DOI 10.31489/2020Ped3/12-17

UDC 378.147:81

A.N. Kalizhanova[1]*, T.V. Maryshkina[1], T.Yu. Shelestova[2],
A.U. Aupenova[1], T.A. Letyaikina[3]

[1]*«Bolashaq» Academy, Karaganda, Kazakhstan;*
[2]*Karagandy University of the name of academician E.A. Buketov, Kazakhstan;*
[3]*Miras University, Shymkent, MA in TESOL (Stirling, UK)*
*(*Corresponding author's e-mail: anna.kalizhanova2017@gmail.com)*

RELO MOOC experience: facilitating online learning with a diverse group of the participants

The article describes the Project, aimed at supporting a diverse group of the participants in their learning with the help of such Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) as English for Media Literacy and English for STEM and organized by Teachers of English Association of Kazakhstan (KazTEA) and the Regional English Language Office of the U.S. Embassy in Nur-Sultan (RELO). Amongst the project participants were students and teachers from all over Kazakhstan, including Karaganda, Almaty, Atyrau, Kyzylorda, Shymkent, etc. Foreign language skills among the participants ranged from beginner to advanced levels. To help adapt to the Courser's platform, ensure the maximum involvement of the participants, their cooperation, and mastery of new competencies in each group, a facilitator teacher, whose role was in contrast to a regular teacher, was involved. This project was the first, in which the main tasks and the principle of the facilitator's work were gradually clarified and defined. The experience gained helped to describe in detail the functions of the facilitator, their difference from the generally accepted ideas about a teacher-leader. Thanks to the facilitators' sessions, all participants successfully completed both courses and later used the platform to proceed with other courses in their professional areas and interests.

Keywords: MOOC, online learning, Coursera, English for Media Literacy, English for STEM, facilitator.

Having come from Western education, online learning is only gaining popularity in Kazakhstan. Many professionals still do little experience of using the materials of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in their professional activities due to the lack of sustainability [1]. At the same time, nobody argue that MOOCs open new opportunities for the national education system thereby, people need to learn to use for their successful career.

The first well-known top US University that started to digitize the lectures of leading professors and spread them into free Internet access since the beginning of the 2000s became Massachusetts Institute of Technology [2]. Its authors provided only the fragments of training courses, tests, and various simulators that was not enough due to the lack of users' motivation while learning the subjects in such a way; therefore, a need to organize the process of online training give impetus to the next stage — MOOC or Massive Open Online Courses [3].

MOOCs' success was obvious: for instance, 370,000 students enrolled in the nonprofit project of Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology EDX [4] as well as 155,000 remote students enrolled for only one course «Introduction to the Basics of Artificial Intelligence» provided by Udacity company [5].

In 2012, Stanford professors founded a web-platform Coursera for massive open online courses, the number of which grew significantly up today [6]. Now, Coursera MOOCs (www.coursera.org) gather free courses from thirty-three of the most famous US universities [6]. Each course provides information on the university issued it, the instructor, the syllabus, and the certificate in case of successful study. The course materials are arranged on a weekly basis with new video lections and corresponded quizzes to complete by the deadline set by the trainer. The participants have three trials to complete the test with the possibility to achieve the maximum score as final. Random location of tasks with every new trial diminishes the possibility to guess or learn the correct. Additionally, created by the teacher peer-reviewed practical assignments or mini-projects aim to check the knowledge gained and consolidate the material learned.

Peer-review assessment is one of the greatest features of all Coursera MOOCs because it ensures that research is both valid and relevant by providing timely and useful feedback by people who are eager to teach [7]. Such feedback involve adding additional data, identifying and correcting mistakes, assisting in structuring material, and improving the flow of presentation [8]. MOOCs authors are free to add supplemen-

tary literature including visual and virtual instruments to facilitate the process of learning when each lesson turns into a discussion where the participants learn from peers [9].

Currently, Coursera pursues a policy of a financial aid to those who cannot afford to buy the certificate. For this purpose, an applicant is free to apply by sending a motivation letter with no less than 150 words where explaining the reasons for being funded. All mentioned above great options from Coursera resulted in the Coursera courses' support and recognition by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan [10] that allowed Kazakhstan educational institutions and IT resources made the first steps in bringing the higher education online in 2016 [11].

