

# Utilizing Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) to Enhance English Language Proficiency among Yemeni EFL Learners

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**Abstract:** This quantitative study aimed to investigate the use of MOOCs in improving the English language skills of Yemeni EFL learners. It sought to explore the perceptions of Yemeni EFL learners regarding the impact of MOOCs on improving their English language skills, the potential benefits of using MOOCs for language learning, and the obstacles encountered by learners. The sample of the study consisted of 86 English learners, including both males and females, enrolled at three universities in Ibb City, Yemen during the academic year 2023-2024. Closed-ended questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data, which was then analyzed using the SPSS statistical program. The findings of the study revealed that Yemeni EFL learners held an overall positive view of MOOCs and believed that they could enhance their English proficiency levels. The Yemeni EFL learners acknowledged the benefits of MOOCs in providing them with up-to-date learning resources, including readings, lectures, and videos. These diverse materials facilitated practical application and learning in a remote, online environment. The study presented several recommendations for EFL students, including recognizing the benefits of MOOCs, maintaining commitment and self-motivation, actively engaging with instructors and fellow learners, managing time effectively, and supplementing MOOC learning with additional resources.

**Keywords:** MOOCs, EFL, Language Proficiency, Yemeni Learners, online Learning

## 1. Introduction

The increasing prominence of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) has revolutionized digital education, offering open access to education, content, and learning opportunities without time or location constraints (Geng et al., 2020; Rahimi & Tafazoli, 2022; Waks, 2016). This has significantly impacted language learning, with MOOCs providing comprehensive and innovative materials, supportive instruction, and collaborative environments for a diverse range of learners (Abderrahmane & Mebitil, 2022). Despite the advantages of MOOCs, student and teacher participation remains limited, and their attitudes play a crucial role in their adoption and use (Abderrahmane & Mebitil, 2022). The perceived value and ease of use of these online courses significantly influence users' decisions to adopt them.

In today's globalized world, English language proficiency is essential for personal development, academic progress, and professional achievement (Gherhe et al., 2021). However, acquiring and strengthening English language abilities can be challenging for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, particularly in locations with limited access to high-quality resources and skilled

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instructors. This is especially true in the context of Yemen, where EFL learners face numerous obstacles, including a shortage of qualified teachers and suitable learning materials (Gherhe et al., 2021). The advancements in Internet technology have transformed education, enabling learning to be accessed anytime and anywhere, thus expanding educational opportunities and enhancing traditional classroom teaching (Gherhe et al., 2021). Consequently, MOOCs have emerged as a potential solution to overcome the constraints experienced by Yemeni EFL learners (Chanaa & Faddouli, 2021; Gherhe et al., 2021). These internet-based courses provide unrestricted access to diverse educational resources, such as interactive lessons, multimedia materials, and collaborative learning opportunities, making them widely popular worldwide due to their flexibility, cost-effectiveness, and capacity to reach a broad audience (Lazarus & Suryasen, 2022).

Utilizing MOOCs to improve English language skills among Yemeni EFL learners offers a novel solution to the educational obstacles encountered by the nation (Liyaganawardena et al., 2014). Through technology, MOOCs provide a convenient and engaging platform for EFL learners to enhance their linguistic abilities. However, the efficacy of MOOCs in this specific setting has yet to be thoroughly investigated.

### **1.1. Objectives of the Study**

The present study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To Study the Yemeni EFL learners' perceptions on the use of MOOCs in enhancing their English language proficiency.
2. To explore the opportunities that MOOCs provide for Yemeni EFL learners to enhance their English language skills.
3. To determine the challenges faced by Yemeni EFL learners when utilizing MOOCs for improving their English language proficiency.
4. To provide recommendations for the effective integration of MOOCs into English language learning.

