

Lesson 4

The advantages and the challenges of multilingualism

Aim: To investigate the various challenges faced if you don't speak the primary language of the country.

Learning Outcomes: At the end of this lesson, students will understand the advantages of being able to speak a variety of languages and the challenges faced if you don't have that opportunity.

Requirements for the Class:

- DVD of the vox pops which are in Irish. The video clip entitled 'Lesson 4' on the DVD is to be shown to the class.
 - There are two versions of the vox pops on the DVD. You can select the version **without subtitles in English** by choosing "Gaeilge" at the beginning of the DVD or you can select the version **with subtitles in English** by choosing "English" at the beginning of the DVD.
 - The text of the vox pops is provided in this booklet.
- A copy of the Worksheet to be photocopied by the teacher for every student. The Worksheet is provided in this booklet.

Start of Class:

1. Ask the students to watch the DVD of the vox pops.

Development of Class:

2. Distribute a copy of the Worksheet to each student.
3. Ask the students to watch the DVD again and to complete the worksheets.
4. Ask them to state the similarities between the different examples.
5. Are there any similarities between these examples and the examples discussed in Lesson 3?
6. Define the difficulties that people have if they don't speak the primary language of the country. What about the advantages of being able to speak various languages?

End of Class:

7. Homework: Ask the students to list 5 countries in which more than one language is spoken. They must list the various countries and the various languages which are spoken in those countries.

Teacher's Notes:

The teacher should explain the following points to the students:

- There are over 6,500 languages spoken throughout the world and many of these are in danger of being lost.
- There are particular countries in which more than one language is widely spoken, for example Canada, Belgium and Switzerland.
- There are other countries in which lesser used languages are spoken, for example Irish in Ireland, Welsh in Wales and Scots Gaelic in Scotland.
- While Irish is a lesser used language in Ireland, it is the first official language under the Irish Constitution. English is the second official language in Ireland under the Constitution.
- Irish is spoken as a community language in Gaeltacht areas in 7 counties: Donegal, Mayo, Galway, Kerry, Cork, Waterford and Meath.
- For many others throughout the country, Irish is their language of choice. Irish is taught in all schools and in the last census over 1.6 million people said that they could speak Irish.

Vox pops:

This is the text in English, for the teacher, of the vox pops which are on the DVD.

Vox pop 1

My name is Niamh. I have lived in Belgium with my family for a few years since my mother got a job here.

It was very hard for me at school in the beginning because I had no French. I had problems understanding the teachers. I had to spend a lot of time translating my school books before I could do my homework.

Although people in school were very friendly, it was hard to make friends at the start because I had no French but, little by little, I managed to learn French and now I have loads of friends at school.

I'm delighted that my family came to live in Belgium. I now have fluent French and I love using it!

Vox pop 2

My name is Pádraig. Last year I went on a camping holiday to Spain with my family. I really enjoyed it. The weather was great. The campsite was near the beach and I went swimming every day.

But I had a bad experience one day when I got a jellyfish sting on my foot – I will never forget it – the pain was terrible.

My Dad had to take me to the doctor but it was hard to explain to the doctor what was wrong with me because we couldn't speak Spanish. In the end, we managed to explain to the doctor what had happened and I got the medicine I needed. But had we been able to speak Spanish, it would have been much easier to deal with the doctor.

Vox pop 3

My name is Zina. My family came from Brazil to live in Dublin a few years ago.

It was very hard for me at the start because I wasn't able to understand anything in school and it was difficult to make friends. When I came home from school, I wasn't able to understand much on TV either.

I'm very interested in music and I wanted to learn the piano. My mother found a music teacher for me but I had problems understanding her. My mother had to come to the piano lessons with me and help me to understand the teacher.

But things are much better now. I don't have any problems now understanding people in this country. But I also think it's great that I have my own native language from Brazil. That is what we speak at home.

Vox pop 4

My name is Séamus. I live in the Gaeltacht in Co. Galway. We speak Irish at home and when I started going to school, I had very little English.

When I was younger, I had a stammer and I had to get help from a speech therapist. Unfortunately, there was no speech therapist with Irish available to help me and the classes were in English. My mother used to come to the classes to help me understand the speech therapist.

Even though I had problems when I was younger because I spoke Irish only, I love being able to speak my own language as well as English. I speak Irish with my family and friends and enjoy watching young people's programmes on TG4 but I have to say that there are lots of places where Irish is still not very welcome.

Worksheet for Lesson 4

Vox Pop 1

What is her name?

What were the challenges she had with a language she didn't understand?

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What are the advantages to her of being able to speak more than one language?

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Vox Pop 2

What is his name?

What were the challenges he had with a language he didn't understand?

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Vox Pop 3

What is her name?

What were the challenges she had with a language she didn't understand?

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What are the advantages to her of being able to speak more than one language?

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Vox Pop 4

What is his name?

What were the challenges he had with a language he didn't understand?

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What are the advantages to him of being able to speak more than one language?

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What difficulties does he still have?

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