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Introduction

*Bridges:
English for Communication Sciences
Manuale per corsi di inglese*

Jodi Sandford and David Massey

When thinking about how to better teach a 60 hour English language course there were several factors to take into consideration: the limited number of hours, the excessive number of students (an average of 100-150) per lesson, the variation of true language background, the variation in age and of motivation. We chose to alternate the physical set up between the Aula Magna, the only room big enough to hold so many students that was also equipped with audio visual means; and the computer laboratory, which although small allowed for the students to group 2-3 to a computer.

Consequently we decided to divide the course into three types of lessons:

1. Speaking Listening and Grammar English, (SLG ENG);
2. Communication Theory English, (CT ENG)
3. Computer Internet English, (CI ENG).

18 hours are dedicated to each type of lesson. This division will be indicated throughout the volume. We then decided to hold CI ENG for two hours once a week for the entire semester, but to hold the two hour SLG ENG lessons twice a week for the first half of the semester and the two hour CT ENG lessons twice a week for the second half of the semester.

By holding the grammar related lessons for the first half of the course our objective is to give those without a background in English a basis to start from and at the same time to give the other students an in depth review of basic English grammar, morphology and phonology. We then organized the course so that we could verify the knowledge acquired, three times, once at the end of each theme related module. The first module we called the Grammar module, the second the Translation module and the third the Analysis module. They vary topically moving from the closest type of communication; intrapersonal and interpersonal, to group and organizational communication and then in the last module to mass communication. Each week includes three two hour lessons, each module lasts three weeks, at total of 18 hours, before a progress test. Each student must pass at least two tests to access the oral exam at the end of the course. The objective in this case is to give a gradual approach to the material to enable and to encourage a gradual yet constant study of the language.

In addition to explanations of both structures, concepts, collocations and usage of the language, we have presented every day material from as many different sources and as many different media as possible. Throughout the manual we have included material from, books, essays, encyclopedias, dictionaries, web sites, newspapers, editorials, movies, music, cds, games, advertisements, radio, press releases, promotional devices, letters, e-mails etc., as many forms of English as possible. Our goal is to expose the students to the variation of genre and register, to give them elements to further their education on their own.

We believe that by constructing a course that is dynamic in structure we can more readily reach our new audience of students. Maybe some students will be more interested in one aspect rather than another, but by giving them a rose of material to choose from there should be something for everyone. The media supplies us with a constant flow of information in English, approaching the language from an analytical and selective point of view should help motivate language students that most probably will be using the language as back up to their principle interest. It is our hope that the language elements they acquire will motivate them to apply communication theory and understanding to the material they will need in further studies or career prospects. This course wants to point the students in the direction of the language tools they can use to decipher the world that surrounds them and to give them the opportunity to learn what is the best approach for themselves.

Communicative language learning is limited by the sheer number of students, yet the examples of variation are presented. The SLG ENG lessons have explanations, practice, translation, exercises and assignments to work on, both in class and on one's own. We are fully conscious of the fact that we have not covered all the grammar points, nor did we expect to be able to in such a limited situation. The material presented is a good start to understanding the code of English and it is for this reason that in the first part we concentrate on linguistic text analysis, perception, modality, denotation, connotation, code, phonetics, phonology, and morphology. SLG starts with the details and builds up to more complex texts. Then in the second part of the course, the CT lessons, we do the opposite, working from the texts and theories we analyze the results, the objectives, the targets, the genres and the meanings, in other words a semiotic, semantic and pragmatic approach.

At the end of the manual we have included a series of appendixes and practice material from web sites that offer a cultural approach and understanding. As it is only through a cultural understanding that we can negotiate the meaning of a text, it is fundamental to understand or to be able to translate if not use another language different from one's own. We must consider the content and the substance, the form and the context, the verbal and the paralinguistic traits. In order to come to an understanding we must first learn what these aspects are and what effects they may have. Interpreting and executing a language truly requires many talents. We hope to have developed a tool to further these possibilities.

Perugia,
March, 2004

SLG ENG
(Speaking Listening Grammar English)

SLG ENG 1

General Introduction, course explanation,

The English Language, the alphabet, numbers, days, months

One of the first things that strikes an Italian learner of English is that the vowels are “not pronounced the way they are written”. This is obviously true if you look at the English language from the Italian language point of view.

