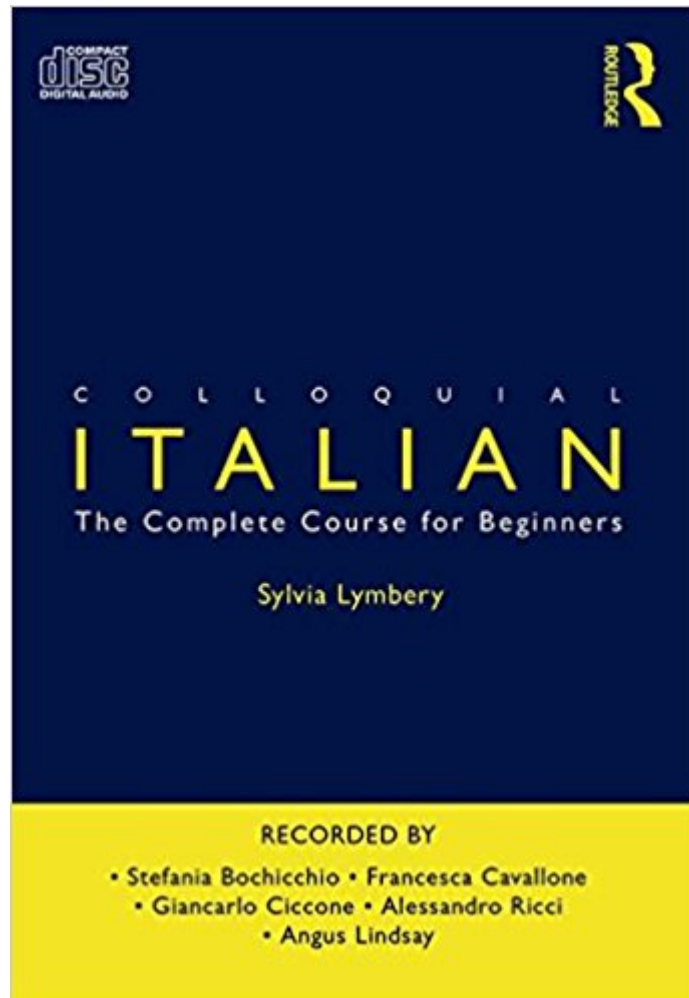




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Colloquial Italian (Colloquial Series)



Synopsis

These two 60-minute CDs, recorded by native speakers of Italian, are an invaluable component of the Colloquial Italian course. While reinforcing material from the book, the CDs also contain a variety of additional exercises, including role-playing, and a useful guide to pronunciation. Course components: The complete course comprises the book and audio materials. These are available to purchase separately in paperback, ebook, CD and MP3 format. The paperback and CDs can also be purchased together in the great-value Colloquials pack. Paperback: 978-0-415-36268-9 (please note this does not include the audio) CDs: 978-0-415-36270-2 eBook: 978-0-203-01272-7 (available to purchase separately from http://ebookstore.tandf.co.uk/audio_viewbooks.aspx. Please note this does not include the audio) MP3s: 978-0-415-47081-0 (available to purchase separately from http://ebookstore.tandf.co.uk/audio_viewbooks.aspx) Pack: 978-0-415-43489-8 (paperback and CDs)

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Customer Reviews

Sylvia Lymbery is just about to retire after a working life which saw her at one time heading up an international School in Oxford, and later teaching EFL in Italy for several years. Also author of Teach Yourself 'Improve Your Italian' and our own Colloquial Italian 2. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