### **1.2. Questions of the Study**

The present study seeks to answer the following research questions

1. How do Yemeni EFL learners perceive the use of MOOCs in enhancing their English language proficiency?
2. What opportunities do MOOCs provide for Yemeni EFL learners to enhance their English language skills as a foreign language?
3. What challenges do Yemeni EFL learners face when utilizing MOOCs for language learning purposes to enhance their English language proficiency?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Theoretical background**

English has become a widely recognized global language due to its significant role in our lives during this era of globalization. Individuals of various nationalities use English to communicate with one another (Mahfoodh, 2011). While English is employed as a native, secondary, and non-native language worldwide, in Yemen, it is taught specifically as a foreign language. Concurrent with the

increased demands and widespread availability of information, technology, and global social networks, practitioners and educators have been compelled to adopt new teaching methods and resources in the classroom (Duke et al., 2013). This transformation in the education sector has been facilitated by the utilization of information and communication technologies (ICTs), which have introduced novel pedagogical implications for the acquisition and instruction of the English language (ELL/T). In this context, e-learning, which employs technology and internet resources, can provide viable remedies for the difficulties encountered by students in English Language Learning (ELL). By offering tailored learning experiences, interactive exercises, and access to diverse instructional materials, e-learning has the potential to enhance students' language proficiency (Robinson, 2011).

Emerging as a prominent e-learning modality, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are online educational courses that are open to a large number of participants, providing access to high-quality educational content typically offered by universities or other educational institutions (Debnath, 2023). A crucial characteristic of MOOCs is their ability to facilitate connections among participants beyond the confines of traditional learning settings, thereby fostering autonomy, openness, and the emergence of new information (Viswanathan, 2012). This aspect allows learners to explore and implement the fundamental framework of a course based on their personal experiences and ideas about learning, while MOOCs provide them with appropriate resources to achieve their goals.

The increasing popularity of MOOCs can be attributed to their capacity to democratize education and offer access to top-notch learning materials for individuals who cannot participate in conventional face-to-face courses (Lazarus & Suryasen, 2022). Various platforms, such as Coursera, edX, and FutureLearn, provide English language courses that cover a wide range of topics, including grammar, vocabulary, oral communication, auditory comprehension, and written expression. These courses, often developed and instructed by experienced language educators, are designed to be interactive and captivating, enabling students to enhance their language proficiency through activities, quizzes, and peer engagement.

## 2.2. Previous Studies

Several studies have investigated the impact of MOOC-based programs on language proficiency. Mellati and Khademi (2018) found that Iranian EFL learners in a MOOC-based program outperformed a control group in terms of language proficiency, although the study also identified technical and emotional challenges associated with MOOCs. Althubaiti and Almasaad (2020) reported that MOOCs significantly improved learners' knowledge and skills in English. Similarly, Hashemifardnia et al. (2021) found that MOOCs significantly improved the speaking complexity, accuracy, and fluency of Iranian EFL learners. Chang (2023) assessed the use of MOOCs and data-driven learning activities to prepare EFL students for academic content in English, and the results showed significant improvements in students' academic listening skills.

In terms of perceptions and attitudes of language learners and instructors towards the use of MOOCs, Sharma (2018) found a positive disposition among faculty members in India towards using MOOCs in Library and Information Science education. Additionally, Aljaraideh (2019) reported that faculty members at Jerash University viewed MOOCs as beneficial for learners but also identified challenges associated with their use. Yaşar (2020) found that EFL learners had positive attitudes towards integrating MOOCs into their language learning, and Abderrahmane and Mebitil (2022) observed positive attitudes towards MOOCs among both EFL students and teachers, although their willingness to use them could be higher.

Researchers have also examined the importance of personalization and engagement in MOOC-based language learning. Yunus et al. (2019) found that MOOCs can be effective in improving communication skills, but they highlighted the importance of interaction and engagement among learners. Jitpaisarnwattana et al. (2021) investigated how language learners personalize their learning experience in a MOOC focused on developing English presentation skills, and they found that both personalized learning plans (PLPs) and individual learning plans (ILPs) were effective. Siyuan and Sriwisathiyakun (2022) developed online vocabulary-based active learning activities for Chinese higher vocational college students, which significantly improved their attitudes towards writing and their English writing proficiency. Accordingly, studies suggested that MOOCs can be an effective tool for language learning, with the potential to improve language proficiency, learner attitudes, and engagement. However, the effectiveness of MOOCs may vary depending on factors such as learner motivation, technical challenges, and the need for personalization.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1. Research Design

