MOOC (MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSES) AS AN ADVANCED TECHNIQUE TO STUDY ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Inas Kamal Yaseen[1],
Çağlar Demir[2i]
[1]College of Basic Education,
Al-Mustansiriyah University,
Baghdad, Iraq
[2]School of Foreign Languages,
Balıkesir University,
Turkey

Abstract:

This study tries to shed lights on the most updated technique that has been used nowadays to study variety of disciplines and English in particular. MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses) is a trendy term come to exist in the very recent dates, where learners can use technology and internet to learn from vital online recorded or live platforms assured by granted well organized resources or foundations that provide knowledge for free or not. This research tries to investigate the awareness of Iraqi English teachers to MOOCs by making a questionnaire to English language college teachers from different disciplines and universities in Baghdad during the academic year 2018-2019. The sample of this study includes 35 English language college teachers. According to the findings of this study, the researcher considered the weighted mean 50% and 68% as an item that gain low positive attitude from teachers. Consequently, three items were gaining high attitude from teachers.

Keywords: (MOOC) Massive Open Online Courses, English language, advanced technique of study

1. Introduction

1.1 The Problem of the Study and its Significance

Despite the fact that most Iraqi teachers and learners use their smart devices very commonly in communication, and internet service is available in most of Iraqi areas, the implementation of this gift is rarely seen in the actual life, educational associations especially. Iraqi universities in addition, follows a slow progressing considering the rapid update techniques which have appeared each time in many fields.

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[i] Correspondence: email rareviolet2007@yahoo.com, erkandemirdemir508@hotmail.com

It is hoped that with this study, the reader will be familiar with MOOC and make use of it as a very important free way to acquire an endless gate of information.

1.2 Aims
The study aims at investigating Iraqi English Language Teachers' Awareness toward the use of MOOC application

1.3 Value
1) This study can be useful and helpful for English Language teachers in universities by making them familiar with the new techniques and updated ways to use technology in teaching
2) It can aid at developing English teaching in Iraq as using the available time and way.
3) It can help both learners and teachers to be independent and confident in themselves.
4) It can serve teachers and learners in time and place due to its flexibility nature in which it is designed for.

1.4 Limits
This study is limited to English Language Teachers at Iraqi Universities in Baghdad governate for the academic year 2018-2019.

1.5 Definitions of Basic Terms
1.5.1 MOOC
European Commission defines a MOOC as "*an online course open to anyone without restrictions (free of charge and without a limit to attendance), usually structured around a set of learning goals in an area of study, which often runs over a specific period of time (with a beginning and end date) on an online platform which allows interactive possibilities (between peers or between students and instructors) that facilitate the creation of a learning community. As it is the case for any online course, it provides some course materials and (self) assessment tools for independent studying*" (European Commission, 2014)

2. Literature Review

There has been breathtaking change in education systems in the world for the last decade. Digital revolution has opened the doors of education and information to all the people via various educational websites, social media platforms in internet. One of the most useful tools internet provides people with is MOOCs, which is called as massive open online course. It 'allows massive scale of learners to register and take participate in a course simultaneously.' It provides free and open access to course materials to learners across the world. MOOCs started first in Germany, England, and Spain. In 2014, the most

popular MOOCs included those on statistics, learning how to learn, computer science, strategic management, finance and R programming (Shah, cited in Zhang, 2014).

Zhang states that clearly the reason people signed up for MOOCs had undergone a significant change in a short time. Whether a function of an expanding curriculum or personal needs and preferences, the road quickly shifted from computer science and business courses to MOOCs for personal growth and development (Zhang, 2014).

The effective learning and teaching are conducted via online (World Wide Web) using various advanced technologies and innovative pedagogical techniques. In particular, discussion forums in massive open online course (MOOCs) are a primary means of interaction among learners and instructors. They enhance students' learning foreign languages efficiently for they are engaged in the forums in MOOCs comfortably compared to discussions in the classes.

Bowden (2019) describes MOOCs as being;
- *"Massive because enrollments are unlimited and can run into hundreds of thousands.*
- *Open because anyone can enroll — that is, there is no admission process.*
- *Online because they are delivered via the internet.*
- *Courses because their goal is to teach a specific subject."*

It provides an online solution for those who are interested in different subjects, students and those who are undecided about future profession or specialization, setting goals and developing their skills.

When we analyse the advantages of MOOCs in English language education, learners who have computers with internet connection have free access to open online course programmes.

MOOCs have filled the gap in equality of opportunity in language education in the world.They enable language students to learn English in open online language courses which are given by significant international institutes, such as British Council. This foundation offers "*an open online course 'Understanding IELTS: Techniques for English Language Tests' through the FutureLearn platform*" (Pethuraja, 2015).

