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MOOC as a Free, Digital tool for Different Profiles Providing Introductory Training in PSIT. Analysis and Reflections

Bianca Vitalaru, bianca.vitalaru@gmail.com, and Carmen Valero Garcés,
carmen.valero@uah.es.

Universidad de Alcalá

Abstract:

In this article we present the results of the implementation of a MOOC providing an introduction in Public Service Interpreting and Translation (PSIT) for a variety of backgrounds and profiles, from people working with foreign population, to people who have no formal training and are ad-hoc interpreters, as well as people interested in learning about PSIT. The ultimate goal of the MOOC is to provide general information and to raise awareness about the complexity of the field, as well as to offer the possibility of learning and practicing some of the principles and strategies presented so that those interested in deepening their knowledge and skills may do so with more formal training. It is in this context that the article presents some of the findings obtained since its implementation given the variety of personal profiles and student backgrounds registered in the course as well as the evaluation of aspects related to its design such as duration, access to information, difficulties and, in general, aspects that enabled us to

identify students' perceptions on the usefulness, effectiveness and applicability of the course.

Keywords: MOOC, PSIT, introductory training, analysis

1. Introduction

The results of the special Eurobarometer on integration of immigrants in the European Union (EU), released in April 2018, reveal that approximately 37 million persons born outside the EU reside in the EU, making around 7% of its total population, and further flows of migration will likely remain a feature of the 21st century.

According to the same report “It is therefore imperative that effective policies for the integration of third-country immigrants are developed in the EU” (EU, 2018, 3). It is also pointed out that “the issues of immigration and integration have been politically sensitive across Europe, particularly in the aftermath of increase in the flows of refugees over the last few years” and that “Immigration is seen as the most important issue facing the EU” (EU, 2018, 3). Thus, it can be said that migration is a reality in today's EU.

In this context, it can also be observed that language is not mentioned at all, and particularly, no reference is made to translation or interpreting, when we –as professionals of interlinguistic communication– are aware of the fundamental role it plays in achieving immigrant integration and in consolidating a truly multilingual society.

On the other hand, at the political level, language issues are often not recognised as an integral part of migratory movements or social integration. Policy makers do not always seem to be aware of the risks and costs of not providing interpreting and translation services.

Public Service Interpreting and Translation (PSIT), a fundamental area of research, training, and practice for our research group (FITISPos-UAH), is one of the best examples of multilingualism in the EU and for this reason it will be approached as an essential field that requires attention and further research. The list of publications, conferences¹ and activities related to PSIT, which increases every day (Valero Garcés et al. 2011; Valero Garcés, Vitalaru y Mojica- López 2014; Valero Garcés, Álvaro Aranda y Ginés Grao 2017), as well as the series of conferences organised at the University of Alcalá (UAH) prove the intensive research carried out in this field. From our experience as trainers and practitioners in the program on PSIT at the University of Alcalá since 2006 we can also highlight some of the challenges that training in PSIT entails:

1. Variety of languages and differences in students' training backgrounds.
2. Different cultural backgrounds (Spanish, Arabic-speaking countries, Chinese, English-speaking countries, French-speaking countries, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Ukrainian, Latin American countries, etc.).
3. Diversity of fields covered by the public sector in Spain (social services, healthcare, education, legal, and administrative services).

4. Difficulties in recruiting trainers with experience as translators and interpreters in the specific sectors covered and in all the language combinations.
5. Questioning directionality and the axiom of L1 translation (Valero-Garcés 2019, 92).
6. The use of lingua franca.
7. Interpreters' & translators 'positioning' (Valero-Garcés 2019, 92).
8. Teaching both translation and interpreting as two specialties with common terminology and used in a syncretic way in the public sector in Spain.
9. The use of language resources and translation technologies with languages of lesser diffusion (Valero-Garcés 2019, 92).

The FITISPos-UAH group has reacted and responded to these challenges through specific research and training. Some of the initiatives undertaken in the last years as a society have changed including involving different types of participants such as students, institutions, stakeholders, and users in research projects (e.g. INTER+MED or Efficient communication in penitentiary centres)² and promoting collaboration in the development of free materials to train or help ad hoc untrained interpreters that assist NGOs, hospitals, or family members in their encounters with service providers.

Another example is the creation of a series of MOOC courses developed and made available for different types of students with or without

experience in translation and interpreting, which will be described in the following section.

2. MOOC as a Starting Point for Training in PSIT

2.1 Context and objectives

Basically, a MOOC course is a massive, open course in the context of online education and different authors define it or analyse the applicability of some of its characteristics. Gimeno-Sanz, Navarro-Laboulais, and Despujol-Zabala (2017, 48) focus on characteristics such as the open registration, the shared teaching and the open goals: “an online course with the option of free and open registration, a publicly shared curriculum, and open-ended outcomes.” Furthermore, its potential as a training tool is noteworthy, as these kinds of courses not only enable distance learning designed by professionals who also interact with students online, but also allow for the possibility of organising student participation in terms of their initial knowledge and skills, interest, and educational goals (Vitalaru and Rodríguez Galán 2018).

Numerous platforms that host MOOC courses are becoming increasingly popular such as Coursera, Blackboard’s Openeducation, EdX, RedunX or MiriadaX, to cite a few examples, backed by universities and prestigious centres that provide to training institutions worldwide a shared space in which to offer these kind of courses. In fact, through these kind of courses universities, in their ongoing search for innovative methods, facilitate the

development of their own research and academic activities by attracting the best students, and among other aspects, prepare and disseminate knowledge, thus becoming important agents of social welfare (Álvarez-Rodríguez et al. 2017, 124; cited by Vitalaru and Rodríguez Galán 2018, 86).

