



doi <https://doi.org/10.58256/f5vmh758>



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Research Article

Section: Literature, Linguistics & Criticism



Published in Nairobi, Kenya
by Royallite Global.

Volume 5, Issue 2, 2024



Article Information

Submitted: 5th November 2023

Accepted: 19th January 2024

Published: 7th February 2024

Additional information is available at the end of the article

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ISSN: 2708-5945 (Print)

ISSN: 2708-5953 (Online)

To read the paper online,
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How to Cite:

Khasawneh, M. (2024). Exploring the influence of distant learning and MOOCs in foreign language lecturers' professional development. *Research Journal in Advanced Humanities*, 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.58256/f5vmh758>

Exploring the influence of distant learning and MOOCs in foreign language lecturers' professional development

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Abstract

Distance education gradually establishes itself as a part and parcel of the global educational system. Although a great deal of research has been done to address the strategic influence of distance learning and MOOCs on student performance, very little is strategically recognized about digital distance teaching about lecturers' professional development (PD). This paper conducted a critical qualitative analysis to provide analyses of the perception of FL lecturers regarding how DL and MOOCs affected their PD as well as student performance. Data was collected by carrying out semi-structured interviews, which were underpinned in the TAM model from five lecturers randomly selected and identified as PLT1, PLT2, PLT3, PLT4, and PLT5, respectively, who appeared to have a deeper understanding of the distancing learning phenomenon on their professional development and academic achievement. Thematic analysis was used to account for the collected data, as various themes were looked for in interview transcripts and subsequently formed a basis of study findings and discussion. Across the varied interview transcripts, six main themes were significant, including the theme of impacts teaching toolkits, global collaborations, flexibility and autonomy, exposure to innovative technologies, continuous PD for lecturers, and enriched cross-cultural perspectives. A more significant percentage of the participants also affirmed how useful and easy to participate in distance learning programs and MOOCs are, in connection to their PD. This research provides further evidence that lecturers' participation in online professional development has a favourable effect on their students' academic success when it comes to foreign language classes. Therefore, it is concluded that for language teachers to stay abreast of ongoing transformations in the field and prepare appropriate practices, considering learners from different backgrounds as part of the global community, a creative professional development practice reflects their responsibility. Distant learning and MOOCs offer this opportunity with flexible and accessible systems.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Distant Learning, Lecturers, MOOCs, Professional Development, technology in Education



Introduction

As the educational system continues to evolve, lecturers of foreign languages must participate in regular opportunities for professional growth so that they may continue to improve professionally and help their students succeed academically. Lecturers of foreign languages may keep current on culturally responsive practises, new pedagogical approaches, and changing linguistic theories via ongoing professional development beyond what is typically included in lecturer education programmes (Alhabahba & Mahfoodh, 2016). This transformation is critically important for personal as well as professional growth and the development of language learning in general. In the modern days of the digital age, automated education programmes have given a new ground to professional development as these lecturers now resound in a pool of endless opportunities for transformative career advancement. The use of webinars and virtual conferences makes possible a broader perception in the practice of foreign language lecturers who, as they receive adequate awareness from other countries' organizations, become able to incorporate cultural aspects obtained from various backgrounds into their lessons (Bragg et al., 2021). Given the rapid expansion of MOOCs and other forms of distance learning, more opportunities are open for lecturers to hone their teaching skills as society moves towards digitalization (Bakogianni et al., 2020). Foreign language lecturers are being pulled into a broader international professional development world, not just determined by individual careers but also changing the very nature of foreign-language education itself as a result of both conventional meetings and internet platforms.

The advent of online degree programmes has revolutionized the approach to lecturer training for foreign language education. Over the years, online programs, including MOOCs, virtual conferences, and webinars, have become significant avenues that language lecturers use to increase their knowledge base. Digital media has revolutionized the world to such an extent that digital literacy for foreign language lecturers is vital. They now have to operate in a dynamic environment where traditional teaching strategies encounter high-tech tools (Goria, Konstantinidis, Kilvinski & Dogan 2019). Secondly, the participatory nature of online programmes ensures that there are no pent-up ideas and it also encourages lecturers to test other ways of teaching. Currently, Internet-based massive open online courses (MOOCs) have become vastly popular among many students.

