Cédric Sarré[1]

Sorbonne Université, INSPE de Paris, France

Poppy Skarli

Turku University of Applied Sciences, Turku, Finland

Anna Turula

Pedagogical University of Cracow, Crakow, Poland

**Original
research paper**

The pedagogy of languages for specific purposes: developing key professional competences through a massive open online course for language teachers

Extended summary

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) as well as studies into their effectiveness date from the beginning of the millennium (Anderson 2004). Although MOOCs dedicated to the teaching and learning of languages - Language MOOCs known as LMOOCs in the published literature - have gained popularity since 2008, this has not been the case for language teacher education courses which are still rarely delivered in the form of MOOCs (Ibanez Moreno & Traxler 2016). However, the very few studies which report on such courses, called Language Teacher Education MOOCs or LTEMOOCs (Sarré 2021), point to the positive impact of this type of MOOC in initial teacher education (Orsini-Jones, Gafaro & Altamimi 2017) as well as in continuing professional development courses (CPD) (Kormos and Nijakowska 2017). Yet, the picture is still far from complete as the effectiveness of such courses in CPD and initial language teacher education still needs to be investigated through more empirical studies.

To fill this gap, a MOOC addressing the needs of current and prospective teachers of languages for specific purposes (LSPs) was designed by the consortium of the Erasmus+-funded

1   cedric.sarre@sorbonne-universite.fr

CATAPULT project and a study was carried out based on three iterations of the course since its launch in 2020.

The course development was largely based on the LSP Common Competence Framework (CCF) that had been devised as one of the key components of the CATAPULT project and published as a research report (Turula & Gajewska 2019). Each iteration of the course (called 'season') ran for 8 weeks and the revisions of the course content were made based on participants' feedback after each season. The main objective of the MOOC was to upskill general language teachers who want to specialise in LSP pedagogies, as well as LSP teachers interested in updating and expanding their pedagogical repertoire and in integrating the use of technology in their practices.

The present study aims to probe MOOC participants' perception of the course in terms of its usefulness and to investigate to what extent it matched their reasons for joining the course in the first place. The sample studied consists of 54 respondents, both LTEMOOC participants (n=50) and teaching assistants (n=4). Course participants were current and prospective LSP teachers and teaching assistants were past course participants who had successfully completed Season 2 and had been awarded a certificate of achievement as they were some of the most active course participants. They were introduced in Season 3 as a way to support instructors in providing feedback and comments to course participants.

Research instruments included post-course surveys administered to course participants, and discourse analysis based on the feedback provided by instructors and on focus-group interviews with Teaching Assistants.

Data analysis first shows that course participants' overall satisfaction has grown steadily between season 1 and season 3 of the course, both in terms of interest and usefulness, which is most probably due to the various revisions that were made after each season of the course. In addition, the perceived usefulness of each module seems to be linked to how directly applicable to a classroom context module content is. Two main factors therefore seem to influence the participants' perception of usefulness: the proportion of theory and the complexity of content. Besides, data analysis shows that course participants' initial objectives have been revised along the way going from preference for takeaways – theoretical background, practical ideas, certificate, etc. – to preference for interactions (posts and feedback) with fellow participants and instructors. This shows that, from a MOOC designer's perspective, a combination of the xMOOC's instructionist model and the cMOOC's interactionist model seems to be relevant for any language teacher education MOOC and that creative solutions exist to address the issue of sufficient instructor presence in such online courses. Our conclusions therefore tend to show that the LTEMOOC offered by the CATAPULT consortium can be considered as a form of teaching innovation which will hopefully pave the way for more MOOC-based language teacher education courses in the future.

Keywords: Languages for Specific Purposes (LSPs), Teacher Education, Continuing Professional Development (CPD), MOOC, LMOO

References

- Anderson, T. (2004). Teaching in an online learning context. *Theory and practice of online learning,* 273–294. Athabasca University Press.

- Colpaert, J. (2014). Reflections on Present and Future: towards an Ontological Approach to LMOOCs. In: Bárcena, E. & Martín-Monje, E. (Eds.). *Language MOOCs: Providing Learning, Transcending Boundaries* (161–172). Berlin: De Gruyter Open Ltd.

- Dede, C., Ketelhut, D. J., Whitehouse, P., Breit, L. & McCloskey, E. M. (2009). A research agenda for online teacher professional development. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60 (1), 8–19.