The researcher employed a quantitative research method to investigate the use of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) to improve the English language proficiency of Yemeni learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the universities in Ibb City. Based on the research aims and questions, it is appropriate to accomplish the goals of the current study. Creswell (2008) describes quantitative research in education as a process where the researcher selects a specific topic of study, formulates a precise and narrowly defined inquiry, collects measurable data from participants, applies statistical analysis to this data, and carries out the investigation in an impartial and objective manner. The quantitative approach in this study involves using a close-ended questionnaire distributed to university EFL students who are studying at level one in various universities of Ibb city, Yemen. The data obtained through this questionnaire will be analysed using SPSS statistical software.

#### 3.2. Participants

The study surveyed a total of 86 students from the Department of English Language at universities in Ibb city, Yemen. The participants were from level one on the selected universities. The Table 1: Number of Participants of the Selected Universities shows the sample used in the study.

*Table 1: Number of Participants of the Selected Universities*

University	Frequency	Percent
Ibb University	49	56.98
Al-Qalam University	15	17.44
National University	22	25.58
Total	86	100

The table presented above shows the number of participants from different universities. From Ibb University, there were 49 participants, representing 56.98% of the total. For Al-Qalam University, there were 15 participants, representing 17.44%. At National University, there were 22 participants, representing 25.58%. These figures indicate that almost half of the participants were from Ibb University. This is explained in details in Figure 1 Number of Participants of the Selected Universities

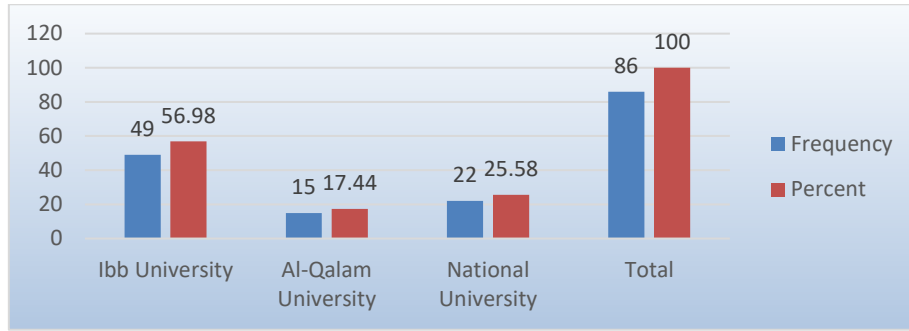


Figure 1 Number of Participants of the Selected Universities

The respondents of the questionnaires were both male and female. The explanation of the frequency of gender distribution of respondents is in Table 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents:

Table 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents:

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	15	17.44
Female	71	82.56
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The table presented above shows the number of respondents according to gender. The number of males was 15, representing 17.44% of the total respondents, while the number of females was 71, representing 82.56%. It indicates that a majority of the responses were from females. This is explained in details in Figure 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

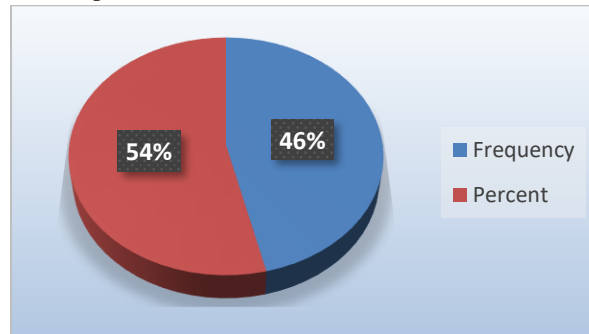


Figure 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

### 3.3. Instruments

The instrument of the study was developed by the researchers after careful review of past studies. The items were designed according to the situation of Yemen and based on the needs of the study to achieve its objectives. The validity of the survey was ensured as five experts reviewed the survey and their comments were taken into consideration.