In fact, English uses different sounds than other languages. For example, the first sound in the word *thin* and the first sound in the word *away* are never spoken in many languages.

So you have to know all the English sounds. You also have to practice your pronunciation — listen to English words and sentences, and try to repeat the English sounds as well as you can.

Reading an English word does not tell you how it is pronounced. For example, the words “*no*” and “*do*” both end in the letter “*o*”. However, “*no*” and “*do*” are pronounced in a completely different way.

This means that, generally, you have to learn the pronunciation of every word that you use. How can you learn the pronunciation of an English word? You can look it up in a dictionary and read about how it is pronounced. Dictionaries tell you about pronunciation through a special system called “phonetic transcription”.

Phonetic transcription is written in a phonetic alphabet. The most popular phonetic alphabet is the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Appendix 3 contains all the sounds used in the English language:

However, native English speakers have learned to read the English language “code” that tells us how to read certain combinations in English.

Let’s observe some of the first rules they teach us when we learn to read. These rules are a simplification of a very complex phonetic reality, but it is the way we are taught to perceive the code.

VOWEL	LONG	SHORT
A	cape (eɪ)	cap (æ)
E	leader (i:)	led (E)
I	light (aɪ)	little (ɪ)
O	boat (@o)	bottom (Q)
U	cute (u:)	cut (ʌ)
Y = semi vowel	reply (aɪ)	syntax (ɪ)
W = semi vowel	few (u:)	

This transcription uses the Text alphabet, which enables us to write phonetics easily with the computer.

Exercise 1:

Go to this site to see the various phonetic alphabet interpretations of the vowels sounds:
<http://faculty.washington.edu/dillon/PhonResources/newstart.html>

The long vowel is pronounced the same way as the letter is called, is either in the stressed syllable, or is indicated by a silent letter(s). These vowels are sometimes called strong.

Generally speaking we can say that the 5 vowels have a total of 22 different phonetic variations. This includes the diphthongs such as oi, au, and for some ei and ai.

Often pronunciation changes are dictated by the syllables, the combination of consonants and vowels and where the stress falls.

The short vowel is pronounced in a softer or shorter way than the long vowel. Sometimes this vowel is atonal, especially when it falls toward the end of a word, or an unstressed syllable. These vowels are sometimes called weak.

Practice repeating these sounds:

<http://www.antimoon.com/how/pronunc-soundsipa.htm>

Go to this site for more information and listening practice:

<http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/IPA/fullchart.html>

Do these exercises:

<http://www.better-english.com/easier/pron.htm>

The letters of the alphabet follow with an example and transcription in **Appendixes 1 & 2**.

Observe the letter, the phoneme and the word example. The consonants do not change much in pronunciation.

The true story is that there are no real beginners. All of us are constantly surrounded by words from different languages, many of which are English and some of which are English words used to signify something different.

autogrill = road side restaurant

autostop = hitch hiking

camping = camp ground

dancing = ballroom, discotheque

footing = jogging

golf = sweater (jumper)

parking = parking lot

plaid = lap blanket (lap robe, travelling rug)

plum cake = pound cake

smoking = tuxedo

toast = toasted ham and cheese sandwich

When considering the impact that English has had internationally we must recognize the economy of the language:

'mezzi di comunicazione di massa' becomes; mass media.

Assignment 1:

Find some examples of English words in Italian magazines, newspapers and names of businesses.

Assignment 2: Other 'English expressions' used in Italian that do not mean the same thing in English.

ACRONYMS:

Acronyms are the combination of initial letters of a series of words. They are different than abbreviations.

An acronym is a label formed from the beginnings of words (Greek: acro [head] and nym [word]) — or very rarely, from letters in the middle of words. There is no requirement that an acronym be pronounceable as a normal word (this is a curious myth perpetuated by American dictionaries): IBM (ai, bi:, em) is just as much an acronym as LASER ('lei zer).

PRACTICE 2:

Practice saying these.