In the improvement of the English language skills, Open online English courses play crucial roles for the language learners who want to become the citizens of the World. MOOEC provide "*free online English language courses offered by universities and colleges. It was launched in December 2013 with support of Queensland State Government and the local English language teaching community*" (Pethuraja, 2015.)

3. Material and Methods

3.1 Population and Sample

The population of this study comprises the teachers of English at Iraqi universities in Baghdad governorate Al- Rusafa district. 35 teachers form English departments in Imam Khdim, Ibin-Rushud, and Basic Education Colleges have participated in this questionnaire.

3.2 Instruments

A questionnaire has been constructed to be the main instrument used.

3.2.1.1 Face Validity of the Questionnaire

An instrument is considered to have face validity in the case that items are well accepted by other testers, moderators, teachers (Hughes, 1989 : 22). In order to ensure the face validity of the questionnaire, its first version has been exposed to a number of specialists in the fields of linguistics and methodology of teaching EFL and in the light of the experts' views some items have been added and others have been omitted. However, the final form of the students' questionnaire consists of 20 items (see Table 1).

Table 1: Jury Members

	Name	Affiliation
1	Prof. Rahim, Fatima	(Ph.D.; University of Misan/College of Basic Education).
2	Rasheed, Istabreq	(Ph.D.; University of Mustansiriyah/College of Basic Education).
3	Asst. Prof. Disher, Iqbal Saheb	(Ph.D.; University of Misan/College of Basic Education).
4	Asst. Prof. Sarhan, Sa'ad Salal	(M.A.; University of Mustansiriyah/College of Basic Education).
5	Inst. Sabar, Muntaha	(M.A.; University of Mustansiriyah/College of Basic Education).
6	Inst. Munshid, Afrah	(M.A.; University of Mustansiriyah/College of Basic Education).
7	Inst. Delf, Muna	(M.A.; University of Mustansiriyah/College of Basic Education).
8	Abdulzahraa, Haidar	(M.A.; University of Mustansiriyah/College of Basic Education).

* The jury members are arranged according to their academic titles.

3.2.1.2 Reliability of the Questionnaire

Reliability refers to how consistent evaluation results are from one measurement to another (Gronland, 1976 : 102). However, the questionnaire has been read ministered to the same pilot sample after two weeks. The statistical manipulation of the data has been obtained from the two administrations. By using Pearson Correlation Coefficient formula, the result yields 0.86, whereas, by using Alpha Cronbach Formula the result yields 0.87.1.

3.2.1.4 Scoring Scheme of the Questionnaire

Accurate scoring procedures should be adopted in order to get proper results to ensure objectivity and reliability (Harrocks & Schannover, 1968: 76). The questionnaire is intended to be answered according to a three point scale. The questionnaire is intended to be answered according to a three point scale (strongly agree, agree, Not sure, disagree). The marks are assigned as follows: agree 3, not sure 2, strongly agree / disagree 1.

Table 1: Questions of the survey investigating Iraqi teachers use
for massive open online courses when studying English Language

Item	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Weighted mean	Percentile Weight
1. I have access to a computer with an internet connection	25	2	4	4	0	2.5	50%

2. I have access to a fairly new computer (e.g., speakers, CD-ROM).	11	6	9	8	1	3.4	68%
3. I have access to a computer with adequate software (e.g., Microsoft word, Adobe Acrobat).	8	10	7	2	8	4.4	88%
4. I have the basic skills to operate a computer e.g., saving files, creating folders)	16	6	3	7	3	3.6	72%
5. I can send an email with a file attached	11	5	14	5	0	3.7	74%
6. I think that I would be comfortable using a computer several times a week to participate in a course	11	11	7	6	0	3.5	70%
7. I think that I would be able to communicate effectively with others using online technologies (e.g., chat)	9	4	13	7	2	4.2	84%
8. I know what MOOCs (massive open online courses)are	4	2	15	5	4	4.1	82%
9. I have tried to use one of MOOCs services (e.g., Coursera, future learn, Udemy applications)	8	8	7	9	3	4.3	86%
10. I found obstacles using MOOCs applications due to my weak ability to use internet and smart devices	15	8	10	2	0	3.5	70%
11. MOOCs are very useful nowadays for both teachers and students	14	4	6	7	4	4.0	80%
12. I think that I would be able to remain motivated even though the instructor is not online at all times	12	6	6	9	2	4.0	80%
13. I think that I would be able to complete my work even when there are online distractions (friends sending emails or websites to surf)	6	7	8	7	7	4.8	96%
14. I think that I would be able to complete my work even when there are distractions in my home (e.g., television, children and such)	5	4	5	15	4	4.1	82%
15. I think that I would be able to carry on a conversation with others using internet (e.g., internet chat, instant messenger)	9	6	13	6	1	4.0	80%
16. I think that I would be comfortable having several discussions taking place on the same online chat even though I may not be participating in all of them	13	5	6	7	4	3.5	70%
17. I prefer to have more time to prepare responses to a question	12	3	9	11	0	4.0	80%
18. I think I would be able to follow an online conversation (e.g., internet messenger) while typing	5	8	10	8	4	4.6	92%
19. I suppose that I only pay attention to online courses	8	10	10	3	4	3.4	68%

