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Integrating Coursera MOOC Courses into Classroom Teaching in BS English Degree Program by the Faculty of English in a Pakistani University; Successes and Failures in Second Language Acquisition for Employability

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ABSTRACT

This extensive research delves into the impact of a private university's digitalization policy and utilization of MOOCs in teaching English as a second language. The aim is to improve the communication skills of students majoring in English across five campuses in Pakistan. Through this quantitative study, we gain valuable insights into the successes and challenges of developing language proficiency among EFL learners. By examining the relationship between various variables, we can analyze the progress made and identify barriers that hinder the employability of graduates. This study has the potential to guide ELTs in effectively teaching a second language using the vast platform of Coursera, providing opportunities for both personal and professional growth. Data was gathered from 124 dedicated instructors and 2310 students, with a recommendation of 124 Coursera courses by the Faculty of English at a prestigious university in Pakistan. The ultimate goal is to equip students with the necessary skills to thrive in the competitive global service industry.

The major findings of this in-depth study are that the most successful language learning model was self-learning, resulting in increased motivation and building up of self-esteem and confidence in the Pakistani ESL learners. However, the results indicate irrelevant integration of Coursera certificates, due to improper course mappings into the degree program. In order to edify communication skills of the graduates for employability, the main challenge was lack of proper guidance and technical issues that impeded students' ability to extract maximum value from Coursera MOOCs.

INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on a prestigious HEC recognized private university in Pakistan that has made great strides in implementing the Coursera platform into its classroom teaching. Ranking second among general universities by HEC, this institution has been a pioneer in exploring the benefits and impact of integrating Coursera online certificates into its degree programs. What's more, students at all levels - Bachelor's, Masters' and even M. Phil - have free access to the Coursera platform, thanks to the university's Directorate of Coursera Academic Integration. The author of this study is a member of the Coursera Academic Integration Research and Course Authoring group, and the data collected for this research was sourced from a diverse population of 2310 students and 124 faculty members. Through this study, a range of successes and failures were uncovered, providing valuable insights for overcoming challenges and showcasing the faculty's achievements in preparing students for the competitive job market. With a keen understanding of the importance of standing out in the job market, the university offers free access to Coursera to enhance students' CVs and showcase their online certificates to potential employers

Research Objectives

1. The study intends to achieve a collection of facts that could enable the language teachers of English to understand the factors that have positive impact on using

online resources in Language teaching.

2. It also aims to analyze other factors that were not so positive and could be taken into account in future for more effective language teaching.

3. This inquiry desires to measure the weaknesses that prove to be challenging the desired impact on effective language teaching.

Research Questions

1. Which teaching models were most successfully used by the ELTs in degree awarding institutions of Pakistan?

2. What positive outcomes were reported by the ELTs who used the digital language teaching resource Coursera in their classes?

3. What problems were observed in the data collected and what variables or covariance emerges as the result of this study?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ling & Elgort (2023) elaborate upon the utility of digital tools for teaching language. They view digitalization to be advantageous as provides freedom to both the learner and the student. The only key factor in using them is the knowledge of how to use them.

Researchers who are producing top grade research claim these to be extremely useful in developing communication skills. It is now easy for teachers to engage students in learning activities that transcend time and space. At the same time, different digital spaces

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have their own linguistic and discourse practices that both teachers and learners need to gain familiarity. For example, in their contribution to this special issue, Ling & Elgort (2023) report on a study that found new forms of academic evidence in students' writing contributions to online course discussion forums. Dooley *et al.* (2023) observe greater participation of students on discussion forums, classrooms and in role plays after having received coaching through non-traditional teaching tools.

Meniado (2023) believes that MOOCs and other digital forms have granted ease of access and the advantage of self-paced learning to a learner. Online learning has surely minimized a teachers' role in platforms honestly too.

They emphasize upon the teachers not only to be aware of the advantages but also the limitations of digital learning platforms. It is beyond doubt a pre-requisite for a trained teacher to be able to comprehend the "contextual factors to enhance and/or transform their teaching, student learning and assessments" state (Moorhouse *et al.*, 2023). Stockwell & Wang, (2023) give utmost importance to sustainable assessments. Janke *et al.* (2021) highlight dishonesty to be a major problem in online teaching. Janke *et al.* (2021) view teachers to be very casual in their assessments, sometimes even sharing their questions or replicating the same mock papers in exams. Researchers find combating cheating to be a major issue in online learning. Bilen and Matros (2020), claim lack of motivation to be the sole operating factor behind cheating and observe that more meaningful and authentic assessment can visibly reduce the urge to cheat.