### 3.4. Reliability

The present study utilized questionnaires as the primary data collection instrument. The researcher developed a 30-item questionnaire to assess the impact of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) on improving the English language proficiency of Yemeni learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The questionnaire employed Likert scales to measure response levels, including categories such

as strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. The reliability of the test was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha method, which yielded a coefficient of 0.787, indicating a high level of internal consistency. This result provides robust evidence of the test's reliability and consistency, as displayed in Table 3: Statistical measures of reliability

**Table 3:** Statistical measures of reliability

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.787	30

### 3.5. Procedures

Close-ended questionnaires are utilized to gather information regarding EFL students' perceptions of utilizing Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) to improve the English language proficiency. The survey instrument is created by utilizing the Google Form platform. Subsequently, it is disseminated among the student body. A Google Form questionnaire was designed to facilitate subject participation by accommodating potential time constraints that may impede their ability to complete the survey. The utilization of online close-ended questionnaires facilitates data collection and enhances subject participation in research.

### 3.6. Data analysis

The statistical analysis of the quantitative data gathered from the questionnaire will be conducted using SPSS 29.0 software. According to Ismail (2011), the SPSS software generates various forms of descriptive statistics and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The data collected from participants who completed the survey will be quantified using a 5-point Likert scale. A score of 5 is assigned if the participant responds highly proficiently.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Results

#### 4.1.1. Descriptive Statistics for Questionnaire Items

The data presented in Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Questionnaire Items table presents the overall opinion of Enhancing English Language Proficiency among Yemeni EFL Learners through Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). The table includes 30 statements. The findings indicate that, overall, most participants have a favorable opinion towards utilizing Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) for enhancing English language proficiency. The mean values span a range from 2.7907 at the lower end to 4.3023 at the upper back, with a standard deviation (SD) ranging from 0.83723 to 1.31163.

Concerning the various aspects of using MOOCs, the mean score for the helpful and effective aspects of MOOCs is high, ranging from 3.4302 to 4.3023. This suggests that the respondents generally have a positive opinion about the benefits and effectiveness of using MOOCs for learning English.

In contrast, the mean score for the challenges and drawbacks of using MOOCs is relatively lower, ranging from 3.1744 to 3.9419. This indicates that the respondents also recognize some of the difficulties and limitations associated with learning English through MOOCs, such as the lack of face-to-face interaction, personalized guidance, and immediate assistance.

**Table 4:** Descriptive Statistics for Questionnaire Items

No	Statement	No	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	MOOCs are helpful for acquiring updated information when learning English.	86	4.3023	.85502
2.	MOOCs play a fruitful role in effectively learning English	86	3.9302	.83723
3.	The different types of audio and video materials in MOOCs provide great opportunities to gain practical and useful English knowledge	86	4.0698	.87838
4.	Internet usage in the classroom can help students achieve updated knowledge of the English language	86	3.5581	1.19415
5.	learners become more innovative with the help of e-learning	86	3.4302	1.02373
6.	MOOCs provide students with useful information to compete in this competitive world	86	3.4767	1.12435
7.	English lessons incorporating multimedia applications exert powerful motivation and provide exciting new ways for bored students to learn.	86	3.8140	1.04613
8.	MOOC make me feel more confident in learning English.	86	3.9302	1.00341
9.	MOOCs save time in order to study well and perform better in assignments.	86	3.4419	1.18426
10.	Online courses are more flexible than regular courses.	86	2.7907	1.31163
11.	English lessons that incorporate multimedia applications can exert powerful motivation and provide bored students with exciting new ways to learn.	86	3.9651	.98754
12.	MOOCs are Flexible to access course materials from anywhere at any time.	86	4.2442	.86685
13.	MOOCs have provided me with a wide range of English language learning resources.	86	3.9767	.90718
14.	MOOCs have allowed me to access authentic English language materials.	86	3.8256	.93547
15.	MOOCs have provided me with opportunities to practice English language skills in a variety of contexts.	86	3.9186	.97275
16.	MOOCs have allowed me to interact with English language learners from different cultural backgrounds.	86	3.6977	1.09619
17.	MOOCs have exposed me to different accents and speaking styles in English.	86	3.9651	1.11088
18.	MOOCs have provided me with opportunities to develop my English language fluency.	86	3.8721	.99169