20. I think that poor internet connection may not influence on my motivation to stay tuned	6	7	8	7	7	4.8	96%
21. Iraqi colleges support online learning	5	3	7	5	4	4.1	82%
22. I do intend to follow courses that provide certificates mostly	11	11	7	6	0	3.5	70%

4. Results and Discussion

According to the findings of this study, the researcher considers the weighted mean 50% as an item that gain low positive attitude from teachers. Consequently, Three items were gaining high attitude from teachers. Conclusion remarks can be clearly pointed out in item number (20) which refer to (I think that poor internet connection may not influence on my motivation to stay tuned). It got a weighted mean 96%, and number (13) item (I think that I would be able to complete my work even when there are online distractions (friends sending emails or websites to surf)). It got a weighted mean 96%. For that sake, research findings assure the beneficial of implementing or the use of MOOC in teaching English for all statistical means shows high responding for teachers' assumptions about it. English Language teachers are technology friendly and find MOOCs useful. The pandemic of Covid- 19 has a positive influence on Iraqi English language teachers' development in internet and applications use. It opened their eyes and eager to try many teaching applications and programs. The real application for the online teaching, has changed Iraqi teacher concepts and perceptions about internet implementation in teaching and studying English in the positive way that leads them to try more than application and program to achieve their goals in teaching language.

5. Recommendations

The following recommendations are suggested:
1) The Academics can practice the use of MOOCs on many applications, such as Coursera, Futurelearn, Udemy considering them the most accessible and easily used applications
2) Students' language learning will directly affect their language acquisition. That is why, language teachers can create interesting contents to make MOOC more appealing, but not challenging.
3) Teachers should update their knowledge about educational innovations and usage of educational e-tools every time for technology rapidly develops every minute of the life.
4) Language teachers should not only give linguistic input via MOOC but also give a great deal of time to students to practice what is taught.

6. Conclusion

MOOCs is of great significance in the world today, in terms of providing equality of opportunity in education. It provides courses taught by well-informed teachers in the colleges and respected universities around the world. It also promotes self-learning. Though it is still not used efficiently by all the learners in the world, its vital role in education is clearly understood by the academics, teachers and learners due to Covid 19 Pandemic world has been going through. If some regulations related to appropriate accreditation issues can be made, education system will totally change in the world and a student in a different part of the world can access to any university in any parts of the world and have bachelor, master and doctoral degrees.

7. Suggestions for Further Studies

1) An online designed English Course specified to a particular level can be applied on University students.
2) Further studies can be done over the effect of MOOC on students' critical thinking skills at different school programmes.
3) An academic study can be done on the effect of MOOCs on the professional development and their sense of belonging to teaching profession.

Conflict of Interest Statement
The authors of this research certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript. All co-authors have seen and agree with the contents of the manuscript

About the Authors
Inas Kamal Yaseen is an English instructor at Al Mustansiriyah University / College of Basic Education – English Department from. Holds a master degree in Methods of Teaching English with a real concern of research writing and technology implementing in education. Some of the author published works are a descriptive study under the title (Investigating Teachers Attitudes towards Using Visual Aids in Developing Vocabulary) with an experimental study under the title (The effect of Using Gradual Release of Responsibility Teaching Model on Iraqi Non-EFL College Student's Achievements in Reading Comprehension) also a participation in a research under the title (The effect of Using Index Card Games on Iraqi EFL Pupils' Performance in Conversation) and a published study in Missan Academic Journal with the title (Dictogloss as a Comprehensive Teaching Technique to Use with EFL Iraqi College Students).
Dr. Çağlar Demir works as an English Instructor at Balıkesir University, School of Foreign Languages. His research interests are English language education, English

teaching methods, Context analysis of Postgraduate theses and English literature, gender studies. He is also the author of the book 'Elizabeth Gaskell and Feminism.'

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