

Part A: Learner's Profile

Student is an intermediate-level (B1) Mexican student whose L1 is Spanish. Although he studied Arabic to prepare for his trip to Egypt, he is now focusing solely on English.

He originally started learning English in primary school, but he did not retain much of it, explaining that he only became serious about improving his fluency in 2017 at the age of 18 when he started university. Since then, he has been taking English classes three times a week as a requirement for his degree as well as one-on-classes on the side.

However, despite the effort that student has demonstrated to learn English, he admits that he is not very fond of language learning, making his motivation almost entirely extrinsic. Harmer points out that adults "often have a clear understanding of why they are learning and what they want to get out of it" (Harmer, 2007:84), which is the case for this student. Not only does he need to pass an English exam before graduating, but he also has to have an advanced level to pass the job interview at an American company in Mexico.

Although English is instrumental to his career and study prospects, music is what intrinsically motivates him. He likes learning the lyrics of rap songs and singing along when he is driving or out with friends.

He is most interested in having conversations in English, so he likes activities that relate to listening and interacting with others. For example, when he is in class, he benefits from roleplays because it gives him a chance to actually use and hear the language from the lesson in a more realistic way. He also enjoys doing listening comprehension exercises. This means that his learning style is a balance of auditory and interpersonal.

The student is aware that he is not really a visual learner, so he tries to practice outside of the classroom not by reviewing notes but rather by sending and receiving English audio messages on WhatsApp with his friends and going on social media in English. Besides music, he is also fond of listening to podcasts. These activities help him to be more autonomous while effectively utilizing his preferred learning styles. He fits the mould of a concrete learner because he likes "the social aspects of learning"; this is to say that the student is "interested in language use and language as communication rather than language as a system" (Harmer, 2007:88).

When it comes to grammar, the student struggles with identifying the various parts of the language even though he usually uses them accurately when speaking. If you ask him, for example, to come up with a list of prepositions or adverbs, he will struggle. However, if you ask him to share words that are similar to 'in, over, and under' or 'frequently and sometimes', he will easily do so. The same goes for verb tenses. He may not remember the name of the present progressive, but he can correctly express his ideas using that tense. This means that the student freezes up and doubts himself when he is doing written grammar tests.

The student is able to understand a wide range of expressions and words when he is reading and listening to others speak. However, when it comes time for him to produce those expressions and words, he resorts to using more simple lexis. For example, he clearly understands the meaning of phrases like "I am fond of" and "I am passionate about" but will instead repeat "I like" because he wants to speak fast and says what comes to mind first. He is very open to corrections regarding lexis and will try to incorporate more complex phrases and words into his speech if reminded. However, since he does not like writing in English, I have observed that he only uses short and simple lexis when writing.

Because the student practices speaking the most, pronunciation is a huge strength of his. There are only a few sounds that he has difficulties with such as /j/, /dʒ/, and words with -ed endings. After hearing a proficient speaker model the sounds, he is able to reproduce them with ease but sometimes reverts back to mispronouncing them. For example, he correctly pronounces 'walked' like ['wɔkt] when conversing but tends to put too much stress on the last syllable when reading out loud, making it sound like [wɔk'ɪd]. This pronunciation difference seems to occur because he is less confident with reading.

Part B: Language problems and activities

Pronunciation

The first language problem relates to -ed verbs because, even though pronunciation is already one of the student's main strengths, he still has room to improve if he is to ace his job interview.

I found a YouTube video about someone's trip to Egypt, and I designed a corresponding worksheet to go along with it. It will help the student hear which verbs from the video are pronounced as /t/, /d/, or /ɪd/ and learn how to identify the correct pronunciation for other -ed verbs he will encounter.

This activity is meaningful because it is about a topic he already enjoys—Egypt. Plus, it allows him to hear a native English speaker not just modeling the verbs with -ed endings but also using them in a real-life context. Part B is engaging because he can personalize the -ed verbs to talk about his own experiences, which will come in handy during his job interview. It is also suitable for the student because Spanish speakers "tend to pronounce English words letter by letter" instead of taking into account the final sound of the past verb before the -ed ending (Swan, 2001:94).

Grammar

The student has a strong grasp of grammar, but he often mixes up the to be and to have verbs. For example, when he is chatting about friends, he says that he and his friends "have the age" and that he "has cold", which are direct translations from his L1.

My hope is that this activity will help make the student more conscious of the correct verb when he is speaking before it becomes a permanent habit.

The "be + adjective" structure is "expressed in Spanish... by have + noun" (Swan, 2001:101), so this activity is suitable for the student as it will get him to spend less time directly translating from Spanish. It is also meaningful because he is working on speaking as a sub-skill, which is his favourite thing to do in English.

Activity 1: Pronunciation

A: Pay attention to pronunciation of the bold words from the video. Place them in the corresponding section.