Building on these premises we could state that the type of online course we propose is meant not only for a wide number of participants on the Internet, but also for a variety of profiles and backgrounds, from people who have no training in Translation and Interpreting (and already engaging voluntarily as mediators most notably in intercultural settings), to people trained in similar fields and even professionals from other disciplines interested in learning about the specificities of training in this field as well as the demands of professional practice.

The selection of the setting we suggest, PSIT, also known as Community Interpreting and Translation, is due to several reasons related to the practice and need identified in Spain over 20 years ago.

Firstly, it is worth mentioning the research group that works in this field since 1997, with the publication of their first article entitled “Translating and interpreting in public services? What are you talking about? A new specialisation?” and the ongoing interest and work to deepen what has been considered as a new specialisation in the Degrees in Translation.

Secondly, we are experiencing a unique moment in education given, on the one hand, the globalization phenomenon, the fast-paced evolution of ICT and the digitalisation expansion and, on the other, the fact that we are

influenced by social concern and the birth of incipient policies relative to the situation of migrants and refugees in Europe. In this context MOOCs, along with other free digital alternatives to learn, arise as effective instruments to develop competencies that may even help migrants and refugees in the inclusion, integration and the reincorporation into formal education or the labour market (Vitalaru, Valero Garcés and Lázaro 2018, 329-331).

Finally, the proliferation of MOOCs in other areas of knowledge (economics, art, history, etc.), has not had the same impact in teaching translation and even less so in the case of PSIT. Thus, insofar as the Spanish territory is concerned, we have not found a single course offering it (see analysis carried out by Vitalaru and Rodríguez Galán 2018) despite the fact that PSIT has become extremely relevant due to the increase of foreign population and their need to communicate effectively with employees of public institutions such as courts, police stations, hospitals, health centres, immigration offices or schools.

Considering all these aspects and the need for online training materials to provide a supplementary introductory training for PSIT, we hope to contribute to eliminating this knowledge gap. In this sense, different innovating teaching projects have been carried out in the last three years by the research group FITISPos-UAH and the teaching innovation group FITISPos-E-Learning at Universidad de Alcalá focusing on preparing materials useful for creating and setting up,³ in 2017, a Spanish MOOC that

provides an introduction to public service translating and interpreting (PSIT) entitled: “¡Iníciate en la Traducción e Interpretación en los Servicios Públicos!” (which translated means ‘Get Started in Public Service Interpreting and Translating’). This MOOC⁴ is primarily intended for people who are unfamiliar with public service translating and interpreting but who have a command of languages, and it is designed both as a tool to disseminate this emerging profession as well as a learning tool, which includes practical exercises so that students interested in doing so may be in contact with the field of PSIT. The questions posed in the general introduction to the course reveal some of its objectives:

Have you ever wondered how communication is enabled between foreign users and public institutions such as courts, police stations, hospitals or schools? Are you curious about the work translators and interpreters carry out in these settings? Would you like to know if you could work as a translator or interpreter in one of these settings?.
(MOOC, general presentation).

In fact, the course is presented as an innovative tool for self-learning and supplementary training based on the current principles of ongoing learning. In Valero Garcés, Vitalaru and Lázaro Gutiérrez (2017, 104-109) we find the main objective, that is, to favour the registered students’ independent

learning, both individual as well as collective. In this case, in a ten-week time frame and using Spanish as the working language, the course

offers an approximation to the world of PSIT and intends to contribute to the dissemination of information regarding this emerging profession among professionals and users of different sectors in which intercultural communication is present. (Álvaro Aranda and Valero Garcés 2017, 12)

At the same time, it encourages the self-training of those who already have or continue to carry out tasks as ad hoc interpreters or volunteer interpreters most notably for minority or lesser-used languages and who may not have access to formal training for different reasons. Ultimately, this course, introductory in nature, may serve as a starting point for a more specialised, specific, and perhaps exhaustive training.

2.2 Design and preparation

The different phases of the design and preparation process of the course have already been explained in Álvaro Aranda and Valero Garcés (2017), Valero Garcés, Vitalaru and Lázaro Gutiérrez (2017) and Vitalaru, Valero Garcés and Lázaro Gutiérrez (2018). We will summarise the key points of its creation that have affected its development in the framework of the different projects in which it is included.

Firstly, it is worth mentioning the four main phases followed based on the model of Jolliffe et al. (2001, 85-86) regarding the design of any space on the Internet (gathering information, development, production, and evaluation of materials) and the general phases which include preproduction, production, and postproduction (Álvaro Aranda and Valero Garcés 2017, 13-14).

The actions undertaken in the phases are summarised below based on Vitalaru, Valero Garcés and Lázaro Gutiérrez (2018, 332-333) as well as on the authors' own reflections regarding the employed methodology:

Table 1. Phases of the work and actions carried out

Phases	Actions
Preproduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Bibliographic review. b. Revision and analysis of other MOOCs. c. Setting objectives. d. Work planning and design of methodology. e. Definition and delimitation of the curriculum. f. Definition of the work methodology for the potential student. g. Distribution and organisation of the theoretical and practical content.
Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Development of the theoretical and practical content as well as the structure of the course. b. Design of the computerised presentations with specific content for each of the lessons. c. Recording of partners and students of the <u>Master's</u> program. d. Revision by the teaching innovation group. e. Incorporation of changes and improvement of visual attractiveness for the user. f. Open access through the Open Education platform.
Postproduction	<p>Pilotage in 2016 with three groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Teachers of the Master's in PSIT at UAH. b) Postgraduate students trained in PSIT. c) Modern Languages undergraduate students of UAH enrolled in the elective course entitled 'Institutional Translation'.