19.	MOOCs have helped me improve my English language vocabulary.	86	4.0698	1.09319
20.	MOOCs have provided me with opportunities to engage in English language speaking and writing activities.	86	3.5116	1.01453
21.	Weakness or absence of Internet connection hinders me to participate in the MOOCs.	86	3.9302	1.02660
22.	learning via MOOCs needs to spend additional time	86	3.6512	1.04900
23.	I find it challenging to stay motivated and engaged when learning through MOOCs.	86	3.3372	1.12313
24.	The technical aspects of using MOOC platforms and tools pose challenges for me.	86	3.6047	.98553
25.	Monitoring my progress and receiving feedback in MOOCs can be challenging.	86	3.1744	1.10817
26.	I face difficulties in applying the knowledge and skills learned from MOOCs in real-life English language situations.	86	3.2326	1.20464
27.	The lack of face-to-face interaction with instructors and peers in MOOCs is a challenge for me.	86	3.9419	1.05557
28.	The absence of immediate assistance or support during MOOC learning activities is a challenge for me.	86	3.7674	1.18495
29.	The lack of personalized guidance and individualized instruction in MOOCs is a challenge for me.	86	3.5581	1.17428
30.	The lack of accountability and external motivation in MOOCs can make it challenging to maintain consistent effort and progress in English language learning.	86	3.7907	1.11794
	Valid N (listwise)	86		

#### 4.1.2. Opinions about perceiving the use of MOOCs in enhancing English language proficiency among Yemeni EFL Learners

*Table 5: The opinion of using of MOOCs*

No	Statement	No	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	1. MOOCs are helpful for acquiring updated information when learning English.	86	4.3023	.85502
2.	3. The different types of audio and video materials in MOOCs provide great opportunities to gain practical and useful English knowledge	86	3.9302	.83723
3.	8. MOOC make me feel more confident in learning English.	86	4.0698	.87838
4.	2. MOOCs play a fruitful role in effectively learning English	86	3.5581	1.19415
5.	7. English lessons incorporating multimedia applications exert powerful motivation and provide exciting new ways for bored students to learn.	86	3.4302	1.02373
6.	4. Internet usage in the classroom can help students achieve updated knowledge of the English language	86	3.4767	1.12435
7.	6. MOOCs provide students with useful information to compete in this competitive world	86	3.8140	1.04613



8.	9. MOOCs save time in order to study well and perform better in assignments.	86	3.9302	1.00341
9.	5. learners become more innovative with the help of e-learning	86	3.4419	1.18426
10.	10. Online courses are more flexible than regular courses.	86	2.7907	1.31163

The table Table 5: The opinion of using of MOOCs presents the results regarding the participants' opinions about the use of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in enhancing their English language proficiency. The items are arranged in descending order based on the mean values, which provides a clear overview of the dominant perspectives.

The highest mean score of 4.3023 is for the statement "MOOCs are helpful for acquiring updated information when learning English." This indicates that the participants strongly agree that MOOCs are beneficial for accessing the latest information and content related to learning English.

The next highly rated items are "The different types of audio and video materials in MOOCs provide great opportunities to gain practical and useful English knowledge" (mean = 3.9302) and "MOOCs make me feel more confident in learning English" (mean = 4.0698). These findings suggest that the participants value the multimedia resources available in MOOCs and believe that these courses can enhance their confidence in learning English.

The items with relatively lower mean scores include "Learners become more innovative with the help of e-learning" (mean = 3.4419) and "Online courses are more flexible than regular courses" (mean = 2.7907). These responses indicate that the participants may not strongly agree that MOOCs foster innovation or that they are more flexible than traditional courses. Therefore, the table reveals that the participants have a generally positive perception of the use of MOOCs in enhancing their English language proficiency. They recognize the benefits of MOOCs, such as the availability of updated information, practical learning resources, and the positive impact on their confidence. However, some respondents may not fully agree that MOOCs are more innovative or flexible than traditional learning formats.