2018 year has been marked by the necessity of preparing the transition from traditional distance learning to online training with the full teacher's support within the student-centered approach [12].

Then, lots of educational services and simulators appeared, but only such giants as Coursera and EdX could change the existing educational system significantly [11]. For instance, in 2020, the government of Kazakhstan made possible for unemployed to gain a new profession with the help of Coursera [13]. Another example that comes to mind is *The Coursera for Campus Project* that involved a number of Kazakhstani universities, which students got an opportunity to gain a little knowledge and experience from the best teachers in different fields from the legendary Harvard Stanford, Princeton, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Yale to Hebrew University in Jerusalem and receive appropriate certificates and diplomas for free [14].

However, online education with the help of MOOCs revealved the following: although the course participants indicated their satisfaction and comfort regarding working in such conditions, the university teachers hardly welcomed such an innovation due to the time-consuming process of converting papers into electronic products. Furthermore, efficient online work made sense only with the timely and productive feedback that teachers should have provided 24/7, but the teachers were not ready or were not sufficiently motivated to prepare high-quality educational content.

Such preliminary results proved a huge role of a teacher in online education with the help of MOOCs and, consequently, the necessity to consolidate the efforts of Kazakhstani teachers in preparing the MOOC to create new educational resources in Kazakhstan and conduct their certification at the world level.

In December 2019, Teachers of English Association of Kazakhstan (KazTEA) and the Regional English Language Office of the U.S. Embassy in Nur-Sultan (RELO) launched the American English Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) Facilitated Sessions Project, aimed at promoting such Coursera courses as English for Media Literacy and English for STEM from the Pennsylvania State University courses and involved EFL and STEM pre — and in-service teachers with intermediate to advanced English Language skills in 16 cities including Nur-Sultan, Almaty, Aktau, Aktobe, Atyrau, Karaganda, Kokshetau, Kostanay, Kyzylorda, Pavlodar, Petropavlovsk, Semey, Shymkent, Taraz, Uralsk and Ust-Kamenogorsk [15].

The idea of the Project was to gather such different participants as EFL and STEM pre — and in-service teachers to help the not only proceed with the Coursera courses but also learn to cooperate and gain new competences from each other. A minimum number of participants in one group should have accounted for 20 people, each of whose filled an application form where explained his/her motivation to participate in the Project, and passed the 50-min EF SET English level test [16] to prove their level of English (Fig. 1).

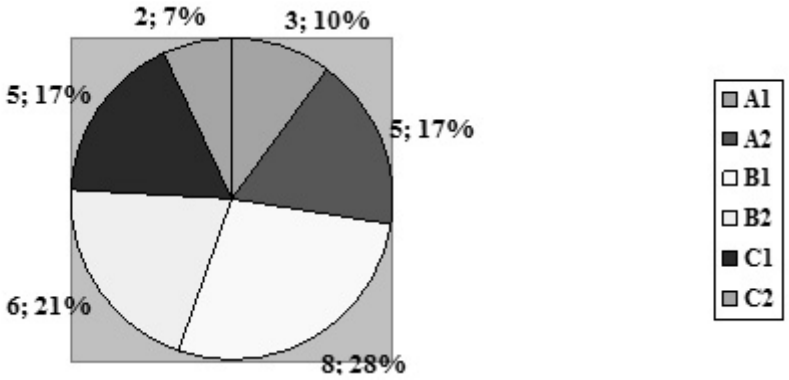

Figure 1. English level of the participants

During the selection process the school teachers in both ESL and STEM fields were the most active and indicated the highest need for the Project participation, whereas the ESL students — the lowest.

The Project lasted from November 25, 2019 to 30 June, 2020 and showed the interesting dynamics since a sine qua non for its successful accomplishment was a compulsory attendance of all facilitators sessions one a week.

By the end of March 2020, Karaganda participants involved 29 people from Karaganda State University, Bolashaq Academy and secondar schools from Karaganda City and Karaganda Region: 8 school teachers (4 — STEM and 4 — English); 8 students, 12 university teachers (6 — STEM, 5 — English, and 1 — humanitarian), and 1 art expert. 18 people had already got English for Media Literacy certificates, while 6 participants had already finished English for STEM course.