These digital projects have opened an era of change to professional development by eliminating physical barriers and providing the world with a virtual network of language lecturers. However, in addition to enhancing the depth of their specialization only for lecturers' professional development is not limited but can also benefit from long-distance learning, where one learns new cultural factors that are different and provides a broader horizon, allowing the use of more diverse teaching strategies, (Atmojo, 2021). The virtual environment afforded by many online programs often allows lecturers to feel more autonomous and adaptable in professional growth opportunities; this is because they can schedule classes according to their preferences. With these programs' collaborative features, lecturers all over the world can work together past which they get to share ideas or information and even be able to know how best one can overcome any obstacle that she may have in her career (Malita et al., 2018). When more language teachers are using these online programs, they become better digital citizens; this increases their pedagogical skills and enables them to adapt to future changes in the field of education and make an approach that responds dynamically to new developments (Ji & Cao, 2016).

For this paper, the intention was to probe into various elements that cause FL lecturers' involvement in distance learning and MOOCs to further their pedagogical professional development. It is through this study that the researchers seek to understand how these distance learning programs, including MOOCs, affect FL teachers' professional development by shaping their pedagogical practices and improving students' grade scores. In our line of inquiry, we interrogated how the lecturers enhanced

their teaching experiences using distance learning and MOOCs and in what ways such programs were beneficial to improve students' performance by guiding the methods of teaching by foreign language teachers generated diverse academic outcomes among learners. In this regard, the goal is to learn from the activities of FL lecturers who are already involved in distance learning or MOOCs.

Literature Review

Distance Learning in Professional Development; A Review of Motivations

Over the years, distance learning has grown tremendously in popularity as a critical component of professional development for foreign language instructors. Through online programs, lecturers can transcend borders and engage students from anywhere or irrespective of the time zone due to asynchrony nature (Bragg et al., 2021). The above-discussed flexibility is particularly desirable for language instructors with multiple responsibilities because it helps tailor the students' study affairs based on their different schedules. Thus, instead of being merely a counterpart option, the paradigm can be viewed as a powerful transformative one that provides equal opportunities for professional growth to language lecturers globally (Gonçalves & Osório, 2018).

Digital platforms have helped bring about numerous distance learning programs, such as MOOCs and webinars, that demonstrate the changing nature of professional development in today's world (Koukis & Jimoyiannis, 2018). Reeves's (2013) and Misra's (2018) scholarly studies also illuminate the drivers that facilitate the increasing adoption of distance education where shifting educational paradigms are reflected in the continuous innovation drive needed for persistence. Smoothness and convenience are appealing features of online programs for language lecturers (Holmes et al., 2010). This is because the lecturers are aware of how important it is to be informed about current innovations in pedagogy. Lay et al. (2020) carry out a wide-range review that demonstrates the great variety of research in this sphere and supplies evidence about numerous motivations accounting for the growing popularity of distance learning as one tool to improve professional development. The growth of distance learning activities is also an indication that the language education community as a whole appreciates the significance of embracing modern pedagogical approaches and technological resources.

The broad range of motifs influencing foreign language lecturers to engage in PD through distance learning is a standard and typical attribute of the evolving naturehood. One of the most important drivers is a need to stay informed about pedagogical novelties and use up-to-date approaches in teaching. Saleh & Pretorius (2006) evaluated foreign language lectures in ideal circumstances and how they have managed their professional development since we made them. Thus, motivation for involvement in distance education is not limited to personal development but also encompasses a commitment toward the benefits of linkage and globalization interests.

Wasserman and Migdal (2019), in their work on lecturers' perceptions of online training courses, are related to research by Harlen and Doubler (2007). These investigations emphasize the benefits of asynchronous learning and digital forms, which offer comfortability and adaptive features. In terms of MOOCs and their accessibility along with inclusiveness, the article by Malita et al. (2018) focuses on how they transform professional development options. The flexibility of asynchronous distance-learning programs and the possibility for language lecturers to participate in ongoing professional development at their own pace allow them to consider lesson plans that cater to different schedule requirements. There is further evidence from another case study of an online workshop intended to facilitate teachers' lifelong learning by Yang and Liu (2004), whose accounts demonstrate the ability of distance learning to overcome temporal-spatial limits. Increased accessibility not only strengthens overall diversity in the

field of professional development but also amplifies how these ventures impact the level of language teaching.

How Lecturers' Professional Development Impact Students' Academic Performance

An essential element that emphasizes the interdependence between lecturer education and student outcomes is the effect of PD on students' academic performance. Giraldo (2014) argues that when lecturers are actively involved in professional development programs, their students' performance will improve significantly. Moreover, Masters et al. (2010) showed that lecturers who are actively involved in online teaching training possess a better knowledge base and new techniques; therefore, they have an impact on the outcome of their students' improvement.