I've been using this book to prepare for a trip to Italy, so I am not (currently) pursuing Italian in an

academic sense. I would give it 3.5 stars if possible, but I've rounded it to four, but really 4 is too generous. The audio is available online for free from Routledge (search for "Routledge Colloquials Audio"), so don't waste your money trying to acquire CDs to go with it! The book is structured as a few dialogues with some exercises and grammar points thrown in. It moves fairly quickly (probably too quickly, to be honest) and like most "touristy" books, it starts in a cafe and then goes to topics like trains, directions, and describing yourself. The print and binding quality are fine, and it's a monochrome print. The audio quality is pretty good, but there is a lot of English at start of each dialogue that reads text straight out of the book -- I wish they would cut that, but this is pretty much standard for every Routledge "Colloquial", so I just use Audacity to trim the audio. There is probably less than 5 minutes of Italian per unit. There is one difficult part about this book: they don't provide a translation of the dialogue. Sure, they give you vocabulary words and some phrases, and yes, there is a dictionary that contains every word, but there are not bilingual texts for quick comparison. For me, having to jump to the dictionary in the back isn't the best experience. Still, the audio is very animated (clearly good voice actors/actresses) and you can learn quite a bit, but you will need listen and read along with the dialogues easily 10+ times. The book also covers a surprising amount of grammar, albeit a little too strongly like the grammar-translation method for my taste. Compared to *Teach Yourself Italian*, the audio in this course is much better, but this course feels a bit more random. I think the two have a lot of overlap and can be used to reinforce each other. And finally, compared to *Assimil Italian with Ease*, it's far, far less content: Assimil still takes the cake for cramming 100 bilingual dialogues with 3 hours of Italian (only) audio into one course. I own and use all three, but if I had to pick just one, it would be Assimil, not this course. Still, this has been useful and I have learned from it, and the dialogues are a lot more relevant if you're going to be traveling or living a short while in Italy -- much more so than Assimil, to be honest. If you find an inexpensive, used copy, grab it and download the audio!

I bought this from the Colloquial languages series because I had used the "Colloquial Japanese" in 1983 and found it exceptionally useful - I still use phrases from that book. What I liked at that time was the speedy pace, the intelligent and full discussions of Japanese grammar, and the relatively wide standard vocabulary for both reading and speaking. What I was trying to get away from was the Phrase Book approach - which treats you as if a) you are stupid and scared of grammar, b) only interested in buying souvenirs. So how was Colloquial Italian? On grammar, about middling. I found it irritating to have to learn the first person singular, then a little later the first and second person singular, and then again later the first second and third person singular. My feeling is that we need

to learn paradigms, let's get on with it. Postponing it does not make it easier. In Colloquial Italian you only get the plural of first conjugation regular present tense on page 77, halfway through chapter 5. Still the discussions of grammar, when they come, are intelligent and informative. On vocabulary, I was again disappointed, for the book is directed primarily at the American tourist. Again, one needs to learn a good deal, so let us not hang back. The chapters are broken into several little sections, with a few words each. Much better to have one place with all the vocabulary listed in some rational order. Then one could start by learning it all by rote before working through each chapter. This would reinforce memory and also makes systematic study / revision far easier. Still, at least the book has a glossary that covers words used in the text so if you cannot recall which list it was in, you still have some recourse. If I look back at languages I have persevered with, I have in fact used them more for general reading and for watching films than as a tourist. I also have some experience as a schoolboy learning language systematically and effectively. I am clearly not the target learner for this (or any other current language learning) book. This book is sold as a "New Edition." I wonder if the old edition would be more to my taste. Probably the dumbing down and the narrow focus on tourists derives from the publisher. I would like one publisher however to set out to satisfy the language learner of broad interests. They would have that section of the field to themselves. Perhaps they should have two versions, the "normal edition" and the "tourist" edition".

This book is an easy read and the best part about the book is that it teaches the reader to speak the way Italians speak. And not some text book version of the language.

I have found it to be very helpful. It is one that I will use if I travel. Helps out.

I have used the Routledge Colloquial series for teaching and learning for my own pleasure for numerous languages. This is certainly the best the series has to offer. Sylvia Lymbery does an outstanding job of making you feel at home and comfortable learning Italian. It's almost like sitting with the author and having a chat over a nice espresso! Well done!

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