By the end of May 2020, the final list of Karaganda participants involved 26 people: 4 school teachers (2 — STEM and 2 — English); 10 students, 11 university teachers (5 — STEM, 5 — English, and 1 — humanitarian), and 1 art expert. 26 people had finished English for Media Literacy course, and 22 participants hade finished English for STEM course. The difference in the number of the attendies and their certificates can be seen in Figure 1 explained by the following:

1) One of the participants, a retired ESL university teacher, did not miss any sessions both face-to-face and online, attracted two of her university students, who completed English for Media Literacy, but did not complete any courses. She was eager to stay tuned; however, it was very difficult for her to cope with such a format involved blended learning.

2) Another attendee, a pre-service ESL student, completed English for Media Literacy but refused to finish English for STEM due to no desire to penetrate into any scientific issues.

3) Another pre-service ESL student completed all tasks and quizzes for English for STEM; however, she had been still waiting for her certificate from Coursera since 25.05.2020.

4) The strongest motivation appeared the desire to learn English — both a humanitarian teacher from the Bolashaq Academy and n Art expert with the lowest level of English (A1) did not miss any of sessions and successfully completed both Coursera courses.

5) KSU STEM teachers became more active during the online facilitators' sessions for Coursera English for STEM course.

6) ESL Bolashaq teachers, alternaively, were more active during the face-to-face facilitators' sessions for English for Media Literacy Coursera course.

7) The school teachers in both STEM and ESL spheres appeared the weakest participants because half of the first number of them failed to complete the courses due to lack of time.

8) Some school teachers refused to participate in the Project as soon as they understood that the facilitators' sessions' attendance is a must.

9) None of the participants indicated the need for a certificate of the professional development as the main reason why he or she would like to participate in the Project. In turn, all of them expressed the interest to grow professionally and personally.

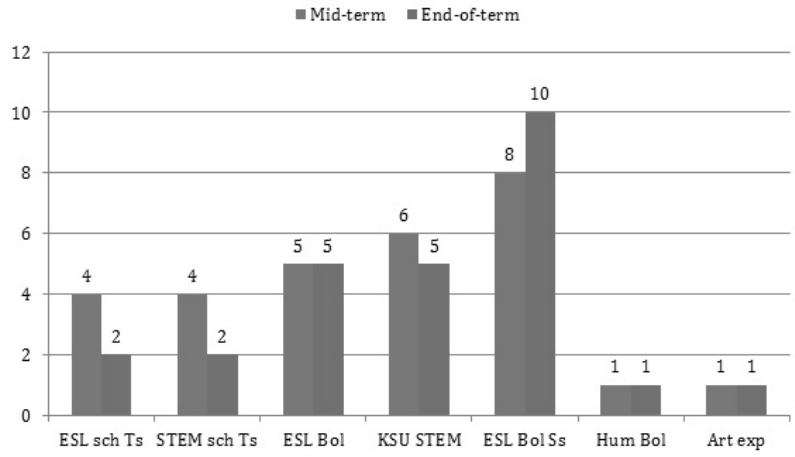

Figure 2. Data in comparison on the number of the Karaganda participants of American English MOOC Facilitated Sessions' Project

The facilitators' sessions increased the interest of the participants in learning with Coursera. The latter found other materials within their professional interests and got more certificates from the platform:

1) 7 students-participants completed the course «Teach English Now! Technology Enriched Teaching». These students created their final projects — the educational websites with the online lessons designed by them;

2) 1 participant completed the course «Art & Inquiry: Museum Teaching Strategies for your Classroom»;

3) 2 attendes started learning html and web design with Coursera;

4) 4 students-participants started learning French and Korean with Coursera;

5) 1 ESL student taught English for Media Literacy to the school students of the Gymnasium 45 during her professional practice with such topics as «Social Media,» «The End of the Gender,» «Advertisement,» and «How to choose your News.»

