THE ANALYSIS OF LEARNER AUTONOMY AND AUTONOMOUS LEARNING PRACTICES IN MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE LANGUAGE COURSES (MOOLCS)

ÖĞRENEN ÖZERKLİĞİ VE KİTLESEL AÇIK ÇEVRİMİÇİ DİL DERSLERİNDE (KAÇDD) ÖZERK ÖĞRENME PRATİKLERİNİN ANALİZİ

Hülya MISIR

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ÖĞRENEN ÖZERKLİĞİ VE KİTLESEL AÇIK ÇEVRİMİÇİ DİL DERSLERİNDE (KAÇDD) ÖZERK ÖĞRENME PRATİKLERİNİN ANALİZİ

Hülya MISIR

ÖZ

Edgar Faure ‘in (1972) 'Öğrenen Toplum' kavramı, tekâmül eden yaşam boyu öğrenme biçimleri için kapsayıcı bir kavram olma özelliğini sürdürmektedir. Bugün, dijital ve etkileşimli (sosyal) ekolojilerde öğrenme fikri, farklı yasam biçimlerine sahip olan milyonlarca insana cazip gelmektedir. Bu anlamda Kitlesel Açık Çevrimiçi Dersler (KAÇD) oldukça revaçtadır. KAÇD'ler birebir ders biçiminden, merak uyandıran, etkileşimli ve işbirlikçi bir biçime doğru tekâmül ederken; bu çevrimiçi derslere, dil dersleri de katılmaktadır. Bu çalışmada değinildiği üzere Kitlesel Açık Çevrimiçi Dil Dersleri (KAÇDD) ilk KAÇD'lerin aksine, bilginin aktarımı için kolay bir yol olarak görülmeyip; öğrenenin katılımını destekleyerek, ortak çalışmaya dayalı aklı ve aktif bilgi üretimini teşvik etmektedir. Böylece, öğrenenin pasifliğinden (tüketici), aktif katılımcı ve üreten durumuna (üretici) bir geçiş yaşanmaktadır. Bu nedenle, öğrenen özerkliği (learner autonomy), çevrimiçi öğrenme ortamlarıyla ilişkilendirilir hale gelmektedir. Dil öğrenimindeki bu pedagojik gelişmeler doğrultusunda, bu çalışma, öğrenen özerkliği ve KAÇDD'lerle ilgili olarak aşağıdaki konuları incelemektedir: (a) KAÇDD katılımcılarının özerkliği ve ne derece özerk oldukları, (b) katılımcıların dil öğrenmede kendi rollerinin algısı, (c) katılımcıların dil öğrenmedeki öğretmen rolü algısı ve (d) katılımcıların KAÇDD'lere katılarak dahil oldukları özerk öğrenme pratikleridir.

Çalışmada, İngilizce KAÇDD bağlamında özerk dil öğrenme konusuna daha geniş bir bakış açısı kazanmak için karma araştırma yöntemi kullanılmıştır. 3 farklı İngilizce KAÇDD'den 57 katılımcıyla Özerk Öğrenme Anketi (ÖÖA) uygulamak üzere iletişime geçilmiştir. Nitel veriler ise bu üç İngilizce KAÇDD'de özerk öğrenme pratiklere ve öğrenenlerin bu pratiklerine karşı tutumlarına dair bir çerçeve çizmek için tartışma forumundaki gönderilerinden (katılımcıların etkileşim verileri) toplanmıştır. Veri analizi nicel (frekans analizi, ortalamalar, standart sapmalar) ve nitel (içerik analizi) analiz teknikleri kullanılarak yapılmıştır.

Özerk Öğrenme Anketinin sonuçları, İngilizce KAÇDD katılımcılarının son derece özerk olduklarını ve kendi dil öğrenmelerinden sorumlu olmaya ve çevrimiçi dil öğrenmede kendi başarıları için daha fazla sorumluluk almaya istekli olduklarını göstermektedir. Dahası, öğrenenlerin kendi rolleri hakkındaki algısı, özerkliğe karşı olumlu bir eğilimi gösterir. Öte yandan, öğrenenlerin, özerk öğrenmeyi kabul ettikten sonra çevrimiçi öğrenmede öğretmenlerin rolünü gereksiz görmedikleri ortaya çıkmıştır. Aksine, çevrimiçi öğrenmeye alışma sürecinde 'denetlenen bir öğrenme' ve öğretmenin varlığına önem verilmektedirler. Dahası, ilgili veriler, öğrenenlerin KAÇDD'de öğrenen odaklı ve özerk dil öğrenme pratiklerini desteklediklerini göstermiştir.

Anahtar sözcükler: özerk öğrenme, rol algısı, Kitlesel Açık Çevrimiçi Dil Öğrenme Dersleri (KAÇDD), özerk öğrenme pratikleri

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THE ANALYSIS OF LEARNER AUTONOMY AND AUTONOMOUS LEARNING PRACTICES IN MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE LANGUAGE COURSES (MOOLCS)

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ABSTRACT

Edgar Faure's (1972) 'Learning Society' continues to be a blanket for the ever-evolving forms of lifelong learning. Today, the very idea of learning in digital and interactive (social) ecologies is tempting for millions of people with different stories. In this regard, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are in demand. When MOOCs were evolving from lecturing form to an engaging, interactive, and collaborative form of learning, language courses began to rise within MOOCs. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOLCs), as referred in this study, are not deemed to be simple ways of knowledge delivery unlike some early MOOCs, because they encourage collaborative intelligence and active knowledge making by empowering better inclusion. This way, a shift from learner passivity (consumer) to active participant and maker (producer) has emerged. Hence, learner autonomy (LA) has become relatable to online learning environments. In accordance with this pedagogical development in language learning, this study investigates the following areas regarding LA and MOOLCs: (a) learner autonomy with MOOLC participants and to what extent they are autonomous, (b) learners' perception of their own roles in language learning, (c) learners' perception of teachers' roles in language learning, and (d) the autonomous learning practices the learners are involved by participating in the MOOLCs.

The mixed-method design is employed to gain a wide perspective regarding autonomous language learning in the context of English MOOLCs. 57 participants from three different English MOOLCs have contacted to conduct the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (LAQ). The qualitative data is collected from discussion forum posts (interaction data of the participants) in order to form a frame for autonomous learning activities in these three English MOOLCs and learners' attitudes towards them. The data analysis is carried out via quantitative (frequencies, means, standard deviations) and qualitative (content analysis) analysis.

The results of the questionnaire show that the English MOOLC participants are highly autonomous and willing to take charge of their own language learning and be more responsible for their own accomplishment in online language learning. Also, the learners' perception of their own roles indicates a positive inclination towards autonomy. On the other hand, it is found out that the learners do not find the role of teachers redundant in online learning once they adopt autonomous learning. On the contrary, they value the presence of a teacher and a supervised learning within the process of familiarizing with online learning. Furthermore, the interaction data confirms that the learners favor the learner-centered and autonomous language learning practices in the MOOLCs.

Keywords: learner autonomy, perceived roles, Massive Open Online Language Courses (MOOLCs), autonomous learning practices

Advisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Didem KOBAN KOÇ, Hacettepe University, Department of Foreign Language Education, Division of English Language Teaching

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

MOOC: Massive Open Online Course

MOILLE: Massive Open Online and Interactive Language Learning Environment

MOOLC: Massive Open Online Language Course

LMOOC: Language Massive Open Online Course

LA: Learner Autonomy

ILL: Independent Language Learning

LMS: Learning Management Systems

CALL: Computer Assisted Language Learning

OLE: Online Learning Environment

OER: Open Educational Resources

CEFR: The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

GLL: The Good Language Learner

MKO: More Knowledgeable Other

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

1. INTRODUCTION

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are the new flavor of education that has already gotten underway in 2011 and evolved since. “MOOCs have been around for a few years as collaborative techie learning events, but this is the year everyone wants in” says Pappano in her coloumn in The New York Times (Pappano, 2012). 2012 was pointed to be “the year of the MOOC” when Cousera reported 2.8 million students registered in April 2012 (Miyazoe & Anderson, 2013). The acronym MOOC describes the key characteristics: *Massive*-the courses are offered to a great number of people, *Open*-MOOCs are free to enroll and study, *Online*-the courses are accessed via web-based platforms, and *Course*-they are for educational purposes. MOOCs can be considered as an improved version of Open Educational Resources (OERs) or Online Learning Environments (OLEs), only with some new characteristics.

Miyazoe and Anderson (2013) state that if 2012 is the year of MOOCs, then “2013 has become the year to talk and worry about the MOOC!” Everyone wonders what good MOOCs will do. This question brings up a hot debate among individuals, institutions, and even governments. As MOOCs are open-access and offer free choices among massive amount of courses for individuals, it is an undeniable source of knowledge. No matter how MOOCs are implemented (blended learning, supplementary source, or lifelong learning), they do not fail to give individuals a feeling of learning something new. This new online treasure helps people with different learner profiles reach out scafolding, that is, people have access to principled education with educators, mentors, peers, and organized resources. As prestigious institutions and universities get in line to be accepted by platforms such as Coursera, Udacity, MiriadaX, and EdX, learners must feel lucky at this point to access the courses designed and tutored by qualified and experienced educators. When asked to higher education institutions, most of them are positive about MOOCs and believe in a promising future for MOOCs. It may not be as huge as affordable smartphones replacing many gadgets altogether. However, as Bill Gates asserts, MOOCs are going to be phenomenal, because they are coming at a very good time. Because of the cost of education nowadays, it is the best timing to educate more people. The educational institutions appreantly see MOOCs as

their lab to experiment new pedagogies within the technological innovations. Some higher education institutions involved in this ongoing development sustain their performance by trying new educational models that will help them explore new horizons. David Willetts, Universities and Science Minister in England, the UK, is sure that MOOCs will change the analysis of education, of how we learn and where we make mistakes. They will also allow people to be able to change career paths, improve new skills, and develop better digital literacies as well as get the middle class in the game of elites at prestigious universities. Stephen Caddick, the vice provost of University of College London said that the university invested in MOOCs because they want to experiment it for the good of students. He sees MOOCs as a development in personalized learning and life long learning. Additionally, Rupert Wegerif, the Director of Research at University of Exeter, emphasized the fact that MOOCs are here to teach us how to learn from ourselves and from others. They not only transmit content but also provide a safe environment where students are willing to learn in a personalized way, create knowledge for themselves, and create knowledge to shape with others. This is clearly a kind of skill the students in Internet age need. Therefore, MOOCs definitely bring new opportunities to people who pursue life long education and to institutions that experience this new technology. After all, governments would benefit from all these innovations the most. They would fund the MOOCs as a part of a lifelong education in the country, recruit more people for the MOOC projects and courses, discover a new business model and provide future career plans, and have a more educated population in the long run.

The MOOCs brought a new perspective to pedagogical practices. There has been a hot debate, though, whether they can replace face-to-face classes, a good teacher, or a group study. Dr. Siemens, as an initiator and instructor of the MOOCs himself, probably gave the most accurate answer to those debates in an interview by University Affairs. He said, “There’s a role that MOOCs can play. But they’re not replacement models. They don’t replace the existing university systems. They augment it and help those universities become more relevant in the digital space” (Tamburri, 2012).

Siemens is aware that MOOCs are not here to do everything, but to serve a particular need. He stated that MOOCs brought significant research opportunities

for universities to further their educational practices and help the transition of their activities and offerings in those spaces (Tamburri, 2012).

Quality education has not been affordable for everyone. The situation today does not give many opportunities to people with lower income as well as people who may think of a career change and get an education from the high ranking universities. However, MOOCs offer thousands of courses from a great number of fields to inspire everyone out there in one way or another. Knowledge is no longer expensive for those who want to *learn* in our era. The current post-industrial era very much depends on knowledge-based industries, information technologies, and communications (Bates, 1993). Therefore, MOOCs are meant to play a significant role eliminating demographic, economic, and geographical constraints. MOOCs and in fact any components of online learning through the use of the Internet and technology provide a medium for that (Gov, 2014).

As MOOCs were initiated in Canada and the USA, almost all of them were English-medium courses. However, English was only a requirement and mostly a hindrance for those from around the world until courses for language learning started. Among a great number of subjects that MOOCs offer via popular platforms (Coursera, EdX, FUN, Futurelearn, MiriadaX etc.), language MOOCs (MOOLCs) gathered pace too. According to the variety of focus of MOOCs, I categorize the current English language courses as follows:

Exam focused: e.g. *TOEFL® Test Preparation: The Insider's Guide* and *Understanding IELTS: Techniques for English Language Tests*

Skill based: e.g*. Academic Listening and Note-Taking, Academic and Business Writing etc.*

Content based: e.g. *English for Journalism, Exploring English: Magna Carta, Shakespeare etc.*

Language Teaching MOOCs: e.g. *Teaching EFL/ESL Reading: A Task Based Approach.*

General English: *Tricky English Grammar, English Whit #1 Using Sentence Connectors etc.*

The platforms offer different language courses by many prestigious institutions. The language courses are mostly initiated in the country where the language taught in the course is spoken as an official language. Apart from English courses, Chinese, Arabic, Spanish, Italian, French, and some other Asian and European language courses have been provided. A detailed chart for the numbers of English language courses with the links to the courses is provided in Appendix 4, and the list of other language courses in Appendix 5.

The notion of learning a foreign language via MOOLCs brought hot debates on language learning as much as learning anything via MOOCs. Everyone asked why one would want to participate and be a part of a MOOLC society in the first place. This question relates to participants' learning behaviors, which may contribute or impede the language learning process in a MOOLC. Language learners' learning behavior may vary in an online learning environment because "learners also come to learning with their own individual beliefs, attitudes, expectations, anxieties, motivations and strategies" (Hurd, 2005). Therefore, online learning environments (OLEs) place significant demands on *the learner*. The most recent studies often address the issue of learner autonomy in online learning courses in terms of registration, active participation, and completion (e.g. Beaven et al., 2014). Learner autonomy has taken much more attention in regard to online learning environments since distance education came to our lives. In the general sense, Healey (2002) defines the instructional framework of autonomy as the degree of independence the learner has in setting language learning goals, the path to the goal, the pace of learning, and the measurement of success. Given the nature of learner's place in MOOCs, Healey's framework can clarify the importance of enhanced awareness of learner autonomy.

In recent years, autonomy has played a prominent role in educational policies around the world in part because of the importance of self-directed lifelong learning in business, employment, and social policy (Benson, 2013, p. 4). As the MOOCs foster a new business model, social understanding, and educational policies, autonomous and thus successful learner gained importance. In the present study, the central issue is to investigate to what extent the MOOLC participants are autonomous and benefit from online learning environments. The

literature on autonomy relating online language learning environments is expected to shed light on the ever-expanding issue of autonomy.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The realm of innovative technologies in education intrigues today's learners. Those who are immersed in technology take emerging technologies as essential tools for learning (Conole, 2013). Any sort of involvement of technology in education makes it a lot easier to deal with the pace of the postmodern world today. In this regard, MOOCs are introduced to be a potential educational tool. In terms of foreign language education, Perifanou and Economides (2014) affirm the growing interest about MOOLCs as they are multiplying at a rapid pace. They provided the first essential framework to evaluate, as they call it, the Massive Open Online and Interactive Language Learning Environment (MOILLE). One of the six dimensions in the framework is *pedagogy.* This dimension supports the idea of promoting autonomy (Autonomous/Self-paced/Self-regulated Learning/Reflection) (Perifanou, 2016). While autonomy is of general requirement in education, language learning especially motivates the notion. Given the nature of language learning, it is quite important to be autonomous in MOOLCs in many ways (e.g. for interactive activities, monitoring the learning, self-assessment etc.)

The dominant approach in traditional language classes has not been encouraging learner-centeredness, and thereof learners' lacking autonomy results in inefficient language learning. The perception of autonomy in Turkish Education is an indubitable issue studied by some academics (e.g. Yıldırım, 2008; Çubukcu, 2009; Balçıkanlı, 2010; Çakıcı, 2015). As autonomization in Turkey remains to be a major problem, it is not surprising that the MOOLC participants from Turkey do not grab a big piece of the pie among MOOLC registrants.

Learner autonomy seems to be an intractable issue in some other education systems as well. Brown (2013) indicated that undergraduate students are unlikely to have the skills required to be autonomous learners in a MOOC. Most learners have little confidence in their own learning skills and rely on teachers' authority instead. They prefer to stay in their comfort zone that does not include much risk of uncertainty. However, this new phenomena of education has zero tolerance of unskilled language learners who are unable to manage their own learning. It is

unlikely to (successfully) complete a MOOLC without the ability to learn. To conclude, if learners that come from different education systems can possess a desired level of responsibility and management over their own learning process, there is a lot that MOOLCs can offer for them to pursue the goal of learning a foreign language.

1.2. Purpose and Significance of the Study

The research regarding Computer Assisted Language Learning and Technology Enhanced Language learning has assured that language learning benefitted the great number of opportunities that technology brought to education (Perifanou, 2016). Now MOOCs are taking over the duty of contributing to *learning*. The most obvious contribution is that it saves many people from the distractive nature of Internet by gathering quality and approved materials and offering a fruitful learning process. Similarly, the language learning materials on the Internet have not always been trusted either. MOOLCs could be a solution for those who can afford a shift of focus away from traditional education and put their lives and experiences at the center of their learning (Reinders & White, 2016). In line with the mission of traditional education, Downes states what MOOCs attempt to do is to “create an environment where people who are more advanced reasoners, thinkers, motivators, arguers, and educators can practice their skills in a public way by interacting with each other” (2012).

It is important to highlight that “language competences and intercultural skills are more than ever before key qualifications for every citizen nowadays in every part of the world” (Perifanou, 2016, p. 380). Every citizen of our time is expected to be the best version of themselves in order to gain credits/praise. As it seems, online learning has considerable contributions to the mentioned goal. Bárcena and Martín-Monje (2014) state in their very great source for MOOLCs that open online courses can “facilitate the communicative language capabilities for potentially massive and highly heterogeneous groups whose only common goal is their desire to learn a given language” (p. 10). The profile of the participants of MOOLCs is quite various, but there is one common sentence in many comments on the web: “I am here because I want to improve my language.” Therefore, it is our job to study MOOLCs and introduce learners what is in MOOLCs for them. Nevertheless, there is very little research on MOOLCs in particular and even less empirical research in

the literature. The conference proceedings have been complied from 2013 to 2016, and some empirical research was included, though these works are taking time to reach the scholarly status of refereed journal articles (Bárcena & Martín-Monje, 2014). In this sense, the present study will qualify for the related literature on MOOLCs.

Various research and considerable experiences in education circles argue that the use of technology for learning purposes brings the issue of learner autonomy. Reinders and White (2016) give a critical argument about the link between technology and learner autonomy along with the key changes within 20 years stating “the use of technology for learning often requires a degree of autonomy, but also that our understanding of the impact of technology is changing our understanding of learner autonomy and, more broadly, the roles of learners and teachers” (Reinders & White, 2016, p. 143). In the related literature, although there is a good number of studies on MOOCs and learner autonomy separately, there is a lack of research on *online learner* per se, or what autonomous practices learners are involved in MOOLCs, and how learner autonomy in open online learning is at work. By addressing the mentioned topics, this study will contribute to our understanding of learner autonomy and autonomous practices in MOOCLs.

All in all, I believe that learner autonomy should not be come down to the achievement in traditional classes. On the contrary, bearing in minds the online learning environment, learner autonomy, autonomous learning environments, namely, MOOLCs, and autonomous practices in MOOLCs should be analyzed. In this study, I introduce three MOOLCs and explain to what extent the participants are autonomous, and what autonomous practices they are involved thanks to the MOOLC participation. Therefore, I study the relationship between degrees of learner autonomy with respect to the three particular MOOLCs and the learners’ involvement in the autonomous practices in the MOOLCs.

1.3. Research Questions

This study aims at identifying the answers to the questions below to achieve a better understanding of massive open online language learning courses and learner autonomy as well as what autonomous practices the MOOLCs have the learners to be involved.

1. To what extent are EFL learners in an English MOOLC autonomous?
2. How do EFL learners in an English MOOLC perceive learners' roles in learner autonomy?
3. How do EFL learners in an English MOOLC perceive teachers' roles in learner autonomy?
4. What autonomous practices are EFL learners involved by participating in an English MOOLC?

1.4. Limitations

Esch (1996) stated that autonomy, which is not a steady state, is not "a single easily identifiable behaviour" (p. 37). Although there are well-developed surveys/questionnaires or empirical studies to evaluate the degree of learner autonomy, it is naive to consider that there might be a fully-fledged instrument to identify autonomous behavior. This study will use Joshi's (2011) Learner Autonomy Questionnaire since she finds the items of the questionnaire quite relevant to what she intends to study regarding the degree of learner autonomy. Nevertheless, the researcher keeps in mind the limitations of using a single questionnaire as a research instrument, especially with respect to learner autonomy.

Another limitation might be the number of participants I was able to contact, which is 57 among thousands of participants using MOOLCs. Additionally, the online context defined in the study includes learners from different education systems in different countries; however, it can be deceiving to generalize the findings of the present study and draw conclusions regarding the approach to autonomous learning or MOOCs/MOOLCs in those countries.

1.5. Definition of Terms

Massive Open Online Courses: "A MOOC is an online course with the option of free and open registration, a publicly shared curriculum, and open-ended outcomes" (McAuley et al., 2010, p. 10).

Massive Open Online Language Courses: Massive Online Open Language Courses (MOOLCs) are online educational platforms that meet the educational needs "as they can give the opportunity to massive number of learners to learn for

free a language through communication in a learning environment with no space and time limitations" (Perifanou, 2016, p. 381).

Learner autonomy: "The ability to take charge of one's own learning … and to take charge of one's learning is to … have responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning" (Holec, 1981, p. 3).

1.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I introduced the related terms 'MOOCs and MOOLCs', and discussed the beliefs and attitudes of educators and researchers regarding the contribution of online learning courses to education. Also, learner autonomy and autonomous learner in online learning, the statement of the problem, the purpose and significance of the study, the research questions, limitations, and the definitions of important terms are presented. A more comprehensive literature review on MOOCs, MOOLCs, learner autonomy, and definition of achievement in online learning will be presented in the following chapter.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Timeline of MOOCs

MOOCs are not a brand new idea that came into existence over night. There is a long background and evaluation of LMS (Learning Management Systems) and distance education behind this current educational technology. Distance education has been in our lives since the 1980s when technology started to revolutionize education. In the 1990s, distance education showed a rapid increase, and universities and educational institutions began to utilize a variety of both real-time and asynchronous online technologies (Miller, 2014). As for Computer Assisted Language Learning, the term CALL took the floor when Levy (1997) looked for a new pedagogical approach and study the implementations of the computer in language learning and teaching environments. There have always been developments in adapting e-learning elements into education. We could actually conclude that prospective teachers, researchers, and practitioners have always been looking for a way to get the technology in. In 2008, George Siemens and Stephen Downes created the first Massive Open Online Course called Connectivism and Connectivist Knowledge, and it was the first driving force and became an inspiration for starting up more open online courses in Canada and the United States (Miller, 2014). It was David Cormier, the instructional technologist at the University of Prince Edward Island, who coined “the term MOOC to describe the Connectivism and Connective Knowledge (CCK08) and highlight the key characteristics of this new pedagogical model” (Dabbagh et al., 2016). It rapidly became globally phenomenal. It even managed to find a place in the latest quarterly update of Oxford dictionary in August 2013.