In the first phase it is worth mentioning the research and analysis of different platforms hosting MOOCs and their technological potential (see Vitalaru and Rodríguez 2018), which, in turn, enabled us to select a platform with a simple interface suitable in meeting the specific needs of the planned course and the applicability of different computer tools for recording audio-visual material for teaching and training purposes (Álvaro Aranda and Valero Garcés 2017, 14).

Regarding the following phases, it is worth mentioning not only the development of the specific content and of a structure with a progressive degree of difficulty but also the improvement in terms of its presentation to the public, the type of access to the different types and formats of the training content (videos, lectures and debate forums) and the most effective modality for the student to work in. In this sense, in addition to the videos as such, there are also downloadable computerised presentations with the content included in each of the lessons, templates with the answer sheets to the self-evaluation tests, and, in most of the cases, clues regarding the fundamental aspects to be considered in professional practice for each of the lessons or themes covered.

Finally, the pilotage has been essential in detecting the most relevant aspects for the different groups involved as well as the need to increase or modify contents that were not deemed suitable, whether because they were too

theoretical or superficial or due to problems of a more technical nature (the volume of some videos was too low or files were not uploaded correctly, etc.) (Vitalaru, Valero Garcés and Lázaro Gutiérrez 2018, 334).

3. The MOOC entitled “¡Iníciate en la Traducción e Interpretación en los Servicios Públicos!”: from Theory to Practise

To contextualise the practical implementation of the course, the design of details in terms of structure and curriculum were paramount. The course, available on the Open Education platform since 2017 (Figure 1), has a duration of 10 weeks:



The screenshot shows the course page for "¡Iníciate en la Traducción e Interpretación en los Servicios Públicos!" on the Open Education platform. The page includes the Universidad de Alcalá logo, a navigation menu (INICIO, CATÁLOGO DE CURSOS, INSTITUCIONES, ACERCA DE, ASISTENCIA), and a "Iniciar sesión" button. The main content area features a "COMPARTIR EL CURSO" section with social media icons (Facebook, Twitter, Google+). Below this is a text block with introductory questions and course details. To the right, there is a "¡Iníciate en la Traducción e Interpretación en los Servicios Públicos!" graphic and an "Inscribirse" button. The "Detalles del curso" section lists the duration as "Autoaprendizaje" and the volume of work as "10-12 horas semanales, a ritmo del usuario".

Figure 1. MOOC on Open Education

The structure is based on three blocks of content/knowledge or modules with a fixed duration, depending on the specific sections (Figure 2):



Figure 2. Structure of the MOOC (Álvaro Aranda and Valero Garcés 2017, 15).

As can be observed, the distribution of the content in the modules is based on a linear progression according to the degree of specialisation and the level of difficulty of the discussed theme.

As far as the activities are concerned, as mentioned in a previous paper (Vitalaru, Valero Garcés and Lázaro Gutiérrez 2018, 338-339), they are extremely diverse, and their goal is to favour the independent and cooperative learning of the registered students. The activities, therefore, constitute an essential part because students ought to reflect on the discussed themes, carry out deeper queries, and participate in forums based on the personal conclusions they have reached. Furthermore, they are expected to put to the test some of their skills with a series of activities designed to

develop specific competences applicable to translation and interpreting in public services.

Specifically, this diversity translates to the following types of activities, including both training and evaluations:

1. Self-evaluations, with true and false questions or multiple choice:



The screenshot shows a web page for a MOOC. At the top, it says 'Open Education powered by Blackboard'. The main title is '¡Iniciate en la Traducción e Interpretación en los Servicios Públicos!' from the 'Universidad de Alcalá'. Below the title, there are social media sharing icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Google+. The main content area contains several paragraphs of text, including a list of questions and a description of the course. On the right side, there is a 'Detalles del curso' section with a 'Inscribirse' button. The questions are:

- ¿Alguna vez te has preguntado cómo se posibilita la comunicación entre usuarios extranjeros e instituciones públicas como juzgados, comisarías, hospitales o escuelas?
- ¿Sientes curiosidad por el trabajo y las funciones de los traductores e intérpretes que se desenvuelven en este ámbito? ¿Te gustaría saber si podrías llegar a trabajar tú mism@ como traductor y/o intérprete en alguno de estos campos?
- ¿Te atreves a descubrir el fascinante mundo de la traducción y la interpretación en los servicios públicos? ¡inscríbete!

The 'Detalles del curso' section includes:

- Duración: Autoaprendizaje
- Volumen de trabajo: 10-12 horas semanales, a ritmo del usuario

Figure 3. A self-evaluation (Vitalaru, Valero Garcés and Lázaro Gutiérrez 2018, 342).

2. Activities having three parts: (a) questions and reflections in video or Word format or recommended readings and analysis; (b) individual reflection; and (c) participation in debate forums in the same platform and social media (Twitter) to exchange views and experiences.