The impact that professional development has on the grades of students is mainly dependent on the nature or type of professional development that lecturers undertake. Structured and customized development programmes lead to more efficient teaching methods (Bragg et al., 2021). While studying how MOOCs for lecturer PD are used, Koukis and Jimoyiannis (2019) reach the same conclusion that well-constructed MOOCs can have significant effects on both teaching practices and student performance. Thus, having PD that is sustained and ongoing has an impact on students as well as lecturers (Reeves, 2013; Lay et al., 2020).

The use of technology to support lecturers' professional development is one major factor influencing students' academic achievement. According to Hu et al. (2021) and Lay et al. (2020), the initial research on this issue shows that lecturers' capacity to work with information technologies during PD courses positively affects both school activity as students' performance scores under some conditions defined beforehand by researchers supporting parity concerning all crucial elements needed earlier when conducting such a study or And, digital technology can enhance institutional practices and performance in the classrooms of language lecturers that is why Alhabahba and Mahfoodh (2016) emphasize on increasing professional development for teachers through using internet.

To sum up, there is a complex and ever-changing dynamic at work in the connection between lecturers' professional growth and students' academic success. What kind of influence on student results PD efforts have depends on how technology is integrated, how it is designed, and how well it aligns with lecturers' preferences. According to many studies, the literature stresses the significance of ongoing professional development that is both well-designed and incorporates technology to improve students' academic achievement via influencing lecturers to adopt more effective practices in the classroom.

Research Methodology

Study Approach and Rationale

In his research, the qualitative methodology is adopted as the most suitable approach to investigate the views and perceptions of university lecturers on the influence of distance learning on their PD. According to Massouti (2019), the researcher in qualitative study assumes the role of the principal tool for both data collection and analysis. In this particular approach, researchers engage in an in-depth examination of social and organizational dynamics, with a specific emphasis on the complex process of constructing and assigning meaning. The nature of the researcher's involvement, according to Jonker and Pennick (2010), is intrinsically descriptive, as it adeptly captures the many subtleties present in various human experiences. The selection of this approach emphasizes the importance of uncovering new knowledge, gaining valuable insights, and achieving a deeper understanding. These outcomes are derived by

analyzing the viewpoints and experiences of the study participants. A qualitative investigator can enhance the knowledge base and educational “practises by actively engaging with the lived experiences of the individuals they investigate (Barnes, 2014, p. 19). The choice of this approach is mainly aimed at eliciting directly lived experiences of university FL lecturers on how they perceive the concept of the influence of distance learning and MOOCs on the PD of foreign language lecturers

Study Design

The case study design, as described by Gregory (2020), Houghton et al. (2015) and Merriam (1998), is a research approach that involves a comprehensive investigation of a particular phenomenon within its genuine real-world setting, utilising a variety of forms of data. The design selected in this study is based on its nuanced capacity to effectively tackle the basic inquiries of “how” as well as “why,” particularly in situations when the investigator has little control over behavioural occurrences and when the emphasis is on current issues (Baxter & Jack, 2010 Kekeya, 2021; Yin, 2017). The case study design is firmly centred on the concept of triangulation (Ritchie et al., 2013), which represents an essential convergence of several types of supporting information to get a sufficient understanding of digital literacy in FL using distance learning and MOOCs as possible motives behind PD for foreign language lecturers.

Participant and Sampling Technique

The sampling strategy adopted by qualitative researchers has a significant influence on the overall quality and breadth of research findings (Beverland & Lindgreen, 2007). In this case, purposive sampling was done in the study that examined five different universities of which FL lecturers were chosen to examine how distance learning and MOOCs affect foreign language lecturer PD. A decision to select schools as potential cases deliberately can also be evidence of a strategic approach that focuses on the close connection with study purposes (Cohen & Manion, 2007). Non-random sampling allows for a detailed study of lecturers who have undergone the impact of distance education and MOOCs on PD to English language teachers.

Data Sources

The approach used in the data collection of this study is the methodical and systematic strategy, which employed semi-structured interviews as a significant means for investigation. It was selected because its intrinsic feature is flexibility (Kekeya, 2021), which allows for maintaining a balance between the predetermined questions and involving participants to develop their answers further. The interview session was planned carefully, with a duration that ranged from 20 minutes to one hour, so as not only to gain the best out of their viewpoints but equally acknowledge their schedule difficulties. The interviews were designed according to the theoretical framework of this study, which included perceived usefulness and influence on distance learning and MOOCs part in FL lecturer’s PD.