The second driving force was a computer science course, Artifical Intelligence, offered by Stanford via Udacity. Udacity was founded in June 2011 by Sebastian Thrun, a former Stanford professor, along with David Stavens and Mike Sokolsky who are current researchers in Stanford to offer open online computer science courses by Stanford. Udacity was launched with the goal of “democratizing” education (Faviero, 2012). After that, Coursera started more courses while EdX took on creating MOOCs with the cooperation of Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Udacity is a different platform than the other MOOC

providers in some sense. First of all, it is a for-profit start-up. Besides, when students enroll in a course in Udacity, they can complete the course based on their own pace unlike in EdX and Coursera where there are more timely-structured courses starting and ending at certain weeks (Faviero, 2012). Last but not the least, Udacity brought a different pedagogical approach to MOOCs which is called connectivism. Through this approach, MOOC providers had to differentiate the pedagogical practices of cMOOCs and xMOOCs, which will be discussed soon.

It did not take too long for new MOOC platforms in different countries to come into the stage. In Europe, platforms such as OpenupEd, FutureLearn, and TheOpenUniversity from the UK, HassoPlattnerInstitut (HPI) and iversity from Germany, FUN from France, Eliamedy from Finland, Miríada X and UNEDcoma from Spain were all launched before 2014. Meanwhile, in the rest of the world, Japan started Schoo, Australia-OpenLearning.com and open2study, Brasil-veduca, and India-EducateMe360. According to the participant rates, the most popular of these platforms still are Coursera, EdX, and Udacity in the USA, Futurelearn in the UK, and Miriadax in Spain.

2.2. The MOOC Providers and Courses

2.2.1. EdX

EdX is a MOOC provider that is founded by Harvard University and MIT in 2012 now including more than 90 global partners. Anant Agarwal, the CEO of edX, taught the first EdX course on circuits and electronics from MIT. 155,000 students from 162 countries participated in the course (EdX, n.d.). It is a non-profit organization funded by the institutions. EdX has the second biggest platform that offers a great variety of courses by 18.1%. Currently, it offers 1195 courses. There is a wide range of courses as shown in Figure 2.1.

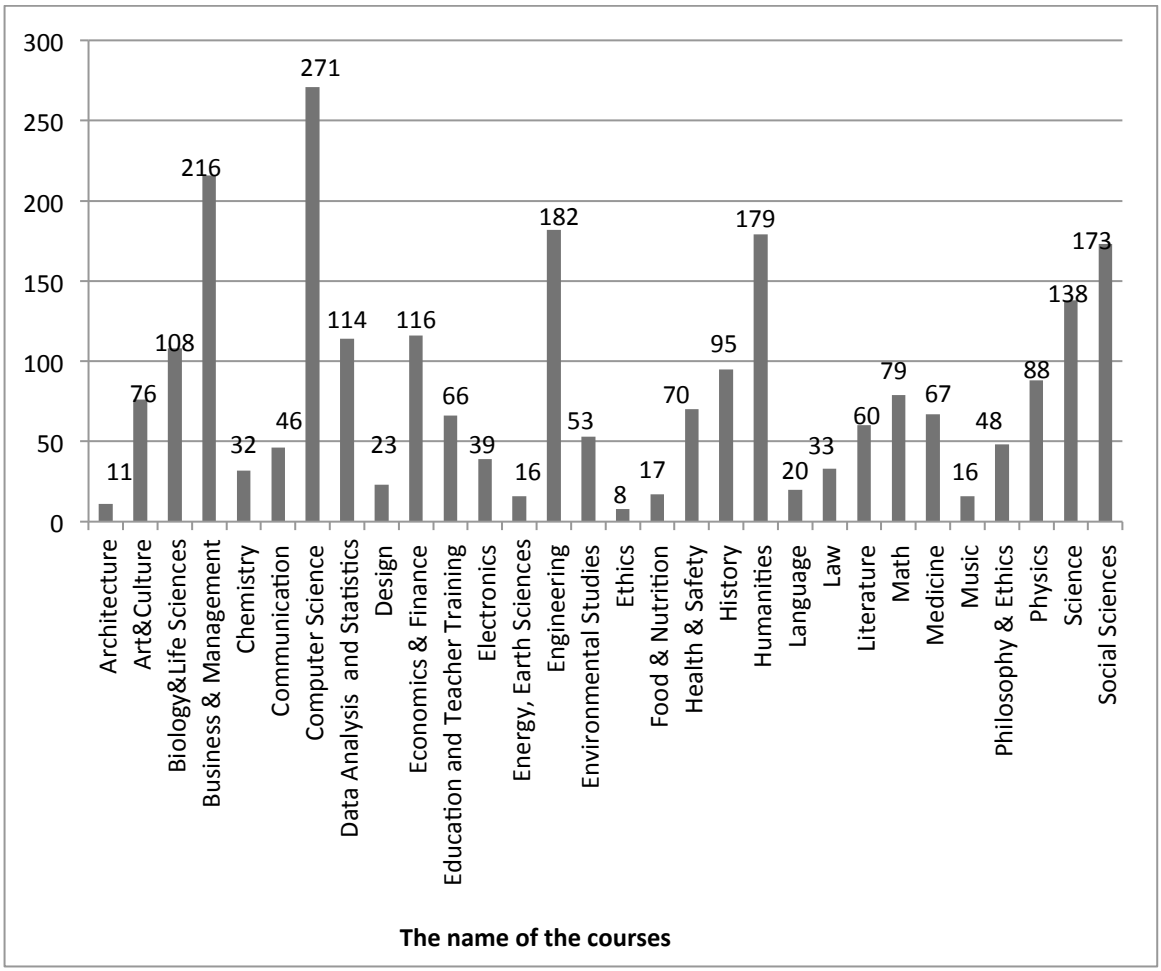

Figure 2.1: The Number of Courses by Subject in EdX

Source: EdX. (n.d.). About Us. Retrieved October 29, 2016, from https://www.edx.org/about-us

2.2.2. Coursera

Coursera is a for-profit company, which started with $22 million total investment from venture capitalists, including New Enterprise Associates and Kleiner, Perkins, and Caufield & Byers Education (Yuan and Powell, 2013). It offers 2452 courses currently (29.09.2016) most of which are certificated upon paying a small amount of fee. The course range is the widest of all platforms. There are 10 subjects in the catalog each of which includes many sub-categories and hundreds of specializations (see Figure 2.2). Coursera has universal access to education offered by top universities and institutions such as Stanford University, MoMA, National Geographic Society, Yale University, Johns Hopkins University, IBM, Brown University, and Koç University, Turkey. It provides the 35.6% of all MOOCs according to Class Central Report in 2015 (Shah, 2015).

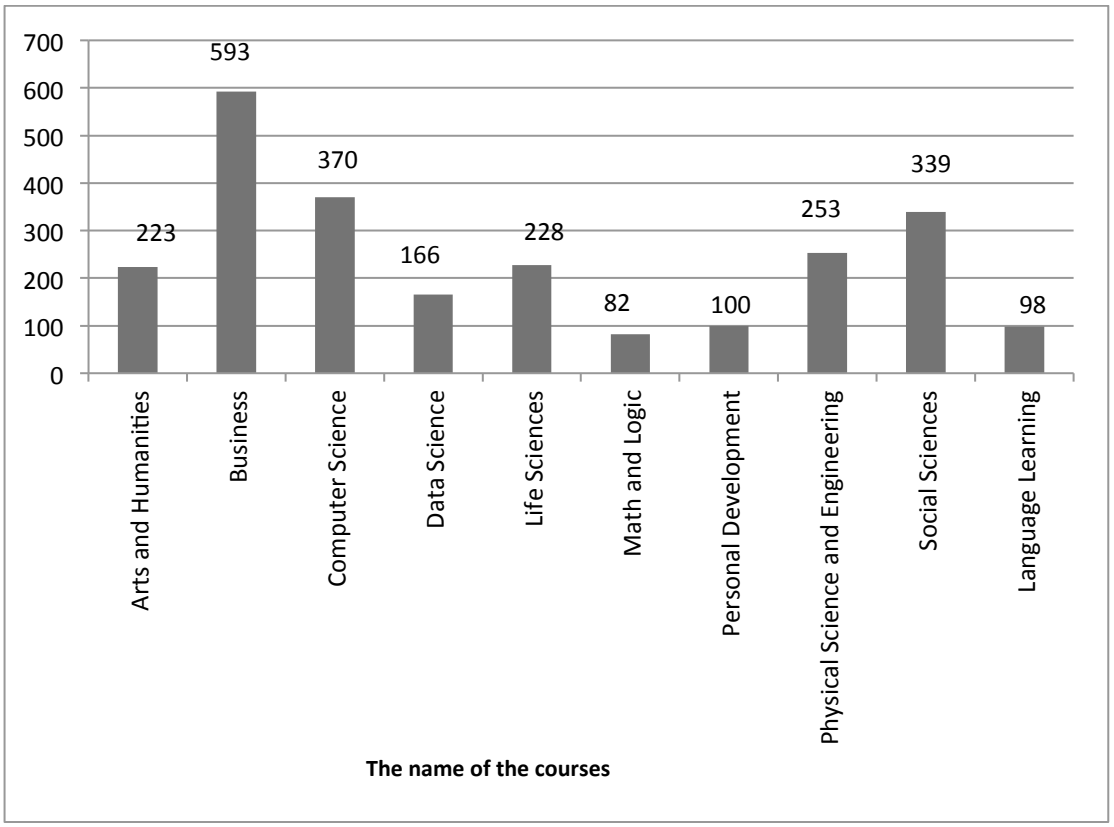

Figure 2.2: The Number of Courses by Subject in Coursera

Source: Coursera | Online Courses From Top Universities. Join for Free. (n.d.). Retrieved October 29, 2016, from https://www.coursera.org/browse?languages=en

2.2.3. Udacity

Udacity is a rather different platform that was initiated at Stanford University by means of Sebastian Thrun and Peter Norvig's course called Introduction to Artificial Intelligence, which was free and attended by over 160,000 learners from more than 190 countries (Udacity, n.d). It focuses on building a university by Silicon Valley with the industry giants such as Google, AT&T, Facebook, Salesforce, and Cloudera. The courses aim at proving professional and hands-on projects for learners to become Web Developers, Data Analysts, Mobile Developers, Software Engineers etc. by offering nano degree programs and credentials. The President of Udacity Sebastian Thrun thinks that Udacity's nano degree could actually revolutionize higher education by linking learners to tech jobs.

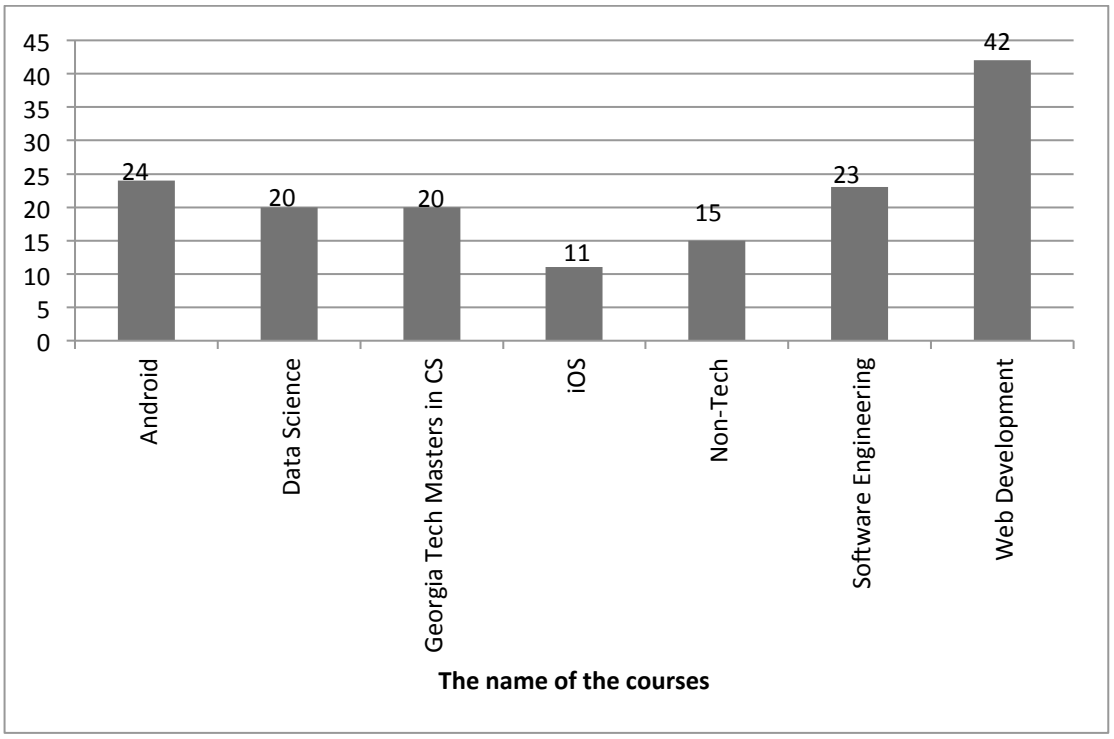

Figure 2.3: The Number of Courses by Subject in Udacity

Source: Udacity. (n.d.). Udacity - Free Online Classes & Nanodegrees. Retrieved October 29, 2016, from http://www.udacity.com/

2.2.4. Futurelearn

Futurelearn was started in the UK in 2013. It is a private company owned by The Open University. The platform is partnered with 111 prestigious institutions and universities including British Council, Lancaster University, the UK Government, BBC etc. Currently, there are 586 courses some of which are 'to be announced'. Since the beginning, 4,491,617 people were recorded to register the courses (Futurelearn, n.d.).

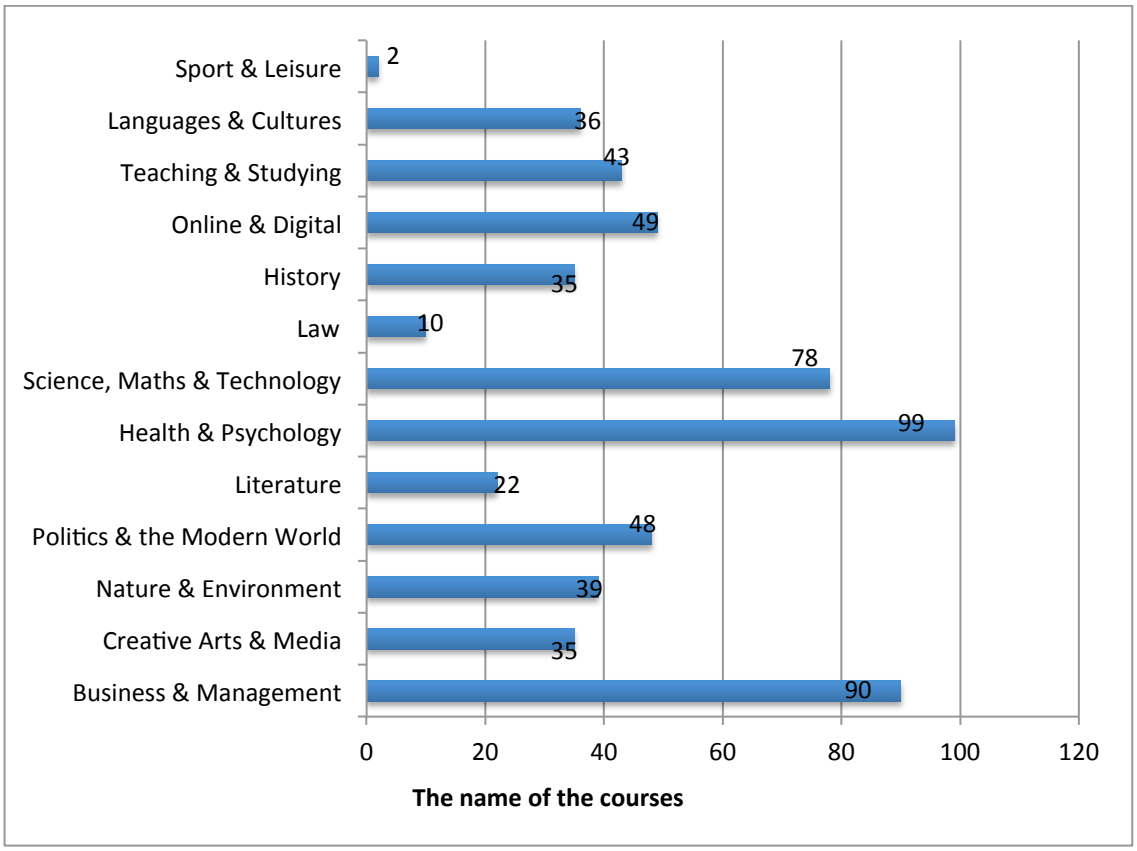

Figure 2.4: The Number of Courses by Subject in Futurelearn

Source: Futurelearn. (n.d.). About - FutureLearn. Retrieved October 29, 2016, from https://www.futurelearn.com/about

2.2.5. Miríada X

Miríada X was originated in Spain in January 2013. It is promoted by Telefônica-Educação Digital, a company specializing in online learning, Universia, a network of Hispanic and Portuguese universities, and Santander. The platform is partnered with 64 universities and has 1469 teachers teaching 338 courses at the moment. Around 1,800,000 students enrolled in the courses, 10,500 with Premium badges and 32,000 with participation badges (MiriadaX, n.d.). The courses are in Spanish, Portuguese, and English.

According to the statistics of Class Central Report, since 2011 MOOCs had a gradual growth reaching 4180 courses by March 2016 (Shah, 2015). This growth requires an urgent attempt to adopt a new business model that will comprehend the value of all those certified people around the world.

2.3. Types of MOOCs and the Pedagogy

Depending on the ideology the MOOCs employ, we need to make a difference between content-based xMOOCs, such as Coursera, Udacity, and EdX and connectivist MOOCs (cMOOCs) introduced by Stephen Downes (Morrison, 2013).

2.3.1. xMOOCs

First came xMOOCs which are based on "the cognitive-behaviorist pedagogy" and provide "a tutor-centric model that establishes a one-to-many relationship" to reach a great number of participants (Yuan & Powell, 2013; Perifanou & Economides, 2014). That is, xMOOCs give tutorials as in videos, supplementary materials, and support practice drills and quizzes. The xMOOCs employ pedagogy where out of the three types of interaction, student-content interaction is the highest (Miyazoe & Anderson, 2013). The idea is to meet the needs of knowledge-based education providing an online and quality lecture environment. As long as the content is well documented, there is claimed to be no subject that cannot be taught via xMOOCs. They seem to offer a more traditional education and curriculum (Rodriguez, 2013).

2.3.2. cMOOCs

The cMOOCs are based on connectivist teaching principals which encourage autonomy, peer-to-peer learning, social networking diversity, openness, emergent knowledge and interactivity (Mackness et al., 2010). The pedagogy employed is based on creating networked connections between and amongst students, teachers, and content (Miyazoe & Anderson, 2013). It is not a coincidence that MOOLCs are designed as to be cMOOCs. Connectivist MOOCs are considered to be distributed networks since "they do not run on a single website or with a centralized core of content, but the content in cMOOCs is networked" (Sokolik, 2014). Besides, Yuan and Powell (2013) state that cMOOCs support a learner-centered pedagogy and non-traditional forms of teaching approaches. Highlighting the importance of learners' roles in learning has been a recent development in traditional classrooms where students were encouraged to learn from each other. Connectivist MOOCs employ such an approach that "online communities 'crowd-source' answers to problems, creating networks that distribute learning in ways that seldom occur in traditional classrooms in universities" (Yuan & Powell, 2013,

p. 11). By this means, the students create knowledge, share and negotiate it rather than being a consumer only. As for the role of the instructor in such massive courses, it is to facilitate, aggregate, review, summarize, and reflect on activities in daily/weekly newsletter (Rodriguez, 2013). This is also the reason why the success heavily depends on interaction via provided tools (hyperlinks, Google Hangouts on Air, Facebook clinics etc.). Hence, it is a fair assumption that cMOOCs would satisfy the goals of Communicative Language Teaching.

All in all, the difference shows that xMOOCs, mostly offered by elite U.S. institutions, are based primarily on the behaviorist approach to distance education pedagogy (Rodriguez, 2013) whereas cMOOCs are designed in massive networks (Downes, 2012; Siemens, 2012). It is arguable which pedagogy is more successful than the other, but it is also clear that each attracts and engages different learner profiles. Nowadays, xMOOCs outnumbered cMOOCs as connectivist pedagogy is relatively newer. Time will show which pedagogy will be adopted more and bring more successful examples of the learning environment.

2.4. The Objectives of MOOC Providers and Registrants

It is equally important to understand the objectives of both MOOC providers and MOOC registrants. The objectives of providing MOOCs for institutions are identified as financial improvement, reputation/visibility, keeping up with innovation area, research on technology and learning, responding to the demands of learners and societies, increasing the access via flexible learning opportunities, and improving educational outcome etc. (Allen & Seaman, 2014; Gaebel et al., 2014; Hollands & Tirthali, 2014; Yuan et al, 2014). On the other hand, the participants' objectives are identified as following:

-to learn about the content offered by the MOOC (often associated with intrinsic motivation)

-to obtain certification

-for professional improvement

-due to the prestige of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

-for engagement with people with same interests

-relating to interaction and collaboration with the world (Castrillo, 2014).

2.5. Profile of MOOC Participants

Hill (2013) identified four types of MOOC participants according to the data available to him.

Lurkers: Participants only enroll to observe and watch a couple of videos or check out materials. Some may register and leave as well. A little (if any) involvement is observed.

Passive Participants: These learners are consumers of the content. They try to complete the course by taking the quizzes or watching the videos, but they do not participate in the discussions or any sorts of interactive activities provided.

Active Participants: These learners are successful followers who participate in the course actively "including consuming content, taking quizzes and exams, taking part in activities such as writing assignments and peer grading, and actively participate in discussions via discussion forums, blogs, twitter, Google+, or other forms of social media" (Hill, 2013).

Drop-Ins: This identifies the learners who are intrigued by a certain part of the course and participate actively in the selected part; however, they do not intend to complete the whole course.

Huin et al. (2016) offer a more dynamic classification depending on more current data. The initial categories include (i) *registrant*s, (ii) *no-shows*, and (iii) *participants.* The pre-committed profiles correspond to (i) *learners*, namely participants with an intention of going through the course, (ii) *active learners*; those who are committed to complete the course, and (iii) *observers* with no learning objective, though they perform some actions (Huin et al., 2016).

2.6. Massive Open Online Language Courses (MOOLCs)

Teaching and learning a language via MOOLCs brought further considerations. Despite the lack of research in the concerning area, there is an increasing number of language MOOLCs as well as related concerns and questions. How do the MOOLC providers guarantee a qualified language course? What are the criteria to meet to be able to start a MOOLC? What is the anticipated number of participants? Can the course pedagogy handle different participant profiles? Why would a learner prefer a MOOLC rather than a face-to-face learning environment?

What is the code of interaction? The questions to be asked about MOOLCs might be more significant than MOOCs. The available studies tend to focus on the platforms and their qualifications more than the participants' reasons for being involved in such platforms. However, this is not necessarily a wrong approach to start researching a new area in education. The studies about learners' characteristics, motivation, autonomy etc. will most probably proceed.

To me, Barcena et al. (2014) might have given the most accurate description of language learning approach in MOOLCs:

> *LMOOCs are presented as a fairly recent didactic modality that has emerged with an enormous potential for rich, flexible, and attractive collaborative learning and social interaction, in a world where huge economic unbalance gives rise to people with very different access opportunities to both formal language training and the diverse communicative scenarios that enhance the development of language competences (p. 11).*

Perifanou and Economides (2014) evaluated MOOLCs via a framework they propose which includes six core course elements that a MOOILLE (Massive Open Online Interactive Language Learning Environment) should have- 1) Content; 2) Pedagogy; 3) Assessment; 4) Community; 5) Technical Infrastructure, and 6) Financial Issues. The researchers aim at defining the characteristics of a successful online language learning course and how MOOLCs accord. It is a quite contributive paper in terms of exploring the current MOOLCs initiatives, classifying and evaluating the most representative MOOLC initiatives based on the proposed framework (Perifanou & Economides, 2014). Thanks to the research, they were able to make some recommendations for better MOOLCs one of which is to keep the learners' level of motivation in completing courses high via course design.