The standard deviation values range from 0.83723 to 1.31163, indicating a moderate to high level of variation in the responses. This suggests that there is some diversity in the participants' opinions, and not all respondents share the same level of agreement or disagreement with the given statements.

#### 4.1.3. Benefits that MOOCs Provide for Yemeni EFL Learners in Enhancing their English Language Skills.

*Table 6: Benefits of MOOCs*

No	Statement	No	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	2. MOOCs are Flexible to access course materials from anywhere at any time.	86	4.2442	.86685
2.	9. MOOCs have helped me improve my English language vocabulary.	86	4.0698	1.09319
3.	3. MOOCs have provided me with a wide range of English language learning resources.	86	3.9767	.90718
4.	1. English lessons that incorporate multimedia applications can exert powerful motivation and provide bored students with exciting new ways to learn.	86	3.9651	.98754

5.	7. MOOCs have exposed me to different accents and speaking styles in English.	86	3.9651	1.11088
6.	5. MOOCs have provided me with opportunities to practice English language skills in a variety of contexts.	86	3.9186	.97275
7.	8. MOOCs have provided me with opportunities to develop my English language fluency.	86	3.8721	.99169
8.	4. MOOCs have allowed me to access authentic English language materials.	86	3.8256	.93547
9.	6. MOOCs have allowed me to interact with English language learners from different cultural backgrounds.	86	977	1.09619
10.	10. MOOCs have provided me with opportunities to engage in English language speaking and writing activities.	86	3.5116	1.01453

The table presents the results regarding the participants' opinions on the various benefits and opportunities offered by Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) for enhancing their English language proficiency. The items are again arranged in descending order based on the mean values, providing a clear understanding of the most prominent perceptions.

The highest mean score of 4.2442 is for the statement "MOOCs are Flexible to access course materials from anywhere at any time." This suggests that the participants strongly agree that the flexibility and accessibility of MOOCs are significant advantages for learning English.

The next highly rated items are "MOOCs have helped me improve my English language vocabulary" (mean = 4.0698) and "MOOCs have provided me with a wide range of English language learning resources" (mean = 3.9767). These findings indicate that the participants perceive MOOCs as beneficial for vocabulary development and as a source of diverse learning resources.

The item with the lowest mean score is "MOOCs have provided me with opportunities to engage in English language speaking and writing activities" (mean = 3.5116). This relatively lower rating suggests that the participants may not fully agree that MOOCs offer sufficient opportunities for practicing productive English language skills, such as speaking and writing.

The results reveal that the participants generally have a positive perception of the benefits and opportunities provided by MOOCs for enhancing their English language proficiency. They particularly value the flexibility and accessibility of MOOCs, as well as the improvements in their vocabulary and the availability of a wide range of learning resources.

However, some participants seem to be less convinced that MOOCs offer adequate opportunities for practicing productive English language skills, such as speaking and writing. This could indicate a potential area for improvement in the design and implementation of MOOCs for English language learning. The standard deviation values range from 0.86685 to 1.11088, suggesting a moderate level of variation in the responses. This indicates that while there is a general consensus on the benefits of MOOCs, there is also some diversity in the participants' opinions and experiences.

#### 4.1.4. The Challenges That Yemeni EFL Learners Face When Utilizing Moocs for Language Learning to Enhance Their English Language Proficiency.

*Table 7: Challenges of Utilizing MOOCs*

No	Statement	No	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	7. The lack of face-to-face interaction with instructors and peers in MOOCs is a challenge for me.	86	3.9419	1.05557

