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## EFL Learners' Attitudes Toward the Usability of LMOOCs: A Qualitative Content Analysis

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### Abstract

This qualitative study aimed to explore the usability of Language Massive Open Online Courses (LMOOCs) based on Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' attitudes. We used a qualitative questionnaire to collect data from 12 EFL learners from five cities in Iran. The study's findings address a broad range of positive and negative aspects of LMOOCs. According to content analysis, learners have agreement on the positive aspects of LMOOC, including the learning environment, usability in language learning, inclusive educational technology, and parental presence. However, the learners' attitudes were inconsistent regarding affective factors and feedback through LMOOCs. Finally, they believed that contextual factors are the barriers to using LMOOCs. We believe EFL authorities in Iran and other contexts should run more teacher education and professional development courses to enable teachers to learn how to teach through LMOOCs in practice.

### Keywords

Language Massive Open Online Courses (LMOOCs), qualitative content analysis, usability, Iranian EFL learners, attitude

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# **EFL Learners' Attitudes Toward the Usability of LMOOCs: A Qualitative Content Analysis**

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This qualitative study aimed to explore the usability of Language Massive Open Online Courses (LMOOCs) based on Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' attitudes. We used a qualitative questionnaire to collect data from 12 EFL learners from five cities in Iran. The study's findings address a broad range of positive and negative aspects of LMOOCs. According to content analysis, learners have agreement on the positive aspects of LMOOC, including the learning environment, usability in language learning, inclusive educational technology, and parental presence. However, the learners' attitudes were inconsistent regarding affective factors and feedback through LMOOCs. Finally, they believed that contextual factors are the barriers to using LMOOCs. We believe EFL authorities in Iran and other contexts should run more teacher education and professional development courses to enable teachers to learn how to teach through LMOOCs in practice.

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## **Introduction**

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are open and free courses delivered through online tools that have revolutionized digital education by efficiently extending the online learning landscape through open education, content, enrollment, and curriculum for the learners (Waks, 2016) without restriction concerning time or place (Geng et al., 2020). Nowadays, MOOCs have received a wide currency among the learners witnessing participants' attractions (de Freitas et al., 2015).

Despite the popularity of this new generation of online education, MOOCs' course completion rates are meager compared to traditional training methods (Alraimi et al., 2015). Recent studies acknowledged that MOOC completion's average rate is less than ten percent (Alraimi et al., 2015; de Freitas et al., 2015; Lee & Chung, 2019). In this regard, recent inquiries have tended to shed light on the relationship between participants' course completion rates and their psychological factors in MOOCs (e.g., Reparaz et al., 2020; Romero-Frías et al., 2020).

For example, Romero-Frías et al. (2020) investigated the relationship between participants' motivation and course completion rates in MOOCs. They found that extrinsic and intrinsic motivations have played a prominent role in completing MOOCs' online courses. Likewise, Reparaz et al. (2020) explored the relationship between participants' self-regulation and their completion rate in MOOC. They reported that setting goals, task-interest, and academic fields were among the critical factors in leading learners to continue their courses in MOOC. Similarly, other studies shed light on the relationship between participants

psychological factors and their completion rates in MOOC, such as self-regulation (Rabin et al., 2020; Song et al., 2016; Terras & Ramsay, 2015), motivation (Deshpande & Chukhlomin, 2017; Luik et al., 2017; Sun et al., 2018; Zhou, 2016), and attitudes (Kovanović et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2020).

With more focus on pedagogy, various studies investigated participants' engagements in MOOCs (Deng et al., 2020; Gupta & Maurya, 2020; Hew, 2014; Lemay & Doleck, 2020; Rayyan et al., 2016; Walji et al., 2016). For instance, Walji et al. (2016) argued that teacher presentation, social interaction, and peer learning were the main pedagogical factors in leading learners to complete MOOC courses. In another study, Lemay and Doleck (2020) highlighted that video searching and repeated viewing of assignments are positive factors in augmenting MOOC course completion rates among students. Moreover, Gupta and Maurya (2020) counted technological features, learners' characteristics, and open features of MOOCs as the main factors in engaging students' MOOCs.

