

INTRODUCTION

1. Aims of this book

The main aim of this book is to provide students of English with material for the comprehension, acquisition, and learning of the main items, strategies and functions of language corresponding to the first half of the B1 level of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFRL). Thus we intend to provide the students with the necessary competences for communication, as well as with their related knowledge and skills, and the appropriate situations and domains of communication corresponding to this level.

In spite of the fact that this course has been originally created to cover the contents of the *Inglés Instrumental I* syllabus within the ESHE (*European Space for Higher Education*) university program for *English Studies* at the UNED (Spain), it can potentially be used by any group or by anyone attempting to achieve the B1 (*Independent User*) level of English of the CEFRL.

As may be inferred by the reader, this course has been pedagogically designed and oriented towards the teaching of English to Spanish-speaking students, and therefore the explanations and exercises in many cases have been thought of and conceived bearing in mind the potential problems that a native speaker of Spanish might encounter when dealing with the English language. As a consequence, this course is also indicated and can (we hope) be useful for any Spanish-speaking group or individual having the English B1 level as their target.

2. Contents of this book

Strands of Language (B1 - Part I) consists of six units of learning, all of them sharing a similar structure. Basically, we provide the students with oral and written material, as well as with exercises related to both the oral and written texts, which help them develop the necessary skills and

CANDOs to cover the contents of the first part of a B1 syllabus. In particular, the topics and tasks have been adapted to the requirements of the *Inglés Instrumental I* syllabus of the English Studies program at the UNED.

Each of the units revolves around the topic specified in its title, the topic being the organizing concept in all cases. Both the topic of the conversation (in the *Oral Discourse* section) and that of the written text (in the *MULTI-TASKING ACTIVITIES* section) are interrelated in order to give coherence to the whole. This organization helps the students make the necessary linguistic/ cognitive/ situational connections, in order to see language and discourse from a holistic perspective, as an interactive system of registers, voices, discourse types, linguistic levels, etc., and not as a mere list of words or grammatical rules. Notwithstanding, the teaching of vocabulary and grammar is also considered necessary, as can be deduced from the existence of the *Grammar Capsules* and the *TACKLING VOCABULARY* section in each of the units. The topics covered in the six units are the following:

UNIT 1: SMILE!!

UNIT 1: LUXURY AND ROMANCE

UNIT 3: TEA LOVERS

UNIT 4: CRIME AND DANGER

UNIT 5: WILDLIFE EXPERIENCE

UNIT 6: LANDSCAPE AND THE ARTS

3. Structure of the units

Each of the chapters of *Strands of Language* (B1 - Part I) is devoted to one of the units of study, which have the following general structure and sections:

A) WARMING UP: In this section the students are introduced to the topic of the unit by means of questions to be answered and discussed orally in class or through videoconference with his Tutor or classmates.

B) ORAL DISCOURSE: This is the section where the main conversation of the unit, which is recorded in the DVD accompanying the book, is introduced. This conversation is taken as the trigger for several oral (interactive) exercises presented in the book and in the DVD, whose aim is the achievement and completion of the CANDOs corresponding to this type of discourse in each unit.

C) MULTI-TASKING ACTIVITIES: In this section the students have to work with a written text and videos/ websites whose topic is closely connected to the topic of the dialogue, by answering questions and doing exercises derived from them. Here there is an emphasis on the solution of problems by putting different and combined language skills into motion at the same time, as it normally occurs in real, every-day use of language.

D) TACKLING VOCABULARY: This section is devoted to working with the vocabulary in the text presented in section C. The learners are encouraged to build their own glossary of terms for each of the units, as well as to become familiar with synonyms, antonyms and any new item of vocabulary in the text, by means of, for instance, the completion of sentences or crossword puzzles, or by matching words or expressions.

E) NOW, HOW'S YOUR SPELLING?: In this section the students are presented with exercises whose main aim is to make them aware of some of the spelling rules or facts connected to the vocabulary used in the text in section C.

F) AND... HOW'S YOUR FORMATION OF WORDS?: In this section the learners work with the different types of morphemes (free, bound, prefixes, suffixes, etc.) used in the formation of many of the words included in the text in section C. Also, the student is made aware of the different combinations available for the formation of compound words in English.

G) USING ENGLISH APPROPRIATELY AND PUTTING IT INTO MOTION: This is the section with the higher amount of exercises and assignments. Here the learners have to work with different grammatical aspects of the English language, as well as with the discursive uses of certain expressions and other aspects of linguistic communication and interaction.

GRAMMAR CAPSULES: All throughout the units the students will encounter the so-called grammar capsules, which contain grammatical information pertinent to some of the language points studied in the different sections. This grammatical information is always very basic, and thus the students are encouraged to consult a grammar of the English language in all cases, as complementary material for the course.

TIME TO RELAX : This is a section which has been included at the end of each unit for the student to have fun and relax by watching videos whose theme is related to the main topic of the unit, but this time with no exercises or tasks to complete. The main aim of it all, as the name of the section explains, is to have some time to relax and enjoy, which does not exclude the very probable fact that they may learn new uses of the language through the mere activity of watching.

Self-evaluation: All the units have a section with self-evaluation exercises at the end, for the students to check their comprehension and command of the main points studied in all the sections.

The solutions to all the exercises in the different sections of the units are to be found in the **KEY TO EXERCISES AND TASKS**, at the end of the book.

TRANSLATION AND COMPOSITION: This section is included only at the end of Units 3 and 6, and aims to test the students in their midway and final progress regarding their translation and composition skills. We do not provide the answers to these exercises in the key, for they are intended to be discussed with and corrected by the Tutors.

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE: THE CONNECTION: This section appears only in the last unit (Unit 6), to meet a special requirement of the English Studies program. It is intended as a means to make the students aware of the relationship between language and literature, so that they can establish the connection between what they have studied in the course and its application and use in literary texts. In this way we expect that they will in turn make the required and necessary connection between the language and the literature subjects within the program. In this particular language course we have focused on the structure of narratives, and have tried to make the student reflect upon and infer the existing ties between the use of narratives in everyday language and their use in literary works, following Labov's framework for the analysis of oral narratives of personal experience.

4. Additional practice material (DVD and virtual course exercises)

The DVD which accompanies this B1 course presents us with the innovation of communicative ESL/EFL listening opportunities for natural, international English. The dialogues are studied phrase by phrase, with the students' chance to play them as many times as desired; self-recording their repetition of the new phrase and then comparing the two by listening to the combined playback. Help files are also available, and the learner is constantly checked for listening comprehension. The exercises are multiple choice with voice recognition, so that the activity becomes more realistic with immediate feedback, both aurally and visually. Additionally, there are word order and fill-in-the-blank exercises. In this manner, all four main language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), as well as a variety of related sub-skills, are actively being employed.

The UNED student has the additional advantage of finding the recording of all the exercises of this book in the virtual class corresponding to the subject. Some learners find it practical to listen to the recording in order to correct the exercises after having completed them, instead of checking the answers in the *Key* section of the book. In any case, it is recommended that they listen to these recordings as often as possible in order to learn and practise all the teaching points included, as well as to improve their pronunciation and intonation skills.