LA LED	ABC AC/DC AD AIDS AP AT&T ASAP
MBA MEP MP	BA BBC BC BSE BT BYOB
NASA NATO NBC NIMBY	CB CBS CD CIA CNN
OK OM OPEC	DMZ Dr. DVD
PIN PLO PM POW PR PTP	ECU. EMU ER EU
RAM ROM	FAO FBI
SALT STS	GB GDP GM GMT GNP GP
UEFA UK UNESCO UN UPI US	HGV HIV HQ HTTP HU
VAT VCR VDU VHS	IAT IBM ID IMF IOU IQ IRA IRS
WASP WEU WHO WTO WWW	

EXERCISE 2: Find out what they mean at:

<http://www.ucc.ie/cgi-bin/uncgi/acronym>

When one faces the task of learning English, it is important and interesting to give a collocation to the language and to understand a little of its history in order to better grasp certain patterns.

The history of the English language

At the time of Julius Caesar, 2000 years ago, there was no comprehensible English. Only after 500 years was there a semi-comprehensible form of English. And only after another 1000 years over seven million indigenous inhabitants of an island in the northwest corner of Europe spoke English.

Through history man has tried to invent artificial languages that could be used by all people, languages that would be rational, easy to learn and easy to use. Some examples are: Esperanto, Interlingua, Novial, Interglossa, but they didn't work. Greek, Latin, Turkish, Arabic, Spanish, French, German and Russian all passed for a time as an international language, yet they never reached the penetration level of English today. Today English has reached a degree of expansion that goes beyond all expectations or imagination. Currently there are approximately,

1,000,000,000, = (1 billion) English Speakers;
 500,000,000 = mother tongue,
 500,000,000 = speak English as a foreign language.
 English is the official language of 40 countries.

Why has English become the world language?

One reason may be that the past two 'empires', Great Britain in the 1800's and the US in the 1900's were the principle military, commercial and cultural powers.

But the main reason has to be deeper to have taken on such unprecedented dimensions. Some possible reasons may be that the structure of the language is simple, the grammar and syntax are elementary, even if mispronounced it is usually understandable and it uses the Latin alphabet.

The main difficulties are how the words are pronounced and written.

Spelling is fundamental. Learn the names and sounds of the letters.

There are only 26 letters for 40 sounds.

A person can make himself understood in almost any occasion knowing only 50 phrases or notions; and a quarter of humanity knows these basics.

We use the same 50 notions for almost 45% of what we say.

Another limit however, may be that in order to speak 'properly' the language and vocabulary become extremely complex and sophisticated. This is possibly due to the variety of influences and especially due to the combination of conserving 'the old' and constantly adding 'new'. In fact English has the largest number of words; the Oxford English Dictionary sites over 500,000. This does not even include many technical and scientific terms. Some good examples of a more sophisticated mix are: phrasal verbs and idiomatic expressions.

See **Appendix 4** for other notions of historic and philological interest.

USE OF CAPITAL LETTERS WITH NOUNS

Capital letters are used with:

Months of the year:

January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December.

Days of the week:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday.

Seasons:

Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter

Holidays:

Christmas, Easter, New Year's Day, Boxing Day, May Day, Thanksgiving Day.

Names and titles of people:

Cary Grant

Natalia Ginzburg

the Queen of England

the President of the United States

the Headmaster of Eton

Professor Richards

Doctor Stephens.

Note: The personal pronoun *I* is always written with a capital letter.

Names of rivers, oceans, seas, lakes etc.

the Atlantic

the Dead Sea

the Pacific

Lake Como

Lake Victoria

Lake Michigan

the Rhine

the Thames

the Nile

Names of geographical formations

the Himalayas

the Alps

the Sahara

Titles of works, books etc.

Pride and Prejudice

The Merchant of Venice

The Language Instinct

The Norton Anthology of English Literature

No Logo

More Than Words

Geographical names.

Names of countries and continents

America

England

Scotland

India

China

Peru

Albania

Africa

Europe

Asia

Names of regions, states, districts etc.

Sussex

California

Queensland

Provence

Tuscany

Berlin

Florida

Costa Rica

Tyrol

Names of cities, towns, villages etc.

London

Cape Town

San Francisco

Florence

Bath

Walla Walla

Vancouver

Wellington

Beijing

Adjectives relating to nationality nouns

France - French music
 Australia - Australian animals
 Germany - German literature
 Arabia - Arabic writing
 Indonesia - Indonesian poetry
 China - Chinese food

Names of streets, buildings, parks etc.