MOOCs have been rapidly shifting in educational mode by virtue of their open features, resulting in eliminating some learners' limitations by facilitating the continuation of their education anywhere and anytime. However, this new technology-based context has raised scholars concerns about the applicability and accountability of MOOCs for teaching and learning skill-based subjects such as English language (Chacón-Beltrán, 2017; Godwin-Jones, 2019; Martín-Monje & Bárcena, 2015). Language MOOCs (LMOOCs) are specifically designed for language learning purposes (Rahimi, 2022). Also, due to language learners' restrictions in interacting with native speakers (Sokolik, 2014) or inadequate space for manipulating social language learning (Schulze & Scholz, 2017), language learning through LMOOCs might influence learners' attitudes toward language learning.

Widely known and defined as an individuals' psychological evaluation of an object, instrument, and event (Gagné et al., 2005; Kamradt & Kamradt, 2013), the attitude has three main interwoven components of cognition, affection, and behavior (Kamradt & Kamradt, 2013). Concerning the integration of technological tools in language education, several scholars have highlighted the critical role of language learners' attitudes in accepting and successfully implementing computer-assisted language learning (CALL; e.g., Tafazoli et al., 2018, 2020).

However, as a recent CALL tool, few studies have investigated the role of language learners' attitudes in utilizing MOOCs (e.g., Chacón-Beltrán, 2017; Safdar et al., 2020; Uchidiuno et al., 2017). For example, in a qualitative study, Safdar et al. (2020) explored English for Specific Purposes (ESP) students' perspectives toward MOOCs. Thereby, ten participants were divided into two groups in which five of them enrolled in a MOOC facilitated through face-to-face communication, and the other group just had virtual education in the MOOC. The first group was guided and assigned by their teacher, while the non-facilitated one had virtual guidance for the content course. The results showed that the participants who enrolled in the MOOC with a facilitator's presence have a high level of peer competition. Indeed, the MOOC were more effective when they could be utilized by teachers or any facilitator, leading participants to have a high level of retention by creating a sense of belongingness, accountability, responsibility, and networking.

In another study, Uchidiuno et al. (2017) investigated English language learners' motivation in MOOCs. To do so, they conducted semi-structured interviews with 12 learners signed up in "Conversational English Skills" developed by edX. The course aimed creating language learners' English conversation, expressions, and listening strategies. The course also had eight units and a final exam, entailing listening comprehension, vocabulary uses, and grammatical ranges. The result of the study illustrated that participants had a high level of motivation by mastering the course content, obtaining certificates, soaring language learning skills, and finding their language partner with a similar interest.

Chacón-Beltrán (2017), in a mixed-method study, explored the role of MOOCs in teaching English to beginner learners who had never learned English before. To do so, 26,266 learners signed up in two online platforms known as MiriadaX and UNED Abierta, in which 840 language learners completed the course successfully. The course designer adapted the course content for participants to have self-directed language learning and take some advantage of background linguistic knowledge and utilize their mother tongue. The qualitative and quantitative analysis results presented that MOOCs are suitable for any language learners regarding their age, language proficiency, and geographical area. The learners mainly had positive attitudes toward MOOC, particularly with the social network features; however, they had difficulty with the teachers' feedback.

Although recent studies investigated language learners' attitudes and motivation in MOOCs, scholars recently encouraged future studies to apply in-depth analysis to explore language learners' experience and attitudes toward MOOCs (Geng et al., 2020; Hone & El Said, 2016; Tseng et al., 2016; Veletsianos et al., 2015). Moreover, due to the vast integration of technology in language education, and scarcity of studies regarding the usability of LMOOCs in the Iranian language education context (Fathali & Emadi, 2021), and the necessity of having a deep understanding of this newly emerged tool in CALL, we tried to find out about Iranian English language learners' attitudes toward the usability LMOOCs. Thus, we formulated the following research question based on the presented gap in the literature and study purpose:

RQ: What are the Iranian English language learners' attitudes toward the usability of LMOOCs?

