'Dear, did you say pastry?': meet the 'AI granny' driving scammers up the wall

Level 1: Elementary

Article summary: This article discusses how an AI bot with a grandmotherly persona has successfully stopped scammers.

Time: 60 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking, Writing

Language focus: Subordinating clauses with the conjunctions *while*, *because* and *which*

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

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1. Warmer

a. The purpose of this activity is to get students talking about *scams* and *frauds*. Preteach the two words and brainstorm useful vocabulary before they start to make sure students have what they need for writing the tips. Encourage students to express and justify their opinions.

2. Key words

a. Ask students to do the activity individually and then compare their answers in pairs or small groups. The word *pastry* can also be used more broadly to mean the type of dough itself. As an extension activity, ask students to highlight the key words in the article.

Key:
1. scammer
2. AI bot
3. Fraud
4. waste
5. download
6. pastry
7. upgrade
8. trained
9. call centre
10. Awareness

b. Before reading the article carefully, students use some of the key words to fill the gaps in the sentences to ensure that they understand and know how the words are used in other contexts.

Key:
1. waste
2. scammers
3. AI bot
4. awareness
5. upgrade
6. call centre

3. Comprehension check

a. Students answer the questions based on the information in the article. They may do this in different ways, e.g. in item 1, they may say, 'She's an AI bot whose purpose is to waste scammers' time to stop them from scamming real people' or similar.

Key (suggested answers):
1. *Daisy is an AI bot.*
2. *She wastes scammers' time and stops them from scamming real people.*
3. *She is a friendly grandmother.*
4. *She delays them by looking for her glasses, having trouble turning on her computer, being confused about buttons/icons and asking about pastries.*
5. *up to 40 minutes*
6. *O2 (Virgin Media O2)*
7. *They pass Daisy's details on to another scammer and try again.*
8. *to raise awareness about scammers and internet fraud*
9. *four*
10. *He posts videos of himself wasting criminals' time. He helped put phone numbers on websites, so the scammers would call.*

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4. Key language

a. The activity allows students to practice working with complex sentences with subordinating clauses. You may have to remind students that *because*, *since*, *while* and *which* are all subordinating conjunctions. Tell students that when the subordinating clause is first, it is followed by a comma (,). As another extension opportunity, ask students to find more examples in this or other articles.

Key:
1. (Because) she asks if they like tea, the criminals are angry, not successful.
2. You are going to lose your money (because) someone is trying to take your money.
3. He waits (while) she looks for her glasses.
4. Daisy wasted each scammer's time for up to 40 minutes (when) they could have been scamming real people.

b. Students write four sentences using the conjunctions from task a. Encourage them to write sentences about the lesson's topic.

5. Discussion

a. Students discuss the statements related to the article and give their reasons and justifications for each answer, referring to their own experiences wherever possible.

6. In your own words

a. Ask students to research more about internet fraud. Ask them to answer one or more of these questions: *What are some ways that scammers try to hurt people? How can people protect themselves and their loved ones? How can AI help ight this problem? What are some things to do if you, or someone you love, have been scammed?*

b. Students could then present their reports to the class. Encourage students to include facts and statistics when they share their research findings. Encourage them also to share their opinions and give reasons to support their answers.