Data Analysis Procedure

A thematic analysis was used to perform the extraction and coding of recurrent themes and sequences from the interview transcripts. These resources were helpful in conducting the following evaluation and interpreting of data. Thematic analysis is a process of noting patterns within the generated data to develop themes (Kekeya, 2021). The use of semi-structured interviews allowed the development of a realistically distinguishable image in the PD of FL lecturers due to the influence of distance learning and MOOCs, revealing how it occurs within a given educational environment.

Results and Presentation

Table 1: Result of Demographic Variables

Participants	Age	Gender	Highest Degree	Years of Experience as an FL Lecturer
FLT 1	49	Male	PhD	8 years
FLT 2	57	Female	PhD	11 years
FLT 3	44	Female	Post Doctorate	19 years
FLT 4	52	Female	Masters	5 years
FLT 5	55	Male	Masters	4 years

The interviews were done with five foreign language lecturers (FLT) whose demographic profiles provide a diverse and mature outlook on how MOOCs and DOL affect their careers. The participants are aged 44 to 57 years, and the period between which most of their experiences last is four-nineteen years. It is important to note that each of the participants in this research group has at least one master’s degree; two degrees have received master’s only, while three more have doctorates. The richness of gender representation, together with the variety in credentials presented by the individuals, creates diversity in knowledge regarding the subject matter. The large total number of years in the classroom for these FLT, particularly with most having 19-43 years’ experience, is an indication that they have encountered and adapted to evolving trends in language teaching. This, therefore, puts them in an excellent place to reflect on the impact of remote learning and MOOCs on their personal academic development. Participants’ insights are critical in understanding the complicated workings of online professional development for L2 education because they have provided significant teaching experience and diverse backgrounds.

Results

The results of the collected data are presented below, paying attention to lecturers’ views regarding technological acceptance and usage principle, perceived benefit, ease-of-use, and influence at a distance learning system MOOC in PD.

Result on Perceived Usefulness and Ease of Usage

Different technological systems that enhance distance learning and MOOCs have become extensively helpful in exploring the perceptions and sentiments of the FL lecturers on their perceived ease of usage and perceived usefulness. The charts below offer a summary of the data collected in this regard.

Figure 1: Result of the Perceived Usefulness of Distance Learning and MOOCs to enhance FLT’s PD

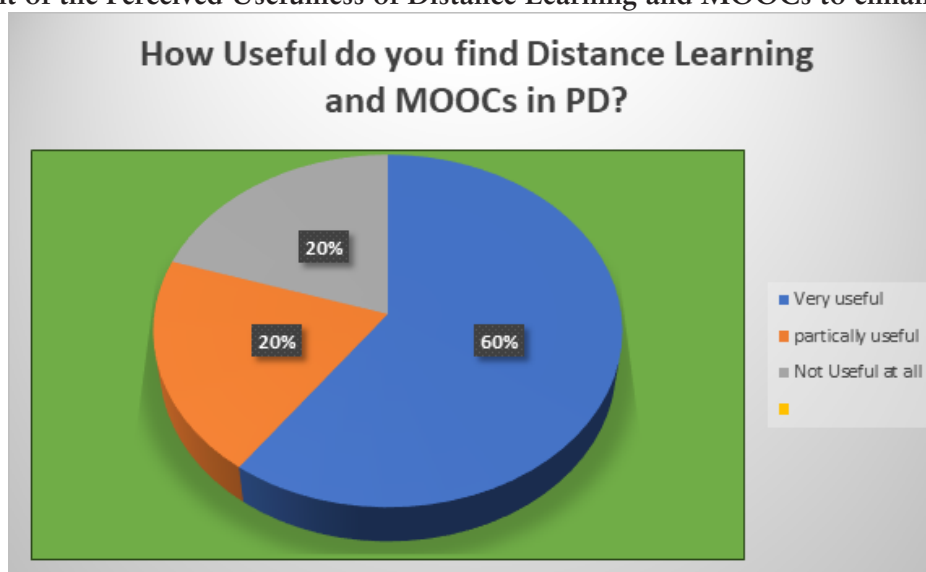
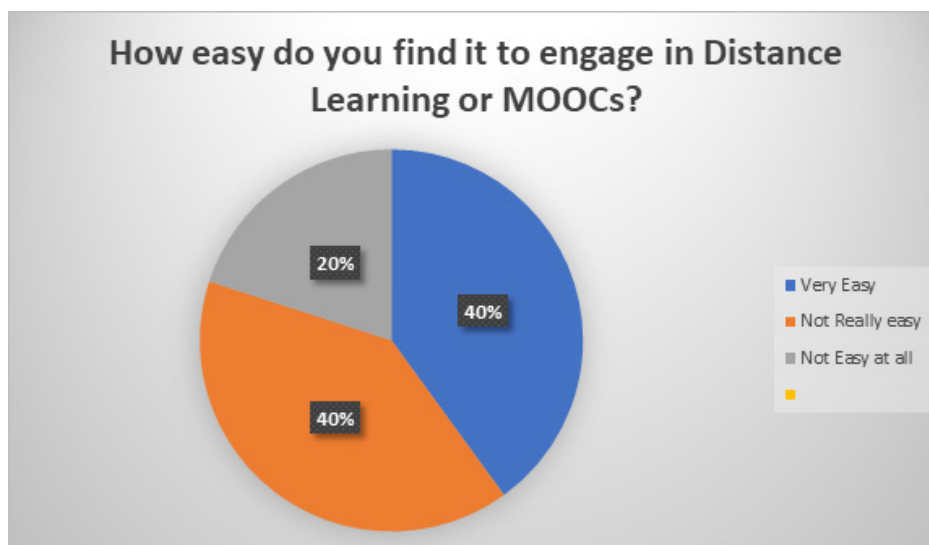