### **Researchers' Positioning**

This study is a part of a larger study that shaped my (Amir Reza's) M.A. thesis in English Language Teaching at Shahid Rajaei Teacher Training University, Tehran, Iran. Moreover, having worked as an English language teacher in various contexts (i.e., university, high school, and language institutes) in Iran, I am really interested in applying emerging technologies to foster my English language learners. However, I believe that attitude plays a significant role in adopting new technology for educational purposes. Thus, I put my research emphasis on students' attitudes. My research interests are educational technology, educational psychology, Open Educational Resources (OERs), and Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL).

I (Dara) have been working with Amir Reza as his research mentor for around four years. I am a Research Officer on the Virtual Reality (VR) School Study, also working on developing and implementing the CALL literacy framework for language teachers at the School of Education, University of Newcastle, Australia. I received my Ph.D. in Languages and Cultures from the University of Cordoba, Spain, in 2019. My research interests are Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), CALL teacher education, and professional development. After publishing my first qualitative research in *The Qualitative Report (TQR)* in 2020, inspired by the editors' comments and perceptions, I have conducted and published many qualitative studies. Recently, one of them, titled *Key Enablers and Barriers to Integrating Technology into Iranian Language Teaching Profession* was awarded the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) 2021 Research Priorities Initiative grant.

## Methodology

### Research Design

In this study, we used a qualitative research design (Creswell, 2014) to explore Iranian EFL learners' attitudes toward the usability of LMOOCs. The participants of our study were 12 EFL learners from different cities in Iran. We believe that students' attitudes are complex and complicated and not quantifiable. Therefore, a qualitative design is the best way to reach a deep and detailed understanding (Creswell, 2014). To collect data, we developed a qualitative questionnaire through the Delphi method (Linstone & Turoff, 2002). To analyze the collected data, we employed a qualitative content analysis due to the nature of our study and its flexibility (Cavanagh, 1997). According to Krippendorff, content analysis is "an unobtrusive technique that allows researchers to analyze relatively unstructured data in view of the meanings, symbolic qualities and expressive contents they have and of the communicative roles they play in the lives of the data's sources" (as cited in Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 179).

### Participants

The study was conducted during the academic year of 2019-2020. Amir Reza sent the message to his classmates and co-workers who accommodated in five cities of Iran (i.e., Ardabil, Faruj, Mashhad, Quchan, and Sabzevar) and asked them to introduce their active language learners for participation in a free online language course. About 31 language learners expressed their interest in voluntarily participating in this online course. Interested participants had various levels of English language proficiency and familiarity with online courses. Thus, we decided to use purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002) to underline the similarity and judgment-based representativity of the cases (Marshall, 1996; Palinkas et al., 2013). The selection criteria incorporated: (1) learners should have a high level of interest in online English language learning, (2) they should be at the intermediate level, (3) the participants should be familiar with using online courses. Therefore, we only recruited 12 participants based on the specified criteria. After completing the consent forms, the participants were grouped into two groups using two LMOOCs. For both groups, Amir Reza was the English language teacher. The participants were seven female and five male students. Six participants were categorized between 18-19, four ranged between 20 and 21, and finally, two were aged between 22-23.

**Table 1**

*Language Learners' Demographic Information*

No.	Pseudonym	Gender	City	Age
1	Eli	Female	Ardabil	18-19
2	Sara	Female	Quchan	20-21
3	Arash	Male	Quchan	18-19
4	Vania	Female	Ardabil	18-19
5	Pari	Female	Sabzevar	22-23
6	Omid	Male	Sabzevar	20-21
7	Amin	Male	Mashhad	18-19
8	Aref	Male	Mashhad	22-23
9	Ava	Female	Faruj	18-19
10	Farzad	Male	Faruj	20-21
11	Sam	Male	Quchan	20-21
12	Kia	Male	Ardabil	18-19

## **Data Collection**

First, we developed a qualitative questionnaire through Delphi methodology, which is a practical approach for developing a research instrument (Sekayi & Kennedy, 2017), particularly in educational technology (Nworie, 2011). The focus of Delphi is to seek the experts' ideas regarding a problem or issue "yield results that will aid in decision-making by faculty, researchers, and administrators at various levels in the field" (Nworie, 2011, p. 4). We designed an initial qualitative questionnaire and sent it to a panel of twenty experts in different fields of educational technology, educational psychology, computer science, computer-assisted language learning, and English language teaching. The Delphi method was conducted in three phases of (1) gathering opinions, (2) highlighting the critical issues, and (3) organizing opinions (Keeney et al., 2001). To follow the guidelines, after collecting the panel's viewpoints about the instrument content and items in three rounds, we modified the included items based on the experts' opinions to reach a consensus. Finally, the camera-ready version of the questionnaire was designed and sent to the experts to reach the final consensus. We included three demographic questions and ten open-ended questions in the final draft of the instrument.