In the following example (Figure 4), students are asked to reflect upon cultural aspects and other elements that may play a part in the communication as well as potential stereotypes:

En el tema 2.1. aparece una serie de fotografías en las que se muestran personas de diferentes países y se invita a la reflexión sobre lo que sugiere cada una de ellas y la opinión que esas personas podrían tener. Relaciona tus respuestas con el concepto de estereotipos y comparte tus impresiones con tus compañeros en este foro.

Puedes reflexionar sobre las siguientes preguntas u otras que se te ocurran: ¿Deberías empatizar con estas personas e intentar comprender su modo de vida? ¿Crees que los temas tabú son los mismos en todos estos países? ¿Cómo reaccionarías ante una referencia cultural que no conoces? ¿Qué tipo de gestos o acciones forman parte de tu cultura y ellos quizá no entenderían?

Figure 4. Example of an activity requiring careful consideration in the MOOC on PSIT (Vitalaru and Rodríguez Galán 2018, 103).

Figure 5 includes an example of an activity in which the student has to identify different types of interpreting that are required in a situation that may possibly imply the need to mediate and the different models that may be followed (advocacy model or impartial model), as well as answering a set of questions for which they can apply the knowledge acquired in the theoretical part and their reflections about the implications. Of the different situations included, the following may be illustrative of the situation that is presented: “We are at a health centre. An Arab girl has booked an appointment because she has abdominal pain. The doctor is male and the interpreter female. The patient seems shy.” (MOOC, Unit 2).



Figure 5. Activity involving questions and careful reflection (Vitalaru, Valero Garcés and Lázaro Gutiérrez 2018, 341).

3. Translating or interpreting exercises focused on some of the many difficulties of T&I in this setting (cultural aspects, terminology, etc.) and that imply knowing how to apply specific skills (note-taking, memory, quick reaction, etc.).

In the following activity (Figure 6), despite the fact that it involves basic training, the main objective is to make the student aware of the complexity of the field and the need for specific and ongoing training.

Actividad 3.2 Esta actividad te permitirá practicar la interpretación consecutiva y la toma de notas. Vas a escuchar un diálogo en español. Se trata de una conversación entre un usuario que acude a un centro de salud y su posterior encuentro con el médico. Después de cada intervención, se dejará una pausa en la que tendrás que interpretar la información a tu otra lengua de trabajo. A continuación, contesta a la siguientes preguntas:

¿Qué dificultades has encontrado? ¿Qué expresiones te han resultado más complicadas de interpretar? ¿Conocías la terminología? ¿Has utilizado símbolos en la toma de notas? ¿Cómo crees que puedes mejorar en el futuro? Utiliza la secuencia que encontrarás dentro de este foro para comentar estos aspectos.

Figure 6. Activity to practise, reflect, and raise awareness of the complexity of interpreting.

4. Forum for debate suggesting themes related to the videos students watch, fostering the exchange of ideas and providing utter freedom for students to add their observations and reflections and start new discussions as they make their way through the course (Figure 7):

Hace 4 días FORO DESPUÉS DE ACTIVIDAD 3.2 B

Actividad 3.2.b

Al hacer este ejercicio si tuve tiempo de pensar cada sinónimo o antónimo, pero al ver las opciones dadas en las respuestas propuestas, me di cuenta de que en algunas palabras no tuve el foco puesto en la temática concreta (sanitaria) del ejercicio, de manera que algunas de las palabras que pensé eran más generales. Esto me permite ser consciente de la importancia de no perder de vista en ningún momento el ámbito específico (temático) en que el profesional se desempeña en cada caso...

Después recordé fácilmente la mayoría de las palabras. Aquellas de ámbitos que me son familiares me resultaron más difíciles de memorizar; Otras eran agrupables con base en algún elemento (inicial o posibles grupos temáticos, por ejemplo).

MOOCTISP @MOOC_TISP

Atrévete a definir el papel de la #TISP en la sociedad actual.

8:29 - 1 sept. 2016

• 1 Me gusta

• 

23 respuestas 0 retweets 1 Me gusta

Figure 7. Forum for reflection in the platform forum and debate on Twitter.

The student must follow the indicated work method to make the most of the content, which it is similar in the three modules of the course. The method consists of watching videos, reflecting on what they were exposed to, and carrying out a series of activities. This method is in line with the main structure as each unit includes, organised in folders, the following elements:

general videos presenting the units, theoretical videos containing more relevant information, *Power Point* presentations with the same content, activities to develop different skills, debate forum, and self-evaluations.

4. From Practise to Results: Data and Analysis

After a pilot phase in 2017, a description of which was presented in Brussels in the Directorate-General for Translation in the international Translating Europe Forum (October 2016), the course entitled *¡Iníciate en la Traducción e Interpretación en los Servicios Públicos!* (or ‘Get Started in Public Service Interpreting and Translating’) has been openly available and it was followed by students with different profiles. So far (October 31st, 2018) we have analysed the data from four groups of participants: professionals –institutions, people with prior training in T&I, people without prior training in T&I, and students of the Master’s in PSIT, which amount to a total of 141 students who have completed the course in Spanish.

In the following section, we will describe the data obtained from a questionnaire passed out at the beginning and another at the end of the course. It is worth mentioning that the students of the Master’s in PSIT completed the course as supplementary training to the introductory module of the Master’s program.

4.1 Participants Profile Data

Of the initial data, we have been able to extract more general data about the profile of all the people who actually registered in the course. We will take into account the data gathered before September 2018 and after this date,⁵ since as of this date, students from the Master's in the Arabic-Spanish, Chinese-Spanish, French-Spanish and Russian-Spanish language combinations registered in the course, and their profile and prior training are, therefore, more specific.