Moorhouse *et al.* (2021), Rehn *et al.* (2018) and Stickler *et al.* (2020) suggest that though technological knowhow is imperative but knowing technical skills is not sufficient for success. They view practice will bring confidence to the teachers as well as enable them to learn from their past mistakes. Moorhouse, (2023), emphasizes upon developing one's unique style from experimenting on virtual platforms.

Yang (2021) asserts that academia must not only train teachers but also nurture teachers' comprehension and understanding about their role as knowledge givers through digital technology, and their capacity to use flip teaching manage with online teaching.

Sailer *et al.* (2021) have proposed a model that emphasizes upon an interlinking of skills, attitude and institutional factors in the learning triad. They claim that individuals (teacher and /or student) cannot succeed in isolation. For holistic learning, all stakeholders must cooperate willingly. Moorhouse (2023) credits teachers to be human and must learn from their past mistakes and successes, in order to develop a unique teaching style with confidence. Teachers assesses their students to consider the positive outcomes of their hard work. Hence assessments are a reflection of students' performance as well as the teachers. In accurate assessment is believed to negatively affect a learner's academic life and career view (Abedi, 2006a; Artiles *et al.*, 2005).

The researcher views another fact that should not be

ignored, the economic prospects related to opportunities for graduate students, in learning a foreign language. In order to counter the detrimental consequences of language skills evaluation for students, it is important that language teachers are doubly conscious of the influence they wield on their professional and personal lives of ESLs because English is a language that enables people to acquire jobs. Abedi *et al.* (2005) advise not to require long descriptive answers. They insist that test item writers develop test items in a language that is not linguistically complex. The independent use of non-human AI tools, nurtures self-learning, which is more everlasting and will help them to ace speaking and the art of business writing, drafting research proposals as well as preparing project reports.

In the age of AI, Siemens (2003) shifts the responsibility of learning to the learners rather than the teacher; Stating a teacher's prime task to "create learning ecologies, shape communities, and release learners into the environment" (Siemens, 2003). This shift of the burden of learning empowers the teacher but ensures that the teachers "create learning ecologies" for personal and professional growth as well as that of the students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The responsibility of the Faculty of English is to develop communicative competence in the students enrolled in the departments of English across five campuses, of a private university operating in five cities of Pakistan. This university purchased Coursera license to provide free access to its students. Unstable economy, lack of employment opportunities and unstable political scenarios in Pakistan are a challenge for the Pakistani youth. The universities are aware of the importance of competence in foreign language in their future professional lives. Measures like providing access, free of cost, to students for using Coursera online certificates is a step in the same direction.

The epistemological framework that informs this study is connectivism proposed by Siemens & Downes (2003). Siemens (2004) theorized knowledge to be flowing in from multiple networks. He cognized that humans live in a flux of knowledge, that is forever transforming. Since knowledge is as vast as a sea, it requires learners to 'plug in' to this sea of perpetual flow of information. It is no more controlled by academic institutions or teachers. Downes (2007) opposed the concept of making meaning from the flood of information, he believed that a learner cannot be taught intentionally, s/he can only make associations between the flow of information by plugging in and making connections or associations for self-improvement. Siemens (2003) states that learning "resides" in non-human tools and "currency" or staying abreast with latest developments in all areas of learning. Access to a diversity of language learning platforms, native instructors, and interactions between students from all over the world allows a socio-cultural mediation so important for learning English for non-native learners

in this Capitalist world.

Byrdina *et al.* (2020) studied and concluded the experiment of flipped classroom teaching to be successful in Russian universities. Zubkov (2002) asserts that the competence language development through Coursera can only be successful through exercising a methodological approach to teaching a language based on proper integration, authentic teaching, conscientiousness, and activity-based nature of language teaching by ELTs.