Beaven et al. (2014) conducted a study that evaluated the expectancy, beliefs, and task values of participants in a MOOLC environment based on the cognitive variables of the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory. Among the participants of French MOOLC *Travailler en français,* 427 respondents demonstrated a high score of self-determination and autonomous motivation. The high intrinsic motivation score also helped to understand the goals of participants among which are "improving or maintaining their level of French and of ICT, and in finding a job in a French-speaking country" (Beaven et al., 2014, p. 60).

Barcena et al. (2014) analyzed a popular Spanish MOOLC by Miriada X with 23,424 students registered, 19,076 who started studying it, and 1,120 who completed the course (5.87%). The participants' profile was not different from other MOOLCs- mostly young adults and adults, the majority being university students. It unsurprisingly coincides with the digital native age group. The study presents significant information regarding "students' profiles, fulfillment of course expectations and achievements, students' satisfaction in terms of course structure, contents, evaluation, duration of the course, teacher-student interaction, peer-to-peer (henceforth, P2P) interaction, and the feedback and scaffolding mechanisms" (Barcena et al., 2014, p. 71)

MOOLCs had its peak in Spain too. Fernando Rubio's MOOLC "Improving your Spanish Pronunciation" started in January 2013 and lasted 6 weeks. It was one of the first MOOLCs that was offered by Canvas Network, a MOOC platform developed by Instructure (http://www.instructure.com) (Rubio, 2014, p. 148). The key points in this particular MOOLC are the role of feedback, assessment types, and learner-centered education. As an assessment model, students are asked to record themselves reading some sentences or paragraphs via Audacity in order to evaluate themselves later on. There was a certain rubric for self-assessment, which is considered to be a useful tool, which encourages learners to assess their own performance and thus provide a learner-centered assessment.

Perifanou (2015a) asks which pedagogy MOOLCs have adopted mostly so far, xMOOCs or cMOOCs. Are there successful examples of MOOLCs (Perifanou, 2016)? For a more accomplished online language learning, it might be the best if the two MOOC pedagogies were combined and a mixture of xMOOC for a better and quality content and cMOOC for a socialized and networked environment was created. Godwin-Jones (2014) also highlights the importance of a mixed model that takes machine learning and social learning account. He believes that the optimal approach to structuring a MOOLC would be applying an adaptive learning system that offers a social and personalized environment by combining an xMOOC with a cMOOC. There are some example MOOLCs that implemented this sort of model. For example, The SpanishMOOC takes the Instreamia adaptive learning system to serve the purposes of personalized feedback and content sequencing (Godwin-Jones, 2014). Some other example courses that became

quite popular are 'I learn' ('Aprendo'/UNED) and 'German for Spanish speakers' both of which are successful attempts with tens of thousands of enrollments started in Spain (Read & Rodrigo, 2014). Apart from the Spanish MOOLCs, Castrillo (2013) stated that the German MOOLC (Alemán para hispanohablantes: nociones fundamentals taught by Maria Dolores Castrillo de Larreta-Azelain, UNED, Spain) "won the First Prize for the best MOOC in the Miriada X platform" (as cited in Perifanou, 2015a).

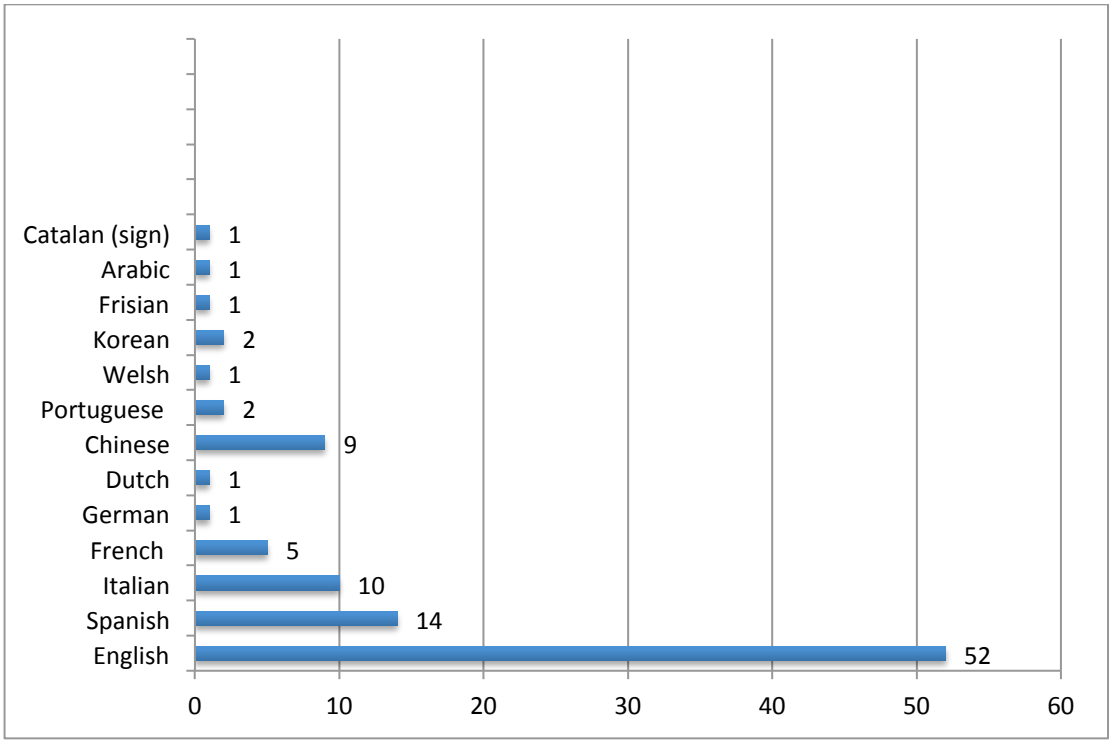

Figure 2.5: The Number of MOOLCs by Language

Source: The numbers were gathered from https://www.class-central.com/providers and https://www.mooc-list.com/initiatives-and-categories (ClassCentral, n.d.; MOOCList, n.d.)

2.6.1. The Nature of the Three Language MOOCs in Futurelearn

Futurelearn is a UK-based platform with 111 partners running free courses since September 2013. The interface is simple to navigate among weeks and the related materials. *To-do* section lists the works to complete, *activities* contains all the comments of the weekly discussions, and *progress* shows the progress by percentage of steps completed.

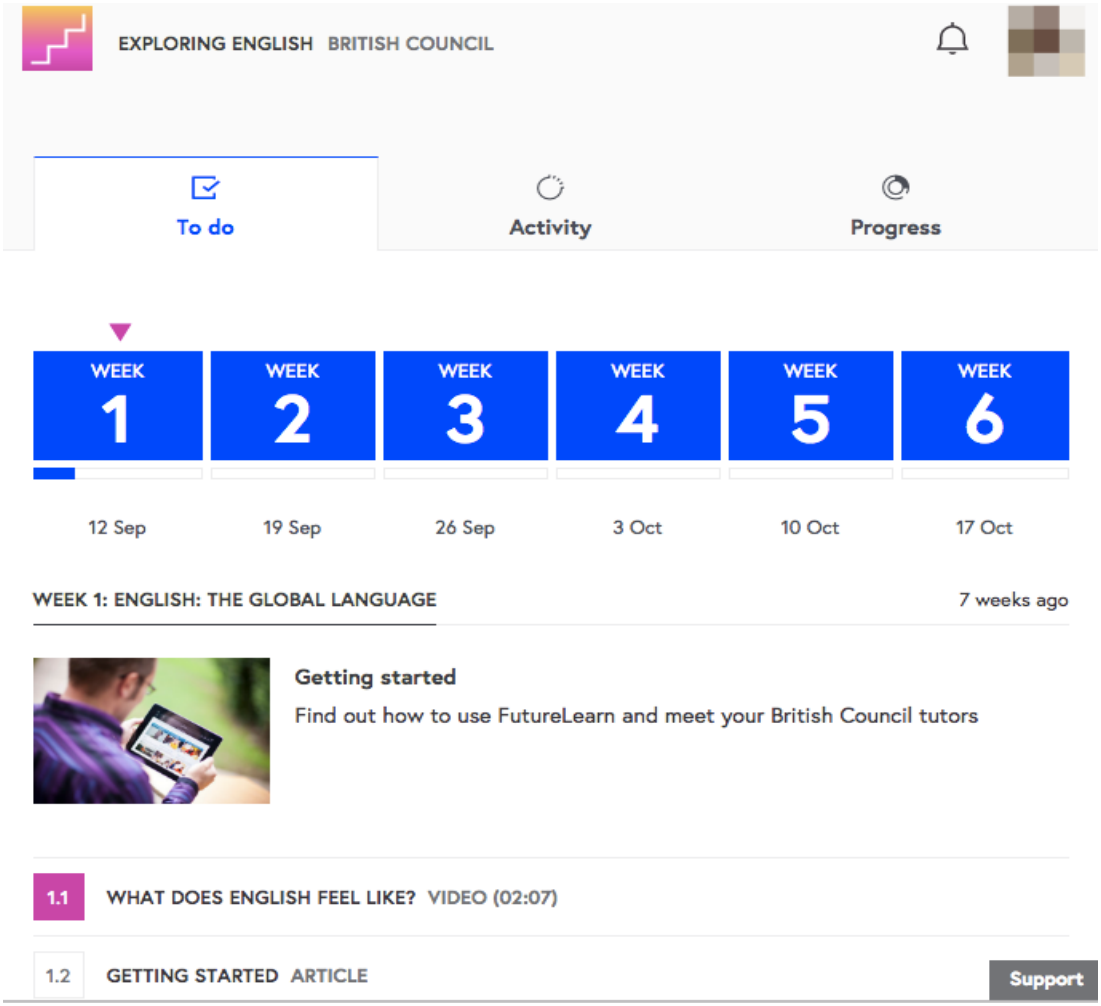

Figure 2.6: The View of the Main Page of a Course in Futurelearn

Source: https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/explore-english-language-culture/6/todo/6688

The three language courses that are taken into consideration in the present study can be identified as cMOOC because of the means of interaction. They depend on learners' communications, contribution, and self-regulation instead of adhering to traditional teaching. Although the content of the courses is structured, the participants are strongly encouraged to participate less structured discussions. The number of comments after each activity (e.g. 1.1 means Week 1, Activity 1.) demonstrates that there is a great interest. Seeing the number of comments, one cannot help imagine an in-class hour with that many words flying through the air just over one topic.

Figure 2.7: The Number of Comments in 1.2 of Exploring English: Language and Culture

Source: https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/explore-english-language-culture/6/steps/102150

Assessment relies on a learner's self-assessment of the learning process. Besides, there are quizzes, and 'mark as complete' buttons after each page to link the number of completed activities to the *progress* section. In order to get a digital and printed certificate (A Statement of Participation), learners must mark more than 50% of the course steps as complete and pay the cost of certificate and shipping.

2.6.1.1. Exploring English: Language and Culture

Table 2.1: Information Tag of the MOOLC 'Exploring English: Language and Culture'

Course Title	Exploring English: Language and Culture
Provider	Futurelearn, British Council
Length	6 Weeks
Course content	The course is about English language and British Culture including literature, music, business, countries of the UK, and environmental projects.
Pedagogical approach	Videos, articles, biographies, talks, interviews, short films, listening and note-taking activities, production activities: 'record yourself', quizzes, summaries, discussions, Facebook clinics, and videos for feedback and Q&As.
Tools	Forum, Weekly videos (lectures), downloadable slides, transcripts, readings, and videos, Facebook clinic, Google Hangouts on Air, BBC Radio 4, Wikipedia, Hyperlinks for extra sources.
Assessment	Quizzes, a paid digital and printed certificate upon completion

Exploring English: Language and Culture is a content-based MOOC with a primary focus on British culture and Britain. As a connectivist MOOC (cMOOC), the design of the course includes a cluster of the resources around a subject for each week instead of following a linear set of materials throughout the course (Downes, 2009). It was started by the British Council (see Table 2.1). It has a flexible yet coherent structure in design. Here is what the course offers overall:

Week 1 Defining global language, feelings about English, and technology & language learning

Week 2 Different genres of British music

Week 3 Countries and the United Kingdom

Week 4 British literature, Shakespeare, and Roald Dahl and short stories

Week 5 Environment and Eden projects, articles, and concerning vocabulary

Week 6 Business, entrepreneur Richard Branson, and interviews

The topics are discussed before and after the main focus as pre and post activities. The content is thought-provoking, and there are a wide variety of tools to study the content. The course also provides explicit and embedded grammar instructions in the weekly content such as passive voice (week 1), relative pronouns (week 2), adjectives and adverbs (week 3), comparatives and superlatives (week 4), the connector 'so' (week 5), -ing form (week 6).

The course started on 12th of September 2016 and lasted 6 weeks. Learners are required to be approximately B1 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and at least 13 years old in order to participate in the course. Although the course targets a more general learner profile, it only serves for the purposes of a certain CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) level.

2.6.1.2. A Beginner's Guide to Writing in English for University Study

Table 2.2: Information Tag of the MOOLC 'A Beginner's Guide to Writing in English for University Study'

Course Title	A Beginner's Guide to Writing in English for University Study
Provider	Futurelearn, University of Reading
Length	5 Weeks
Course content	The course is about academic writing and the skills that are required to write well for academic purposes.
Pedagogical approach	Videos, articles, discussion boards, quizzes, summaries, articles, grammar exercises, writing assignments
Tools	Forum, Weekly videos (lectures), downloadable slides and exercise sheets, transcripts, readings, interactive maps, Wikipedia, Hyperlinks for extra source, and audios
Assessment	Quizzes, peer feedback, a paid digital and printed certificate upon completion

A Beginner's Guide to Writing in English for University Study is provided by the University of Reading. It focuses on developing a coherent and well-structured

academic writing. It offers a solid base for participants to build on for better academic writing skills (see Table 2.2). Here is what the course offers overall:

Week 1 Introducing academic writing, developing an essay, and main and supporting ideas

Week 2 Analysis of essay structure and organization, title, and impersonal style

Week 3 Using an academic language

Week 4 Feedback on sample first drafts, collecting ideas, and preparing the first draft

Week 5 Reviewing an essay, reflecting, summiting, and responding to feedback

The course also provides basic grammar instructions such as the present simple and continuous, the use of 'there is' and 'there are', plural nouns, quantity expressions, compound and complex sentences, linking words in week 3 for a better academic language.

It started on 26th of September 2016 and lasted 5 weeks. Learners are required to have a minimum level of International English Language Testing System (IELTS) 4.5 or equivalent to be able to follow the course properly.

2.6.1.3. Understanding IELTS: Techniques for English Language Tests

Table 2.3: Information Tag of the MOOLC 'Understanding IELTS: Techniques for English Language Tests'

Course Title	Understanding IELTS: Techniques for English Language Tests
Provider	Futurelearn, British Council
Length	6 Weeks
Course content	The course is about preparing for English tests, and developing skills required for international language tests such as IELTS reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
Pedagogical approach	Videos, articles, interviews, listening and reading activities, summaries, discussions, production activities: 'record yourself', quizzes
Tools	Forum, Weekly videos (lectures), downloadable slides, transcripts, readings, some useful links, sample IELTS tests, and Facebook clinic
Assessment	Quizzes, a paid digital and printed certificate upon completion

Understanding IELTS: Techniques for English Language Tests is offered by a team of experienced IELTS educators to provide some useful tips and advice that help participants understand how the tests are produced, delivered, and assessed (see Table 2.3). It is started by British Council, which delivers IELTS tests in more than 100 countries now. Here is what the course offers overall:

Week 1 Getting to know IELTS, exam stress, reading, and listening practice, booking an IELTS test

Week 2 The format of the IELTS Speaking test, tips for the speaking test, assessment criteria

Week 3 The format of the IELTS Listening test, tips for the listening test, assessment criteria

Week 4 The format of the IELTS Writing test, tips for the writing test, the marking criteria

Week 5 The format of the IELTS Reading test, improving reading speed, introducing the question types

Week 6 Academic Writing, Compare & Contrast Essay, Sample tasks

It started on 17th of October 2016 and lasted 6 weeks. Learners are required to be approximately B1 (intermediate level) or above in the CEFR level. The course is for non-native English speakers whose objective is to take an international English test for higher education or global migration.

2.7. Who is a Good Language Learner in Online Learning?

Quite many researchers think that a good language learner can be identified based on particular learning behaviors, personal characteristics, or learning strategies. For instance, Rubin and Thompson (1982) came up with fourteen characteristics to identify a good language learner. In their list, some of the characteristics are developing conversational skills, memory strategies, using linguistic knowledge, ambiguity tolerance, autonomy etc. Brown's maxim (2007) also suggests ten characteristics of good language learners regarding confidence, risk taking, inhibitions, cooperative skills, intrinsic motivation, ambiguity tolerance, intuition, error feedback processing, right-brain processes, and personal goals. On the other hand, as "good" depends very much on circumstances of the learning

process and the learner, one may question if there is such a thing as a 'good language learner.' Bearing in mind that every learner is unique in what she brings into the language learning process, and in the ways that she thinks, learns, and processes the information, any maxim regarding the learning behaviors, learner characteristics, or strategies may offer too many items to list. However, available research can at least provide a common sense of who could be considered as a good language learner.

There is a great number of Good Language Learner (GLL) studies indicating what qualifications fit into the definition of a 'good' language learner in traditional language classrooms (e.g. Stern, 1975; Brown, 2007; Rubin & Thompson, 1982; Naiman et el., 1978; Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Rubin, 1975; Sewell, 2003). In the era of technology and online learning widespreading, the characteristics and skills the above studies highlighted are still necessary and significant, though some new ones must be added to the list while some can be emphasized. On the one hand, as in traditional language environments, learners become more successful when they are intrinsically motivated, goal oriented, interactive and social, and more importantly autonomous and independent in online learning environments. On the other hand, online learning demands intercultural sensitivity as learners have encounters from all over the world, digital literacy for better management of learning materials and process, and knowledge of how to deal with computer anxiety.

Nowadays, the changing perspectives on a good language learner in online learning are in the scope of researchers. As the learning environment is new to learners, the learner behaviors vary, and the new learning styles, skills, and characteristics are being investigated more profoundly. Cercone (2008) examined the characteristics of adult learners and important adult learning theories to integrate the online learning environment into learners' needs; self-directed learning, experiential learning, and transformational learning. Coleman and Furnborough (2010) studied learner characteristics in an online Spanish course and determined the factors regarding achievement in online language learning. What they state is that online learners have the ability to work independently and tend to be responsible for the pace and path of language learning far more than traditional students.

Recent studies on self-determination, self-discipline, and autonomy gained importance for a good reason (e.g. Dabbagh, 2007; Çakıcı, 2015). Autonomy has become more prominent since distance education arrived. Technology found its way in education, and too much dependency on the teacher(s) ended. Distance education was still instructor-centered whereas MOOCs tried of switching to a more learner-centered process. Perifanou (2014) states that MOOCs should support autonomy and give learners a chance to practice it by receiving feedback and guidance. Kay et al. (2013) also highlight the fact that students must possess certain competences, such as self-guided learning. The study refers to self-regulated learning (cognitive, metacognitive, and motivational regulatory components) and claims that MOOCs encourage competence-oriented open learner models that support self-guided lifelong learning.

Who is this good online learner in MOOLCs, and what characteristics does she possess? According to Kay et al. (2013, p. 72), "the successful MOOC student isn't your average student who has decided they need to learn." A good learner in language learning process is someone who sees the value of other worlds. Teixeira and Mota (2014) attempted to capture some characteristics of the nature of traditional learning and competence-based learning and what differentiates the two.

Table 2.4: Differences between Traditional Learning and Competence-based Learning

Competence-based, 21st-century learning	***Traditional learning***
Learner-centred	Content-centred
Personalized	Uniform
Flexible	Rigid
Social/collaborative nature	Highly structured
Challenging	Centralized
"Messy"	Competitive nature
Contextual	Academic, curricular
Real life like, authentic	Memorizing/reproducing information
"Gamified"	Mistakes as failure; fear of experimenting outside the given parameters
Questioning/creating knowledge	
Experimenting; mistakes as learning opportunities	Tests / Exams
Problem solving	
Artefacts/complex objects/eportfolios	

Source: Teixeira, A. M., & Mota, J. (2014). A Proposal for the Methodological Design of Collaborative Language MOOCs. In E. Martin-Monje & E. Bárcena (Eds.), *Language MOOCs: Providing learning, transcending boundaries* (pp. 33-47). Berlin: De Gruyter Open Ltd.

In addition to Table 2.4 above, I intend to present some crucial differences between an in-class learner and a MOOLC learner.

Table 2.5: Further Differences between Traditional Good Learner and Good Learner in MOOLC

	Traditional Good Learner	*Good Learner in MOOLC*
The drive force to learn	Intrinsic & extrinsic, with an emphasis on the latter	Intrinsic & extrinsic, with an emphasis on the former
Autonomy	Not emphasized out of class	Vitally important
Interaction and collaboration	Among limited participants (synchronous)	Among a great number of networked participants (synchronous and asynchronous)
Digital competency	CALL and TELL highlight some computer skills needed	Digital literacies are majorly significant competences
Recruitment	Requires diploma etc.	New business model should be adopted
Evaluation of success	Teacher-dominant, peer assessment is somewhat valued	Self-assessment and peer assessment along with automated evaluations
The focus of learning process	Mostly instructor-centered	Totally learner-centered

2.8. Learner Autonomy

Defining learner autonomy (LA) might be a demanding job as it entails quite many learner characteristics. In many of the studies in the literature, certain key concepts seem to be used frequently in defining autonomy. Among these are 'independent' (Breen & Mann, 1997; Lamb, 2006; Lamb & Reinders, 2005; Benson & Voller, 2013), 'take responsibility' (Holec, 1981; Little, 1995, Dickinson, 1987, 1995; Lee, 1998; Lamb, 2008; Schwienhorst, 2008; Scharle & Szabo, 2000), 'inborn capacity' (Holec, 1981), 'motivated' (Dickinson, 1995; Ushioda, 1996) , and 'make free choices' (Littlewood, 1996). It was Holec who first articulated 'autonomy' in the 1979 report published by the Council of Europe. He defined it as learners' taking responsibility for their own learning (Holec, 1981, p.3). Littlewood (1996), on the other hand, considers autonomy as 'learners' ability and willingness to make choices independently'. The essence of the definition lies in willing and involvement in learning. Little (1991) gives a quite similar definition a decade after Holec. He states that learner autonomy "not only entails learning but also learning how to learn" (Little, 1994). That is, the autonomous language learner is expected to be an independent *agent* in the learning. Only an agent could rate for a libertarian and democratic education, which promotes learner-centered and process-oriented teaching in language education (Chan, 2001).

Since learner-centered education came into education, autonomy has been emphasized more often than ever before. For example, the European Council of European Union by the Modern Languages Project established in 1971 has respected lifelong learning, autonomy, and learner-centered practices as key elements of modern education systems. In this regard, teachers' role is critical regarding the readiness for autonomy. Teachers' favoring autonomy leads to learner-centered, engaged, democratic, and meaningful education for the students. Now teachers raise awareness among learners and make them appreciate what is important to them. Benson (2013) highlights the importance of teachers' helping learners to be autonomous and its prominent role in successful learning compared to non-autonomous learning (p. 2). This way, students learn to force their capacities to achieve the best of what they are engaged with.