2.	1. Weakness or absence of Internet connection hinders me to participate in the MOOCs.	86	3.9302	1.02660
3.	10. The lack of accountability and external motivation in MOOCs can make it challenging to maintain consistent effort and progress in English language learning.	86	3.7907	1.11794
4.	8. The absence of immediate assistance or support during MOOC learning activities is a challenge for me.	86	3.7674	1.18495
5.	2. learning via MOOCs needs to spend additional time	86	3.6512	1.04900
6.	4. The technical aspects of using MOOC platforms and tools pose challenges for me.	86	3.6047	.98553
7.	9. The lack of personalized guidance and individualized instruction in MOOCs is a challenge for me.	86	3.5581	1.17428
8.	3. I find it challenging to stay motivated and engaged when learning through MOOCs.	86	3.3372	1.12313
9.	6. I face difficulties in applying the knowledge and skills learned from MOOCs in real-life English language situations.	86	3.2326	1.20464
10.	5. Monitoring my progress and receiving feedback in MOOCs can be challenging.	86	3.1744	1.10817

The table Table 7: Challenges of Utilizing MOOCs presents the challenges that Yemeni EFL learners face when utilizing MOOCs to enhance their English language proficiency. The items are arranged in descending order based on the mean values, providing insights into the most prominent challenges perceived by the participants.

The highest mean score of 3.9419 is for the statement "The lack of face-to-face interaction with instructors and peers in MOOCs is a challenge for me." This suggests that the participants strongly feel that the absence of direct interaction with instructors and fellow learners in the MOOC environment is a significant challenge for their English language learning.

The next highly rated challenge is "Weakness or absence of Internet connection hinders me to participate in the MOOCs," with a mean score of 3.9302. This finding indicates that the participants perceive the lack of reliable internet connectivity as a major obstacle to their effective participation in MOOCs.

The item with the lowest mean score is "Monitoring my progress and receiving feedback in MOOCs can be challenging," with a mean of 3.1744. This relatively lower rating suggests that the participants may find it less challenging to monitor their progress and receive feedback in the MOOC context compared to other challenges. The standard deviation values range from 0.98553 to 1.20464, indicating a moderate level of variability in the participants' responses. This suggests that while there is a general consensus on the challenges faced, there may be individual differences in the degree to which these challenges are perceived and experienced by the learners.

## 4.2. Discussion

The findings of the present study are largely consistent with the existing body of empirical research examining the efficacy of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in enhancing language proficiency among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The positive perceptions and beliefs expressed

by Yemeni EFL learners towards the use of MOOCs echo the results reported in similar studies conducted in other cultural and educational contexts.

The results of the current study support the findings of Mellati and Khademi (2018), who found that Iranian EFL learners participating in a MOOC-based program outperformed a control group in terms of language proficiency, despite identifying technical and emotional challenges associated with the MOOC modality. This corroborates the present study's observations that Yemeni EFL learners recognize the value of MOOCs in providing updated learning materials and diverse resources for practical application in a remote learning environment, despite encountering various obstacles. Furthermore, the results of the present study resonate with the findings of Althubaiti and Almasaad (2020), who reported that MOOCs significantly improved learners' knowledge and skills in English. Similarly, Hashemifardnia et al. (2021) found that MOOCs substantially enhanced the speaking complexity, accuracy, and fluency of Iranian EFL learners, which aligns with the current study's emphasis on the potential of MOOCs to improve English language proficiency among Yemeni EFL learners. The present investigation's findings also echo the research conducted by Chang (2023), who assessed the use of MOOCs and data-driven learning activities to prepare EFL students for academic content in English and observed significant improvements in students' academic listening skills. This suggests that MOOCs can be a valuable tool for enhancing various language skills, including listening, speaking, and writing, which is a key focus of the current study.

Regarding perceptions and attitudes towards the use of MOOCs, the positive findings of the present study are consistent with the work of Sharma (2018) and Aljaraideh (2019), who reported that faculty members in India and Jordan, respectively, viewed MOOCs as beneficial for learners, despite identifying certain challenges. Similarly, Yaşar (2020) and Abderrahmane and Mebitil (2022) found that EFL learners and teachers held positive attitudes towards integrating MOOCs into language learning, although their willingness to use them could be higher. The emphasis of the present study on the importance of personalization and engagement in MOOC-based language learning is supported by the research of Yunus et al. (2019), who highlighted the significance of interaction and engagement among learners for the effectiveness of MOOCs in improving communication skills. Additionally, the study by Jitpaisarnwattana et al. (2021) on the personalization of learning experiences in MOOCs and the work of Siyuan and Sriwisathiyakun (2022) on the development of online vocabulary-based active learning activities, both of which resulted in improved learner attitudes and language proficiency, further validate the current study's findings and recommendations.