Johnstone (2006) and Levidow (2001) both contend that higher education institutions are commodities and need to be reorganized to cater to the needs of the capitalist market. Levidow (2006) demands that higher education institutions cannot ignore the “academic capitalism” that requires better quality and improvements in management and revisions in curricula for acceptance of graduates into the service industry. Rawat (2010) believes that “higher education should also be treated as a market good amenable to market forces”, in Pakistan. Though a teacher still plays a central role in our classrooms but Higher education institutions of Pakistan must seriously consider using technology and replacing traditional classrooms with virtual classrooms, he opines.

The English language teachers in Pakistan view that proficiency in English increases ones’ chances of being employed in the capitalist global world, asserting that

command over English language never fails to impress the interview panel. Devi (2016) also supports the viewpoint that strong communication skills are an advantage in the competitive job market.

Data Collection

The major source of the ‘raw’ data collected is the survey and statistical data collected by the Coursera Academic Integration Directorate team from September to December 2024. The scholar is a member of the Research and Authoring group working under the CAID. The directorate was established in a Pakistani private university to assess the effectiveness of Coursera platform in developing English language skills of the students enrolled in the department of English across its five campuses in Pakistan. The data collected and analyzed highlights the successes and failures of this experiment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study reveals that out of 124 course instructors who participated in the study, 100 percent achieved Coursera integration into their daily classroom teaching by integrating a maximum number of 124 courses into their language and literature-based courses from September 2023 to - December 2024.

Table 1: Integration of Coursera MOOCs into Degree Programs at all levels

Integration of coursera across all degree programs				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
BS English	107	86.2	86.2	86.2
M.Phil English	8	6.5	6.5	6.5
Functional Eng courses	9	7.3	7.3	7.30
Total	124	100.0	100.0	100

A major part of the faculty members reported the purpose of integration to be self-learning and 12.0 % shared that they used flip classroom teaching model. Whereas, 18 %

of the population believed that online certificates will increase their prospects of jobs in the competitive world by embellishing their curriculum vitae. See Table 2.

Table 2: Purpose of Integration

Purpose of Integration				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Flip Classroom	16	12.0	12.0	12.0
Self-Learning	90	73.5	73.5	73.5
Extra/Optional Work for Employment Opportunites	18	14.5	14.5	14.5
Total	124	100.0	100.0	100

Table 3: Category of Regular Courses integrated with Coursera Courses

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Core	114	91.9	92.7	92.7
	Functional English	8	6.5	6.5	6.5
	Elective	1	.8	.8	0.8
	Total	123	99.2	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.8		
Total		124	100.0		100

As indicated above most of the Coursera courses were integrated with the core courses in the BS English Program. Contrastingly only 6.5% Functional English

instructors recommended an online Coursera course to the classes, the outcome of these courses was developing the communication competence in English.

Table 4: Course Type integrated

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Skill	58	46.8	46.8	46.8
Theory	66	53.2	53.2	53.2
Total	124	100.0	100.0	100

A majority of faculty, 66% recommended theory- based courses on Coursera for their students when their

emphasis was on developing linguistic competence that would benefit the ESLs in their professional lives.

Table 5: Ensuring Student Participation

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Class Discussion	4	3.2	3.2	3.2
Completion Certificate	82	66.1	66.1	66.1
Assessment Mark	3	2.5	2.5	2.5
More than one	35	28.2	28.2	28.20
Total	124	100.0	100.0	100

Upon responding to the question how did they ensure student participation, 66.1 % replied that they relied on the submission of Coursera certificates for evaluation. 28.2% replied that they used more than one method, giving no details about the multiple methods used. 2.5 %

claimed having given assessment marks, giving no details about the rubric either 3.2 % stated that they conducted discussions among their students based on the courses opted for, in their classrooms.

Table 6: Major Positive Factors reported by participants that impacted upon students' language acquisition through MOOCs

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Self-learning/increased utilization of online resources	38	30.6	30.6	30.6
Soft skills development//Critical thinking skills	6	4.8	4.8	4.8
Improvement in English language/Communication skills	13	10.5	10.5	10.5
Broader perspective of subject and exposure for better jobs	34	27.4	27.4	27.4
Research skills	1	.8	.8	0.8
Presentation skills	10	8.1	8.1	8.1
Writing Skills	10	8.1	8.1	8.1
Total	124	100.0	100.0	100.0

Other than self-learning and development of communication skills reported as beneficial by 38% faculty members, a significant size of the population i.e., 27.4% commented that these online certificates provided exposure and broader perspective to the students that would enable them to find lucrative employment opportunities. Other than these advantages a few minor

problems were also observed through careful analysis of the data collected.