The topic of 'freeing oneself from the control of others' in language learning is highlighted by some researchers (Holec, 1981; Benson, 2013). Welden (1991) states that achieved or intelligent learners learn how to learn, and develop learning strategies, certain skills, and attitudes in order to reach knowledge "confidently, flexibly, appropriately and independently of a teacher" (p. 15). Those who can achieve these are considered to be autonomous. Holec (1981), similarly, thinks that teaching learners to be self-directed can be counterproductive, so learners, as individuals, should base their training on the practice of self-directed learning itself. It is important to understand that freeing oneself or self-directed learning does not necessarily mean that learners cannot get support from teachers, other learners, or experts when needed. It is a misconception that Little (1991) attempted to set straight.

The theory of autonomy accounts for the significance of having control over 'self' (Shearer, 2009). There are many concepts that are 'self' related in the framework of autonomy. Autonomy entails self-monitoring, self-management, self-assessment, self-evaluation, self-direction, self-regulation, self-determination, self-awareness, self-efforts, and self-efficacy. However, this selfhood should not be interpreted as if autonomy caused a separation from the society for the sake of the fully developed self. On the contrary, a learner that is autonomous in her own learning is probably autonomous in other areas of her life, which results in becoming a more useful and effective member of the society (Little, 1991). This

allows learners a maximum choice of where, when, how, with whom and what to learn (Mackness et al., 2010). Making decisions about their own learning and acting on them is up to their own will. They achieve the goals they set for themselves with a strong sense of *self.*

Benson's (2013) idea of autonomy in language learning is based on the concept of personal autonomy, which means that in order for an individual to be autonomous, one must live in a society in which autonomy is valued, and freedom is respected. However, institutional education suppresses the capacities of being autonomous (Benson & Voller, 2013). For example, in some cultures, teacher's role is overrated, and dependence on so-called 'the owner of knowledge' is common. Because of this traditional belief of relational hierarchy in classrooms, teachers' and learners' roles are rooted deeply in people's thinking, which might take quite some time to change (Nguyen, 2012). In a collectivist society like in Turkey where the culture favors reliance on one another, the independency might seem as if one was alone, incapable, or weak. In Turkey, many students rely too much on what their teachers offer, hence the teachers' role could not go beyond 'the knower'. Considering the amount of research on autonomy, there is very little that improved in autonomisation, and Çakıcı (2015) thinks that the reason might be that "all forms of autonomisation threaten the power structures of educational culture" (p. 40). Taking the Turkish educational culture into consideration, Çubukcu (2009) studied the readiness for autonym of undergraduate Turkish students at a Turkish university and showed that Turkish students are not fully autonomous. The study indicates that learners still think that teachers should be evaluating them, and although they were willing to take responsibilities instead of relying on teacher transmitting the knowledge, neither did they like cooperating, nor regulating their own learning.

Autonomy often goes hand in hand with motivation. Various studies provide adequate proof of the relationship between enhanced motivation and autonomy. Some studies suggest that motivation enhances autonomy, though some discuss the opposite to be true too. For example, in Dickinson's (1995) words, a learner who takes more control of her own learning will become more motivated and successful whereas Ryan and Deci (2000) think that it is the intrinsic motivation that leads learners to be autonomous. Further, Ushioda (2006) frames the

motivation to learn a second language within a theory of autonomy taking a social-psychological perspective. Similarly, Noels and her colleagues (2000) and Lamb (2008) affirm that autonomy involves *motivation* to learn. Dickinson (1995), on the other hand, put together a long list of literature about the relationship between autonomy and motivation. Given the 114 pages for the list, there is an adequate number of studies to shed light on the strong link between the two concepts.

All in all, autonomy applies to many aspects in our lives, learning in particular. In order to sustain a wholly purposeful learning, learners must transfer their autonomous behaviors to every other area of their lives by eliminating the barriers between learning and living (Little, 1991). Autonomy can be put to work in various settings in our lives although it might sometimes seem irrelevant or distantly relevant (Benson, 2013). Clearly, autonomy matters both for our lives and our educational purposes to be an achieved member of the society. Now with the open online learning, which entertains a new understanding of lifelong learning, the concept of autonomy should be analyzed further with careful considerations.

2.8.1. Open Online Learning and Learner Autonomy

Distance education and Learning Management Systems have been technically used to deliver a course by controlling the administration, course documents, assignments, and tracking learners' progress in courses. Providing the appropriate materials and guidance needed, even though they lack interactive or communicative technology, such learning environments fulfill the mission they have been assigned to do. The availability of such educational technologies promotes the notion of learner autonomy, whether it is explicitly mentioned as an objective or not (Lamb, 2008).

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) studies have widened in the 1980s when they adopted the communicative approach and new technologies. Levy (1997) traditionally defines CALL as "the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning (p. 1)." This 'study' and 'search' promotes learners' self-access. However, learners need the training to practice self-directed learning and construct and reconstruct rather than simply consume the knowledge. Besides, if learners do not internalize the *culture* of online learning,

it might be hard to avoid anti-intellectual, non-quality, and insensitive contents. Otherwise, techonology could be counter-productive at the worst case scenario.

Some research was conducted to see how online learners perceive this new notion of autonomous learning (Reinders & White, 2016; Reinders & Hubbard, 2013; Schwienhorst, 2008). Whether learners are capable of developing autonomy to survive in an online learning environment is still an issue. A learner might be willing to practice her independent learning, though she may not possess the capacities or abilities for it. Yıldırım's (2008) study, for instance, indicated that learners seem to be ready for taking more responsibilities; however, exercising autonomy is not so common in Turkey that the actual autonomous learning rarely takes place. Similarly, Kessler (2013) states that the collaborative culture of the Internet gives learners new opportunities for language learning and help them develop autonomy, but if learners do not have the ambiguity tolerance, they will not be able to handle uncertainties of this rapid technological change.

After the development of MOOCs, learner characteristics required for e-learning started to evolve. Mackness et al. (2010) explores the perspectives of learners on their experiences in Connectivism and Connective Knowledge (CCK08) within a MOOC in 2008 in relation to autonomy. The study demonstrates that 59% of the learners emphasize the importance of learner autonomy. The CCK08 instructors agree that learner autonomy is essential in MOOCs (Mackness et al., 2010).

In completing a MOOLC, autonomy is everything. Without it, it is highly unlikely to benefit from a MOOLC wholly or succeed as a matter of fact (e.g. completing the requirements for certification or personal satisfaction). "A MOOC heavily depends on the autonomy of learners to control their learning process" (Davis et al., 2014). Therefore, a learner will definitely have her autonomy challenged in a MOOLC.

Another point worth mentioning is self-management. The autonomous learner is able to monitor the learning process in terms of identifying what schedule would serve the best for the desirable outcome. Figuring out the right amount of time to achieve the goals is significant. For example, a MOOLC participant has to manage her time to participate continuously and effectively in order to benefit from the course. Most MOOLCs support self-paced pedagogy, which makes autonomy crucial as a competence whereas some have fixed timetables with interactive

(synchronous or asynchronous) discussions, Facebook clinics, Google Hangouts on Air, synchronous question and answer hour etc. Bearing in mind the participant profile of MOOLCs (people who are employed, undergraduates, academicians etc.), it might be difficult for learners to arrange their studies and works in a way that the two would not overlap, particularly for the sake of synchronous activities.

Surprisingly big number of participants makes it almost impossible to receive feedback from a single teacher monitoring the course. Depending on the model of MOOLC, the nature of feedback changes. For example, an academic writing course with thousands of registrants needs peer-assessment based on a particular rubric whereas in a highly interactive course with a focus on language and culture, feedback is simply given through comments by mentors or other participants in forums. On the other hand, achievement in MOOLCs should be defined by what one thinks is achieved. Self-assessment, at this point, is what an online course asks of learners. Kulkarni et al. (2013) thinks “self-assessment helps students reflect on gaps in their understanding, making them more resourceful, confident, and higher achievers…and provides learning gains not seen with external evaluation” (p. 3).

At this point, learners have to be interactive and collaborative. A high level of engagement and interaction is a key feature of cMOOCs, and Sokolik (2014) argues that as the discussion is vital for a MOOLC, the current discussion platforms should be enhanced. “These co-constructed participatory environments rely upon communities of users who find this participation meaningful and rewarding” (Kessler, 2013, p. 307). Therefore, the participants are expected to develop a sense of “ownership” and “belonging” as Kessler (2013) defines it when they are involved and manipulate the knowledge that has been presented to them.

The educators who discredit the philosophy of investing in MOOLCs fail to notice the educational value of the pedagogical theories, methods, and practices in online learning environments. It is entirely understandable that the attitudes towards such learning environments vary as the current number of reflections on the outcome failed to satisfy the demands of suspicious minds. Nevertheless, it is time that the affordances and convenience of MOOLCs outshine the education within four walls. The education beyond four walls exceeds the limits of a fixed physical space for learning and connects the present learners to the world better.

2.8.2. Distribution of Roles in Learner Autonomy: The Role of Teacher, Learner, and Technology

Learner autonomy has been an educational concern in the 20th century since the communicative approach became an educational practice. Several important researchers in language education (e.g. Higgs, 1988; Holec, 1981; Little, 1991) discussed the role shift and the new definitions regarding learner autonomy in an insightful way. In 21st century, Lamb and Reinders (2008) extensively studied the new roles of teacher and learner in learner autonomy as opposed to traditional roles. These empirical studies clarify the role shift from teacher authority to learner-centeredness. Upon the arrival of technology into education in mid-1990s, learner autonomy was influenced by the new possibilities and practices (Reinders & White, 2016). Accordingly, both teachers and learners needed to change their role perceptions in the field of learner autonomy by adapting to the new autonomy essentials. Hence, the distribution of roles among teacher, learner, and technology is addressed here.

Being autonomous is often confused with learning alone without the help of others. However, the case is exactly the opposite. Learners should benefit from the help of a teacher, mentor, counselor, or as in Vygotsky's (1978) term, the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) to reach the highest possible achievement. From the 1980s on, teachers have taken the role of a manager who provides a stimulating learning enviroment and become an available resource to learners (Higgs, 1988). With a closer look, Nunan (1993) defines the teacher's role as active participants, monitors, consultants, and guides who work with learners collaboratively. Taking learner needs into account when enhancing learner autonomy, Han's (2014) study summarizes the teachers' general role by categorizing the roles into eight descriptions: *Guide (counselor, instructor), facilitator (helper), organizer and designer, cooperator (peer partner, friend, participant), inspirator and supporter, monitor and evaluator, resource supplier,* and *atmosphere creator* (p. 25). As can be deduced, teachers' role in classrooms is to help learners *develop* autonomy, rather than *teaching* them how to be autonomous, which is actually an abstract and subjective concept to teach explicitly.

On the other hand, the participants' role in developing/maintaining autonomy to be a part of the MOOLC environment truly has the greatest share in the successful

completion of a certain course. Kelly states “learners need to undergo a considerable transformation of their beliefs about language and their role as learners in order to be able to undertake independent learning effectively” (1996, p. 94).

One of the critical issues with learners’ *being* in MOOLCs is the new literacies they have to adopt such as how to be a part of such interaction and collaboration, how to utilize the forums, how to navigate the platform (basic ICTs), how to manage the multicultural setting of learning etc. As to the critical literacies, it can be noted that there is a “reciprocal relationship between learning autonomy and new literacies” (Villanueva et. al., 2010, p. 12), as learners without certain degree of autonomy cannot utilize MOOCs in the most efficient way while MOOCs cannot exist/survive without autonomous participants. In order to have an efficient learning program in a MOOLC, participants are expected to develop learning strategies via new literacies on digital learning ecologies, which empower them to study both individually and collaboratively. Developing autonomy and learning strategies is vital in MOOLCs as the participants are not told what course to take, what to learn, or how to learn. Learners establish their own goals, objectives, judgements, and assessment of the success (Downes, 2016) and gain awareness of metacognitive strategies (plan, manage, monitor, and evaluate). Therefore, it can be advocated that learners are more responsible for creating the most efficient learning for themselves when it comes to online language courses.

Prensky, who coined the terms ‘digital natives’ and digital immigrants,’ stated, “Today’s students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach” (2001, p. 1). The ongoing change with learner characteristics is so rapid that even within the current era, two types of digital natives can be identified: (i) *consumers* who are simple receivers of what digital ecologies offer and (ii) *producers* who can manipulate the knowledge or become a part of making. New digital ecologies, though, train learners to be more than consumers. The nature of, for example, cMOOLCs encourages participants of e-learning to become producers as well as collaborative players. It makes the participants interact, work collaboratively, do assignments and edit peers’ works, create and submit videos, recordings etc., take quizzes, use hyperlinked materials, and become curious

about the further resources and activities. It entails establishing a path to make effective use of the available means of learning.

Developing learning stategies in online platforms alone hardly succeed in MOOLCs when lacking digital literacies. Improving literacies is a critical and gradual practice from gaining basic ICT skills to develop one's own style in digital learning ecologies. The skill pyramid developed by Hampel and Stickler (2005) is presented in Figure 2.8.

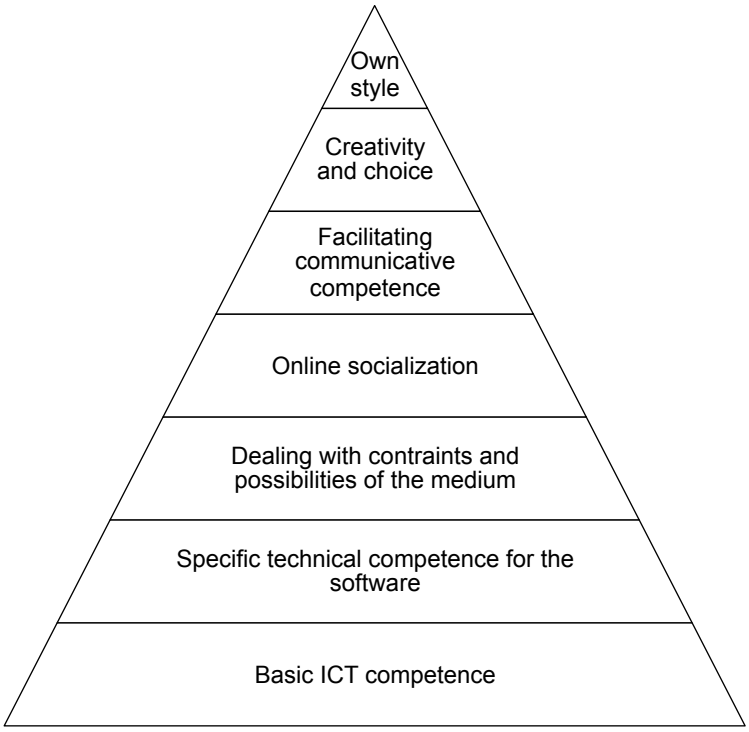

Figure 2.8: Skills pyramid

Source: Hampel, R & Stickler, U. (2005). New skills for new classrooms: Training tutors to teach language online. *Computer Assisted Language Learning, 18* (4), 311-26.

The understanding of digital literacies allows learners to access the affordances of digital learning environments. However, lacking the guidence on new technologies and having unlimited access to information (technologies) can result in inhibiting learners from developing autonomy as well as taking charge of their own learning (Reinders & White, 2011, p. 1). Several studies investigating the influence of digital literacy and autonomy on each other can support the idea that high degree of autonomy goes hand in hand with high level of ICT competence, which facilitates a more effective learning experience (e.g. Shetzer & Warschauer 2000;

Warschauer, 2002; Reinders, 2007; Villanueva et al., 2010; Reinders & White, 2011). Therefore, the concept of autonomy should be expanded in accordance with new digital literacies.

Reinders and White (2016, p. 143) advocate that the use of technology for learning purposes requires a degree of autonomy. Their paper explains well that technology that affects the understanding of learner autonomy and the perceived roles of both agents (learner and teacher) has just become the third agent. New affordances of technology enhance autonomous learning by encouraging the search of knowledge. The role of new learning technologies hence made it possible to re-examine the ever-evolving concept of learner autonomy. To conclude, one can easily observe the prominent role transfer in developing learner autonomy.

2.9. Defining Autonomous Learning Practices in MOOLCs

Autonomy can be accomplished by means of tools, practices, experiences, or more abstract concepts such as beliefs and attitudes. While the autonomy of individuals may trigger their tendency towards these practices, experiences etc. that require autonomy, this tendency may also contribute to the development of autonomy within individuals. A different perspective to the learned concept of autonomy in the traditional sense is now adopted by examining the autonomous learning practices in digital and social learning environments, namely, the MOOLCs. Therefore, it is necessary for this study to point out what autonomous learning practices learners are involved by participating in online forms of language learning.

Since the technology intervening the educational practices, CALL, distance learning, OLEs, MOOCs and such means of learning have required a certain capacity to learn, which is associated with learner autonomy, and Smith (2008) states that autonomy needs to be exercised in such forms of learning. Among the prominent practices of learner autonomy are the goal setting and goal achievement. Kop and Fournier (2010, p. 16) argue that goal-setting is one of the most important algorithmic factors that influences the participation in learning. Locke and Latham (2006) also emphasize the goal-setting theory in relation to experimental designs in education.

Learners differ in their doings during learning and their competence to succeed in varying learning situations. Although some studies (e.g. Castrillo, 2014) undertake a joint effort to summarize the common goals and accomplishments of the MOOLC participants, learners' personal goals and accomplishments cannot be generalized for the purpose of conceptualizing 'achievement' in MOOLCs. Therefore, the concept of achievement has not clearly been measured and recognized in MOOLCs. What achievement in MOOLCs indicates is a personal achievement, that is, whether a learner achieves her personal goal she sets at the very beginning. Learners' participation in MOOLCs and utilizing this new experimental learning ecology in the most efficient way not only increase the success of MOOLCs but also the learners. In this regard, the objectives and target skills to develop are set on a realistic level while the courses are being designed. Although these objectives and skills are not determined to satisfy all learners' need considering the great number of registrants, the framework offers flexibility to both providers/lecturers/mentors and learners to improve the course with the help of feedback after a couple of runs. The main focus is to provide a more satisfying and motivating design, materials, and activities for sustainability of MOOLCs. By this way, serious steps will have been taken to develop and improve the learning skills in the long term.

Independent language learning (ILL) is a manifestation of autonomy. It may be helpful to mention that independent learning and autonomy are often used interchangeably although independent learning is a relatively wider concept (Sheerin, 1997). The term refers to a more practical aspect of autonomy as it includes developing learning strategies to achieve the learning goals of the target language. The studies of learner independence (Cotterall, 1995; Sheerin, 1997; Lamb, 2006; Lamb & Reinders, 2005; Pinkman, 2005; Reinders, 2006, 2010) build consensus that learning how of learning and developing learning strategies are essential principles of ILL. In MOOLCs, independent language learning requires learners to have a vision of what they need to learn and effective and affordable ways to learn it. Additionally, the features of learning independently, owing to being a wide concept, can be relatable to many of the autonomous skills such as motivation, self-instruction, self-efficacy, self-determination (for persistence), increased self-confidence, self-assessment and –evaluation, which heightens

learners' awareness of their capabilities as much as limitations in MOOLCs. White's (2008) definition agrees with this statement:

> *…independence involves developing the attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and strategies needed by learners to take actions dealing with their own learning. Independent learning in this sense is based on students' understanding of their own needs and interests and is fostered by creating the opportunities and experiences which encourage student choice and self-reliance and which promote the development of learning strategies and metacognitive knowledge (p. 4).*

Upon "the emergence and proliferation of information and communication technologies (ICTs)", they have become so relevant to human lives that the boundaries between when people use technology for learning purposes and other activities have begun to disappear, which led up to the emergence of connectivism (Kop, 2011, p. 20). It is this connectivist structure of MOOLCs that gives learners the possibilities of engaging in autonomous learning practices. The nature of the connectivist MOOLCs encourages (a) interaction among providers (institutions, entrepreneurs etc.), peers, lecturers, mentors, content, resources, and the mean of communication (the platform) and (b) collaboration among the human components of the platform. It offers a learning setting where there is freedom to choose to be, or not to be a human component in this network. It has been long emphasized that the knowledge society needs a shift from teacher, institution, and syllabus -controlled cooperative learning to learner-directed and collaborative learning where the learners choose the content they are interested in and learning methods they can relate to (Littlewood, 2002; Downes, 2010).

The connectivist structure brings about the matter of social dimensions: interaction and collaboration in MOOLCs. Interaction mostly takes place through live events on the Facebook clinic (synchronous) and discussion forum posts (asynchronous). Considering the participants from different time zones, it may be less convenient for everyone to be involved in live hours; however, these people are not divested of building collaborative intelligence via genuine and meaningful communication in activity forum. Furthermore, learning alone in the sense of not needing anybody else's inclusion in one's learning can also be limiting and selfish. It has never been what is meant with autonomous learning, nor is it the case for self-directed or independent learning in online learning ecologies. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory, at this point, is very applicable in a setting where team

members (metaphorically used) elevate one another with their own ZPDs. In this form of learning, the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) is actually each one of the participants given that everyone brings different ZPDs into learning.

Little (1995) argues that the nature of the pedagogical dialogue between teacher and learner will always be the decisive factor. Due to this eminent relationship, the role of a teacher will not be seen as redundant for a full capacity of learning. As far as e-learning platforms are concerned, the teacher's role needs a reading to do to comprehend the tacit support. Kelly (1996) listed the macro and micro skills of language counseling among which are modeling, supporting, evaluating, linking, questioning, summarizing, empathizing etc. (pp. 95-6). These skills still remain to be quite relevant to promoting learning autonomously in e-learning platforms. For example, questioning skills promote eliciting knowledge and experience, which leads to creating collaborative knowledge rather than depending on a single source. In collaborative knowledge making environments, MOOLC designers and lecturers consider learner's access to knowledge, social interaction as much as an individual reflection on their own learning, production of assignments within learners' capabilities, providing guidance on utilizing extra sources, and practicing peer feedback. These are some of the concerns that MOOLC lecturers and mentors as monitors and guides have when aiming at providing autonomous learning.

The high dropout rate (Conole, 2013; Davis et al., 2014) in MOOCs is a concerning issue that has its underlying reasons to discuss. It can be an indication of poor time-management among learners, and thus losing track of the course. Although the courses are self-paced in audit and may have some deadlines for learners who build a portfolio of their certificates, it still requires a certain amount of effort to benefit from a course. Additionally, learners can have difficulty in finding the time to mine the useful shares among thousands of posts; therefore, time management becomes significant for learners to be involved in weekly discussions on a regular basis before they get in over their head.

Although there are a few studies investigating the promise of peer and self-assessment, the existing rubrics etc., (Piech et al., 2012; Kulkarni et al., 2013; Sokolik, 2014) there is only one detailed research regarding the practices of self-evaluation in MOOLCs. Beaven et al. (2014, p. 60) worked on a continuous self-

evaluation questionnaire to identify the MOOLC learners' experiences and point out the difficulties when they adopt online language learning. It is an insightful study for both course designers and learners per se. Nonetheless, it is only a drop in the ocean. Further consideration should be attached to self-evaluation as it encourages self-reflection, which is a neglected area in many learning cultures.

In sum, the potential of MOOCs in Foreign Language Education has not been researched thoroughly and lots of issues remained unaddressed (Perifanou, 2015a). Researchers are now suggesting new ways to improve language learning via MOOLCs. The LangMOOC project is a good research reporting the current situation of MOOLCs (Perifanou, 2015b). Besides, Kay et al. (2013) have already recommended creating e-portfolio to submit for better assessment and certification. Gutiérrez-Rojas et al. (2014) introduce MyLearningMentor, an application to assist learners in planning their studies with MOOCs and "turn less experienced students into self-learners" (p. 43).

