

Strengths

The weighty (254 pages) Book contains 12 units, the second half being devoted to those in the area of lexis is systematically

features, in response to students' requests, are the vocabulary acquisition, authentic listening practising material is included 80 per cent of the material is authentic and includes a variety of accents and dialects. Some sections deal with talking about finding a body, graphically describing a potential injury, have you sitting your seat. Reading authentic, selected topicality and variety are almost guaranteed a response from the turn of students. Writing, speaking and listening are by no means neglected. Each unit contains two exercises, together with

student-friendly hints on planning, presentation and content. "Talking Points" (activities to get students talking) are stimulating and realistic and will provoke a response. The grammar section in each unit covers standard areas such as conditions, inversion and passives but relies on a deductive approach, requiring the students to classify genuine examples before performing mainly sentence completion tasks. Any omissions of grammar in the Student's Book are compensated for by the optional Workbook with answers, containing a comprehensive range of grammar and vocabulary exercises.

In addition to all this there is a well laid-out Teacher's Book containing answers to the exercises, tapescripts and extremely helpful advice on the handling of each unit, which will especially benefit the less-experienced teacher. What more do you need?

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Eyes and ears

ing styles contrasted. Attention for the Student sets out the rationale clearly, and I find the exercise "Reading Skills" necessarily complex for self-study

at such a fundamental level as the "topic" should be foregrounded by "text awareness" until Unit 12. As a result of the absence of a glossary: lexis learning is incremental. On the other hand, irony might have been dealt with in greater depth. The more than compensation for the shortcomings by the way in which he uses in

prosodic features should be completely ignored. Listening to authentic speech with varied accents is a demanding activity which can prove overwhelming if learners are inadequately trained to perceive stress, intonation, individual sounds and forms of the advanced, often low-frequency, vocabulary featured. *Soundtracks* is a "write-in" book, and the complete Tapescripts are again followed by an Answer Key. I recommend it despite my reservations.

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Old Spanish Customs

El inglés? Sin problemas!
Mike O'Neill *Edward Arnold, 1989*

Bryan Robinson

Learner: Why doesn't "cuánto tiempo" translate as "How long time?"

Teacher: Because.

Learner: "Because" Why?

Teacher: Because because!

It's a very old, and not a very good joke. But it's a mini-dialogue that's repeated time and time again in EFL classrooms throughout Spain.

El inglés? Sin problemas! has been written "specially to answer" this kind of question, but does it do so? Can it?

The entry under 'How long' tells you that it is

- 1)... not followed by time.
- 2)... commonly used with the Present Perfect tense in English, where Spanish uses a Present tense, and
- 3)... not used for distance: for this we use How far? But it doesn't really answer the question at all.

Mike O'Neill, the author, is on the staff of the British Council in Barcelona and he most certainly has a great deal of experience of the type of question which his book sets out to answer. His implied readership has a distinct "British Council pre-First Certificate" air to it, and the thoroughness with which the contents is set out indicates the clear, methodical approach to Cambridge F C exam preparation which the B C Institutes, in Barcelona and Valencia at least, employ.

In his brief introduction he states that the book is basically an "information bank", although the book could be used in class as a complementary text. Fundamentally though, it is intended to be accessible to learners whatever their

level - a promise hard to live up to. A significant step towards achieving this is clearly seen in the structure of the book, in which the language items are dealt with in alphabetical order, in English, and then cross-referenced in a Spanish index. This seems a sensible approach, although some post-Elementary learners would not necessarily agree: they start with the Spanish index, go to the entry and find a text which includes both English and Spanish. The Spanish sentences are correct, but the English sentences include the errors. Incorrect forms are clearly marked if you've read and understood the introduction, which is only written in English.

The 342 entries which constitute the book seem to include all the typical "false friends" traditionally found in F C Reading Comprehension papers as well as many of the commonest structural errors. However, how does the book deal with more complex interference errors, such as the Spanish "Es difícil que ..." followed by a subjunctive? (Translated literally as "It is difficult that ..."). These are commonly mis-translated by Spanish speakers at all levels. This particular example does not appear in the book.

It is a good first step towards someone's writing an accessible, linguistically-based analysis for Spanish-speaking learners of English. It should prove an excellent companion text for pre-F C learners. Moreover, I would certainly recommend it to any teachers new to the Spanish-speaking world.

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The Administration System

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