Figure 1 demonstrates that 60% of the five FL lecturers (N=3) who participated in the interviews affirmed that distance learning and MOOCs are beneficial in enhancing their professional development and teaching strategies. About 20% of the lecturers affirm that distance learning and MOOCs are not that useful in enhancing their teaching PD, while another 20% stated that the systems could be more useful in their PD. As much as two 1 out of the five lecturers who participated in the interview feel that distance learning and MOOCs are not directly applicable to PD, the other 4 participants accepted the strategic usefulness of distance learning and MOOCs in PD in foreign language teaching at the tertiary level.

Figure 2: Result of Perceived Ease of Use



According to the data in the figure, when asked about the ease of MOOCs and other forms of distance learning, foreign language lecturers answered in a fairly even distribution. About 40% of those who were interviewed said that it was straightforward, suggesting that they are pretty at ease using these online resources for career advancement. Concurrently, 40% said it was not easy to participate, which may indicate that there is a subset of lecturers who are hesitant or need help with online courses. A small but considerable fraction of lecturers encounter severe challenges or impediments while participating in these online means of professional development; the remaining 20% said that it was more complex. The various responses highlight lecturers' different experiences with digital learning platforms. These experiences are likely impacted by variables including technical competency, pedagogical preferences, and the unique design of the online programmes. The results of this study have far-reaching implications for the field of foreign language education. For those who have no difficulties at all, there is an opportunity for improvement in terms of professional growth, which might result in the introduction of fresh strategies and methods to language classes. However, the group that thinks it is extremely difficult or not simple at all brings up issues with the usability and accessibility of these platforms, which might prevent particular lecturers from using these good tools for professional development. In order to overcome these obstacles, language lecturers must get individualised assistance and professional development opportunities so that they can fully use online courses and MOOCs. Only then will language education be able to become more accessible and successful for everybody?

Result of the Influence of the Distance Learning and MOOCs in PD of FL Lecturers.

The basis for the interviews was to ascertain the nature of the influence of distance learning systems, including identifiable MOOCs in the PD of FL lecturers. Different themes were identified from the

responses of the study participants. Table 2 outlines the themes, the highlighted expressions, and the implications for FL education.

Table 2: Summary of Themes in the Interview

Theme	Expressions culled from interview	Implications for Academic Performance
<p>1. Impact on Teaching Toolkit</p>	<p>FLT1: “Distance learning and MOOCs have profoundly shaped my professional development in several ways.</p> <p>To begin with, the availability and convenience provided by these sites have enabled me to pursue part-time learning without compromising on my teaching duties.</p> <p>FLT5: My path from a foreign language instructor to an instructional technology specialist has benefited significantly by distance learning and MOOCs.</p> <p>FLT4: The online courses and distance learning programmes have given me a chance to study innovative teaching strategies, utilize new language methodologies in the classroom as well as keep up with contemporary approaches used in education nowadays.</p> <p>FLT3: One of the most important aspects is that it gives an opportunity to use a variety of teaching techniques and resources provided by these sites.</p>	<p>Enriched teaching methods can lead to more engaging and effective language instruction. The use of technology may enhance student interaction and understanding.</p>
<p>2. Global Collaboration</p>	<p>FLT3: FLT3: Due to the collaborative nature of these platforms, I have been able to connect with language lecturers from different cultural backgrounds. The exchange ideas helped me develop my pedagogical approaches by introducing various teaching techniques and perspectives.</p> <p>FLT4: As a result of accessibility to online discussion forums and virtual communities, I have created contacts with professors from all over the world. A global view has broadened my understanding about effective modes in teaching languages considerably.</p>	<p>Exposure to diverse perspectives can improve cross-cultural communication skills, positively impacting language comprehension and usage. Collaboration fosters a supportive global network.</p>
<p>3. Flexibility and Autonomy</p>	<p>FLT5: “Incorporating my individual interests and requirements into my educational trajectory has been made possible by the self-paced nature of numerous online courses.”</p> <p>FLT1: “Additionally, the collaborative characteristics of numerous online platforms have facilitated the development of a worldwide community of instructors, allowing me to establish connections with language instructors hailing from various cultural contexts.”</p>	<p>Flexibility allows lecturers to adapt to individual student needs, potentially leading to a more personalized and effective language learning experience.</p>