The materials of both courses English for Media Literacy and English for STEM were used during the Computer Assisted Language Learning classes, when both ESL students and their teacher were practicing to create interactive tasks with the help of such tools as *LearningApps*, *Quizlet*, *EdPuzzle*, *StoryBoardThat*, *Buncee*, *Kahoot!*, *Trello*, *Movie Maker*, *Active Presenter*, *Zoom*, *GoConq, Genially*, *Canva*, etc. The materials of one or another course were introduced into the educational process of such educational institutions as *Gymnasium No. 45*, *DarynBoard School for Skillful Kids*, *Karaganda University named after Buketov*, and *1 secondary school in Temirtau* right after the end of the lockdown period.

These facilitators' sessions appeared a good example of how to use the course materials after getting the certificate from Coursera. But, the overall situation with the COVID-19 revealed the huge importance of an ability to teach online as well as the most significant merit of the Project was the opportunity to unite all participants at one place, where they could share their experience and emotions while proceeding with the courses' activities. The diverse mixture of people of different ages, backgrounds, and life experiences was a distinct advantage of the project. These differences provoked meaningful discussions, exchange of viewpoints, and resulted in increased learning of ideas and skills. The participants' feedback revealed that the attendees not only learned the course content but also developed new strategies for successful language learning like skimming and scanning, using vocabulary grids, reading and watching templates, etc.

In conclusion, we would like to propose some solutions how to work online with a diverse group of learners:

– Working on a platform that participants feel comfortable with and that allows interaction.

– Choosing quality over quantity: it is better to plan fewer activities taking into account technical/internet connectivity problems, as well as a slower pace of discussions.

– Scaffolding through using effective graphic organizers. We recommend to use various tools such as Wordle, diagrams, drawings, pictures in order to check and reinforce understanding of the week content, and help participants prepare for the key communicative activity.

– Employing interactive games and websites (Kahoot, Quizlet, Youglish, etc) as a basis for learning both content and language.

– Making the participants create various instructional interactives themselves with the help of such tools as LearningApps, Quizlet, EdPuzzle, StoryBoardThat, Buncee, Kahoot!, Trello, Movie Maker, Active Presenter, Zoom, GoConq, Genially, Canva, etc. that resulted in more careful processing of the materials of both courses.

– Working in collaboration with other facilitators via the google drive/classroom and whatsapp group/email was really helpful.

Summing up, this Project showed a teacher from a different angle: any teacher can turn from a transmitter of information into a facilitator, who will support his/her students' autonomous lifelong learning.

References

1 Elf M. Implementation of open educational resources in a nursing programme: experiences and reflections / M. Elf, E. Ossiannilsson, M. Neljesjö, M. Jansson // Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning. — 2015. — Vol. 30, No. 3. — P. 252–266. DOI: 10.1080/02680513.2015.1127140.

2 Class Central. Free Online Courses and MOOCs [Electronic resource]. — URL: http://www.class-central.com/university/mit.

3 MOOC List. — URL: http://www.mooc-list.com

4 Baraka M. Motivation to Learn in Massive Open Online Courses: Examining Aspects of Language and Social Engagement [Electronic resource] / M. Baraka et al. // Computers & Education, Pergamon. — 2015. — URL: http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/ pii/S0360131515300828.

5 Free Online Classes & Nanodegrees. Udacity [Electronic resource]. — URL: http:// www.udacity.com

6 Wochner J. Electronic Resource Review: Coursera, www.coursera.org / J. Wochner // Music Reference Services (Quarterly). — 2018. — Vol. 21, Iss. 4. — P. 223–225. DOI: 10.1080/10588167.2018.1536191

7 Kelly J. Peer Review in Scientific Publications: Benefits, Critiques, & a Survival Guide / J. Kelly, T. Sadeghieh, K. Adeli // EJIFCC. — 2014. — Vol. 25, Iss. 3. — P. 227–243.

8 Butler D.L. Feedback and self-regulated learning: A theoretical synthesis / D.L. Butler, P.H. Winne // Review of Educational Research. — 1995. — Vol. 65. — P. 245–281.

9 Irvin J.L. Taking action on adolescent literacy: An implementation guide for school leaders / J.L. Irvin, J. Meltzer, M.S. Dukes. — Alexandria, Va: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2007.