Before collecting data from students, we considered several ethical considerations regarding students' privacy and rights. First, we specified a pseudonym to each student for identity anonymity. Also, before submitting the qualitative survey via email, we asked them to complete the Informed Consent form. Only those who have completed the forms could proceed with the questionnaire.

## **Data Analysis**

For data analysis, we conducted a content analysis which is described as the objective and systematic analysis (Neuendorf, 2017) of human behavior indirectly (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). Also, through content analysis, the analysis has no influence on the participants' behavior and experiences (Babbie, 2004; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). In other words, the qualitative content analysis gave us the opportunity to have a better understanding of participants' experiences and attitudes. Our qualitative data analysis consists of four main stages: (1) decontextualization, (2) recontextualization, (3) categorization, and (4) compilation (Bengtsson, 2016).

In the first stage of decontextualization, Amir Reza printed all the responses, read, and re-read the participants' responses to get familiar with the answers and obtain the whole sense. Following a deductive coding design, to secure the reliability and minimize a cognitive change during the analysis (Catanzaro, 1988; Downe-Wamboldt, 1992; Morse & Richards, 2002) we decided to use the rule model (Tafazoli et al., 2020). According to the rule model (see Thamrin & Pamungkas, 2017), the collected data can be coded based on internal and external factors. The positive answers coping with the internal factors were coded as strengths, while the negative ones were coded weaknesses. On the contrary, external factors were categorized into opportunities and threats if recognized as positive or negative (Figure 1). The internal factors allude to the LMOOC itself, while the external factors deal with other issues (e.g., technical issues). Amir Reza used the color-coding system (red for weaknesses, yellow for threats, green for strengths, and blue for opportunities).

**Figure 1***The Rule Model (Thamrin & Pamungkas, 2017)*

Factor	Internal External	Score	
		Positive Strength Opportunity	Negative Weakness Threat

In the recontextualization stage, to recheck the codes (Burnard, 1991) and for the purpose of inter-coder reliability and validity (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002), Dara re-read the original data alongside the final codes. Apart from the colored lines, Dara's attention was to unmarked texts to determine if Amir Reza missed any meaning units which might not be coded (Burnard, 1991, 1995). Finally, we compared our coding to determine the similarities and differences (Creswell & Miller, 2000) and reached the consensus

In the third stage of categorization, in the first step, we condensed the meaning units to reduce the number of words without losing the content (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). After condensation, we categorized the units into four categories of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The last stage of compilation is presented in the next sections as "Findings."

### Findings

In this section, we report the findings of analyzing Iranian EFL learners' attitudes toward the usability of LMOOCs. The findings approved that having a positive learning environment and being an inclusive educational technology are the strengths of the LMOOCs. Moreover, usability in learning language skills is another strength of the LMOOCs except for speaking skill which is considered as a weakness. Another weakness of LMOOCs is giving feedback. On the other hand, the presence of parents is regarded as an opportunity for language learners. One of the confusing features of the LMOOCs is the role of affective factors, which is assumed as an opportunity for some learners in counter to a threat for other learners. Finally, contextual factors are threats from the learners' perspectives.

#### Positive Learning Environment

The findings show that LMOOCs are usable, especially in terms of their learning environment. The learners addressed many features of LMOOCs' learning environment, such as flexibility, user-friendliness, and authenticity. The findings showed that LMOOCs are flexible which could be used everywhere in the synchronous and asynchronous levels of communication. One of the learners addressed that "learning a language online is suitable for me since I do not have the time to take private classes and attend classes with fixed times" (Ava). Also, Vania claimed that "I can interact with our teachers, solve my language problems, and learn English outside the classroom." In addition, Farzad said that "time and space don't matter too much here. Students don't need to be in the same physical place to take the same instruction."