<p>4. Exposure to Innovative Technologies</p>	<p>FLT2: “The utilisation of these resources has not only enhanced the comprehension of my pupils but also optimised my approach to lesson preparation and evaluation.”</p> <p>FLT3: “By utilising these resources, I have been able to seamlessly incorporate technology into my language courses, thereby providing my pupils with a more dynamic and engaging learning environment.”</p>	<p>Integration of innovative technologies can make language learning more interactive, engaging, and aligned with modern communication methods.</p>
<p>5. Continuous Professional Development</p>	<p>FLT5: “This autonomy has been instrumental in shaping my professional development according to the areas I find most relevant and intriguing.”</p>	<p>Ongoing professional development ensures lecturers stay current, bringing updated knowledge and methodologies to the classroom, positively influencing student learning outcomes.</p>
<p>6. Enriched Cross-Cultural Perspectives</p>	<p>FLT1: The cross-cultural interactions through online forums as well virtual conferences have impacted my understanding of, and appreciation for effective language teaching strategies; which has improved the nature of education that I offer to my students.</p> <p>FLT4: Cultural awareness can be developed through exposure to different viewpoints which may foster language understanding and communication skills in a globalized setting.</p>	<p>Exposure to diverse perspectives promotes cultural awareness, which can enhance language comprehension and communication skills in a globalized world.</p>

Several vital issues surface from the interviews with FLT concerning how MOOCs and distance learning impacted their professional development, which in turn reflects on manifestations of academic outcomes that reaffirmed students’ attainment. FLT1 and FLT5 carried out the first reflection, revealing attitudes to MOOCs that influence their professional maturity. Such platforms made their teaching skills more adaptable to the pressures of modernity, which led them to change and enhance it whenever needed. Tech can increase student engagement and understanding, which may enhance language learning in a more engaging manner that results in success. These improved teaching approaches are linked to academic performance. Secondly, FLT3 and FLT4 drew attention to the international network that these platforms promoted by uniting lecturers of different cultural heritages into a single highly educated community. Academia is influenced by a variety of positive effects on the understanding and use of language as well as intercultural communication skills. Thirdly, the FLT5 and Flor1 touched on how online courses offer some flexibility to participants that could end up improving their experience in language learning because they have freedom over personalised pathways. FLT2 and FTL 3 discussed the usage of cutting-edge technology; they highlighted that these tools have potential opportunities to modernise language instruction because they are interactive, entertaining, and more suitable for today’s communication. Finally, FLT4 and FLT5 addressed the topic of continual development as they focused on how it could act to improve proficiency and fit students’ needs, changing outcomes favourably. In conclusion, the interviews showcased that massive open online courses (MOOCs) and other forms of distance learning can produce such positive effects on language teaching as contributing both to inter-ethnic communication integration and general academic success.

Discussion of Key Findings

Distance learning and MOOCs have continued to play a significant role in the professional growth of educators. The results of the interview show that most respondents clearly demonstrated how distance education has remained very helpful and incorporated into their professional development. The data analysis identified six themes from the interview text on how remote learning practices and MOOCs impact lecturers' PD.

The theme "Impact on Teaching Toolkit" reveals how remote learning and MOOCs have had a significant impact on the professional development of foreign language lecturers. This result is corroborated by studies done across the research community on language instruction that have focussed on online platforms as a mode of professional development (Alhabahba & Mahfoodh, 2016; Bakogianni et al., 2020; Gorla et al., 2019). The relation of the lecturers' experiences is in line with the rising recognition of online courses' power to impact teaching practices and advanced learning practice management (Bragg et al., 2021; Lay et al., 2020). Based on the statements drawn from interviews, FLT1, FLT4, and FLT5, they emphasized how online courses and distance learning expanded the teacher resource base. The platforms were pointed out by FLT1 and FLT5 as to be adopted due to their actual use, which was possible even in the process of preparing for classes. However, the most crucial part of FLT4 is to study new educational methods and introduce innovative approaches to language teaching. These statements are supported by the research that emphasizes the importance of online platforms in providing lecturers with numerous resources and teaching approaches (Ansyari et al., 2022; Giraldo, 2014; Holmes et al., 2010).