2.10. Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the related literature regarding the MOOC providers, the types of MOOCs, the objectives of the participants and providers, the different profiles of MOOC participants, and Language MOOCs (MOOLCs) and described the three English MOOLCs that the present study intellectualizes. The study also relates to the good language learner in online learning platforms, the concept of learner autonomy and its integration into digital learning platforms, and the perceived role of the learner and teacher, the role shift in developing learner autonomy upon the arrival of technology into learning as well as the autonomous learning practices in MOOLCs. The following chapter will present the methodology of the study with the research questions the study seeks answers for.

3. METHODOLOGY

The present study employs the mixed-method design that uses both qualitative and quantitative data to investigate learner autonomy in Massive Open Online Language Courses (MOOLCs) in English as a foreign language and autonomous practices in the MOOLCs. I attempt to introduce three English MOOLCs, research participants' degree of autonomy in online learning environments, and what autonomous practices they are involved by participating in the MOOLCs. In order to study MOOLCs more profoundly, I have analyzed three particular MOOLCs i) Exploring English: Language and Culture (6 weeks), ii) Understanding IELTS: Techniques for English Language Tests (6 weeks) by British Council, and iii) A Beginner's Guide to Writing in English for University Study (5 weeks) by University of Reading on Futurelearn platform in the UK. The last run of the courses started on 12th of September 2016, 17th of October 2016, and 26th of September 2016 respectively.

In order to determine the degree of learner autonomy among the MOOLC participants, a Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (LAQ) was conducted with 57 participants with whom I contacted via their Futurelearn accounts. Additionally, the qualitative content analysis, which is "a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication," is employed (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 357). The interaction data, namely, the participants' posts in the discussion forums are collected via tracking their Futurelearn profiles. 86 comments in discussion forum posts of Exploring English: Language and Culture, 100 comments in the discussion forum posts of Understanding IELTS: Techniques for English Language Tests, and 53 comments in the discussion forum posts of A Beginner's Guide to Writing in English for University Study were meticulously analyzed via ATLAS.ti to conclude the autonomous practices the learners are involved by participating in the MOOLCs and their views regarding the participation in such autonomous language learning.

The mixed method was used to have a better and deeper understanding regarding autonomous language learning via MOOLCs. The data from the 'Final reviews' section of the courses were collected to triangulate the quantitative data with the qualitative data. The discussion posts of the participants who took place in this

research were included as data to define what autonomous practices they were involved due to the MOOLC participation.

My purpose is to answer the following questions:

1) To what extent are EFL learners in an English MOOLC autonomous?
2) How do EFL learners in an English MOOLC perceive learners' roles in learner autonomy?
3) How do EFL learners in an English MOOLC perceive teachers' roles in learner autonomy?
4) What autonomous practices are EFL learners involved by participating in an English MOOLC?

This chapter includes four sections in which detailed information is presented about participants, instruments, data collection procedures, and how the data are analyzed respectively.

3.1. Participants

A sample of 57 participants is chosen from the learners registered the September 2016 session of Exploring English: Language and Culture, the October 2016 session of Understanding IELTS: Techniques for English Language Tests, and the September 2016 session of A Beginner's Guide to Writing in English for University Study. The registration can easily be completed by connecting a Facebook account to the Futurelearn account (one of the options), which makes the participants' profile accessible to others. Participants are non-native English speakers from all over the world. It could be said that the participants of this course are demographically diverse, especially regarding their nationalities.

While choosing the sample, I adopted 2 criteria. The first criterion for the selection of participants was accessibility. Although quite many people registered the course, I only accessed the complete accounts with an identifiable profile picture that links to a matching social media account (Facebook etc.). The learners are included in this study only if their information from the Futurelearn accounts includes the necessary information; a full name, age, gender, and home country, or any other identifiable information to access their social media account. As a

second criterion, the distribution of the participants according to nationality was a consideration. I intend to have a diverse participant group by selecting learners from different countries. Figure 3.1 shows the participants current residence grouped into continents, and Appendix 6 lists the participants' home countries.

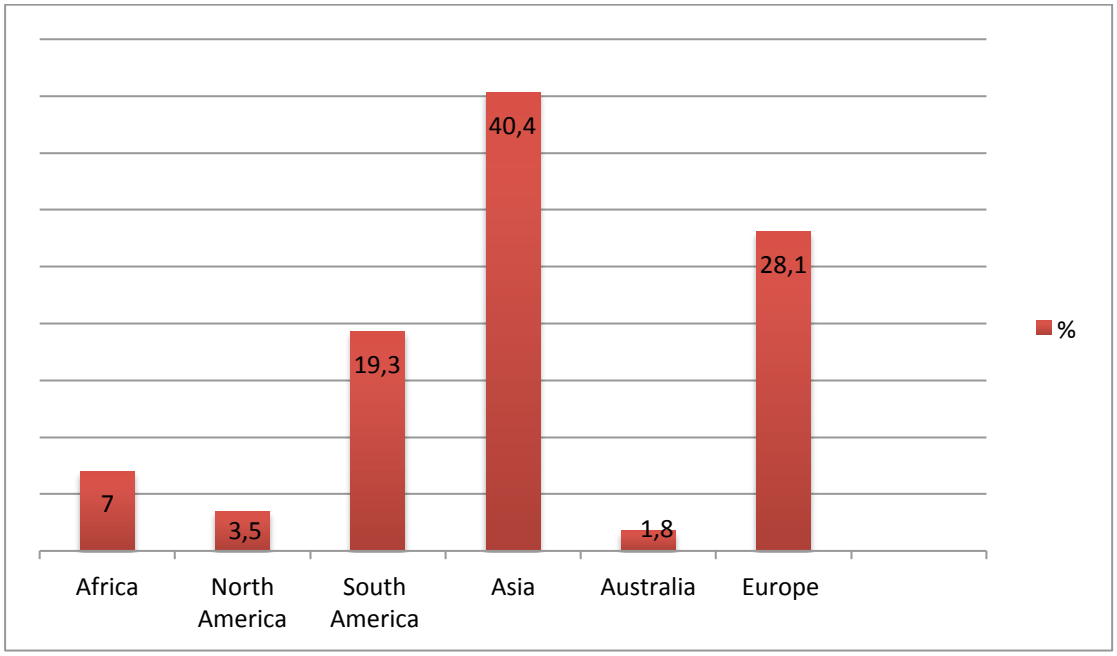

Figure 3.1: Participation by Continent

Out of 57 students, 26 were males and 31 were females. Regarding the age of the participants, the following chart shows that the majority is between 21 and 35, which could be one of the indicators that the MOOLCs appeal people born in the 1980s onwards the most, who are considered to be digital natives, a term coined by Prensky (2001), and young adults and adults in term of age (see Figure 3.2). Additionally, Figure 3.3 presents the employment status of the participants. Almost 65% of the participants are employed adults, and 19.3 % is students.

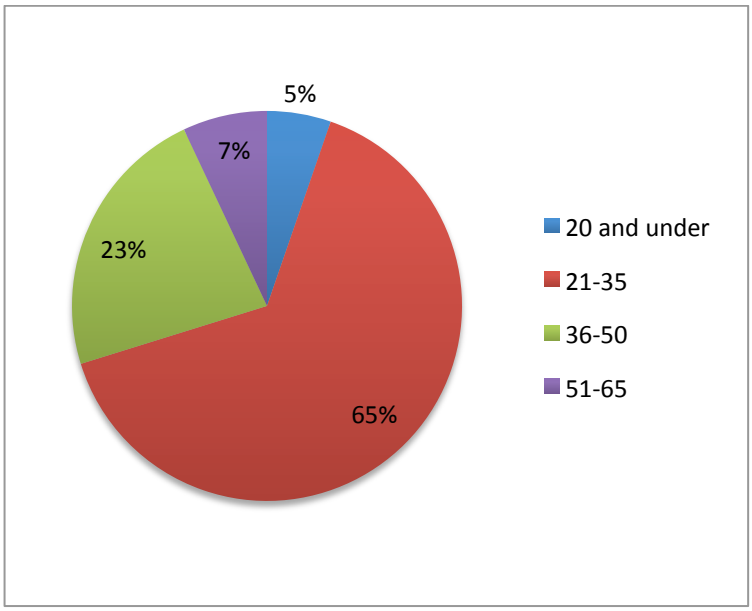

Figure 3.2: Age Group Distribution

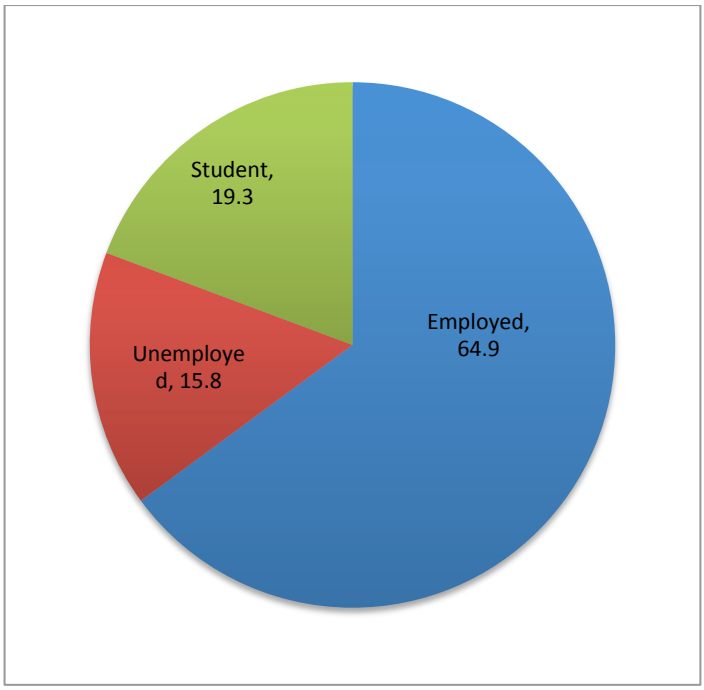

Figure 3.3: Participants' Employment Status

The minimum requirement of language proficiency to join the courses is approximately B1 in the CEFR. Lacking the advised language proficiency, learners can have serious difficulties in taking an active role in interactive activities such as weekly discussions, sharing opinions by answering the questions about the topic of the week, and Facebook clinics, or submitting assignments as a partial

requirement for the certificate. Therefore, the chosen learners of this study are expected to have the advised proficiency.

This section gives the available information about the participants for this research. The following section will present the data collection instruments necessary for this study.

3.2. Data Collection Instruments

Dörnyei (2007) highlights the economical use of questionnaires, as they make it easy to reach people from geographically diverse areas. The participants of the MOOLCs under scope in the present study come from different cities/countries. Therefore, the most convenient tool for the quantitative data collection is considered to be a questionnaire. In this regard, the instrument Joshi (2011) used in his research called 'Learner Autonomy Questionnaire' was used with several changes, which is introduced in the next part. Joshi was contacted and asked for permission to implement the instrument for the sake of the research ethics.

As for the qualitative data, the participants' commentaries regarding the courses are compiled from the 'Final Reviews' sections of the 3 MOOLCs to answer the RQ 4 and gain a deeper understanding of the insights and the autonomous practices the learners are involved by participating in the MOOLCs. The details about the questionnaire and written commentaries are presented below.

3.2.1. Learner Autonomy Questionnaire

In the present study, 'Learner Autonomy Questionnaire' (see Appendix 3) administrated by Joshi (2011) in his study titled "Learner Perceptions and Teacher Beliefs about Learner Autonomy in Language Learning" that was published in *Journal of NELTA* was employed as the quantitative data collection instrument. Joshi's study mainly aimed at investigating the autonomous activities in English learning of 80 master's level students at the Department of English Education, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu and find out the beliefs regarding the role of learner and teacher in learner autonomy. In the original study, the instrument consists of two parts: (1) Autonomous Learning Activity Scale (ALAS) and (2) Evaluation-Sheet for Perception of the Roles (ESPR). The former part includes 18 Likert-scale items (Never-Always) and the latter 13 Likert-scale items (Strongly Disagree- Strongly Agree). The first part of the questionnaire consists of seven

subheadings, and the second part is divided into two. However, after piloting the questionnaire with 20 learners, Item 10, 13, and 15 in the original questionnaire were excluded since they were outdated, irrelevant, and redundant, respectively, in the target context. There is a little improvement observed in the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, which is explained it the pilot study in detail. Table 3.1 below presents the structure of the questionnaire used in this study (see Appendix 3).

Table 3.1: The dimensions of the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire

Item(s)	*Dimension*
Autonomous Learning Activity Scale	
3 items	learner awareness
5 items	self-efforts
3 items	broader autonomous activities
1 item	self-esteem
1 item	use of reference materials
1 item	self-reward
1 item	use of technology in learning
Evaluation-Sheet for Perception of the Roles	
6 items	learners' perceptions of their own roles
7 items	learners' perceptions of teachers' roles

Source: Joshi, K. R. (2011). Learner Perceptions and Teacher Beliefs about Learner Autonomy in Language Learning. *Journal of NELTA, 16*(1-2), 13-29.

Furthermore, several words have been changed in the questionnaire, one of which was extracting the '(e.g. NELTA)' in Item 11 "I attend different seminars, training courses, conferences (e.g. NELTA) to improve my English" as NELTA might be unfamiliar to the learners and cause confusion. The second change was to replace the words 'class' and 'classroom' with 'course' in Item 4, 5, 8, 9, and 26 because 'class' or 'classroom' seems to refer to a four wall physical learning environment whereas 'course' includes online learning environments as well. Therefore, the replacing word seems more relevant to the context of MOOLCs. Finally, Item 19 "*Students should mostly study what has been mentioned under the course because studying M. Ed. English course is actually for exam purpose"* has been changed to *"Students should mostly study what has been taught under the course because studying English in the course is actually for exam purpose"* to make the statement clearer and less vague in meaning.

The questionnaire was formed online, and the link was made available to the participants of the MOOLCs via e-mail or Facebook Messenger. The questionnaire also included a consent form informing participants about the voluntariness and confidentiality. As the participants of 3 MOOLCs are expected to be at least B1 level in English, and the learners are speakers of too many different languages, it was considered appropriate to distribute the questionnaire in English. Also, the language of the items in the questionnaire is found to be straightforward. The data from Learner Autonomy Questionnaire attempted to answer the RQ 1, 2, and 3.

3.2.2. Interaction data: Final Commentaries

The qualitative data of the present study are compiled from the participants' commentaries regarding the 3 MOOLCs they have participated in. The participants are asked to discuss their opinions about their learning experiences for a final round up in the last week of the courses. 239 comments are studied via a macro coding system by using ATLAS.ti to have a more systematic analysis of the qualitative data to answer the RQ 4. The comments by the participants are collected. The contents of the comments are categorized into 9 macrocodes with respect to the autonomous practices. The macro coding includes the followings:

1 Goal achievement

2 Independent learning

3 Time-management skills

4 Self-study materials

5 Connectivist structure of the MOOLC

6 Social dimensions: interaction and collaboration

7 Lecturer/mentor-learner relationship

8 Self-evaluation

9 Overall satisfaction with the MOOLC participation

The sample comments (quotations) for each microcode are saved and presented in Chapter 4.

3.3. Pilot Study

In order to evaluate the credibility of the data collection instrument, Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (LAQ), a pilot study was conducted with a sample size of 20 randomly selected from the 3 MOOLCs. The reliability of the scales is measured to see whether any items need to be revised or simply removed in order to have a questionnaire that is internally consistent.

Upon receiving the submissions of the questionnaire, a reliability analysis in SPSS (Version 23) was run to calculate Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The statistical analyses demonstrated that the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was 0,793. Apart from the several word changes described above, Item 10, 13, and 15 were also excluded to improve the quality of the questionnaire. Item 10 was considered outdated in the target context, Item 13 was irrelevant to the context, and Item 15 was repetitive, and hence it became redundant. The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient improved a little (0, 798), which still indicates good reliability.

3.4. Data Collection Procedures

In the present study, the quantitative and qualitative data were gathered through online affordances. The Learner Autonomy Questionnaire was developed in Google Forms and the commentaries for each course were compiled through reading the threads in the 'Final Review' section one by one to conclude some common standpoints and concerns via qualitative content analysis.

The participants were provided a consent form indicating that the participation is absolutely voluntary, and the data collected remain confidential. They were also informed that the data are only used for the research purposes and the responses are only available to the involved researchers and not shared with other parties.

The link for the questionnaire was sent to the learner via Google Forms. The preliminary section of the questionnaire consists of questions to gather demographic data from the learners such as age, gender, home country, employment status, and educational background.

The 'Learner Autonomy Questionnaire' is the main quantitative data collection instrument with a Likert-type scale. The online version of the questionnaire was sent to 300 people when they registered one of the three courses via their Futurelearn profiles that were connected to a Facebook account or an e-mail. The

number of returns was 57. The response rate was not as at desired level mostly because of the Facebook filters on Messenger. The data were analyzed with the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 23). The aim is to provide descriptive statistics of the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire. The descriptive statistics explain the degree of learner autonomy (ALAS) as well as learner perception of learners' and teachers' roles (ESPR).

To triangulate the quantitative data and evaluate autonomous practices in the MOOLCs, the commentaries described above are collected and studied carefully via ATLAS.ti (Version 1.5.4). First, all the commentaries are simply read one by one. Taking the participants' thoughts and opinions in the comments into consideration, the macro coding system is developed in order to have a systematic analysis of the commentaries regarding autonomous practices in the MOOLCs. Finally, sample comments regarding the codes are saved in ATLAS.ti quotations and will be presented in the following chapter.

3.5. Data Analysis

In the section of participants in this chapter, the demographic distribution of the participants' gender, age (Figure 3.2), current residence (Figure 3.1), and employment status (Figure 3.3) are introduced in the forms of clustered columns and pies.

The main source of data is the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire the results of which were run in the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 23). The descriptive statistics answer the RQ 1, 2, and 3 which express the degree of participants' autonomy (data from ALAS), and perceived the role of learners and teachers in learner autonomy (data from ESPR). These statistics are particularly significant in terms of demonstrating to what extent the participants studying English in online learning platforms are autonomous. The total mean score for each dimension in the autonomy questionnaire is also calculated and presented respectively. Meanwhile, percentages, frequencies, the mean scores, and standard deviations for each item in each dimension are also presented to define the degree of learner autonomy and learners' and teachers' roles in learner autonomy.

The last source of the study is the participants' commentaries that answer the RQ 4. The commentaries are studied by using ATLAS.ti (Version 1.5.4) with a coding system that includes 9 macrocodes. Several quotations in respect to each macrocode are stored via ATLAS.ti quotation segment. Finally, the visual map of the linkages in networks (the codes linked to the quotations) is retrieved.

3.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, the overall design of the research with the research questions, participants, data collection instruments, the pilot study, data collection procedures, and data analysis were presented in an organized structure. The next chapter will present the results deduced from the data gathered in the scope of research questions in the present study.

4. FINDINGS

This chapter presents the data gathered from the statistical analyses and learners' comments about their experiences in the English MOOLCs. The first section, which represents the quantitative data of the study, describes the descriptive statistics of the frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and interpretations of mean values for each item included in each dimension of the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire to answer the RQs 1, 2, and 3. The second section, which presents the qualitative data of the study, consists of the participants' comments about their learning experiences in the courses. A macro coding system is employed via ATLAS.ti (Version 1.5.4) for a more systematic analysis of the qualitative data obtained to answer the RQ 4. The sample quotations presented in the second section are attached to the macrocodes to identify what autonomous practices the learners are involved by participating in the MOOLCs

4.1. Autonomy Levels of EFL Learners in an English MOOLC

Learner Autonomy Questionnaire administrated by Joshi (2011) has 7 dimensions in Autonomous Learning Activity Scale (ALAS) and 2 dimensions in Evaluation-Sheet for Perception of the Roles (ESPR). The present study analyzes these 9 dimensions; learner awareness, self-efforts, broader autonomous activities, self-esteem, use of reference materials, self-reward, and use of technology in learning in the ALAS and learners' perceptions of their own roles and learners' perceptions of teachers' roles in the ESPR. In the analysis, the descriptive statistics for each item under each dimension show the frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations along with the interpretations of mean values (low, moderate, and high level of learner autonomy). In order to answer the RQ 1, the total mean score of the ALAS was calculated to find out to what extent EFL learners in an English MOOLC are autonomous while the RQ 2 and 3 are answered through the two dimensions of the ESPR, which investigates learners' perception of their own roles and teachers' roles.

The total mean score of ALAS was found to be 3.62, which indicates a high level of learner autonomy. The results of the seven dimensions of the ALAS and the two

dimensions of the ESPR are presented below. I consider the means ranging from 1 to 2.49 as an expression of a low level of learner autonomy, the means ranging from 2.50 to 3.49 as a moderate level of learner autonomy, and the means ranging from 3.50 to 5 are interpreted as a high level of learner autonomy (Özdere, 2005). The interpretations of means are presented in the related tables of each dimension in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: The interpretations of Likert Scale Means

Actual Likert Scale	***Never***	***Rarely***	***Sometimes***	***Often***	***Always***
Values	1	2	3	4	5
Values range	1-2.49		2.50-3.49		3.50-5
Interpretations of ranges	Low level of LA		Moderate level of LA		High level of LA

Source: Adapted from Özdere, M. (2005). *State-supported provincial university English language instructors' attitudes towards learner autonomy* (Master's thesis, Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey). Retrieved from http://www.thesis.bilkent.edu.tr/0002853.pdf

4.1.1. Findings Concerning Learner Awareness

The first dimension of the ALAS demonstrates the awareness in participants' own learning. It consists of the following 3 items, which determine the level of learner autonomy within the value ranges in Table 4.1. For Item 1, a vast number of learners (Often: 17.5% and Always: 66.7%) think that they have the ability to learn English well. The value range (Item 1, M: 4.51) indicates a high level of learner autonomy. Moreover, the responses to the Item 2 show that most of the learners (M: 4.19) make their own decisions and set their goals of learning, which is also interpreted as a high level of autonomy. It is significant to state at this point that not a single respondent answers 'Never' when it comes to goal-setting and decision-making. On the other hand, the mean of Item 3 shows a little decrease (M: 3.72). Around 65% of the participants state that they often or always make good use of their free time in studying English while around 12% of the respondents agree 'never' and 'rarely,' and yet the mean still indicates a high level of autonomy (above 3.50). Table 4.2 demonstrates the total mean score of 4.14 revealing that learners are highly aware of their learning responsibilities.

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics: Learner awareness

Item	*Never*		*Rarely*		*Sometimes*		*Often*		*Always*				
	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	Mean	SD	Int.
I-1: I think I have the ability to learn English well.	0	0	0	0	9	15.8	10	17.5	38	66.7	4.51	.759	High
I-2: I make decisions and set goals of my learning.	0	0	2	3.5	9	15.8	22	38.6	24	42.1	4.19	.833	High
I-3: I make good use of my free time in studying English.	1	1.8	6	10.5	13	22.8	25	43.9	12	21.1	3.72	.978	High
Total Mean Score											4.14		

*Int= interpretation of means ranging from 1 to 2.49; Low level of LA; from 2.50 to 3.49; Moderate level of LA; from 3.50 to 5; High level of LA; f: frequencies; p: percentage

4.1.2. Findings Concerning Self-Efforts

The second dimension of the ALAS evaluates the learners' self-efforts including 5 items each of which indicates how often the learners practice English on their own. The results reflect whether learners employ self-efforts to exercise the language. From the mean of 3.35 for Item 4, it can be deduced that most of the learners (40.4%) sometimes preview before the course whereas a relatively significant number of them never or rarely do (Item 4, Never: 1.8% and Rarely: 15.8%). Therefore, the mean score for Item 4 suggests a moderate level of learner autonomy. Meanwhile, it is observed from the high mean of 3.88 for Item 5 that a great number of learners try to use every opportunity to take part in the activities in the course to speak in English. Regarding Item 6 about learners' confidence in speaking in front of the people, more than four fifth of the learners agreed to be confident about speaking in front of people. Only a small number of learners (Never: 2 and Rarely: 5) never or rarely feel confident when it comes to speaking in public. Similarly, the analysis for Item 7 shows that a great many learners make notes and summaries of their lessons (M: 3.56). Finally, with the mean of 3.25 for Item 8, more than half of the participants indicate that they talk to the teachers and friends outside the class in English. However, the indication of a moderate level of autonomy results from a considerable number of learners who answer ‘sometimes' (31.6%) and less (Never: 8.8 and Rarely: 15.8). The sum mean of 3.53 in Table

4.3, though considered as moderate level, still encourages a good deal of self-efforts in regard to the language practice out of the course.

Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics: Self-efforts

Item	*Never*		*Rarely*		*Sometimes*		*Often*		*Always*				
	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	Mean	SD	Int.
I-4: I preview before the course (i.e. see summary, lessons etc.).	1	1.8	9	15.8	23	40.4	17	29.8	7	12.3	3.35	.954	Moderate
I-5: In the course, I try to use every opportunity to take part in the activities where and when I can speak in English.	1	1.8	4	7.0	13	22.8	22	38.6	17	29.8	3.88	.983	High
I-6: I speak confidently in front of the people.	2	3.5	5	8.8	19	33.3	18	31.6	13	22.8	3.61	1.048	High
I-7: I make notes and summaries of my lessons.	3	5.3	5	8.8	18	31.6	19	33.3	12	21.1	3.56	1.086	High
I-8: I talk to the teachers and friends outside the course in English.	5	8.8	9	15.8	18	31.6	17	29.8	8	14.0	3.25	1.154	Moderate
Total Mean Score											3.53		

*Int= interpretation of means ranging from 1 to 2.49; Low level of LA; from 2.50 to 3.49; Moderate level of LA; from 3.50 to 5; High level of LA; f: frequencies; p: percentage

4.1.3. Findings Concerning Broader Autonomous Activities

Table 4.4 presents the results of the descriptive statistics of broader autonomous activities. The three items below express the learners' attempts to reach further exercises to improve their English. Among the items, recording voices and speaking to other people in English to practice English outside of the class seem to be favorable among learners (Item 9, M: 3.37). Nevertheless, the 43.9% of 'sometimes' makes up the greatest percentage, which brings about a moderate level of learner autonomy. Looking at the next item (Item 10) concerning the use of audio-visual materials, for example, listening to BBC, watching English movies, and reading English newspapers to improve speaking, one can conclude that learners think about authentic materials more positively. The high mean score (M: 3.98) with 0% of Never manifests that all the learners, no matter how rarely, employ the mentioned activities in their practice. Over 75% of the respondents, at

least sometimes, attend different seminars, training courses, and conferences to improve their English although 14 learners (Item 11, Never: 3 and Rarely: 11) do not apparently place as much importance on these activities. Overall, the total mean score of 3.55 suggests a high degree of learner autonomy about broader autonomous activities.

Table 4.4: Descriptive Statistics: Broader Autonomous Activities

Item	*Never*		*Rarely*		*Sometimes*		*Often*		*Always*				
	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	Mean	SD	Int.
I-9: I practice English outside the course also such as: record my own voice; speak to other people in English.	2	3.5	7	12.3	25	43.9	14	24.6	9	15.8	3.37	1.011	Moderate
I-10: I use audio-visual materials to develop my speech such as: listen to BBC, watch English movies, read English newspapers etc.	0	0	3	5.3	15	26.3	19	33.3	20	35.1	3.98	.916	High
I-11: I attend different seminars, training courses, conferences to improve my English.	3	5.3	11	19.3	19	33.3	13	22.8	11	19.3	3.32	1.152	Moderate
Total Mean Score											3.55		

*Int= interpretation of means ranging from 1 to 2.49; Low level of LA; from 2.50 to 3.49; Moderate level of LA; from 3.50 to 5; High level of LA; f: frequencies; p: percentage

4.1.4. Findings Concerning Self-Esteem

The fourth dimension identifies whether learners are able to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses in learning and improving English. It consists of a single item in Table 4.5 that introduces the descriptive statistics of self-esteem. A good number of respondents exhibit positive attitudes towards reflcting on their strengths and weaknesses, which leads to a mean of 3.53, an indication of a high level of learner autonomy. More than 82% of the learners tend to perform the aforesaid activity, at least sometimes. Nevertheless, it is relevant to mention that a

relatively small number of learners who does not seem to have a high opinion of self-reflection agree on ‘never’ (f: 2) and ‘rarely’ (f: 8).

Table 4.5: Descriptive Statistics: Self-esteem

Item	*Never*		*Rarely*		*Sometimes*		*Often*		*Always*				
	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	Mean	SD	Int.
I-12: I note my strengths and weaknesses in learning English and improve them.	2	3.5	8	14.0	15	26.3	22	38.6	10	17.5	3.53	1.054	High
Total Mean Score												3.53	

*Int= interpretation of means ranging from 1 to 2.49; Low level of LA; from 2.50 to 3.49; Moderate level of LA; from 3.50 to 5; High level of LA; f: frequencies; p: percentage

4.1.5. Findings Concerning the Use of Reference Materials

The fifth dimension includes one item questioning learners' will to look for alternative or additional sources. The item intends to examine to what extent learners use the reference materials. Item 13 refers to the additional material use, though with an emphasis on ‘in advance.' It is observed that 35.1% of the respondents confirm that they often read extra materials in advance besides the contents prescribed in the course. The following great number in the scale for Item 16 is 33.3% consisting of the participants who sometimes read additional materials other than assigned in course. The dispersion tends to weigh on ‘sometimes' and ‘often' that brings the mean very close to the high level of learner autonomy (M: 3.44). This obviously adds up to a moderate level of learner autonomy (M: 3.44) in regard to the use of reference materials.

Table 4.6: Descriptive Statistics: Use of Reference Materials

Item	*Never*		*Rarely*		*Sometimes*		*Often*		*Always*				
	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	Mean	SD	Int.
I-13: Besides the contents prescribed in the course, I read extra materials in advance.	1	1.8	9	15.8	19	33.3	20	35.1	8	14.0	3.44	.982	Moderate
Total Mean Score												3.44	

*Int= interpretation of means ranging from 1 to 2.49; Low level of LA; from 2.50 to 3.49; Moderate level of LA; from 3.50 to 5; High level of LA; f: frequencies; p: percentage

4.1.6. Findings Concerning Self-reward

The sixth dimension investigates self-reward practices employed by the participants. The dimension in question here only includes one item. The mean of Item 14 is observed to be the lowest score of all the items in the LAQ. It proves that learners do not really consider rewarding themselves when they make progress in learning. 26.3% of the participants claim that they never reward themselves and 21.1% rarely do so whereas 24.6% is sometimes involved in buying new things, celebrating parties, etc. to reward the progress they make. It is noted that rewards are the least of learners' concern considering the lowest mean of 2.65. Nonetheless, looking into the responses from 16 learners for Often (f: 10) and Always (f: 6), the ratio of these learners who entertain the idea of rewarding themselves is not to be underestimated (30%).

Table 4.7: Descriptive Statistics: Self-reward

Item	*Never*		*Rarely*		*Sometimes*		*Often*		*Always*				
	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	Mean	SD	Int.
I-14: When I make progress in learning, I reward myself such as: buy new things, celebrate parties etc.	15	26.3	12	21.1	14	24.6	10	7.5	6	10.5	2.65	1.329	Moderate
Total Mean Score											2.65		

*Int= interpretation of means ranging from 1 to 2.49; Low level of LA; from 2.50 to 3.49; Moderate level of LA; from 3.50 to 5; High level of LA; f: frequencies; p: percentage

4.1.7. Findings Concerning the Use of Technology in Learning

The last dimension of the ALAS addresses the use of technology in learning. It includes a single straightforward item to direct the question of how often the participants use technology for learning purposes. The responses to the Item 15 seem to reveal that the frequent use of technology in learning motivates a high level of learner autonomy. Given the fact that the respondents are the MOOLC participants, it is not at all surprising that more than 95% of the learners use Internet and computers to study and improve English. The smallest ratio of the

frequencies of Never (f: 0), Rarely (f: 2), and Sometimes (f: 4) altogether is observed in this particular item. The mean of 4.55 is noted to be the highest of the LAQ. That Item 15 has the highest mean score of the LAQ among 15 items is quite meaningful and can account for a strong relationship between learner autonomy and the use of technology in learning.

Table 4.8: Descriptive Statistics: Use of Technology in Learning

Item	*Never*		*Rarely*		*Sometimes*		*Often*		*Always*				
	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	Mean	SD	Int.
I-15: I use internet and computers to study and improve English.	0	0	2	3.5	4	7.0	13	22.8	38	66.7	4.53	.782	High
Total Mean Score												4.53	

*Int= interpretation of means ranging from 1 to 2.49; Low level of LA; from 2.50 to 3.49; Moderate level of LA; from 3.50 to 5; High level of LA; f: frequencies; p: percentage

4.1.8. Findings Concerning Learners' Perceptions of their Own Roles

The second part of the questionnaire is called Evaluation-Sheet for Perception of the Roles (ESPR). It discusses the current perceptions of learners' and teachers' roles in learning from the learners' perspective. It includes 13 items to determine learners' perception of their own responsibilities for autonomous learning and teachers' roles in learning. This particular dimension (Table 4.9) reports the descriptive statistics of learners' perceptions of their own roles. Item 16 evaluates how responsible the learners are in order to find their own metacognitive strategies for practicing English. As deduced from the responses to Item 16, nearly 81% of the learners agree that they need to take on responsibilities in learning and exercising language. For Item 17, it is apparent that a majority of the learners are motivated to use self-study materials rather than depending solely on the prescribed sources (M: 4.35). Self-evaluation that Item 18 focuses on is a significant aspect of learner autonomy, and the responses show that around 84% of the learners share the same opinion in regard to self-evaluation for a better learning. Item 19 passes an interesting remark. With a notable decrease in the mean score (M: 3.26), 33.3% of the learners seem to be undecided whether they should mostly focus on studying for the exam purposes. On the other hand, nearly

44% of learners think that English courses are exam-oriented; hence they should mostly study what has been taught under the course. Although the results for Item 17 introduces a great interest in seeking self-study materials, seemingly, the learners seem to give more importance to what is assigned to them in the course. Over 75% of the respondents think that building a clear vision of their learning before learning English is necessary whereas a small percentage (nearly 9%) does not consider it as a must (Item 20, M: 3.95). Regarding the student-teacher relationship in terms of learner autonomy (Item 28), a significant number of learners (35.1%) seem to be undecided about whether this relationship is the raw material and maker. However, more than half of the respondents consider the nature of the interaction between student and teacher as a positive maker. In conclusion, it can be deduced that the learners perceive the importance of their own role in learning and are mostly ready to take charge.

Table 4.9: Descriptive Statistics: Learners' Perceptions of Their Own Roles

Item	*1*		*2*		*3*		*4*		*5*			
	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	Mean	SD
I-16: Students have to be responsible for finding their own ways of practicing English.	0	0	3	5.3	8	14.0	20	35.1	26	45.6	4.21	.881
I-17: Students should use much self- study materials to learn English.	0	0	1	1.8	6	10.5	22	38.6	28	49.1	4.35	.744
I-18: Students have to evaluate themselves to learn better.	0	0	1	1.8	8	14.0	26	45.6	22	38.6	4.21	.750
I-19: Students should mostly study what has been taught under the course because studying English in the course is actually for exam purpose.	3	5.3	10	17.5	19	33.3	19	33.3	6	10.5	3.26	1.044
I-20: Students should build clear vision of their learning before learning English.	1	1.8	4	7.0	8	14.0	28	49.1	16	28.1	3.95	.934
I-28: The student-teacher relationship is that of raw-material and maker.	1	1.8	3	5.3	20	35.1	24	42.1	9	15.8	3.65	.876

*1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree, 5= Strongly Agree; f: frequencies; p: percentage

4.1.9. Findings Concerning Learners' Perceptions of Teachers' Roles

The second dimension of the ESPR investigates learner perception of teachers' roles and the degree of dependence on teachers in learning. The first item (Item 21) provides an answer to whether learning can mostly be done without a teacher from the learners' perspective. The number of the undecided participants (f: 12, p: 21.1%) and those who disagree (f: 10, p: 17.5) is noticeable, which accounts for seeking guidance or even authority depending on the learners' perception of teachers' roles. However, it is also seen that no participant strongly disagrees with the idea of learning taking place without the presence of a teacher. Moreover, half of the learners embrace learning without a teacher. With Item 27, though, a different perspective occurs where around 65% of the learners state that teachers should use authority in teaching/learning if needed. Apparently, although the learners think that they can cope with learning environments where no teacher is involved, they can also be in need of teacher authority in teaching and learning when *'necessary.'*

For Item 22, more than half of the participants think that teachers are responsible for learners' comprehension of English. It is observed that the responses to Item 22 do not really offer an overlapping point of view with Item 21; however, they can, under no circumstances, be interpreted as being entirely contrastive. The learner can agree with the idea of self-learning most of the time and still be in favor of teachers' involvement in their comprehension. In terms of teacher feedback (Item 23, M: 4.28), almost 90% of the learners depend on teachers' pointing out their errors. The highest mean score is observed in Item 24 where almost 95% of the learners agree or strongly agree that teachers have to teach both 'what' and 'how' of English. It should be noted that the learners depend on teachers' guidance, and it does not necessarily impede their autonomy. Item 25 shows the expectations of learners when they come to a course with certain purposes (exam, business etc.) and how they tend to expect teachers to provide exam-oriented notes and materials. 72% of the learners consider the exam-oriented materials necessary. Item 26 offers a significant conclusion about teachers' perceived role in the failure of learners. More than half of the learners do not directly hold teachers' classroom

employment responsible for their failure. It can be inferred that most learners do not attribute the failure to such external factors as the teacher or her employment of poor teaching techniques. To sum, the results in Table 4.10 bespeak the fact that high learner autonomy does not mean the learners ignore active teacher involvement in learning.

Table 4.10: Descriptive Statistics: Learners' Perceptions of Teachers' Roles

Item	*1*		*2*		*3*		*4*		*5*			
	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	Mean	SD
I-21: A lot of learning can be done without a teacher.	0	0	10	17.5	12	21.1	22	28.6	13	22.8	3.67	1.024
I-22: Teachers have to be responsible for making students understand English.	2	3.5	7	12.3	17	29.8	19	33.3	12	21.1	3.56	1.069
I-23: Teachers should point out the students' errors.	0	0	3	5.3	3	5.3	26	45.6	25	43.9	4.28	.796
I-24: Teachers not only have to teach 'what' but should also teach 'how' of English.	0	0	1	1.8	2	3.5	22	38.6	32	56.1	4.49	.658
I-25: Teachers have to provide exam oriented notes and materials.	1	1.8	6	10.5	9	15.8	25	43.9	16	28.1	3.86	1.008
I-26: The failure of the students is directly related to the teachers' course employment.	15	26.3	17	29.8	17	29.8	6	10.5	2	3.5	2.35	1.094
I-27: Teachers need to use their authority in teaching/learning if needed.	2	3.5	4	7.0	13	22.8	28	49.1	10	17.5	3.70	.963

*1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree, 5= Strongly Agree; f: frequencies; p: percentage

4.3. Interaction data: Final commentaries

The qualitative data of the study is collected from the written comments of the participants of the 3 MOOLCs. The qualitative content analysis is employed to enhance the interpretation of learners' opinion of the MOOLCs and investigate what autonomous practices the participants are involved in the MOOLCs. 239 comments have been analyzed, and a macro coding system is developed in ATLAS.ti (Version 1.5.4) to retrieve a networked map. The map helps to visualize the links between the codes and quotations. The comments are categorized into 9 macrocodes (goal achievement, independent learning, time-management skills,

self-study materials, connectivist structure of the MOOLC, social dimensions: interaction and collaboration, lecturer/mentor-learner relationship, self-evaluation, overall satisfaction with the MOOLC participation) according to their contents. Each code is introduced, and sample quotations that represent the associated autonomous practices are presented below according to the courses from which the data are collected.

4.3.1. Goal achievement

Table 4.11: The Comments about Goal Achievement

The course	*Course objectives*	*Sample quotations*
Exploring English: Language and Culture	Studying British culture and improving English language skills	*"I would state that not only my grammar skill has improved but also my acquaintance of the English culture, say on literature, technology, music, the care for the environment and its marvelous cities have expanded."* *"It is a very interesting, exciting, and innovative course for me which updated my learning of English related to Britain culture and literature."*
A Beginner's Guide to Writing in English for University Study	Studying academic grammar, writing well-constructed paragraphs, and learning the organizational structure of essays	*"I have learned how to concise my work but firstly to find my ideas, to corroborate with examples (which was very difficult). I found it hard to develop my essay because of the disconnection of my thoughts, it was hard to find the links, my grammar was bad and still is, but I will learn better."* *"This course is very useful for anyone who is beginning to learn writing academic essays. It sets a foundation and the basics to writing a good academic essay."*
Understanding IELTS: Techniques for English Language Tests	Studying the tips and advice for the IELTS test and improving reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills	*"For sure, this course helped me to improve all my different skills. Investing my time in understanding the IELTS made me feel more confident, now I get a better picture of all the steps in the IELTS, I acquire enough techniques and a lot of useful tools to increase my knowledge."* *"I have learned a lot of English language basics and added a lot, not only to my preparation for an IELTS test but also to my English as a language. Because of this course, I'm more confident"*

Each course was initiated with a purpose of improving language learning, good learning experience, and practicing language skills. The Exploring English: Language and Culture MOOLC did not follow a traditional language syllabus. Instead, it provided various videos filmed in Great Britain to improve cultural knowledge and listening skills via authentic materials in which native language was spoken. The learners claimed that they learned about grammar as well as British culture, literature, music, technology, and many other different social issues

altogether. Accordingly, the learners seem to achieve what the content-based English course aimed at achieving.

A Beginner's Guide to Writing in English for University Study, as the name suggested, focused on improving academic language in writing as well as improving the writing skills. As quoted from the learners, they managed to build a foundation for writing a coherent essay by practicing connecting ideas, improving the academic grammar usage and lexicology, and putting together a well-structured paragraph and essay eventually.

Understanding IELTS: Techniques for English Language Tests was a MOOLC that developed the essential four skills in an exam-oriented way. The course detected learner weaknesses in taking such an international exam and offered some tips and advice to the learners. As observed from the learner comments, the learners benefitted from the techniques for IELTS preparation and mentioned that they felt more confident after taking this course.

All in all, all of the courses seem to find the target audience given that the learners claimed to achieve the initial objectives.

4.3.2. Independent learning

Table 4.12: The Comments about Independent Learning

The course	*Indicators of Independent learning*	*Sample quotations*
Exploring English: Language and Culture	Learning strategies required, Self-paced structure, Self-study materials, Progress tab	*"Independent learning is possible. However, it involves a lot of work and dedication."* *"I think independent learning is a matter of personal choice. It only takes personal zeal/commitment to succeed."* *Learning independently is useful, and you can learn at your own pace, but it is not enough because you need to interact with others and compare your knowledge level to that of other students."* *"It increases the scope of self-learning."*
A Beginner's Guide to Writing in English for University Study	Learning strategies required, Self-paced structure except the deadlines (optional in audit), Self-study materials, Progress tab	*"Studying independently is important because in Colombia we don't have a good environment to learn English that is because the contexts and educational policies in which English is taught in 4 hours per week."* *"It is a good idea if you already have an intermediate level and if you have acquired a "lifestyle" learning something online (at the beginning it could be a little difficult)."*
Understanding IELTS: Techniques for English Language Tests	Learning strategies required, Self-paced structure, Self-study materials, Progress tab	"*As long as I'm concerned, autonomous students tend to look for materials by themselves. Not relying only on the teacher the development of his/her learning."* *"I learned a lot, I shared with people of different places and I understood that is only my task to learn English by myself. It is amazing."* *"Students can learn whatever they want by themselves. Autonomous learners don't need to teachers for learning something."* *"Definitely must be encouraged, especially for intermediate and advanced learners."* *"It is not easy for me to study any language without assistance."*

Independent learning is a part of the autonomous learning practices in the MOOLCs. The learners are aware of how to study independently of a teacher and not to depend entirely on the prescribed activities and materials at hand. Moreover, most of them think that self-learning helps them to regulate their pace of learning. One particular participant mentioned that in-class education is not adequate or quality in his country; therefore independent learning becomes a strong necessity for success. Also, several learners claim that independent learning is a proficiency-dependent learning strategy while some emphasizes the issue of familiarizing oneself with online learning for efficiency of online learning.

4.3.3. Time management

Table 4.13: The Comments about Time Management

The course	*Time management*	*Sample quotations*
Exploring English: Language and Culture	Self-paced except the weekly threads, Unlimited access	*"It gives me the privilege of studying at my own pace, for example; I couldn't finish the course with my mates, but I don't border about it cause I can always go back to it when I'm free."*
A Beginner's Guide to Writing in English for University Study	Self-paced except the deadlines for (optional) assignments, Unlimited access	*"Its an good way of learning specially for professionals as they do not have time to go for classes."*
Understanding IELTS: Techniques for English Language Tests	Self-paced except the weekly threads Unlimited access	*"I participate with pleasure if I can manage my time."* *"… I would like to participate as much as I find the time."* *"It's convenient for my unfixed and ever changing timetable."* *"I think language can be learned through an English language MOOC. Because anyone gets opportunities to do task in his free time."*

Self-paced learning is one of the options for online learning practices. The learners find it convenient to follow a self-paced course due to their timetables considering that almost 65% of them are employed and nearly 20% is the students with fixed timetables. Therefore, time management skills for the learners may determine the completion/drop-out rates. The participants see the value of the MOOLCs eliminating the geographical and time constraints. Since the courses are entirely voluntary, managing time is one of the issues the learner mention in their comments.

4.3.4. Self-study materials

Table 4.14: The Comments about Self-study Materials

The course	*Course materials*	*Sample quotations*
Exploring English: Language and Culture	Forum, Weekly videos (lectures), downloadable slides, transcripts, readings, and videos, Useful links, Google Hangouts on Air, BBC	*"What I like most about the course is plenty of videos in which we can hear live fluent English speech, it helps us a lot in training our listening skills."* *" …clips, stories, and different kinds of fiction that help us to improve our listening skills and reading comprehension."*
A Beginner's Guide to Writing in English for University Study	Forum, Weekly videos (lectures), downloadable slides and exercise sheets, transcripts, readings, useful links, interactive maps	*"The most useful idea of this course for me was drawing the diagram which looks clouds of ideas and examples chained with each other. This would help me think logically and make it easy to choose which ideas and examples to include into the essay."* *"…the tools are great and you are the main character in that process."*
Understanding IELTS: Techniques for English Language Tests	Forum, Weekly videos (lectures), downloadable slides, transcripts, readings, useful links, sample IELTS tests	*"It was very interesting by all means: subjects, exchanges, grammar, videos, quiz and so on. It was very fun to learn English with you."* *"The activities contribute to develop my writing skills and better communication."*

All of the MOOLCs almost used the same course materials to deliver the course content and managed a discussion board where most of the interaction took place. The learners stated that they enjoyed the variety of materials that help them improve listening, reading comprehension, critical thinking skills etc. Innovative materials such as semantic clouds, clips, and videos filmed for fulfilling the course objectives were highly appreciated by the learners. The existence of such materials contributes to the improvement of the essential four skills. These materials are seen as tools to practice English by the learners in the MOOLCs.