Major Findings

Data provided by Coursera on the student engagement was a major factor upon the inadequate utilization of course integration. For instance,

Table 7: Factors resulting in low engagement of students with courses

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Class Discussion	113	91.1	91.1	91.1
Completion Certificate	6	4.8	4.8	4.8
Assessment Mark	5	4.0	4.0	4.0
Total	124	100.0	100.0	100.0

upon analysis of the data from grader's report, it was observed that in 91.1 percent course instructors reported low engagement level of students in their online courses based on information collected from the student's grade books as well as from their own assessments. 4 % stated having faced problems due to the absence of relevant Coursera course for their courses and 5 percent stated that students had no internet access or were not given

access to the platform due to license issues. In addition to the management issues, it was observed that since majority of the faculty believed that good communication skills in English are a requirement for getting accepted in the job market, only a small number of courses were recommended to enhance communication skills, as shown above in Table 3. A crosstabulation of the impact of integration is given below:

Table 8: A crosstabulation of the impact of Integration

Student Participation on Coursera MOOCs: Crosstabulation result				
		Integration Result		Total
		Success	Failure	
Class Discussion	Count	4	0	4
	Expected Count	3.7	.3	4.0
Completion Certificate	Count	73	9	82
	Expected Count	75.4	6.6	82.0
Assessment Marks	Count	3	0	3
	Expected Count	2.8	.2	3.0
More than one	Count	34	1	35
	Expected Count	32.2	2.8	35.0
Total	Count	114	10	124
	Expected Count	114.0	10.0	124.0

Table 9: Result of Integration of Coursera into Academics

Integration of Coursera into Academics - Result			Success	Failure	Total
Integration Purpose	Flip Classroom	Count	16	0	16
		Expected Count	14.7	1.3	16.0
	Self-Learning	Count	82	8	90
		Expected Count	82.7	7.3	90.0
	Extra/Optional Work	Count	15	2	17
		Expected Count	15.6	1.4	17.0
	Guided Learning	Count	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.9	.1	1.0
	Total	Count	114	10	124
		Expected Count	114.0	10.0	124.0

Further analysis of the data shown in Table 7 and 8 revealed that flip classroom method remained successful but guided learning failed due to the following reasons:

1. 33/124 regular degree courses did not match with the content of the Coursera courses recommended to the students.
2. In 16/124 courses, course objectives could not be achieved as the outcome of the courses were not reported by the participants. They were neutral when asked if this online tool had a positive or a negative impact. On the whole, 89/124 reported no negative impact.
3. 51/124 course instructors responded that the courses resulted in improving their students' communication skills. When only 6.5% faculty recommended online courses for Functional English courses and 92.5% instructors recommended additional Coursera courses for

their theory-based courses in Linguistics and Literature.

4. No uniform policy was observed in giving weight to the additional Coursera courses ranging from 50% to 75% upon integration into a Core or an Elective course.

5. Assessments were also observed to be problematic in some cases as the assessments for two courses titled "Academic Writing" were assessed through discussions on the course content rather than evaluation of student's writing skills. Similarly, an elective course instructor teaching Drama employed discussion to be a strategy for evaluating the outcome of online Coursera course on Drama. Problems were also observed in the integration of long duration courses (of 40-23.4) hours into the UR and elective courses of 3 Credit hours duration.

6. 27.4 % Faculty members regarded the Coursera certificates would prove to be beneficial in getting job

opportunities to their students. 30.6 % believed that their students have become independent learners. 10.5 % reported improvement in students' communication skills and 8.1% stated that improvements also appeared in the learner's presentation skills.

CONCLUSION

The researcher concludes that in the light of the above findings it that 2310 undergrad students benefited from the free online courses on Coursera that were provided to university students free of cost to improve their language competence in English. Since another aim of this digitalization was to provide additional edge to the enrolled students over other Pakistani graduates in gaining employability, therefore more skill-based courses should have been recommended, integrated and assessed more thoroughly into the academic degree. This research is significant not only for language teachers, the findings will result in better utilization of the Coursera platform and also lead to further research on how many students were employed on the basis of the completing extra certificates in addition to their formal degree courses.

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