Furthermore, language learners believe that LMOOCs provide a joyful, user-friendly, easy-to-use, and edutainment environment for language learning. Aref said that "the platform was really amazing and user friendly that could provide a different kind of activities and sources." Also, Kia addressed that "personally, I like such online course since it is like Instagram and other social networking tools." "Playing games is the biggest point of this course" (Amin).



Another benefit of LMOOCs' learning environment is openness. Many learners addressed this feature in which they can join other classes and interact with other teachers and students. For example, Sam acknowledged that, "I can share my problems with other students and our teacher to learn the language and pass my English course."

### **Usability in Language Learning**

The main aim of the current study is to improve learners' proficiency in English language via MOOCs. The findings show that MOOCs can enhance students' language learning. Regarding this strength, Sara claimed that "the platform was fantastic and helped me develop my language skills simultaneously." Also, Farzad highlighted that "talking and chatting with others help me develop my language proficiency." Kia expressed that "videos in which people talk to each other helped me develop my [oral] skills as much as possible."

In contrast, one of the students complained that MOOCs are not suitable for improving their oral skills. Omid highlighted that "everyone attending language courses expects to improve their speaking proficiency, but in such course [refers to MOOCs], we just have interaction through writing or chatting."

### **Inclusive Educational Technology**

Also, MOOCs provide context for learners to learn through different channels, which is compatible with blended and flipped learning and consistent with the traditional classroom. Pari declared, "uploading podcasts, videos, and different learning activities, and assignments were fantastic because the content of the course is compatible with our institutes' classmates, but we learn and interact in another context." In addition, MOOCs provide accessibility for learners to download what their teacher has uploaded. Kia stated, "you can download the content course such as PDF books, videos, audios, seen and heard again and again if you do not happen to understand the topic first time around."

### **Parental Presence**

One of the existing benefits of MOOCs is the presence of students' parents, along with their children, during online language learning. In other words, MOOCs provide an opportunity for students to learn in the presence of their parents. For example, Sara pointed out: "My parents encouraged me to interact with my teacher and classmates." Also, Vania said that "this is very interesting that our parents also have their profile." Arash noted that "the presents of my family were very interesting for me because they can interact with my teacher and solve my problems."

### **Feedback**

Besides, students underlined that teachers' feedback in MOOCs is not useful in comparison with traditional classes. For example, Sam mentioned, "one of the weak aspects of this online course is feedback; the teacher could not correct our mistakes in the online context, particularly our speaking skill." Also, Vania pointed out that "you don't know whether your pronunciation is correct or not."

### **Affective Filters**

The findings show a contradiction between students' attitudes toward the atmosphere of the MOOCs. From a positive perspective, MOOCs have many psychological benefits. In

this vein, Eli addressed: “it’s appropriate for shy and hesitant students.” Also, Sara asserted that “I don’t speak in [face-to-face] class, but here [refers to MOOCs] I have more interaction with my classmates.” This finding shows that how learners can interact and express themselves more confidently, and lack of face-to-face interaction is counted as a positive factor. On the other hand, a group of learners highlighted that lack of face-to-face interaction is one of the drawbacks of MOOCs in which real contact and a competitive atmosphere are missed. Accordingly, students addressed that “the atmosphere of the face-to-face class is more competitive in comparison with the online one” (Aref). Moreover, Kia reflected, “in the traditional classroom, we learn from each other, and atmosphere motivates us to study hard.” Furthermore, Arash believed: “traditional classrooms are more enjoyable due to the direct contact.” Also, one of the students complained about the lack of body language in MOOCs.

### **Prohibitive Contextual Factors**

Finally, students and their parents have some contextual issues in using MOOCs. For example, some platforms are not accessible in Iran. Sam reported: “my parents and I had some problems in finding Edmodo.” Also, one of the students used VPN (Virtual Private Network) to work with Edmodo. The internet connection and the bandwidth in Iran cause problems for language learners. Kia stated, “the speed of the internet did not allow me to use this online learning [refers to MOOCs] well.” Also, Sam declared, “I always struggle with the speed of the internet for downloading the uploaded content.”