Firstly, we observe the variety of the groups (Figure 8) and profiles registered in the MOOC:



Figure 8. Profile of MOOC students.

The highest percentage is for students of the Master's in PSIT (59%), followed by people without prior training in T&I (21%), people with training in T&I (19%), and lastly people from other institutions/clerks (4%).

In terms of the age of the participants, the 62 people who registered before September 2018 can be grouped in four categories (Figure 9): 48% with ages between 18 and 25, 33,8% between 26 and 35, 9,6% between 36 and 45 and 8% between 46 to 62 years old:

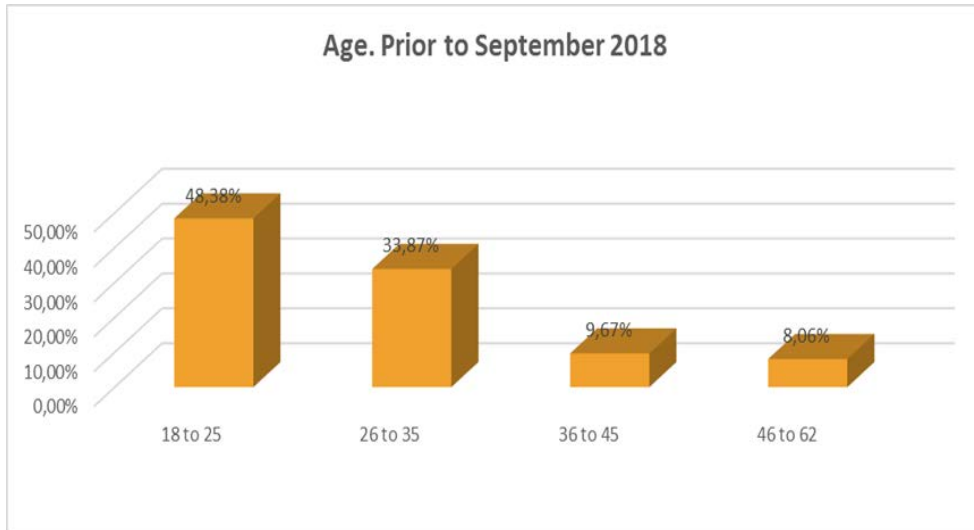


Figure 9. Age prior to September 2018.

The age of the 89 PSIT students varied within the same first three ranges, with a particularly large number of students with ages between 21 and 25 years old (69%). The oldest students are 38, as we can see in Figure 10, below:

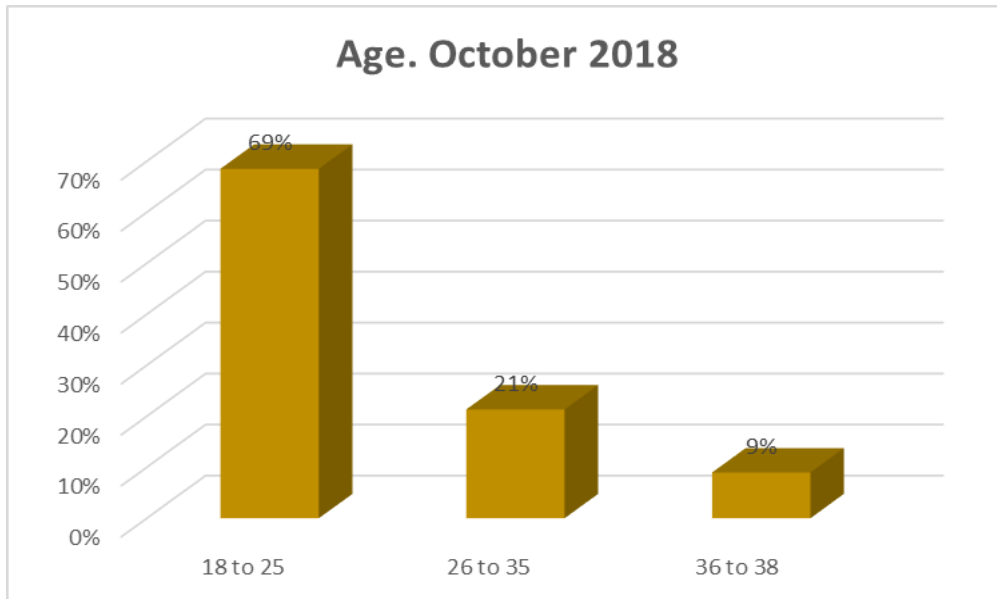


Figure 10. Age prior to October 2018.

