the preservation of local dialects and accents. Write the following proposition on the board: Local dialects and accents should be preserved. Divide the class into two: those arguing for and those against. Ask them to work together to brainstorm as many ideas as they can. Monitor and guide the students if necessary so that they have a substantial number of points to argue. Ideas may include:

FOR

Preserves distinctive local identity

Provides interesting variety and 'colour'

Reflects local history, geography, traditions, etc.

Part of literary heritage

AGAINST

A universal language is easier for everyone to understand

Local words are useless outside the specific area

Local accents can seem provincial and sometimes uneducated or even comical

An irrelevance in modern digital age

Now chair a debate on the issue, ensuring all the students take part. Students may find the debating language below useful.

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opinion ...I think/believe
that ...As far as I'm
concernedI totally agree/
disagree!I go along
with that.That's a very
good point.That's
rubbish!I think you're
wrong because...

interesting or difficult to understand and to describe them in a short letter. If you have a variety of nationalities in the class, you might set this up as one student corresponding to another. This could be set for homework and reviewed in the next class.

Time: 45 minutes

At the end take a vote on which team won the debate.

Time: 20 minutes

This article first appeared on Wednesday, 4 July 2007, at www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/internet-signals-end-of-an-era-for-yorkshire-dialect-455839.html.

Lesson Plan and Worksheet author: Adam Wattam

Editor: Jacqueline French

Further work

- 8** *Writing a letter to a penfriend.* This is an optional activity that will allow students to personalise the topic by describing some of the local features of their own language in an informal letter. Tell them they are going to invite their penfriend from another country to visit them. Ask them to consider what aspects of their language their penfriend might find