### **Discussion**

The findings of the study revealed the usability of LMOOCs for language learning in Iranian EFL context. LMOOCs provide positive learning environments based on their flexible, open, joyful, user-friendly, and ease-of-use nature. In other words, language learners can match their time with the available content, schedule, and interest (Li, 2017; Mellati & Khademi, 2018; Navío-Marco & Solórzano-García, 2019). The positive factors of MOOCs’ environments are consistent with the findings of flexibility in the time and place of the learning (de Freitas et al., 2015; Houlden & Veletsianos, 2019; Rieber, 2016; Xiao et al., 2020), ease of use (Chang et al., 2015), and user-friendly environment (Veletsianos et al., 2015), and enjoyable (Zhang, 2016). These features, along with the edutainment nature of MOOCs, have a positive impact on learners’ performance and emotions (Pasawano, 2015). Another highlighted positive aspect of LMOOC’s environment is the authentic context. Authentic material and environment are significant factors in practical learning as well as meaningful learnings that engage real-world communication (Alioon & Delialioğlu, 2017), which has been highlighted as one of the significant factors in enhancing learner’s engagement in MOOC (Hew, 2014).

One of the confusions among learners’ perceptions is about the usability of LMOOCs for learning to speak English. Consistent with other studies, MOOCs are fruitful in developing learners’ language skills (Chew et al., 2016; Safdar et al., 2020), particularly in receptive skills (e.g., reading and listening; Rayyan et al., 2016; Sokolik, 2014; Vorobyeva, 2018). However, EFL learners had contradictory opinions about the usability of LMOOCs in covering speaking skill, which differs from Hashemifardnia et al.’s (2021) findings of Iranian EFL learners’ positive attitudes toward using MOOCs for speaking skill.

Educational technologists’ and designers’ aim is to create and develop more inclusive educational tools that include all the students with various disabilities, learning styles, and preferences. Thus, delivering content in multiple forms and modalities is an asset for an instructional tool (Correa, 2015; Richter & McPherson, 2012). Interestingly, the findings

showed that LMOOCs cover learners' learning styles and individual differences which is also reported by Mellati and Khademi (2018).

Parental presence is another factor which had a significant role in successful online learning in LMOOCs. This finding is in line with Zhou (2016) speculating that parents positively influence students' language skills and motivation. Thomas et al. (2019) similarly found that parents and their expectations significantly help learners have a successful learning process and achievements. Moreover, Rahimi (2021) found that social obligation and parental expectation can shape Iranian EFL learners' instrumentality-prevention in MOOCs.

Feedback is reported as one of the drawbacks of LMOOCs. The result coincides with Veletsianos et al. (2015) expressed that one of the biggest challenges in MOOC was the lack of immediate corrective feedback. Undoubtedly, giving feedback plays a significant role in language learning and teaching (Clifford et al., 2019). Among various forms of feedback, our findings show that students expect corrective feedback, which is significant in language development (Philip, 2016; Sato & Ballinger, 2016; Sato & Lyster, 2012). Other scholars also address this issue by focusing on the lack of peer-corrective feedback (Clifford et al., 2019) and teachers' feedback (Fuchs, 2017; Teixeira & Mota, 2014). Among them, Teixeira and Mota (2014) believe that in massive courses providing individual feedback by teachers might be impossible, and as a solution, the focus should be on collaboration and peer feedback. Lack of sufficient feedback might be rooted in the absence of required literacy and knowledge of teachers in knowing how to give feedback in LMOOCs. Also, we propose that teachers use a kind of blend instruction through which giving feedback can be taken outside the LMOOC and through direct discussions with the language learners. Moreover, following Teixeira and Mota's (2014) suggestions, engaging learners actively, peer feedback, further collaborations, and dialogues would be substitutions where the direct teacher's feedback seems impossible.