Their occupation is also varied, from students (more than 38%) and translators/interpreters (32,26%) to trainers (12,90%), clerks (6,45%) and other professionals such as project managers or an international cooperation assistant, among other (8%):

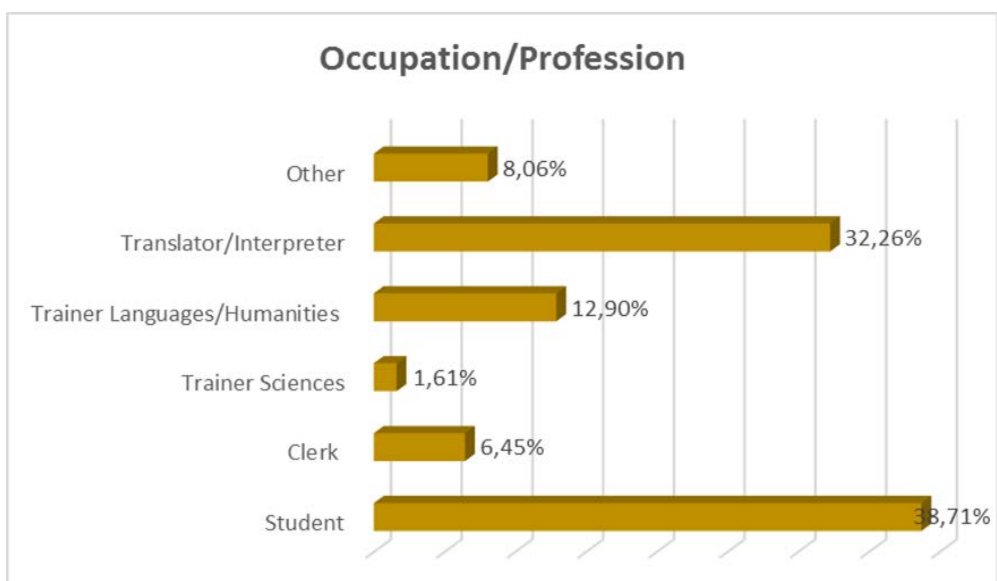


Figure 11. Occupation of students prior to September 2018.

This shows that the nature of the course itself (Translation and Interpreting; MOOC course) encourages different profiles to participate, and there is a slight interest from professionals from other fields.

On the other hand, the occupation of the students enrolled in the Master's in PSIT is mostly that of full-time students (approximately 80%) although some of them also work as translators and interpreters (14,60%) or as language teachers (4,49%):

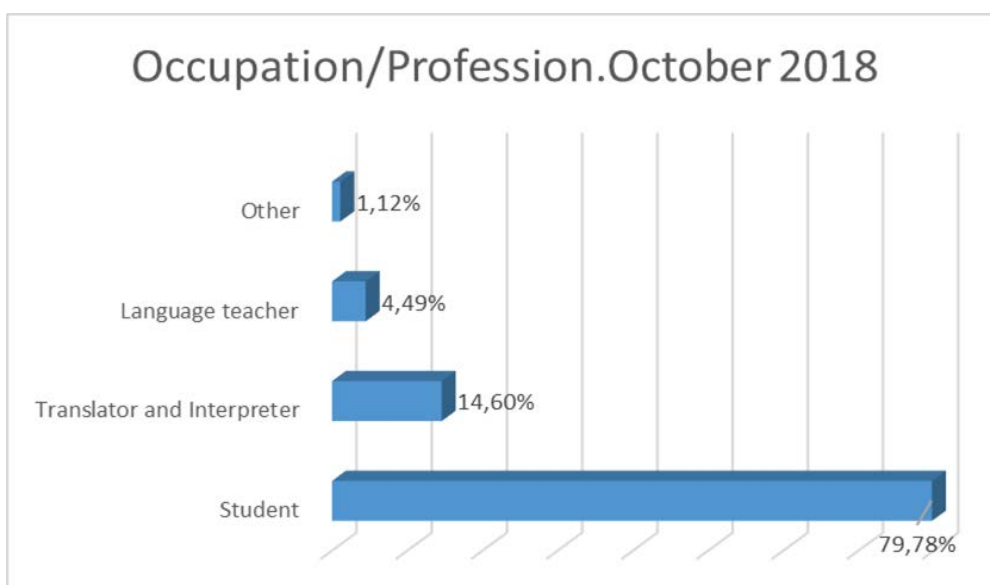


Figure 12. Occupation of students of PSIT.

The variety of the countries of origin (16 countries) of the students that took the course prior to September shows the particular interest in the cultural

aspects of the course and its relationship with translation and interpreting as a profession (Figure 13):

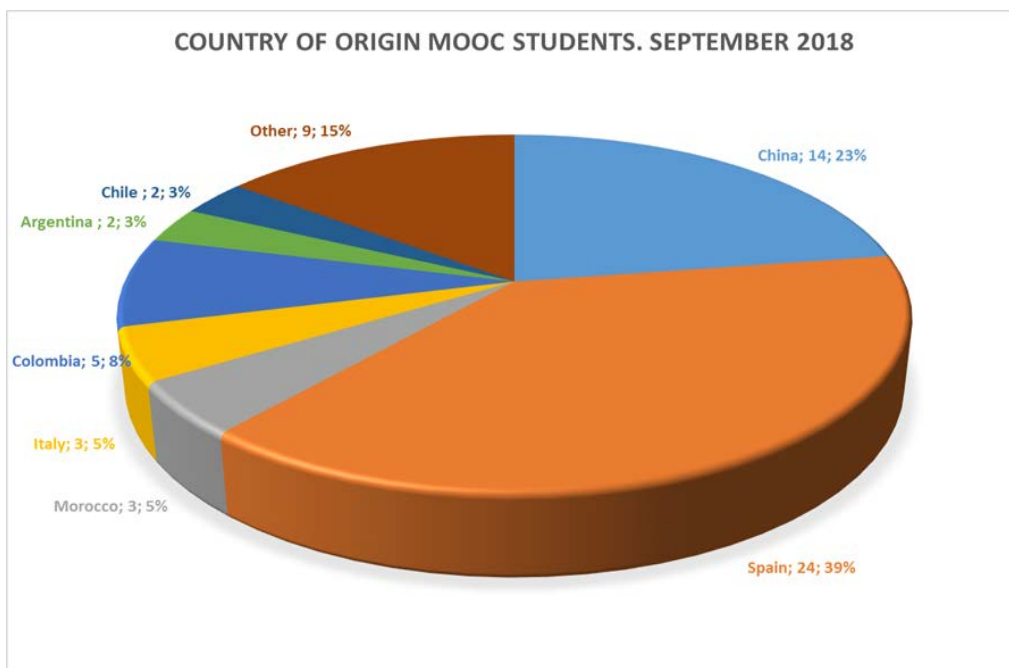


Figure 13. Country of origin prior to September 2018.