We **started** our journey in Cairo, the capital city of Egypt. I got to Egypt by taking an overnight flight from Washington Dulles Airport to Istanbul, and then flying from Istanbul to Cairo. Upon landing in Cairo, we were **picked up** by the group and taken to the hotel. We were driven to the hotel to sleep and get ready for the next full day of adventures.

Upon waking up, we slept at the Steinberger Pyramids Hotel, and the view was absolutely breath-taking. We could see the pyramids right from our patios. It was mesmerizing. So, the first day **started** off with a bang. We went to visit the famous Great Pyramids of Giza, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world and the last remaining. We also **explored** the Sphinx and **learned** about the history and culture of Egypt from our knowledgeable and passionate tour guide, Hasim.

After spending the morning exploring the pyramids and the Sphinx, we went to an awesome lunch spot that was overlooking the pyramids. The food the whole time in Egypt was amazing. Then, after that, we **finished** the afternoon by visiting temples and learning more about Egyptian history. Honestly, my mind is so blown from everything that we learned. It was so fascinating. We **finished** the day off with an amazing group dinner. It was candlelit, under the stars, and absolutely breath-taking. It was the perfect first day in Egypt.

The next day, we woke up bright and early and took a short flight from Cairo to Aswan, a city on the Nile River known for its scenic river views and archaeological sites. Once we got to Aswan, we **climbed** aboard a cute boat and it took us to a Nubian village where we **learned** more about Egyptian history and culture and saw some really beautiful little buildings and artwork. We got to meet some locals, had some snacks and tea, and we **learned** a whole lot. It was so cool to see and experience.

Then we got onto another boat and had a lovely lunch. After checking into our beautiful hotel and resting a bit, we went to a candlelit dinner overlooking the Temple of Philae. It was so incredible.

The next day, we **embarked** on our Nile River cruise. We **explored** the Philae Temple located on an island in the Nile River. It was so cool because when you're visiting these temples on your own, you're looking at it and yes, it's incredible and amazing to look at. But when you go with a guide, you learn so many stories behind each picture and hieroglyph. It was an enriching experience.

We had time to explore and take photos, and then we were off to the local markets where we **learned** about perfume oils, frankincense, and traditional local remedies. We got to smell a bunch of different perfumes and aromatherapy. I bought a special perfume that's only made in Egypt called "Secret of the Desert." It was really interesting to learn that many designer perfumes are made from scents that originated in Egypt.

For sunset, we **boarded** a traditional felucca for a peaceful and scenic sail along the Nile River. We **played** games and bonded while enjoying snacks and tea. We were rescued by another boat, but it ended up being one of my favorite nights of the trip because we all got to know each other so well and **laughed** a lot.

Does the verb (before the -ed) end in a -d or a -t? If yes, the -ed is pronounced like /ɪd/ as a new syllable.	Does the verb (before the -ed) end in a vowel or a voiced consonant (l, n, r, b, g, m, z, s, v)?	Does the verb (before the -ed) end in an unvoiced consonant (p, k, gh, sh, ch, ss, c, x)? If yes, the -ed is pronounced like /t/ and does not create a new syllable.
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	If yes, the -ed is pronounced like /d/ and does not create a new syllable.	
Example: needed	Example: played	Example: worked

B: Create your own sentences using each of the -ed verbs from the list and say them out loud.

Text adapted from: Ghafari, Mahna. (2023, April 2). Should you travel to Egypt? Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/l0amrQHBsxQ?t=140>.

Explanation adapted from: Literacy Minneota. (n.d.). Pronouncing the Past Tense '-ed' Ending: A Sort of Sounds. Retrieved from <https://www.literacymn.org/pronouncing-past-tense-ed-ending-sort-sounds>.

Activity 2: Grammar

Read this dialogue out loud and fill in the blank spaces with the correct forms of the verbs 'be' and 'have'.

Lee: Hi! It's so great to finally meet you.

Anna: Hey! Yeah, I _____ so glad to meet you too.

Lee: Andy told me a lot about you. He said that we _____ the same age.

Anna: Oh, really? You _____ 22 years old?

Lee: Yeah, I _____.

Anna: When is your birthday?

Lee: I will _____ in October. And you?

Anna: I will _____ in November, so I _____ a little bit older.

Lee: Do you know what you want to do for your birthday?

Anna: Well, I originally wanted to go skiing, but I am tired of the snow. I don't like _____ cold. I prefer to _____ warm, so I'll go to a tropical place.

Lee: Yeah, I also don't like _____ cold. It makes you want to stay inside!

Anna: You _____ right. So, _____ you hungry?

Lee: Yeah, I _____. Want to get pizza?

Anna: That sounds great.

References

Harmer, J. (2007). The Practice of English Language Teaching. Fourth Edition. Pearson Longman.

Swan, M. & Smith, B. (2001). Learner English. Second edition. Cambridge University Press.

Additional resource used:

<https://www.e-lang.co.uk/mackichan/call/pron/type.html>