ESL 1072: Working Part-time job

I.                   Dialogue

Luisa: Are you still here? I thought you got off at 3:00.   
Max: I picked up a second shift. I could use the money.   
Luisa: But I thought you had another part-time job in the evenings.   
Max: I normally do, but the restaurant where I work has been cutting back my hours, so I’m trying to pick up as many extra shifts here as I can.   
Luisa: And don’t you work at the amusement park on the weekend?   
Max: I do half the year, but it’s winter and the park only keeps a skeleton crew on during these months. In the meantime, I’m working for a temp agency, which gives me short-term assignments.   
Luisa: I don’t know how you juggle all these jobs.   
Max: I have no choice. I have to piece together an income if I want to pay rent.   
Luisa: Have you ever thought about going back to school to qualify for other work, something full-time?   
Max: Sure, all the time. I’d like a better job, one with benefits and a reliable salary.   
Luisa: What’s stopping you?   
Max: I have to pay for something called “food,” and I haven’t met my fairy godmother yet!

II.                Explanation

Luisa begins the dialogue by saying to Max “Are you still here?” This is one of those questions you ask when you surprise about something, obviously Luisa can see that Max still wherever they are. She said “I thought you got off at 3:00”. To get off of work means to finish your work schedule, to be able to leave the place where you work. Someone said “what time do you get off?” they mean what time do you get off your work, when do you stop working, what time do you stop working. Max said “I picked up a second shift”. A shift s-h-i-f-t refers to a period of time when people work usually this term is used for job when people work at that particular location more than 8 hours or that there are people working at that location for more than 8 hours, this might be, for example, a place where these is someone working 24 hours a day. One person is not going to work 24 hours, it’s straight. So they break up the day into shifts, so if you work the day shift, you’ve been working probably from 8 in the morning around 4 or 5 in the afternoon. If you work in the night shift, you’ve been working probably 4, 5 in the afternoon to midnight. If you’re working what we call the great yard shift, you’re working probably from 11 o’clock at night or midnight to 7 or 8 in the morning. Both are shifts these. The vision of the work day is a place that usually opens for more than 8 hours. Max said he picked up his second shift. To pick up here means to get, to obtain. He was working one shift and now he picks up second shift which means, of course, he was working more than 8 hours a day. Why has Max done this well? He said “I could use the money”. When someone said “I could use this money” he means that he would be able to benefit for getting more money, he had some need of extra money. Luisa said “But I thought you had another part-time job in the evenings” A part-time job is the job usually that is less than 40 hours per week. In United State, 40 hours per week is considered a full time. If it’s less than 40 hours, we might call it part-time. Luisa though that Max had another part-time job. Max said “I normally do, but the restaurant where I work has been cutting back my hours” When we talk about someone cutting back on something, we mean that he is using less of it or he is reducing the number of something. The 2 words phrase of verb to cut back, then, mean to reducing number of something. In this case, we’re talking about the restaurant where Max works cutting back his hours. His hours refer to the number of hours that he can work. Max said “I am trying to pick up as many extra shifts here as I can”. Luisa then asks “and, don’t you work at the amusement park on the weekend”. And amusement a-m-u-s-e-m-e-n-t park is a large park usually that has lots of what we could call “ride in them”, place where people especially children can play game and get into the machine that goes really fast, for example, Disney land is an example of an amusement park here in such of California. Luisa asks if Max is still working at the amusement park on the weekend, he said “I do half the year” meaning “I do work here part of the year, but it’s winter and the park only keeps a skeleton crew on during these months”. Max is saying that the amusement park where he normally works in the summer time only had a skeleton crew during the winter time. The phrase skeleton s-k-e-l-e-t-o-n crew c-r-e-w refers to very a small number of workers, the minimum number of workers you can have that place. If the business doesn’t have very many customers that might have very few employees, and we might call that a skeleton crew if during busy time the company has more employees. This is the case with the amusement park that gets a skeleton crew. The word crew just refers to the group of people. The word skeleton is normally used to describe the ball of your body or the ball of animal. Max said “In the meantime, meaning during the winter season, I’m working for a temp agency, which gives me short-term assignments”. A temp t-e-m-p agency is a company that finds people temporary jobs. The word temp is for short of temporary, meaning short-term, not permanent, not for a long time. They are, of course, many companies that find workers, find people to work for company that just needs workers for a short period of time. Max said the temp agency gives him short-term assignments. Short-term refers to short amount of time, perhaps a week, perhaps even a day. I used to work for a temp agency when I was in college. I would call up every morning and see if they have any work for me. And they could send me to job that would last maybe one day, maybe 2 or 3 days, sometimes as long as a month. Temp agencies are more popular now especially when the economy is not doing so well, companies don’t want to hire employee full time. Luisa said “I don’t know how you juggle all these jobs” The verb “to juggle” j-u-g-g-l-e usually refers to throwing object up in the air and keep it up in the air. We refer to someone who does this as a juggle. But here the verb means to handle many different things at the same time, to be able to do many different things at the same time. Max said “I have no choice, I have no other option. I have to piece together an income if I want to pay rent”. To piece p-i-e-c-e- together something means to put together to assemble. And income i-n-c-o-m-e refers to the money you get for working. Max is saying that he had to work a little bit at this job, a little bit at that job in order to make enough money to pay for his rent. Luisa said “Have you ever thought about going back to school to qualify for other work, something full-time?” to qualify q-u-a-l-i-f-y for something means to have the skills and education in order to be able to do something. So for example if you want to be a doctor, you have to study for many years and order to qualify for that kind of job. At least, I hope you study many years if you’re doctor, if not, please don’t be my doctor. Luisa is asking to Max had thought about going back to school to qualify for some kinds of job that would be full-time, that would be 40 hours a week. Max said “Sure, all the time, meaning I have thought of this a lot” he said “I’d like a better job, one with benefits and a reliable salary”. Benefits b-e-n-e-f-i-t-s refer to things such as health insurance and vacation time and sick paid, money you get when you cannot work because you’re sick. These are common benefits that you get when you have a full-time job. Salary s-a-l-a-r-y refers to money that you get to work at the certain place usually by a month for by a year. When we talk about salary, we’re talking about money you get regardless of how many hours you work. These are 2 kinds of way of getting paid: one is by the hour when you get paid of a certain amount of money for every hour you work; another way of getting paid is by salary when you’re getting paid on a salary, we would say you’re getting a certain amount of money and are expected to do your job even if it takes more than the normal 40 hours a week. Luisa said “What’s stopping you? What’s preventing you from going back to school?” Max said “I have to pay for something called “food,” Max is making a joke here, he’s saying that he can’t afford to going back to school, he doesn’t have enough money to going back to school because condition of paying his rent, he also had to eat and to eat he has to buy food. He finishes by saying “I haven’t met my fairy godmother yet” A fairy f-a-i-r-y godmother g-o-d-m-o-t-h-e-r is the character from children story, story that we tell children usually involving a women who has some sort of magical power. The fairy godmother is common character in certain fairytale that are told to children. They are mad up story about magical events. Here Max is using this expression to mean that he hasn’t found someone who just gives him money to pay for his expenses and to go to school.