The highest percentages were of students from China (23%) and Spain (39%) followed by Colombia, Italy, Morocco, Chile and Argentina. Other countries, which had one student, were: Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Iraq, Mexico, Ukraine, United Kingdom, USA, and Venezuela.

The country of origin of the PSIT students enrolled in the course reinforced the same idea, the cultural perspective involved in Translation and Interpreting studies. Thus, as we can see in Figure 14, below, the countries with the highest percentages were China (50,56%), Spain (20,22%),

followed by France (5,62%), Ukraine (4,49%), and Russia (3,80), in addition to fourteen other countries:

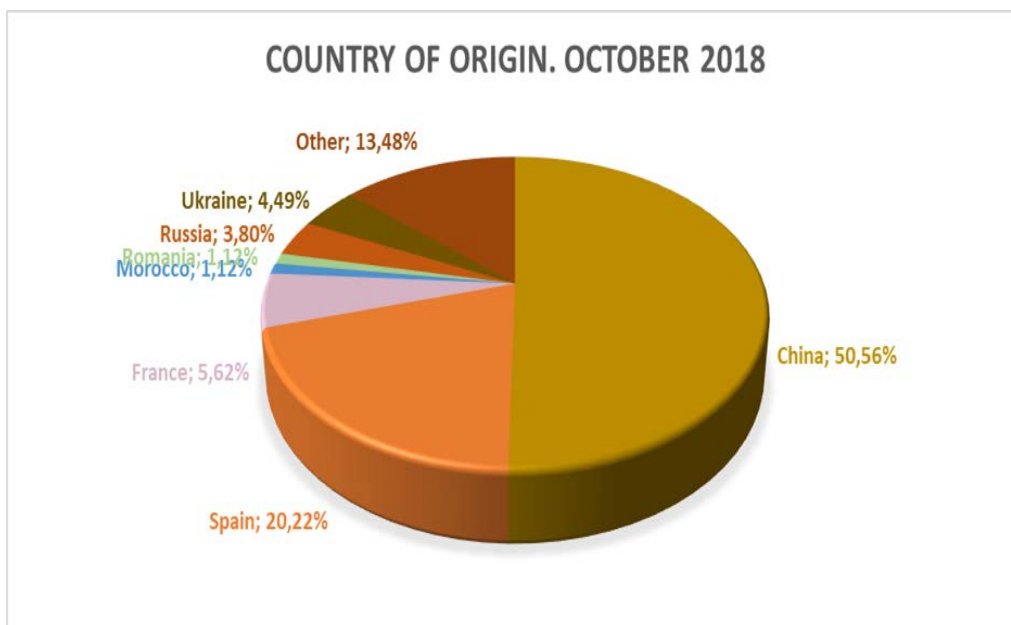


Figure 14. Country of origin October 2018.

Finally, regarding previous training, we observed the high percentages of students who had studied Philology (35%) and Translation and Interpreting (45%), as opposed to the low percentages (5%) of students with training in other fields (Health Sciences, Social, Legal and other Sciences), which suggests that students with a background in languages is the group with more interest in the course:

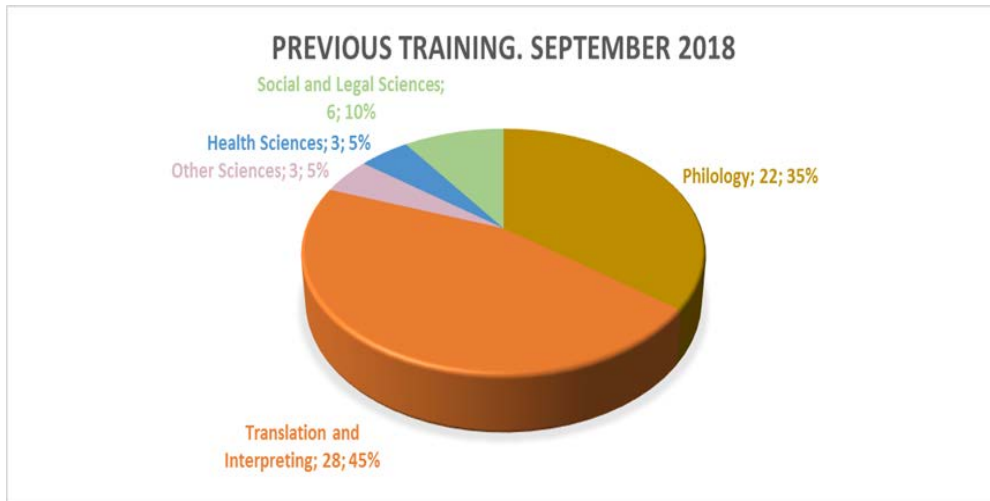


Figure 15. Previous training. September 2018.

