

Mohamed Kechacha

Language Learner Profile

[Date]

Hello ESL 4100 Students!

Nice to Meet you.



About me

My name is Mohamed Kechacha. I am presently working on finishing my major in English as a second language. My ultimate goal is, as I finish this program, to work on my application at the Graphic Design Institute in Montreal.

I am taking this course because it is an elective course. I hope that this course would provide me with the important tools that I need in order to

efficiently learn the advanced vocabulary that I will need to use in the workplace environment.

Although I cannot think of any achievements, I do know that my biggest dream is to one day obtain permanent residency in Canada and move in with my girlfriend.

The Past: Language Learning History

Answer all of the following questions that apply to you and then turn them into narrative format (i.e. connected paragraphs). Approx. 500 - 750 words.

I started learning English when I was about four six years old. At home we had satellite tv and by orienting the dish in the right direction we could watch american channels. I would sit down in the living room after school and watch cartoon network (it had good shows back in the day) entirely in english. I had the same ritual for about six years. By the time I was twelve I took English classes. I had already built up a considerable amount of vocabulary and basic grammar by then by I was a complete stranger to English writing. I knew what the word “sleep” meant but I didn’t have a clue on how to write it down. In Algeria the curriculum put a lot of weight into taking few courses but having a lot of time dedicated to them. To that effect I had about five hours of English classes a week. That quickly changed once I went to Belgium. There the English requirements were lower and fewer which allowed me to have at least English to be an easy A class.

I love the English language for its simplicity and elegance. I feel that my own thoughts and ideas are always better expressed in English (which would explain why I now only think in English). Its grammar is also very easy to grasp and is based on unchanging rules with few exceptions, contrary to french which sometimes has some nebulous concepts. The only downside (which isn’t really one) is that it seems that my brain has a hard time keeping all the languages I know fresh and intact. I noticed that I am starting to lose some of my french in the process.

I can’t say that I ever had a motivation for learning english. English for me is and always was a tool, not a goal. English, as well as arabic and spanish, is a language that I find interesting through the people I talk to. I love to listen to people talking in a foreign language. I game that I like to play in the bus is to try and detect language patterns of the languages that I don’t understand. I learned english not because I needed to. It happened very organically. I learned it because the more I watched TV or listened to people talking, the more I picked up on things I didn’t know about (for instance when someone says “it’s good to *have you back*”, I should answer “it’s good to *be back*”)

Not always, curiously enough these insecurities came into play much later. When I was in Algeria or in Belgium I didn't need to speak English as much as I needed to be able to understand it. It's only when I came to Canada that I realized that when I was in a social setting I would hesitate a lot. Due to my way of speaking I would start a sentence and when I didn't know the word I would try to go around it, using another expression. However I sometimes get lost in my sentence and start mumbling. It took me quite some time to get acclimated to English speaking. However by the time I entered college I had already a quite developed speaking skill.

I mainly used English to communicate with people when it came to writing and speaking. My listening and reading skills were already pretty well honed so I used them solely to listen to people, watch TV or read books.

Being born and raised in Algeria allowed me to learn two languages from the get-go: French and Algerian Arabic (which is a classical Arabic dialect that contains some Spanish, Turkish, Roman and Greek). I used them on a daily basis, especially French, which is my strongest language. A funny thing that I have realized over the past few months is that I started to miss people speaking Algerian to me. I do live with my sister but we mainly speak French and my girlfriend is from Quebec so she doesn't speak it (although I am forcing her to learn it so she'll get there). There is a musicality in the Algerian tongue (which may be said for all mother tongues of people living in a foreign country) that I have a hard time finding in other languages except for Spanish.

The Present: My Current Needs and Goals

Answer all of the following questions that apply to you and then turn them into narrative format (i.e. connected paragraphs). Approx. 250 - 500 words.

Improving my knowledge of the English language hasn't been a determined goal as much as it has been a pursuit fueled by curiosity. Finding new and interesting ways of speaking/writing is something that always pleases me. It is like having an "oh" moment. I do not have any English speaking friends however I do like to interact with people in English. I have a few acquaintances that are English speakers and that I sometimes discuss with. Most of the time I speak in a conversational but slightly more professional tone. Most of the time I ask strangers a question (what time is it? Could you direct me toward *address*). I mentioned earlier that sometimes I tend to try to "go around" the word that I can't recall and instead use a sentence. But sometimes I am able to speak clearly and concisely which does satisfy me.

At this point I no longer consider English as a second language. It comes as a second nature. I always prefer reading books and magazines with their original language, especially movies because I hate watching a dub. In fact I'd much rather watch a movie subtitled than dubbed. I realize now that I have created a sort of bubble around me where everything written around me is in English. In fact I would go out of my way to change the language on my phone so that every app is in English. I think that living in Ottawa has forced me to start interacting with people in English. I noticed that when I'm in Gatineau I always use the French. So I guess it is a contextual thing.

Currently my strongest spoken language is French, however it has been a long time since I have written an academic paper in French, so I am unsure if my strongest written language is still French. My ear is better at understanding French than understanding English. Reading is all the same to me, the same thing could be said about writing. However my speaking skills I still need to work on. I don't know if it actually is possible for me to one day be able to have the accent and the speech patterns of a native speaker.

Are different languages linked to different emotions you have? (e.g. When I am joking around, I prefer to use X language. When I am upset, I slip into using Y language. To my children I speak in Z language when I scold them and W language when we play; When I am talking about something really important, I use U language, etc.)

Now that I think about it, I do notice that my sense of humour is way better in French than in English. I however know that when I talk to myself I do it in English. My use of a certain language isn't really linked to an emotion per se, it is however linked to what I am trying to convey. Another thing is that I see more and more English words slipping into my French. That is in part due to my girlfriend speaking that way, but it is also caused by the fact that to me, English is a more accessible language that conveys a point more directly than French.

I took this course as a follow up the ESL 2100 in which we learned to create a learner profile which helped a lot with figuring out the best way to study. I hope that in this course I will find ways to apply this knowledge in a professional environment.

The Future: How Will I Continue to Use English

Answer all of the following questions that apply to you and then turn them into narrative format (i.e. connected paragraphs). Approx. 250 - 500 words.

I believe that the only way I can learn effectively is by practicing in the real world. I find it very difficult to apply my knowledge in an academic setting. I need to use those news skills in a professional environment, i.e. my placement. I will continue using English for a very long time. In fact one of my worries is that one day I'll find myself only speaking english and slowly losing my french and algerian. It worries me because those two languages are very important to me; indeed, the algerian language is a reminder of where I was born and raised. Not only it is a gateway to other arabic-speaking countries, it is also representative of my roots. French allows me to have more eloquence when I speak, I firmly believe that my discussions in french are at a higher intellectual level because of how french works.