10 [Electronic resource]. — URL: https://lenta.inform.kz/en/utverzhdena-gosprogramma-razvitiya-obrazovaniya-i-nauki-kazahstana-na-2016-2019-gody_ a3341533.

11 Inbusiness, December 22, 2016 [Electronic resource]. — URL: https://inbusiness.kz/ru/news/vysshee-obrazovanie-vyhodit-v-onlajn.

12 Muminov A. The Cancellation of Distance Learning: Advantages and Disadvantages for Universities and Students [Electronic resource] / A. Muminov // World and Kazakhstan News on the Business Portal Kapital.kz. — URL: http://www.kapital.kz/gosudarstvo/ 71230/otmena-zaochki-plyusy-i-minusy-dlya-vuzov-i-studentov.html.).

13 [Electronic resource]. — URL: https://www.vlast.kz/novosti/39383-kazahstanskie-bezrabotnye-smogut-besplatno-projti-kurs-na-coursera.html

14 Don't miss your chance KazNU — a member of the Coursera for Campus project! | Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, April 21, 2020 [Electronic resource]. — URL: https://www.kaznu.kz/en/21517/news/one/19897/

15 Amercian English Massive Open Online Course Facilitated Sessions Project. KazTEA, 2019 [Electronic resource]. — URL: http://kaz-tea.kz/page/11/

16 [Electronic resource]. — URL: https://www.efset.org/ef-set-50

А.Н. Калижанова, Т.В. Марышкина, Т.Ю. Шелестова,
Ә.Ү. Әупенова, Т.А. Летяйкина

ЖАОК АТАК: Біртекті емес студенттер тобында онлайн оқытуды қолдау

Мақалада Қазақстан мұғалімдерінің ағылшын қауымдастығы мен АҚШ Елшілігінің ағылшын тілі аймақтық офисімен бірлесіп ұйымдастырған Жаппай ашық онлайн курстарға (ЖАОК) қатысушыларды қолдау тәжірибесі сипатталған. АҚШ университеттері құрған English for Media Literacy және English for STEM курстарын үлгі ретінде ала отырып, Coursera платформасын қолдау және алға жылжыту курстың мақсаты болып табылады. Жобаға қатысушылар арасында Қарағанды, Алматы, Атырау, Қызылорда және т.б. қалаларды қоса алғанда, Қазақстанның түкпір-түкпірінен келген студенттер мен оқытушылар болды. Қатысушылар арасында шет тілін білу дағдылары intermediate деңгейінен advanced деңгейіне дейін меңгерген. Coursera платформасына бейімделуге көмектесу, қатысушылардың барынша қатысуын қамтамасыз ету, оларды кооперацияландыруға және әр топта жаңа құзіреттіліктерді игеру үшін рөлі қарапайым оқытушымен бірдей болатын фасилитатор-оқытушы тартылды. Осы фасилитатордың негізгі міндеттері мен жұмыс принципі біртіндеп анықталған және белгіленген бұл жоба бірінші болып табылады. Алынған тәжірибе фасилитатордың функцияларын, олардың мұғалім-жетекші туралы жалпы қабылданған ұсыныстардан айырмашылығын егжей-тегжейлі сипаттауға көмектесті. Фасилитаторлық сессиялардың арқасында барлық қатысушылар екі курстан сәтті өтті, кейінірек олардың кәсіби бағыттары мен мүдделері аясында басқа курстарда оқыту үшін платформаны қолданды.

Кілт сөздер: ЖАОК, онлайн-оқыту, STEAM үшін ағылшын, медиасауаттылық үшін ағылшын тілі, Coursera, фасилитатор.