In addition, findings revealed that learners have different attitudes toward the affective factors of LMOOCs. This confusion also exists in MOOCs studies (see Mellati & Khademi, 2018; Soffer & Nachmias, 2018). For example, some of the studies highlighted the positive impacts of MOOCs on students, such as eliminating the anxiety of face-to-face classes (Mellatli & Khademi, 2018) or providing a positive and competitive context (Cohen & Holstein, 2018). Whereas others complained about lack of eye-to-eye contact (Soffer & Nachmias, 2018), lack of sufficient interactions (Aboshady et al., 2015; Doo et al., 2020; Hew, 2014; Tawfik et al., 2017; Topali et al., 2020).

Finally, contextual factors might act as prohibitive factors in the massive integration of LMOOCs in language education. A similar result is found in other educational contexts where had difficulties in utilizing MOOCs (Ferati et al., 2020; Pouezevara & Horn, 2016). This finding also closely matches with other Iranian studies underscoring that CALL materials and tools are not easily available in language education (Mellati & Khademi, 2018; Tafazoli, 2021b).

## **Conclusion**

Finding from the qualitative content analysis revealed that Iranian EFL learners have positive attitudes toward the usability of LMOOCs. LMOOCs can provide an edutainment, flexible, open, joyful, authentic, and user-friendly learning environment. This is an opportunity for language learners to learn, particularly with no restriction in time and place. Also, LMOOCs bring about communication opportunities with other language learners and a possibility to learn a language through various channels and materials. Also, LMOOCs are compatible with blended and flipped classrooms, which might become dominant forms of schooling in the post-pandemic era. Moreover, parents can observe children's language learning development and determine their language learning process expectations.

The fundamental negative factor relating to LMOOC is the lack of a competitive atmosphere for schooling. Also, learning productive skills, mainly speaking, could not be well covered in such online platforms. Furthermore, learners have some limitations for interaction in such online platforms. Their interactions are limited to chat box and comment slots, and they require more oral interactions. More critically, teachers have difficulty with giving feedback to learners, particularly for productive skills. Moreover, learners have some difficulties with contextual factors, including the internet speed and bandwidth.

Based upon the positive findings which confirmed the usability of LMOOCs for language education in Iranian EFL context, there are some implications and suggestions that language education stakeholders should consider. Teachers can apply LMOOCs through blended and flipped courses for the post-pandemic education through which they can give a variety of contents in various formats to their students. Teachers could also give shy and anxious students this chance to choose if they want to learn through LMOOCs or traditional classes. Moreover, teachers can contact other teachers in other countries to have a kind of virtual exchange program to expose students to other students with different language backgrounds.

EFL authorities in Iran and other contexts should run more teacher education and professional development courses to enable teachers to learn how to teach through LMOOCs in practice. Through these courses, teachers can develop their technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK; Tafazoli, 2021a) and other required literacies to use LMOOCs in their practicum. Also, in countries like Iran with some internet restrictions (e.g., filtering), the agreement between responsible organizations and ministries might be possible to exclude useful educational tools from being available for educational purposes. In this way, more students and teachers will be able to use inclusive educational technologies even in rural areas with a lack of teachers and digital equipment.

It is worth mentioning that the study is not without limitations. As mentioned in the findings, the ongoing access to the LMOOCs was not achievable for all students due to contextual factors, including the internet speed and filtering. This finding might not be applicable in other contexts with better access to the Internet. Also, language learners' digital literacy might act as a hurdle for them in achieving their goals. Moreover, although learners confirmed the usability of LMOOCs in developing their language proficiency, the findings might be doubtful as we only considered learners' attitudes. Finally, learners' attitudes toward the parents' presence were positive. However, we did not consider the parents' perceptions in this case.

We believe more research is required to investigate the effectiveness and usability of LMOOCs, particularly exploring areas where reaching consensus has not been achieved. To make it clear, the possible interactions through LMOOCs, the role of effective filters, and giving feedback require more attention in future research. Also, the current study was focused on the EFL context, then more research in other English contexts might also be valuable. We do believe that considering other stakeholders' perceptions (e.g., parents, teachers, authorities, teacher educators) might lead to sound decision-making about the usability and effectiveness of the LMOOCs.

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