This theme has a definite influence on aspects such as achievement in academic enterprise. Lecturers say that the application of augmented teaching practices can lead to more exciting and practical language training (Gonçalves & Osório, 2018). Furthermore, the introduction of technology in language teaching, as specified by FLT1 and FLT 3, has an opportunity to enhance student involvement and understanding (Harlen & Doubler, 2007). The outcomes are congruent with current research that indicates reforms in teaching practices have a beneficial effect on learners' performance, as shown below. The interviews reflected a critical attention towards the theme of "Global Cooperation," which is consistent with the emerging trend in literature highlighting the use of online channels for training language instructors. FLT3 and FLT4 highlighted the collaborative nature of these tools with a focus on opportunities to connect with other language teachers from diverse cultures. This aligns with studies that highlighted the need for international collaboration in enhancing pedagogical practices of language teaching and promoting a global perspective in education (Alzahrani & Althaqafi, 2020; Byessonova & Trofimova, 2019; Kabilan et al., 2011). The findings relate to research revealing that open online platforms allow the development of a global supportive network and instructors' exposure to various methods of teaching practice (Koukis & Jimoyiannis, 2019; Lay et al., 2020).

FLT3 and FLT4 stressed the spread of ideas among lectures on a global basis through virtual communities and online forums while analysing concepts related to worldwide collaboration. In further elucidation, the lived experiences of FLT1 and FLT5 correspond to conclusions formulated by Manning et al. (2014) in their study about how online professional development influences lecturers' knowledge domain and teacher instruction performance. The adaptation methodology described by FLT4, leading to self-governing as the primary function in affecting professionals' development, supports Saleh and Pretorius (2006) and Wasserman and Migdal (2019), concentrating on lecturers rendering online training programmes.

The type of flexibility highlighted by FLT5 and FLT1 allows one to adapt teaching methods in accordance with the needs so that each learner is able to get; due to this fact, consequences for GPA

are rather severe. This aligns with the more extensive literature body, as shown by Lay et al. (2019), that tailored learning practices for lecturers lead to effective teaching methods, which sometimes can be referred to as customized education of instructors. The collaborative nature of the platforms, according to FLT1, signifies that flexible and self-directed professional development opportunities via these could make way for a better language learning experience by joining the global lecturer community with an open and individual approach.

The Construction of “Exposure to Innovative Technologies” reveals the full impact online courses and distance learning caused language lecturers acquiring novel technology integration into their pedagogies. The studies of FLT2 and FLT3 expressions help understand the ways in which these tools have facilitated better engagement in students and potentiated preparation/assessment educative efficiency. This corresponds to what the literature on MOOCs currently portrays as a possible fruit of technological learning. It is evidently rooted here in Massive Open Online Courses and how they may lead to better language instruction (Bakogianni et al., 2020; Giraldo, 2014). The outcomes of FLT2 and FT3 correspond with Mai & Ocriciano (2017), who investigated the role played by attending webinars in promoting professional development among English language lecturers. In addition to this, the lecturers only focus on a seamless integration of technology, which can be observed in both studies by Yang and Liu (2004) as well as Hu et al. (2021). The statement about technology is a dynamic and exciting tool in FLT2, as well as FLT3’s comments, reflect the broader study on the positive impact of technology on learners’ language learning process (Gonçalves & Osório, 2018; Koukis & Jimoyiannis, 2019).

The use of modern technology in language learning can make this process more interactive and appealing, an improvement that could be reflected in the students’ academic success. It also falls in line with the current studies that reveal that incorporating technology into language teaching may enhance student engagement and comprehension (Koukis & Jimoyiannis, 2018; Manning et al., 2014). In addition, the suggested approach by FLT2 and FLT3 synchronization language training with modern modes of communication will enable students to learn better from these techniques for practical application in real-life situations. This indicates the potential of technology utilization in online professional learning to improve language learners’ outcomes successfully.