4.3.5. Connectivist structure of the MOOLCs

Table 4.15: The Comments about Connectivist structure of the MOOLCs

The course	*Course structure*	*Sample quotations*
Exploring English: Language and Culture	cMOOLC content-based	"The teaching technique used in this course are fascinating, very innovative, relaxing, fun, creative and with excellent exercises that encourage me to continue learning this beautiful English language." "This is free from classroom tension, and it can promote the concept of learning with pleasure and more important is that it enhances cross learning from discussions among the students."
A Beginner's Guide to Writing in English for University Study	cMOOLC skill-based	"It is free, open source, any time and any where, and unites the global sharing and new learning." "It is good way to be exposed in the language environment. Also interaction helps us to express ideas."
Understanding IELTS: Techniques for English Language Tests	cMOOLC skill-based	"In my opinion, personal learning helps a lot in language learning but interacting with teachers and other people is important too." "It is a two way process, that you get to share what you know, in return you get to have information that is shared online like in website links or videos." "The course was well constructed with good opportunities for feedback."

The course requirement for a successful and productive learning process included cherishing communication and interaction. The fact that language could only be learned effectively in an interactive and communicate learning environment applies to MOOLCs as well. The cMOOCs are designed to be interactive, collaborative, and communicative with various focuses. While the first MOOLC in Table 4.15 was a content-based language course with innovative means of teaching that learners felt satisfied with, the other two MOOLCs focused on improving the target skills the courses determine. The learners thought that the courses were structured with interesting, motivating, and encouraging learning/teaching techniques and actually led to changes in their behaviors and attitudes.

4.3.6. Lecturer/mentor-learner relationship

Table 4.16: The Comments about Lecturer/Mentor-Learner Relationship

The course	*Means of Engagement*	*Sample quotations*
Exploring English: Language and Culture	Forum and Facebook Clinic: Q&A hour	*"…great teachers behind and most importantly the interaction between the professors and us, with any channel of communication, was reciprocal."*
A Beginner's Guide to Writing in English for University Study	Forum	*"The tutors were supportive, patient, and witty. They found the time and the ideas to add their personal comments on many people's notes and encourage participants to continue to learn."* *"My only regret is that there are too many participants and I am not able to access teacher feedback all the time."*
Understanding IELTS: Techniques for English Language Tests	Forum and Facebook Clinic: Q&A hour	*"…expert opinion, clarification can be obtained from the learned teachers."* *"… we still need teacher to check and give us feedback."*

The interaction in the MOOLCs above was carried out via the discussions in forums and Facebook groups that gather occasionally. The learners and mentors of the courses became available to the learners for feedback, consultancy, guidance, managing the clinics etc. The learners found the lecturers quite engaged, supportive, encouraging, and willing to interact and help for learners to carry on learning. There was, in the MOOLC 'A Beginner's Guide to Writing in English for University Study,' one learner who asked for teacher feedback on his written pieces more frequently and one-to-one question & answer hours; however, bearing in mind the number of participants, learners learned to benefit from peers (e.g. peer-feedback) and self-efforts more.

4.3.7. Social Dimension: Interaction and collaboration

Table 4.17: The Comments about Social Dimension: Interaction and Collaboration

The course	*Means of Interaction & Collaboration*	*Sample quotations*
Exploring English: Language and Culture	Forum and Facebook Clinic: Q&A hour	*"It was incredible because I felt like I belonged to a group. I exchanged views on various topics with both learners and educators, and the English level of each one didn't really matter."* *"It helps in learning, especially there are fellow learners like whom I can share ideas and knowledge about the language."* *"…when it comes to learning a new language there should be an interaction with others."*
A Beginner's Guide to Writing in English for University Study	Forum, Written feedback	*"I think this course has been very interesting in every aspect, but the best of all is definitely the commentary feed, where you get to know the other learners and spread your own English skills as well."* *"I have not only learned through the videos and article but I have learned a lot from my peers as well."*
Understanding IELTS: Techniques for English Language Tests	Forum and Facebook Clinic: Q&A hour	*"It was very interesting to read your comments, I've learned a lot from them. And so nice to write to people from all over the world."* *"…we´ll be in contact at the MOOC Facebook group."* *"I think we all help each other by giving and taking advice."* *"… plus flexibility and ability to expand and practice with variety of people globally."*

In each MOOLC, the learners had fellow students from all around the world, which ensured learning from one another and studying collaboratively. The participants of the MOOLCs found it interesting to have a stress-free language learning environment where every idea and opinion matters. Some claimed to develop a group identity and made the course a part of their daily routine. The forum, as they stated, was an online meeting room where they enjoy learning.

4.3.8. Self-evaluation

Table 4.18: The Comments about Self-evaluation

The course	*Self-evaluation*	*Sample quotations*
Exploring English: Language and Culture	Learners are encouraged to write reflection posts in threads	*"My ability to think is also improved."*
A Beginner's Guide to Writing in English for University Study	Learners are encouraged to write reflection posts in threads	*"For me, MOOC is a great opportunity to analyze my level of learning, identify weaknesses and seek mechanisms to improve my knowledge and, in this case, language proficiency."* *"It is easy to review and reflect, and it was motivating that I could see my progress."*
Understanding IELTS: Techniques for English Language Tests	Learners are encouraged to write reflection posts in threads	*"I feel confident to test my English because I follow these online courses. But I need more practice in writing and need to comment on my essays."* *"It gives me the chance to refine my teaching and learning."*

Since the learning takes place autonomously in the MOOLCs, there is no one observing the learning process of the individual learners, nor is there an evaluation of individual gains. Therefore, as the learners exercise, self-evaluation is the way to follow the progress in their language learning via the MOOLCs. The course design encourages the learners to write self-reflection posts regarding their informal learning. Writing down their own strengths and weaknesses, which was also highlighted in the ALAS above as a matter of self-esteem, in an open discussion forum mirrors the learners' positive attitudes towards self-evaluation.

4.3.9. Overall Satisfaction with the MOOLC participation

Table 4.19: The Comments about Overall Satisfaction with the MOOLC participation

The course	*Sample quotations*
Exploring English: Language and Culture	"Thank you to Futurelearn and British Council and the team by this entrepreneurship, which allows me to enjoy to learn through continuous improvement of my English, to know new cultures, and study different subjects of knowledge, without costing me money." "I'm glad to meet Futurelearn. This was a good way to practice my English. I have never done an online course. It was very difficult to me, but I got it." "It is a very interesting, exciting, and innovative course for me which updated my learning of English."
A Beginner's Guide to Writing in English for University Study	"I will pursue to learn English and to attend MOOCs." "I am actually interested in taking another course at Futurelearn." "It gets boring after a while if your English proficiency is too below or too much above the suggested level."
Understanding IELTS: Techniques for English Language Tests	"I'm happy because this is my first English Online Course, I enjoyed all exercises and I felt good when I saw the hearts to like my comments*." "It was a good experience, but I'd rather appreciate traditional learning in a classroom." *Hearts represent the likes by other participants.

Finally, it was observed that the overall satisfaction was quite high among participants. They mostly expressed their gratitude to providers, entrepreneurs, lecturers, mentors, and peers for making the online learning experience worthy. Several participants highlighted the fact that MOOCs were free of charge for the good of educating more people in the world. Quite many of them stated that they had a pleasant and enriching experience and considered to take another course and continue studying while many others stated that they would recommend the course to their friends. Though, a couple of participants mentioned that they actually enjoyed the interaction online, yet they would still prefer in-class learning.

In conclusion, the qualitative data tried to extend our knowledge and understanding of autonomous practices in the online teaching/learning environments. The analysis is also a rich source to capture the learning experiences in participating in a MOOLC to practice English.

4.5. Conclusion

This chapter presented the quantitative data analyzed with IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 23) and the qualitative data analyzed

with ATLAS.ti (Version 1.5.4). The findings of Learner Autonomy Questionnaire are categorized into 9 dimensions each of which presents the descriptive statistics. The findings of ATLAS.ti macro coding give further insights for a deeper understanding of the learners' participation in the autonomous practices in the MOOLCs. Chapter 5 will present the discussions, conclusions, implications, and suggestions for further research.

5. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The study investigates the autonomy level of the learners in the MOOLCs, learners' perception of their own roles and teachers' roles in learning, and lastly the autonomous learning practices they are involved in participating in the online English language learning courses.

In the present study, 4 research questions were answered concerning the investigated aspects mentioned earlier. Learner autonomy, autonomous language learning, and autonomous learning practices have often been studied in traditional learning environments. However, this study investigates these aspects within a digital learning platform and studies the concerning results and conclusions for the sake of the future of open online language learning. The discussions and conclusions are presented under the research questions associated with the findings.

5.1. Learner Autonomy in MOOLCs

The study investigates to what extent the MOOLC participants are autonomous in order to figure out how autonomy helps them exist in such learning environments. The 7 dimensions of the Autonomous Learning Activity Scale (ALAS) are interpreted, and the findings are summarized. The results show that the learners are highly aware of their capabilities in learning English. A great many of them have positive attitudes towards their own learning abilities. This positivity can contribute to their achievement to a great extent. Besides, learners may come into the learning with individual differences, different educational background, general competence, motivation etc.; however, they have to have their own objectives and motivate those objectives, which is deterministic concerning the successful language learning.

The results of this study are in parallel with this statement, that is, the learners know that they are responsible for making decisions and setting goals for learning, which is a clear indication of a high level of learner autonomy. Additionally, the learners' high determination of their objectives in learning relates to the goal-setting theory by Locke and Latham (2006) that is associated with self-efficacy, self-determination, and achievement. It must be highlighted that setting an explicit goal and pursuing that goal is particularly important in online learning

environments since there is much freedom and little control over learners' personal objectives. It is also worth mentioning that goal setting and self-management in learning with MOOLCs are within the scope of metacognitive strategies that learners are expected to develop for achievement in online learning as much as traditional learning. Therefore, it can be deduced from the findings that the learners with higher self-confidence in their language learning abilities and those who appreciate metacognitive strategies tend to endeavor to get better at language.

Another result that the study showed is related to self-efforts. The learners showed an ambitious level of engagement in out-of-school practices in English. Registering these MOOLCs already indicates that the learners try to improve English by involving in informal learning settings. Bearing the results in mind, self-study helps the learners practice or complement their knowledge. For example, the learners claim to be willing to engage in activities that enable them to speak English in and outside of the course with teachers and peers (authentic communication), which relates to social strategies. They also employ some other self-study techniques such as reviewing course materials, making notes, and summarizing. These actually refer to metacognitive strategies the learners implement in online learning. Besides, the use of technology for educational purposes is established to contribute to the use of metacognitive and social strategies; for example, the study by Koban-Koç and Koç (2016) identifies several metacognitive and social strategies the learners used more often to practice English in computer-based classrooms. Similarly, this study supports the idea that developing learning strategies are necessary for learners to maintain their goals in learning English in digital learning ecologies.

The dimension regarding broader autonomous activities includes voice-recording, speaking to other people, benefiting from audio-visual materials, mostly authentic ones such as BBC, movies, newspapers etc., and attending seminars, conferences, workshops etc. The results express that there is a moderate engagement in further activities by the MOOLC learners. The activities included in the research instrument can appeal the learners to some extent, and thus the mean score of 3.55. However, one should bear in mind the individual differences

and a vast number of activities not included in this study when language learning strategies are concerned.

Self-esteem is one of the several concepts autonomy relates to. Coopersmith's (1967, pp. 4-5) definition of self-esteem, which is "…the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself…," is perfectly in accord with the single item in the ALAS. Reflecting on one's 'strengths and weaknesses' addressed in this study is only one of the many implications of self-esteem. In the study, the mean score of 3.53 indicated that the learners of the MOOLCs feel strongly about self-reflection. This psychological phenomenon promotes reflective thinking and allows improving the skills of autonomy. Moreover, the opposite is also meaningful, that is, autonomy can contribute to the self-esteem of the learners.

The scale includes an item concerning the use of reference materials. As to the item, the results signify a moderate level of autonomy among the learners. The learners with a higher level of autonomy search after extra materials before and after the course. Depending solely on the prescribed learning materials can be limiting for an autonomous learner. There is an increasing number of affordances not only via computers but also mobile phones that assist the MOOLC participants in pursuing language learning goals out of school. In this respect, the MOOLC participants could be expected to be even more autonomous and resourceful than they already are.

Self-rewarding is often associated with both learner autonomy and motivation. The item in the ALAS concerning self-reward evaluates whether the learners value rewarding themselves when they progress on the way to achieve their goals. The results show a lower frequency compared to other dimensions. The learners seem to underestimate the value of what Bruner (1961) called 'the autonomy of self-reward', which keep them carry on learning by discovering (p. 26).

Final dimension, the use of technology in learning, can be considered as the starting point of this study. What the results show is that the learners are already active users of technology in learning and digitally literate. Bearing in mind that they are the registrants of MOOLCs, it is not surprising that the learners show a high level of autonomy concerning technology use (the use of hypertexts, tables,

data, videos, audios etc.). While this study suggests that highly autonomous learners utilize technology in their language learning, from a different yet supporting perspective, Mutlu and Eröz-Tuga's (2013) study reveals that the use of technology enhances learner autonomy. Steel and Levy's (2013, p. 319) study replicates the conclusion that more independent and autonomous learners are more able to use technological affordances (social technologies in particular) at their disposal for the purpose of meeting their goals. It appears that there is a reciprocal contribution between learner autonomy and technology in attaining learning goals.

To conclude, the first research question (RQ 1: To what extent are EFL learners in an English MOOLC autonomous?) investigates the level of learner autonomy with the MOOLC participants based on their responses to the actions that require autonomy. Given the total mean score of 3.62 for the ALAS, the answer is that the learners in the MOOLCs are highly autonomous according to the value range presented in Table 4.1 in the previous chapter. It can become disputable to put a number on autonomy based on a scale since learners have different learning habits, interests, needs, motivation, and degrees of independence (Tumposky, 1982). However, it is always reasonable to intellectualize the observable indicators, which express, in this case, high level of learner autonomy among the MOOLC participants.

5.2. Learners' Perception of their Own Roles

The first part of the Evaluation-Sheet for Perception of the Roles (ESPR) analyzes the learners' perceptions of their own roles. A majority of the learners think that learners are responsible for building learning strategies to fulfill their objectives. Autonomous learners can identify the learning styles and develop effective learning strategies based on their abilities, individual differences, interest, motivation, and affordances. MOOLCs increase the affordances for language learning; therefore, the learners who develop digital literacies to cope with the online learning platforms are more advantageous to develop more motivating learning strategies due to the abundant possibilities, teaching/learning materials, methods, and means of access to knowledge in the MOOLCs.

Self-study is a key element to discuss when learner autonomy is in question. Referring to the learners' responses, I can conclude that the MOOLC participants exhibit very positive attitude towards the use of self-study materials. Web-based learning has much to offer in terms of self-study materials. In fact, there is a distractive amount of resources on the web without a user manual provided. However, by developing positive self-study attitudes, the learners can maintain a focus on learning and choose the appropriate self-study materials that contribute to the determined learning goals.

Among the concepts related to autonomy, self-evaluation takes a prominent place. The findings show that self-evaluation is highly favorable among the learners in the autonomous learning environments. These platforms give the learners a real chance to reflect on their own learning progress and performance. This topic has been either researched or at least mentioned in MOOLC studies lately. For example, a study by Beaven et al. (2014) designed a self-evaluation questionnaire for their MOOLC learners to evaluate the MOOLC experiences progressively. Just as their learners were happy with this new practice, the learners in this study also expressed pleasant experiences about participating in an interactive exchange where the learners are reinforced to think about the whole process of learning and where it is heading. Self-evaluation, in this regard, facilitates the evaluation of performance and accomplishments directly and general competences indirectly such as self-reflection, critical thinking, time management etc.

Taken from the findings, a critical point to argue is the perception of exam-orientation. Although the respondents show a high level of autonomy, they still think that learners should prioritize their studies according to the exam of the course being taught. The results do not coincide with the Joshi's (2011) study in which more than half of the students disagree with such an approach to language learning. Nevertheless, this perspective of the MOOLC participants in this study does not disagree with learner autonomy per se. All forms of assessment require some special attention; hence the learners putting more effort into learning the prescribed materials first is not an unexpected situation.

The autonomous learners tend to be good at goal-oriented learning. The MOOLCs demand this kind of behavior from learners if they want to complete the courses and achieve their initial goals. According to the results, the learners are in favor of

building a vision of what and how to learn before starting to learn English. It means they are ready for a self-directed learning with a clear vision of their learning, which brings Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) in mind. As the participation in the MOOLCs is voluntary, lacking a goal or vision may reduce the benefits of the courses and increase the dropouts.

Finally, it should be noted that autonomous or self-directed learning does not mean learning alone in any context. Teachers still have a highly interactive relationship with learners channeled technologically through social networks, forums, etc. (Castrillo, 2014). Therefore, the respondents mostly agree with the idea that the learner-teacher interaction is a maker and to be sustained for the sake of positive learning environment. It is both learners' and teachers' responsibility to create an autonomous learning where there is 'low threat, unconditional positive regard, honest and open feedback, respect for the ideas and opinions of others, approval of self-improvement as a goal, collaboration rather than competition' (Candy, 1991, p. 337).

5.3. Learners' Perception of Teachers' Roles

The second part of the Evaluation-Sheet for Perception of the Roles (ESPR) analyzes the learners' perceptions of teachers' roles. In this part, the study found out that half of the learners think that they can manage to learn independently of a teacher whereas the other half either disagrees or is undecided about how learning might be like without a teacher. At this point, the institutionalized teacher-centeredness can prevent the learner from picturing a learning setting where *the knower* is absent. Since the learners mostly have institutionalized learning experience, a certain degree of resistance towards autonomy may occur (Little, 1991). On the other hand, being autonomous learner never makes the teacher's role redundant. Nunan (1993) and Han (2014, p. 25) accord that teachers' role includes consultant, guides, facilitator, organizer, peer partner (cooperator), resource supplier, atmosphere creator, and active participant who works with learners collaboratively. Just as in the MOOLCs, lecturers and mentors are entitled to take all of these roles as long as a cMOOC model is employed for the sake of learner-centeredness.

An important discussion about how the autonomous learners in the study perceive teachers' role should be presented here since the items from 24 to 30 reveal the fact that the autonomous learners still attach the role of authority, provider, planner, assessor, and evaluator. This is neither surprising nor paradoxical. The learners may want to take charge of their own learning or take more responsibility for their own achievement; however, they may have difficulty in setting realistic goals, planning, monitoring their progress, and self-evaluation (Crabbe et al., 2013, p. 195). In such online learning contexts as cMOOCs, the learner empowerment that emphasizes handholding, scaffolding, and co-regulation suggested by Crabbe et al. (2013) or a similar approach, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) by Vygotsky (1978) should be researched. In brief, having the two sides of the topic heard, the learners clearly have the opinion of sharing responsibilities with teachers with certain actions as replicated in Yıldırım's (2008) study.

The learners' perception of error approach is also included in the study. It is pointed out that almost all the learners want their teacher to point out their errors. Teachers' presence in the learning process suggests a more supervised learning with an emphasis placed on pointing out and correcting errors. Nonetheless, errors should not be handled single-handedly, namely by teachers. The qualitative data for peer feedback also reinforces the idea that learning in online learning environments takes more than a single teacher correcting the assignments. In this regard, Bárcena and Martín-Monje's (2014, p. 3) argument that language learning is not limited to "the 'flawless' performance of a single teacher" is highly agreeable.

Exam-oriented learning has been discussed earlier in learners' perception of their own roles. In accord with that point of view, more than 70% of the learners hold teachers responsible for providing exam-oriented notes and materials. The MOOLC providers also offer exam-oriented readings, videos, and exercises, and the assessment is carried out through reflection, assignment submission, writing reviews, sharing thoughts, and quizzes. What has been taught and learned is tested, but the MOOLCs treat the testing in a more relaxed manner. Therefore, the learners' exam-oriented mindset may also exist without disturbing the autonomous learning.

In conclusion, such autonomous learning platforms as MOOLCs can stimulate a shift from traditional beliefs and hierarchy in education towards favoring learner autonomy. On the other hand, the learners' perspectives about teachers' roles can gradually evolve from authority to more knowledgeable participant via online courses.

5.4. Autonomous Learning Practices in MOOLCs

The interaction data gathered through the discussion forum posts of the participants in the MOOLCs attempts to answer the RQ 4 as to autonomous learning practices with the help of the learners' comment about certain aspects (independent learning, interaction, collaboration etc.). The results show the learners' positive attitudes towards participating in the English MOOLCs and their opinions about digital and interactive (social) learning.

The autonomous learners come to the learning with their own objectives and then blend and shape those objectives with the objectives of the course. Therefore, it is important whether both objectives are met. The objectives can be at the macro or micro level. Shrader et al. (2016), for example, is a rich analysis that includes the general objectives for learners to take MOOCs among which are sustaining life-long learning and a desire to extend their knowledge of the topic in the course. On the other hand, referring to the findings of this study, it is clearly seen that the learners stated more specific goals to accomplish such as writing essays coherently, developing exam techniques etc. Since the achievement is not properly defined in MOOLCs, it heavily depends on what the learners mean to accomplish. Accomplishment can be determined as seeing an adequate number of the lecture videos of a single week or taking the quizzes without participating in discussions (Shrader et al., 2016). It can still be counted as accomplishment or success for that learner no matter what her MOOLC profile is telling. In this study, the findings show that what the learners claimed to have accomplished overlaps with the initial objectives of the course. That is, the learners have awareness of what they are able and want to accomplish.

An important perspective established by the learners is that learning independently of a teacher-centric approach is fruitful. Some learners stated that it is liberating when *they* select what to learn, what materials and activities to engage, and when

and where to be involved. One learner mentioned that independent language learning is language proficiency-dependent, which is not a safe statement to make. It can be a lack of experience in autonomous learning, particularly in such new forms/means of language learning as MOOLCs. However, stating that higher proficiency level is necessary to be an independent/autonomous learner is an overgeneralization.

The courses provide unlimited access in terms of time for utilization and completion, yet this flexibility particularly forces the learners to revise their time management skills when they decide to invest time and effort into such courses to accomplish their goals. Lacking time, demanding assignments with deadlines, a vast amount of readings and forum posts etc. are always the issues in independent learning. Therefore, the learners must develop time management skills to be high achievers and completers in MOOLCs. Kay et al. (2013) confirm that time-management skills are among the competences for learners to succeed in MOOCs. The learners, who are autonomous, found this particular issue rewarding. Regarding time flexibility, the respondents particularly highlighted the usefulness of self-paced structure, the convenience of participation in free time, and their willingness to participate when time limitation did not intervene in self-paced learning.

Most autonomous learners search after extra materials, new means of learning, reference materials, and various self-study materials to practice language outside of their formal learning context. The MOOLCs are also known to bring in authentic, innovative, and autonomous learning activities and materials that are appropriate for self- and collaborative study. The participants of this study endorsed the authenticity and usefulness of the various study materials in the MOOLCs. Since learning in MOOLCs is learner-centered, the realization of the educational values of the self-study materials is important for learners to trust the quality of the course affordances. Additionally, the design of the course allows the learners to be a part of material development through which they convey a personal perspective on the materials (Downes, 2009). This can be linked to the creativity and own style in the ICT skill pyramid of Hampel and Stickler (2005). To be ready for this kind of involvement requires a certain degree of autonomy in using technology for

educational purposes. It can be a shift from passivity to creativity for learners. However, it is a challenging matter for passive participants, lurkers, or consumers.