First Street
 Park Lane
 Wall Street
 The Empire State Building
 George Street
 Central Avenue
 Central Park
 Hyde Park
 The Space Needle
 Sydney Opera House

Summary:

A Capital should begin: 1) the first word of every sentence, and of every line of poetry; 2) proper names of persons, places, months, and days; 3) all appellations of the Deity; 4) titles of honor; 5) names of thing personified, 6) names denoting the race or nation of individuals; 7) adjectives derived from proper names; 8) the first word of a direct quotations or speech; 9) the principal words in the titles of books; 10) words denoting important events, the chief subject of a composition, etc.: 11) the pronoun I and the interjection O are always capitals.

NUMBERS

The cardinal numbers (one, two, three, etc.) are adjectives referring to quantity, and the ordinal numbers (first, second, third, etc.) refer to distribution.

1	one	first
2	two	second
3	three	third
4	four	fourth
5	five	fifth
6	six	sixth
7	seven	seventh
8	eight	eighth
9	nine	ninth
10	ten	tenth
11	eleven	eleventh
12	twelve	twelfth
13	thirteen	thirteenth
14	fourteen	fourteenth
15	fifteen	fifteenth
17	seventeen	seventeenth
18	eighteen	eighteenth
19	nineteen	nineteenth
20	twenty	twentieth

21	twenty-one	twenty-first
22	twenty-two	twenty-second
23	twenty-three	twenty-third
24	twenty-four	twenty-fourth
25	twenty-five	twenty-fifth
26	twenty-six	twenty-sixth
27	twenty-seven	twenty-seventh
28	twenty-eight	twenty-eighth
29	twenty-nine	twenty-ninth
30	thirty	thirtieth
31	thirty-one	thirty-first
40	forty	fortieth
50	fifty	fiftieth
60	sixty	sixtieth
70	seventy	seventieth
80	eighty	eightieth
90	ninety	ninetieth
100	one hundred	hundredth
500	five hundred	five hundredth
1,000	one thousand	thousandth
100,000	one hundred thousand	hundred thousandth
1,000,000	one million	millionth

Examples:

- There are twenty-five people in the room.
- He was the fourteenth person to win the award since 1934.
- Six hundred thousand people were left homeless after the earthquake.
- I must have asked you twenty times to be quiet.
- He went to Israel for the third time this year.

Fractions and decimals

Fractions ($1/2$, $1/4$, $3/4$, $3/5$ etc...) are adjectives referring to quantity, they can be expressed in letters, numeric fractions or decimal fractions:

word/concept	numeric fraction	decimal fraction	read
half	$1/2$	0.5	point five
a quarter	$1/4$	0.25	point two five
three quarters	$3/4$	0.75	point seven five

Percentages

Percentage is a fraction or ratio with 100 understood as the denominator; for example, 0.98 equals a percentage of 98.

25% = twenty five percent

50% = fifty percent

75% = seventy five percent

100% = a/one hundred percent

Units

\$1,200 = one thousand two hundred dollars

£16,486 = sixteen thousand four hundred and eighty-six pounds

150.23 = one hundred fifty euro and twenty-three cents

545 kms = five hundred and forty-five kilometers

\$25.35 = twenty-five dollars thirty-five

Note: The use of decimal point is different from Italian usage. A comma is for decimals in Italian where a decimal point (period/full stop) is used in English for the decimal and a comma is used for thousands, hundreds of thousands etc.

Years

1988 = Nineteen eighty-eight

1864 = Eighteen sixty-four

1099 = One thousand ninety-nine

600 AD = Six hundred (ei – di:) (years after Christ was born)

1,500 BC = One thousand five hundred (bi:- si:) (years before Christ)

2004 = Two thousand and four

How to say '0'

1. zero or nought is used in mathematical expressions and decimals:
 - 0 x 3 = 0 'nought times three equals nought'
 - 0.3 = 'nought point three' (or 'point three')
 - 0.03 = 'point nought three'
2. zero is used in scientific expressions, especially temperatures:
 - 20°C = minus twenty degrees or twenty degrees below zero
3. also used to mean 'the lowest point':
 - 'The heavy rain reduced visibility to zero'
4. 'o' (the letter)
 - used in telephone numbers:
 - 0171 390 0062 = 'o one seven one three nine o double o six two'
5. nil/nothing
 - used to express the score in games such as football:
 - 2 - 0 = 'two nil' or 'two nothing'