А.Н. Калижанова, Т.В. Марышкина, Т.Ю. Шелестова, А.У. Аупенова, Т.А. Летяйкина

РЕЛО МООК: Поддержка онлайн обучения в группе с неоднородными обучающимися

В статье описан опыт участия в проекте с целью поддержки участников Массовых открытых онлайн курсов (далее МООКи), как Английский для медиаграмотности и Английский для STEM, организованных Английской ассоциацией учителей Казахстана совместно с Региональным офисом английского языка Посольства США. Среди участников проекта были студенты и преподаватели со всего Казахстана, включая гг. Караганду, Алматы, Атырау, Кызылорду, Шымкент и другие. Навыки владения иностранным языков среди участников варьировались от начального до продвинутого уровней. Для помощи участникам проекта в адаптации к платформе Coursera, обеспечения максимального вовлечения участников, их кооперации и овладения новыми компетенциями в каждой группе был привлечён

преподаватель-фасилитатор, чья роль контрастировала с деятельностью обычного преподавателя. Этот проект был первым, в котором постепенно были выяснены и обозначены основные задачи и принцип работы фасилитатора. Полученный опыт помог подробно описать функции фасилитатора, их отличие от общепринятых представлений об учителе-руководителе. Благодаря фасилитаторским сессиям все участники успешно прошли оба курса, а позже использовали платформу для обучения по другим курсам в рамках их профессиональных направлений и интересов.

Ключевые слова: МООК, онлайн обучение, английский для STEM, английский для медиаграмотности, Coursera, фасилитатор.

References

1 Elf, M., Ossiannilsson, E., Neljesjö, M., & Jansson, M. (2015). Implementation of open educational resources in a nursing programme: experiences and reflections, *Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning, 30, 3,* 252–266, DOI: 10.1080/02680513.2015.1127140.

2 Class Central. Free Online Courses and MOOCs. *www.class-central.com* Retrieved from http://www.class-central.com/university/mit.

3 MOOC List. *www.mooc-list.com* Retrieved from http://www.mooc-list.com

4 Baraka, M., et al. (2015). Motivation to Learn in Massive Open Online Courses: Examining Aspects of Language and Social Engagement. *Computers & Education, Pergamon*. Retrieved from http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360131515300828.

5 Free Online Classes & Nanodegrees. Udacity. *www.udacity.com*. Retrieved from http://www.udacity.com

6 Wochner, J. (2018). Electronic Resource Review: Coursera, www.coursera.org, *Music Reference Services (Quarterly), 21, 4*, 223–225, DOI: 10.1080/10588167.2018.1536191

7 Kelly, J., Sadeghieh, T., & Adeli, K. (2014). Peer Review in Scientific Publications: Benefits, Critiques, & a Survival Guide. *EJIFCC, 25(3)*, 227–243.

8 Butler, D.L., Winne, P.H. (1995). Feedback and self-regulated learning: A theoretical synthesis. *Review of Educational Research, 65,* 245–281.

9 Irvin, J.L., Meltzer, J., & Dukes, M.S. (2007). *Taking action on adolescent literacy: An implementation guide for school leaders.* Alexandria, Va: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

10 *lenta.inform.kz* Retrieved from https://lenta.inform.kz/en/utverzhdena-gosprogramma-razvitiya-obrazovaniya-i-nauki-kazahstana-na-2016–2019-gody_a3341533.

11 Inbusiness, December 22, 2016. *inbusiness.kz* Retrieved from https://inbusiness.kz/ru/news/vysshee-obrazovanie-vyhodit-v-onlajn.

12 Muminov, A. The Cancellation of Distance Learning: Advantages and Disadvantages for Universities and Students. *World and Kazakhstan News on the Business Portal Kapital.kz.* Retrieved from http://www.kapital.kz/gosudarstvo/71230/otmena-zaochki-plyusy-i-minusy-dlya-vuzov-i-studentov.html.).

13 *www.vlast.kz* Retrieved from https://www.vlast.kz/novosti/39383-kazahstanskie-bezrabotnye-smogut-besplatno-projti-kurs-na-coursera.html

14 Don't miss your chance KazNU — a member of the Coursera for Campus project! | Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, April 21, 2020. *www.kaznu.kz* Retrieved from https://www.kaznu.kz/en/21517/news/one/19897/

15 Amercian English Massive Open Online Course Facilitated Sessions Project.»KazTEA, 2019. *kaz-tea.kz* Retrieved from http://kaz-tea.kz/page/11/

16 *www.efset.org* Retrieved from https://www.efset.org/ef-set-50