Another aspect the learners reflected on is the learner-centered course structure. The three MOOLCs the present study is engaged are based on connectivist MOOC (cMOOC) pedagogy where the course highly depends on the interaction and communication of learners, lecturers, and (guest) mentors. Sokolik (2014) advocates that the effective language learning methodology is "best accomplished by adopting the ideologies of cMOOCs" (p. 16). Employing cMOOC pedagogy to language courses creates more self-directed learners and less passivity in language learning if utilized appropriately. The social and collaborative nature of the courses entertains the highly autonomous learners whereas some learners may experience difficulties in "breaking the mold of passivity" mostly because education in many cultures is teacher-centered (Godwin-Jones, 2011, p. 5). Revisiting the quotations by the MOOLC participants, the learners from content-based MOOLC where the resources cluster around a subject for each week expressed that they found the teaching techniques innovative, relaxing, entertaining, and creative. Also, the construct of learning by sharing allows the learners to receive the valuable feedback they seek either from the lecturer (or mentor) or peers.

The evaluation of learners' engagement with lecturers and mentors can be well explained from two perspectives. First of all, most learners were satisfied with the degree of teacher engagement and support although some explained their regret in regard to the great number of participants and not receiving constant personalized feedback from the lecturer or mentors. However, in such massive language courses, individual support or tutoring is simply not possible (Teixeira & Mota, 2014, p. 36). One of the MOOC lecturers in the study of Mackness et al. (2010) responded that stating "one-to-one conversation [between instructor and participant] is simply not possible in large online courses. The interactions must increasingly be learner-to-learner raising the need, again, for learner autonomy" (p. 271). The second perspective is actually discussed earlier where the learners' perception of teachers' roles is presented. It may cause frustration among the learners to depend less and less on a teacher as the knower. As the quantitative data in the study described, the autonomous learners still attach a more firmly

established role to the teacher involved, which is entirely understandable at this point of transition. However, they will need to revisit their perception of teachers' roles in online courses soon.

The most prominent feature of cMOOCs is the social dimension: interaction and collaboration in the language courses, which the learners praise the most. Godwin-Jones (2014) emphasizes the importance of making a hybrid of machine learning and social learning. Most suspicious minds are concerned with the absence of face-to-face interaction in digital learning and argue that language can only be learned via authentic communication with people. However, traditional classrooms can only offer communication with language learners who are present in the classroom. Online courses, on the other hand, can connect learners to the other language learners from all around the world otherwise far beyond their reach. Hence, the participants are required to have certain features to handle the possibilities wisely in online learning and learn from one another.

Another way of looking into the connectivist pedagogy in the MOOLCs is that it is a collective procedure where the learners are active knowledge makers and create collective meaning with others' inclusion. Based on this pedagogical model in which learner-centeredness, flexibility, interaction, and digital inclusion are praised, Teixeira & Mota (2014, p. 35) articulated their objective to "combine autonomous and self-directed learning with a strong social dimension and the interaction that make learning experiences richer and more rewarding." Apparently, the learners have found this pedagogy employed in the MOOLCs very positive, non-threatening, and nourishing too. However, one aspect that might need serious consideration is that the lack of moderation in discussion forums where free sharing and open communication take place can result in losing sight of the real purpose of the course (Mackness et al., 2010, p. 272).

Taking charge of one's own learning assigns the responsibility of self-evaluation. Due to the nature of independent learning in the MOOLCs, no authority examines the learning process or accomplishments of the individual learners. Therefore, self-evaluation is the way to observe the progress of learners' language learning. The course design encourages the learners to write self-reflection posts regarding their informal learning. Writing down their own strengths and weaknesses in an open discussion forum reveals that the learners have positive attitudes towards

self-evaluation. It promotes learners' thinking about their interest, goals, capabilities, limitations, efforts, and ultimate achievements. Nevertheless, learner training is essential before adopting any forms of self-evaluation in language learning. Otherwise, after long years of experience in institutionalized formal assessment, learners can feel shy or lost when implementing such form of evaluation into their learning.

To conclude, the MOOLCs gave the learners an enriching learning opportunity where collective intelligence is respected. It should be noted that the new learning ecologies might be difficult at the beginning in some educational cultures bearing in mind the constraints and limitations, but enhancing learner autonomy will inspire a more motivating, engaging, and reflective learning. As a last remark, the comments show that MOOLCs will be around for longer years, so will autonomous learners.

5.5. Implications for Practice

The study shows that learner autonomy is essential for the new model of learning as much as the classrooms. Today, the knowledge society of the postmodern world requires better competences from learners and teachers at the micro level and from educational institutions and governments at the macro level. Reinders (2010) proposes a framework that has reflection, motivation, and interaction at the heart of cycle to increase learners' responsibility. I recommend teachers and learners to put an effort on grasping the aspects of learner autonomy in the framework and implement it for the good of autonomous learning. Growing to be an independent/autonomous learner will enhance lifelong learning experiences and produces good language learners, and I believe a good learner makes a good citizen too.

When getting ready for an interactive online learning, both the teachers who want to adopt and integrate online learning into their classes in several forms (in the form of blended learning, flipped classrooms etc.) and the learners who favor independent learning outside of the formal institutions have to be trained about how *to be* in online learning environments. It is important to understand the new literacies. Not only should learners know how to handle the interactive, communicative, and collaborative philosophy behind the MOOLC pedagogy, as

well as affective strategies (certain feeling that may arise regarding the inclusion) in MOOLCs, but also they should develop globalized autonomous skills and digital literacies to practice independent learning. By this way, learners can take charge of their learning, analyze their own practices, and reflect on the progress.

With its obvious name, Massive Open Online Language Course (MOOLC) is designed for everyone who can afford to be online, and it is free of charge. The prestigious institutions, information and communication technology companies, and universities have already undergone this process of transforming the means of learning. The European Union funds the projects to start a MOOC or MOOLC. The Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the United States and Europe (e.g. the UK, Germany, Spain, France etc.) consider MOOCs as an opportunity to experiment new learning and teaching pedagogies. Although MOOC is still very much in its infancy in Turkey, Anadolu University (AKADEMA), Koç University (several courses in Coursera), Turkcell Akademi (affiliated with EdX), Ataturk University (AtademiX), MOOCTAB (a project based in France with 5 Turkish project partners from Turkey) funded by TÜBİTAK TEYDEB in Turkey and several others have taken important steps in lifelong learning in Turkey. As to language courses, many countries started MOOLCs to teach their official language aiming at reaching foreign language learners (Appendix 5). The biggest number belongs to English courses. Nevertheless, there is not a Turkish MOOLC in any platform for interested learners of Turkish as a foreign language. A detailed report should be summited to the related bodies regarding the demands of courses, expenses, quality analysis, platforms to affiliate with etc. for funding. Additionally, English Language Teaching departments in Turkey can also start up a pedagogical English MOOC to communicate their insightful perspectives and experiences regarding teaching English to speakers of other languages (see, for example, the English MOOLCs by The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology).

Given the state of online learning in Turkey, it is also relevant to discuss learner autonomy and readiness for independent learning in MOOLCs from an Asian perspective. There are varying arguments about whether Asian students are autonomous. As opposed to the common stereotypes that suggest Asian learners are not autonomous and ready to take charge of learning independently of a teacher, the studies re-examined the Asian learner and her culture (Nunan, 1994;

Chan et al., 2002; Benson et al., 2003, Yıldırım, 2008; Üstünoğlu, 2009; Ahmadi, 2012; Çakıcı, 2017).

Questioning the perception of non-autonomous Asian learner, it was found out that Asian learners' passivity is more situation-dependent than rooted in their cultural habits. Moreover, the studies expressed that the Asian learners, though in favor of teachers' strong inclusion and control in learning, are actually ready to take more responsibility. In the lights of the results of this study, bearing in minds the greater number of Asian learners, it may be time to re-examine the autonomy of Asian learners in terms of seeking independent language learning opportunities through MOOLCs. Furthermore, autonomy practices in, what Kachru (1992) calls, the expanding circle where English is essentially used in EFL contexts should be grasped for purposeful and meaningful language teaching and learning.

In conclusion, as far as I am concerned, teachers' and learners' role in learner autonomy should be redefined within online learning cultures. Above all, teachers, institutions, and learners should revisit their attitudes and beliefs in regard to the educational value of online learning ecologies. For this purpose, it is in the researchers' hand to communicate the state of MOOLCs worldwide and evaluate the local and cultural conditions before undergoing any adaptations or implementations.

5.6. Further Research Questions

This part presents the recommendations for further research.

1 The present research is conducted with a limited number of participants due to the lack of possibilities. Therefore, the generalizability of the data is quite limited. A bigger number of learners should be included to obtain bigger data to study the autonomous learner and the completion/drop-out rates with underlying reasons in MOOLCs.

2 A further research can be conducted about how achievement is defined and measured in MOOLCs and what kind of impact learner autonomy would have on achievement in autonomous learning environments.

3 A further research can be conducted about how social interaction and collaboration promotes learner autonomy in language learning in MOOLCs. It can give a detailed picture of how individuals treat a democratic and free

learning setting, cultural differences, collaborative work, and a vast number of peers and ideas.

4 A further research can be conducted to see what learning strategies the participants use in such autonomous learning platforms. It can help the MOOLC providers or teachers who blend the courses in their teaching examine learners' strategic abilities, needs, and interests.

5 A further research can be conducted to evaluate learners' readiness for autonomous language learning in MOOLCs in regard to digital literacies. Digital affordances may be counter-productive if learners are not knowledgeable enough about the usage of digital tools. Therefore, digital literacy can be investigated to grasp how digital literacy is adapted to learner-centered education and brings about autonomous learners and thus the need for learner training in e-skills or these new literacies.

5.7. Conclusion

This chapter answers the research questions of the present study through explicating the findings. The discussions and conclusions of the learners' level of autonomy in MOOLCs, the learners' perceptions of their own roles, the learners' perception of teachers' roles, the autonomous learning practices the learners are involved by participating in these MOOLCs are presented. Besides, the implications for practice and further research questions are provided.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. APPROVAL OF ETHICS COMMITTEE

T.C.
HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
Rektörlük

12 Aralık 2016

Sayı : 35853172/ 433 - 3740

EĞİTİM BİLİMLERİ ENSTİTÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜNE

İlgi: 29.11.2016 tarih ve 2750 sayılı yazınız.

Enstitünüz Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Bilim Dalı tezli yüksek lisans programı öğrencilerinden **Hülya MISIR**'ın **Yrd. Doç. Dr. Didem KOBAN KOÇ** danışmanlığında yürüttüğü **"Öğrenen Özerkliği ve Kitlesel Açık Çevrimiçi Dil Dersleri: Çevrimiçi Dil Öğrenmede Başarı ve Özerklik Analizi / Learner Autonomy and Moolcs: Analysis of Autonomy and Success in Online Language Learning"** başlıklı tez çalışması, Üniversitemiz Senatosu Etik Komisyonunun **02 Aralık 2016** tarihinde yapmış olduğu toplantıda incelenmiş olup, etik açıdan uygun bulunmuştur.

Bilgilerinizi ve gereğini rica ederim.

Prof. Dr. Rahime M. NOHUTCU
Rektör a.
Rektör Yardımcısı

Hacettepe Üniversitesi Rektörlük 06100 Sıhhiye-Ankara
Telefon: 0 (312) 305 3001 - 3002 • Faks: 0 (312) 311 9992
E-posta: yazimd@hacettepe.edu.tr • www.hacettepe.edu.tr

Ayrıntılı Bilgi için:
Yazı İşleri Müdürlüğü
0 (312) 305 1008

APPENDIX 2. THESIS ORIGINALITY REPORT

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES
THESIS/DISSERTATION ORIGINALITY REPORT

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES
TO THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Date: 07/06/2017

Thesis Title: The Analysis of Learner Autonomy and Autonomous Learning Practices in Massive Open Online Language Courses (MOOLCs)
The whole thesis that includes the *title page, introduction, main chapters, conclusions and bibliography section* is checked by using **Turnitin** plagiarism detection software take into the consideration requested filtering options. According to the originality report obtained data are as below.

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I declare that I have carefully read Hacettepe University Graduate School of Educational Sciences Guidelines for Obtaining and Using Thesis Originality Reports; that according to the maximum similarity index values specified in the Guidelines, my thesis does not include any form of plagiarism; that in any future detection of possible infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility; and that all the information I have provided is correct to the best of my knowledge.

I respectfully submit this for approval.

15. 06. 2017 Hülya Mısır
Date and Signature

Name Surname: Hülya Mısır
Student No: N13222101
Department: Foreign Language Education
Program: English Language Teaching
Status: X☐ Masters ☐ Ph.D. ☐ Integrated Ph.D.

ADVISOR APPROVAL

APPROVED

Assist. Prof. Dr. Didem KOBAN KOÇ

APPENDIX 3. LEARNER AUTONOMY QUESTIONNAIRE

Autonomous Learning Activity Scale: This scale is meant to know about your own independent learning activities and plans that you adopt for learning English language. Please circle the answers according to your true cases.

		Never	*Rarely*	*Sometimes*	*Often*	*Always*
1	I think I have the ability to learn English well.					
2	I make decisions and set goals of my learning.					
3	I make good use of my free time in studying English.					
4	I preview before the course (i.e. see summary, lessons etc.).					
5	In the course, I try to use every opportunity to take part in the activities where and when I can speak in English.					
6	I speak confidently in front of the people.					
7	I make notes and summaries of my lessons.					
8	I talk to the teachers and friends outside the course in English.					
9	I practice English outside the course also such as: record my own voice; speak to other people in English.					
10	I use audio-visual materials to develop my speech such as: listen to BBC, watch English movies, read English newspapers etc.					
11	I attend different seminars, training courses, conferences to improve my English.					
12	I note my strengths and weaknesses in learning English and improve them.					
13	Besides the contents prescribed in the course, I read extra materials in advance.					
14	When I make progress in learning, I reward myself such as: buy new things, celebrate parties etc.					
15	I use internet and computers to study and improve English.					

Evaluation-Sheet for Perception of the Roles: This section requires your true perceptions about the role of a teacher and that you think of yourself in learning English. Please circle the answer that you think is the best.

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Undecided 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

	1	2	3	4	5	
16. Students have to be responsible for finding their own ways of practicing English.						
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree
17. Students should use much self- study materials to learn English.						
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree
18. Students have to evaluate themselves to learn better.						
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree
19. Students should mostly study what has been taught under the course because studying English in the course is actually for exam purpose.						
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree
20. Students should build clear vision of their learning before learning English.						
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree
21. A lot of learning can be done without a teacher.						
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree
22. Teachers have to be responsible for making students understand English.						
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

23. Teachers should point out the students' errors.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

24. Teachers not only have to teach 'what' but should also teach 'how' of English.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

25. Teachers have to provide exam oriented notes and materials.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

26. The failure of the students is directly related to the teachers' course employment.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

27. Teachers need to use their authority in teaching/learning if needed.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

28. The student-teacher relationship is that of raw-material and maker.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

APPENDIX 4. LIST OF ENGLISH MOOLCs

	Course	Provider	Institution	Weeks
	1/5 Business English: Basics	Coursera	The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	6
	2/5 English for Effective Business Writing			6
	3/5 English for Effective Business Speaking			6
	4/5 Business English for Cross-cultural Communication			6
	5/5 Business Case Analysis			7
https://www.coursera.org/learn/business-english				
	Speak English Professionally: In Person, Online & On the Phone	Coursera	Georgia Institute of Technology	5
https://www.coursera.org/learn/speak-english-professionally				
	Adjectives and Adjective Clauses	Coursera	University of California, Irvine	4
https://www.coursera.org/learn/adjective-clauses				
	Tricky English Grammar	Coursera	University of California, Irvine	4
https://www.coursera.org/learn/tricky-english-grammar				
	Academic Listening and Note-Taking	Coursera	University of California, Irvine	4
https://www.coursera.org/learn/note-taking				
	Business English: Making Presentations	Coursera	University of Washington	4
https://www.coursera.org/learn/business-english-presentations				
	Inglés Empresarial: el márketing y ventas	Coursera	Arizona State University	6
https://www.coursera.org/learn/ingles-empresarial-marketing-ventas				
	Write Professional Emails in English	Coursera	Georgia Institute of Technology	5
https://www.coursera.org/learn/professional-emails-english				
	Exploring English: Language and Culture	Futurelearn	British Council	6
https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/explore-english-language-culture				
	EBA101x: English for Doing Business in Asia - Speaking	EdX	The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	7
https://www.edx.org/course/english-doing-business-asia-speaking-hkustx-eba101x-1				
	Perfect Tenses and Modals	Coursera	University of California, Irvine	4
https://www.coursera.org/learn/perfect-tenses-modals				
	TOEFL® Test Preparation: The Insider's Guide	EdX	Educational Testing Service (ETS)	6
https://www.edx.org/course/toeflr-test-preparation-insiders-guide-etsx-toeflx-1				
	English Composition	EdX	Arizona State University	8

https://www.edx.org/course/english-composition-asux-eng101x-2				
	Exploring English: Shakespeare	Futurelearn	British Council	6
https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/explore-english-shakespeare				
	Understanding IELTS: Techniques for English Language Tests	Futurelearn	British Council	6
https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/understanding-ielts				
	Exploring English: Magna Carta	Futurelearn	British Council	3
https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/explore-english-magna-carta				
	English for Nurses: A Language Learning Community	Canvas.net	University of Oregon	4
https://www.canvas.net/browse/uoregon/courses/english-for-nurses				
	English for Journalism	Coursera	University of Pennsylvania	5
https://www.coursera.org/learn/journalism				
	Business English: Planning & Negotiating	Coursera	University of Washington	4
https://www.coursera.org/learn/business-english-negotiating				
	Academic and Business Writing	EdX	University of California, Berkeley	4
https://www.edx.org/course/how-write-essay-uc-berkeleyx-colwri2-1x-0				
	L'anglais pour tous - Spice up your english	FUN	Université libre de Bruxelles	10
https://www.fun-mooc.fr/courses/ulb/44001S03/session03/about				
	Conversational English Skills	EdX	Tsinghua University	10
https://www.edx.org/course/conversational-english-skills-tsinghuax-30640014x-1				
	English Grammar and Essay Writing	EdX	University of California, Berkeley	5
https://www.edx.org/course/how-write-essay-uc-berkeleyx-colwri2-1x-0				
	Starting to write English with no mistakes: level B1	UNED COMA	UNED (SPANISH)	8
https://iedra.uned.es/courses/UNED/112/2015T4/about				
	Empieza con el inglés: aprende las mil palabras más usadas y sus posibilidades comunicativas	UNED COMA	UNED (SPANISH)	8
https://iedra.uned.es/courses/UNED/111/2015T4/about				
	Pre-College English	Saylor.org	Saylor.org	Self-paced
https://learn.saylor.org/course/engl000				
	English Composition I	Saylor.org	Saylor.org	Self-paced
https://learn.saylor.org/course/engl001				
	English Composition II	Saylor.org	Saylor.org	Self-paced
https://learn.saylor.org/course/view.php?id=44				
	Essentials for English Speeches and Presentations 英语演讲与演示	Coursera	Peking University	8
https://www.coursera.org/learn/yingyuyanjiang#syllabus				

	English for Business and Entrepreneurship	Coursera	University of Pennsylvania	5
https://www.coursera.org/learn/business				
	English Grammar and Style	EdX	The University of Queensland	8
https://www.edx.org/course/english-grammar-style-uqx-write101x-3				
	English Composition I	Coursera	Duke University	10
https://www.coursera.org/learn/english-composition				
	English Whit #1 Using Sentence Connectors	Openlearning	UNSW Australia (The University of New South Wales)	Self paced
https://www.openlearning.com/courses/FoundationAcademienglish				
	1/5 Grammar and Punctuation	Coursera	University of California, Irvine	4
	2/5 Getting Started with Essay Writing			4
	3/5 Advanced Writing			4
	4/5 Introduction to Research for Essay Writing			4
	5/5 Capstone: Writing a Research Paper			6
https://www.coursera.org/learn/grammar-punctuation				
	Conjunctions, Connectives, and Adverb Clauses	Coursera	University of California, Irvine	4
https://www.coursera.org/learn/conjunctions-connectives-adverb-clauses				
	Writing in English at University	Coursera	Lund University	4
https://www.coursera.org/learn/writing-english-university				
	How to write an essay	EdX	UC BerkeleyX	5
https://www.edx.org/course/how-write-essay-uc-berkeleyx-colwri2-1x-0				
	Business English: Basics	Coursera	The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	6
https://www.coursera.org/learn/business-english				
	English for Journalists: Key Concepts	EdX	University of California, Berkeley	5
https://stage.edx.org/course/english-journalists-key-concepts-uc-berkeleyx-colwri15-1x				
	Exploring English: Shakespeare	FutureLearn	British Council	6
https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/explore-english-shakespeare				
	American English Speech	Open Learning Initiative	Open Learning Initiative	Self paced
http://oli.stanford.edu/american-english-speech/				
	Grammar	Khan Academy	Khan Academy	Self paced
https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/grammar				
	Introduction to Conversational English	Alison	Alison	Self paced
https://alison.com/courses/Introduction-to-Conversational-English				

APPENDIX 5. LIST OF OTHER MOOLCs

Provider/ Platform	***The name of the language course***
Coursera	Chino básico: Los viajes de negocios Chinese for Beginners More Chinese for Beginners First Step Korean Learn to Speak Korean 1 Chino básico: La etiqueta social en los negocios Chino básico: Cómo dar una primera 110ositive110n 110ositive
FUN	Cours de français langue étrangère Paroles de FLE (Français Langue Etrangère)
edX	On-Ramp to AP French Language and Culture Basic Mandarin Chinese – Level 1 Basic Mandarin Chinese – Level 2 Tsinghua Chinese: Start Talking with 1.3 Billion People AP® Spanish Language and Culture Italian Language and Culture: Beginner Italian Language and Culture: Intermediate Italian Language and Culture: Advanced Learn Spanish: Basic Spanish for English Speakers
Futurelearn	Introduction to Frisian Spanish for Beginners 1: Meeting and Greeting Spanish for Beginners 2: People and Places Spanish for beginners 3: my life Spanish for beginners 4: leisure time Spanish for beginners 5: getting things done Spanish for beginners 6: out and about Introduction to Dutch Introduction to Italian Italian for Beginners 1: Meeting, Greeting and Eating Italian for beginners 2: My friends and family Italian for beginners 3: My daily life Italian for beginners 4: Likes and dislikes Italian for beginners 5: Time to travel Italian for beginners 6: Out and about Introduction to Catalan Sign Language: Speaking with Your Hands and Hearing with Your Eyes
Open2Study	Chinese Language and Culture
iversity	Spanish for Beginners
Miríada X	Teaching Spanish lexicography: Use dictionaries and applications (Lexicografía didáctica española: Uso y aplicaciones de los diccionarios) Curso de português para estrangeiros Língua Portuguesa Español Salamanca A2 Instrucción Gramatical y Virtual ELE (Spanish)
Canvas.net	Cada Dia Spanish – Daily Conversations
The Open Learning Initiative	Arabic for Global Exchange Elementary French I Elementary French II Elementary Spanish I Elementary Chinese I

APPENDIX 6. THE LIST OF THE PARTICIPANTS' HOME COUNTRY

Afghanistan	Albania	Australia	Azerbaijan	Bangladesh	Brazil	Cambodia
3	1	1	1	2	6	1
Colombia	Ecuador	Egypt	England	Iran	Iraq	Israel
3	2	3	1	1	1	1
Italy	Japan	Jordan	Macedonia	Malaysia	Mexico	Norway
2	4	1	1	1	2	1
Pakistan	Palestine	Philippines	Portugal	Russia	Syria	Turkey
1	1	1	1	1	1	4
Ukraine	Vietnam	Yemen	Nigeria			
5	1	1	1			