The concept of continuous professional development emerged as one of the core elements that define foreign language lecturers’ experiences, implying their constant individual development in an online environment. FLT4 and FLT5 stressed the need for a personalized approach. Ongoing professional development helps not only to develop skills but also allows the lecturer to address the individual needs and preferences of their pupils correspondingly. This is consistent with previous studies, as demonstrated by the study that was conducted by Alhabahba and Mahfoodh (2016) on how they used the Internet to facilitate professional development in English literature teachers. Additionally, the idea of customizing professional development is also in line with findings from this study about lecturers’ preference for online-based PD (Ansyari et al., 2022). Extending these conclusions, the observations of FLT4 and FLT5 could be matched with experiments performed by Giraldo (2014) that emphasized how a PD program may improve instructional success among English language lecturers. Drawing upon such experiences, the reflections of FLT1 and FLT4 align with what Gorla et al. (2019) studied, namely that PLEs and PLNs are significant in a language lecturer’s professional growth. In this respect, the idea that interculturality develops pedagogic methods and approaches is connected with such an international cooperation principle in language education as multiculturalism (Alzahrani & Althaqafi, 2020; Byessonova & Trofimova, 2018).

It is worth noting that FLT1 and FLT4 highlighted the extended cross-cultural viewpoints as one of

those characteristics with a significant impact on learners' language learning outcomes in terms of failure or success. By being subjected to diverse types of teaching methodologies and cultural environments, students develop a good understanding as well as the capacity for multilingual communication; hence, they fit in a globalized setting.

Conclusions and General Implications

This study aimed to explore the impact that distance learning and MOOCs had on the practices implemented by language lecturers taking part in online development events. The topic of the revolutionary nature of online platforms for their personal as well as professional development was by far the most widespread among all six themes. The first significant theme sheds light on how MOOCs and other forms of distance learning have enhanced lecturers' toolkits by opening up a wide variety of pedagogical methods which are more adaptive. Global cohesion significantly contributed to the unity of lecturers from around the world, thus creating an understanding of other cultures. Some of the critical features emphasized included autonomy and flexibility allowed by lecturers to harness students' learning based on their interests, as well as the introduction of innovative digital elements that revealed opportunities for enhanced involvement and streamlined processes. A good source of successful language teaching was continuous professional development that was both collective and non-stop. Although this is the last point, one would note that an enhanced focus on cross-cultural perspectives drew attention to how crucial global relationships are for developing better teaching practices.

As a result of these findings, there are wide-ranging implications for how foreign language lecturers exploit their formal training. With the help of online platforms, which support constant learning development in academic or professional circles, the lecturer can stay up to date with current global trends and modify their teaching technique. The online courses designed for lecturers liberate them from specific standards of professional development and make it possible to focus on individual preferences and needs. They are using sophisticated technology that paves the way for new pedagogical approaches and provides instructors with techniques to create engaging lessons. The idea of inviting lecturers from different countries to come together will broaden their perspectives and drastically create a more robust support system between ourselves, forming an international culture shock appreciation that would help develop better teaching practices.

This study also supports the claim that lecturers who participate in virtual professional development show a positive impact on students' academic performance, especially in foreign language classes. Better language training that incorporates the use of technology and other contemporary pedagogies can create a more engaging classroom atmosphere for the students. The students involved in global collaboration are better equipped to communicate efficiently within a diverse society as they acquire cross-cultural communication skills. Suppose the lecturers are given more freedom and independence in their career development. In that case, students can be provided with personalized education processes that benefit them faster than a general language learning experience. Those lecturers who take part in long-term professional development programmes can keep up with the times and use modern teaching methods more effectively. In the realm of foreign language teaching, studies reveal a symbiotic correlation between effective teacher professional development and positive student outcomes. To conclude, the findings of this study demonstrate how online professional development can significantly improve various aspects of foreign language teachers' daily lives. The development of teaching practices, the widening of cross-cultural perspectives, and the improvement of educational outcomes of foreign language students are among the possible results influenced by lecturers' implementation of MOOCs and distance learning in their career progression. To meet the demands of the fast-changing realization

regarding language taught and guarantee that lecturers are suitably trained to help students from diverse backgrounds in today's globalized world, it is mandatory for them as professionals to be involved with professional development activities promoting creativity and flexibility. Therefore, this study underscores the importance of conducting further research on online professional development and its broader implications for language instruction.

Funding

This research was funded by the Deanship of Scientific Research at King Khalid University for funding this work through Large Research Groups under grant number (RGP.2 / 108 /45).

Acknowledgments

The authors extend their appreciation to the Deanship of Scientific Research at King Khalid University for funding this work through Large Research Groups under grant number (RGP.2 / 108 /45).

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Authorship and Level of Contribution

The paper is single authored.

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