## 5. Conclusion

The present study has explored the utilization of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) as a means to enhance English language proficiency among Yemeni learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). MOOCs have the potential to revolutionize digital education by providing open access to learning opportunities, comprehensive and innovative materials, supportive instruction, and collaborative environments for diverse learners (Geng et al., 2020; Rahimi & Tafazoli, 2022; Waks, 2016). The results indicate that Yemeni EFL learners hold a positive perception of MOOCs and recognize their value in improving English language skills. Learners appreciate the benefits of MOOCs in offering updated, interactive, and diverse learning resources, such as readings, lectures, and videos, which enable practical application in a remote learning setting (Abderrahmane & Mebitil, 2022). However, the study also reveals the challenges faced by Yemeni EFL learners in accessing and utilizing these online courses, including technological constraints, limited digital literacy, and time management issues. These findings underscore the introduction's acknowledgment that despite the advantages of

MOOCs, student and teacher participation remains limited, and their attitudes play a crucial role in the adoption and use of these online courses. The findings of this study contribute to the existing literature on the use of technology-enhanced learning, specifically MOOCs, in improving English language proficiency among EFL learners in underserved regions, as highlighted in the introduction.

## **6. Recommendations**

Based on the context provided, here are the recommendations of the study categorized into three parts: for students, for teachers, and for universities and policymakers.

### **6.1. Recommendations for Students:**

1. Students should understand that MOOCs are a supplement to regular learning and require commitment and self-motivation. It is important to be patient, consistent, and celebrate progress.
2. Students should join online forums, connect with fellow learners, and engage with instructors for assistance and motivation. They should not hesitate to ask questions and clarify doubts.
3. Students should learn to manage their time effectively, stay focused on their goals, and overcome challenges independently.
4. Students should supplement their MOOC learning with other resources like textbooks, online dictionaries, language learning apps, and authentic English media.
5. Actively participate in online discussion forums and activities to gain interaction experience.

### **6.2. Recommendations for Teachers:**

1. Teachers should provide guidance on selecting appropriate MOOCs, setting learning goals, and utilizing the platform effectively.
2. Teachers should encourage students to share their experiences with MOOCs, discuss their learning outcomes, and reflect on their strengths and weaknesses.
3. Teachers should explore new MOOC platforms, resources, and teaching strategies to enhance the integration of MOOCs in their teaching.

### **6.3. Recommendations for Universities and Policymakers**

1. Universities should collaborate with reputable MOOC platforms to offer tailored courses for Yemeni EFL learners and integrate them into university curricula.
2. Universities and policymakers should study the impact of MOOCs on English language learning outcomes, identify best practices, and adapt strategies based on data-driven insights.
3. Train teachers on effectively engaging remote learners and troubleshooting techniques.

## **7. Contributions of the Study**

1. This study tried to shed a light on the Yemeni EFL learners' perceptions of MOOCs for enhancing English proficiency. This helps inform the effective integration of MOOCs in Yemeni English language education.
2. Identifies specific ways that learners believe MOOCs are most helpful such as providing updated resources, building confidence, and offering multimedia materials.
3. Highlights the greatest challenges learners face, particularly the lack of face-to-face interaction and support. This points to areas for improvement.

4. Sheds light on how to strengthen learner engagement and motivation over the long-term through better interaction opportunities and sustained accountability measures.

## 8. Suggestions for Further Studies

The following are some suggestions for further studies:

1. Conduct a longitudinal study tracking learners' English proficiency development over time with sustained MOOC use.
2. Carry out comparative research between MOOC-based and traditional face-to-face class models to evaluate relative strengths and weaknesses.
3. Explore optimal blended learning models combining MOOCs and in-person instruction based on learner preferences and needs.

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