- Deng, R., Benckendorff, P. & Gannaway, D. (2019). Progress and new directions for teaching and learning in MOOCs. *Computers & Education*, 129, 48–60.

- Drake, J. R., O'Hara, M. & Seeman, E. (2015). Five principles for MOOC design: With a case study. *Journal of Information Technology Education: Innovations in Practice*, 14 (14), 125–143.

- Kormos, J. & Nijakowska, J. (2017). Inclusive practices in teaching students with dyslexia: Second language teachers' concerns, attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs on a massive open online learning course. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 68, 30–41.

- Lankshear, C. & Knobel, M. (2007). Sampling "the new" in New Literacies. In: Knobel, M. & Lankshear, C. (Eds.). *A New Literacies Sampler* (1–24). New York, USA: Peter Lang Publishing.

- Lee, K. & Brett, C. (2015). Dialogic understanding of teachers' online transformative learning: A qualitative case study of teacher discussions in a graduate-level online course. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 46, 72–83.

- Liyanagunawardena, T. R., Parslow, P. & Williams, S. A. (2014). *Dropout: MOOC participants' perspective.* Paper presented at the European MOOC stakeholder Summit 2014, Lausanne, Switzerland.

- Martín-Monje, E. & Borthwick, K. (2021). Researching massive open online courses for language teaching and learning. *ReCALL*, 33 (2), 107–110.

- Moon, J., Passmore, C., Reiser, B. J. & Michaels, S. (2014) Beyond comparisons of online versus face-to-face PD: Commentary in response to Fishman et al., "Comparing the impact of online and face-to-face professional development in the context of curriculum implementation". *Journal of teacher education*, 65 (2), 172–176.

- Moreno, A. I. & Traxler, J. (2016). MALL-based MOOCs for language teachers: challenges and opportunities. *Porta Linguarum: revista internacional de didáctica de las lenguas extranjeras*, (1), 73–85.

- Orsini-Jones, M., Conde Gafaro, B. & Altamimi, S. (2017). Integrating a MOOC into the postgraduate ELT curriculum: reacting on students' beliefs with a MOOC blend. In: Kan, Q. & Bax, S. (Eds.). *Beyond the language classroom: researching MOOCs and other innovations* (71–83). Retrieved August 28, 2021 from Research-publishing.net. https://doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2017.mooc2016.672

- Parsons, S. A., Hutchison, A. C., Hall, L. A., Parsons, A. W., Ives, S. T. & Leggett, A. B. (2019). US teachers' perceptions of online professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research and Studies*, 82 (1), 33–42.

- Reeves, T. D. & Pedulla, J. J. (2011). Predictors of teacher satisfaction with online professional development: evidence from the USA's e-Learning for Educators initiative. *Professional Development in Education*, 37 (4), 591–611.

- Sallam, M. H., Martín-Monje, E. & Li, Y. (2020). Research trends in language MOOC studies: A systematic review of the published literature (2012–2018). *Computer Assisted Language Learning,* 33 (3), 1-28. https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2020.1744668

- Sarré, C. (2021). *New Directions in LSP Teacher Education in the 21st Century*. 5th International Conference "Language – Profession – Science – 2.1", 24–25. April, Belgrade, Serbia.

- Sokolik, M. (2014). What Constitutes an Effective Language MOOC? In: Bárcena, E. & Martín-Monje, E. (Eds.). *Language MOOCs: Providing Learning, Transcending Boundaries* (16–32). Berlin: De Gruyter Open Ltd.

- Stewart, B. (2013). Massiveness + Openness = New Literacies of Participation? *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 9 (2). Retrieved August 28, 2021 from www: http://jolt.merlot.org/vol9no2/stewart_bonnie_0613.htm

- Turula, A. & Gajewska, E. (2019). Towards a Common Competence Framework for LSP Teachers. Catapult Consortium. Retrieved August 28, 2021 from http://catapult-project.eu/?smd_process_download=1&download_id=1066

- Yousef, A. M. F., Chatti, M. A., Wosnitza, M. & Schroeder, U. (2015). A cluster analysis of MOOC stakeholder perspectives. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 12 (1), 74–90.

- Yuan, L. & Powell, S. (2013). MOOCs and disruptive innovation: Implications for higher education. *eLearning Papers, In-depth*, 33 (2), 1–7.

- Yurkofsky, M. M., Blum-Smith, S. & Brennan, K. (2019) Expanding outcomes: Exploring varied conceptions of teacher learning in an online professional development experience. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 82, 1–13.