The PSIT students had a similar profile from this perspective, with a high percentage of students with a background in language studies (Philology: 34,83%; Translation and Interpreting: 59,55%), and approximately 5,5% from other fields, as we can observe in Figure 16, below:



Figure 16. Previous training. October 2018

4.2 Analysis of Results and Evaluation of the Final Questionnaire

The data extracted from the final questionnaire sheds light on several aspects that were of particular interest as it enabled us to identify students' perceptions on the usefulness, effectiveness, and applicability of the course considering specific training needs.

Firstly, in regards to the duration of the course, more than 75% of student responders said it was adequate, 6,06%, said that the course was too short and 4,54% that it was too long, although we must remember that most of the students participating in the MOOC were students of the Master's in PSIT, with a time frame of three to four weeks to complete it (Figure 17):

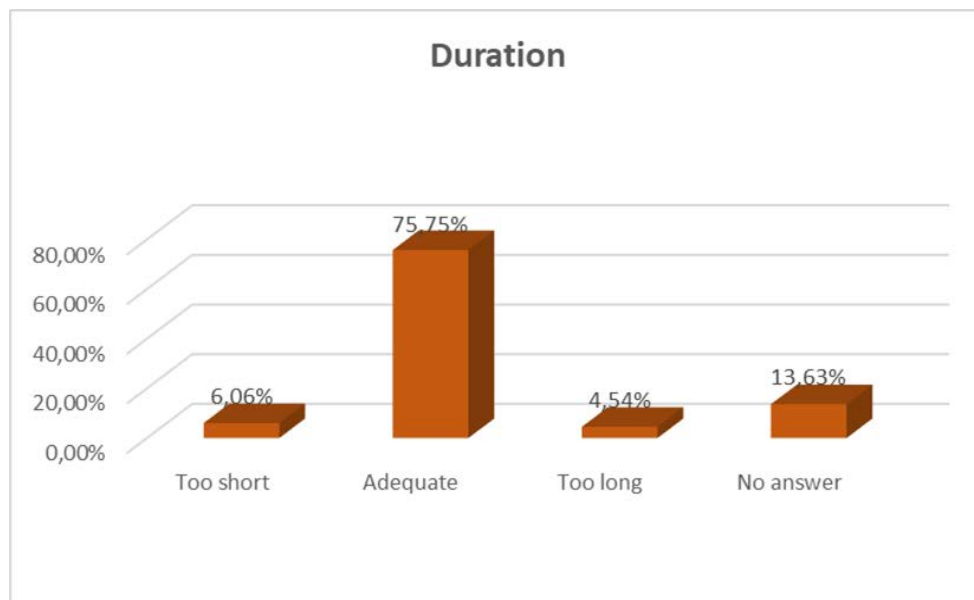


Figure 17. Duration.

In general, most of the comments to this question highlight the observation that the course could be taken intensively in a shorter period than the one provided. As a side note, ever since the course opened each user has had the chance to adapt it to their pace of work. However, the participation and activity has increased as soon as time frames were included, in the months of August and in October of this year, which is when students from the Master's in PSIT have taken it, to consolidate their initial training in the postgraduate course.

Secondly, access to the content has been easy according to approximately 80% of the respondents. Considering that 13,63% did not answer this question, this may suggest that they probably had no problems accessing the course contents:

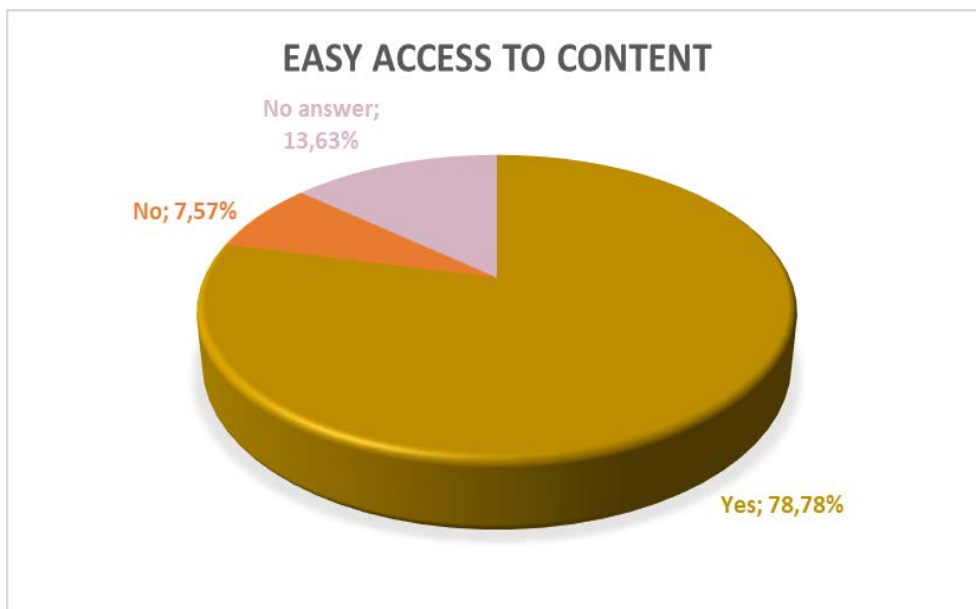


Figure 18. Easy Access to content.

In terms of the content and development of the course, we have obtained data from several questions. In this sense, more than 80% of students indicate that the activities have reinforced the theory, as demonstrated in the figure below:

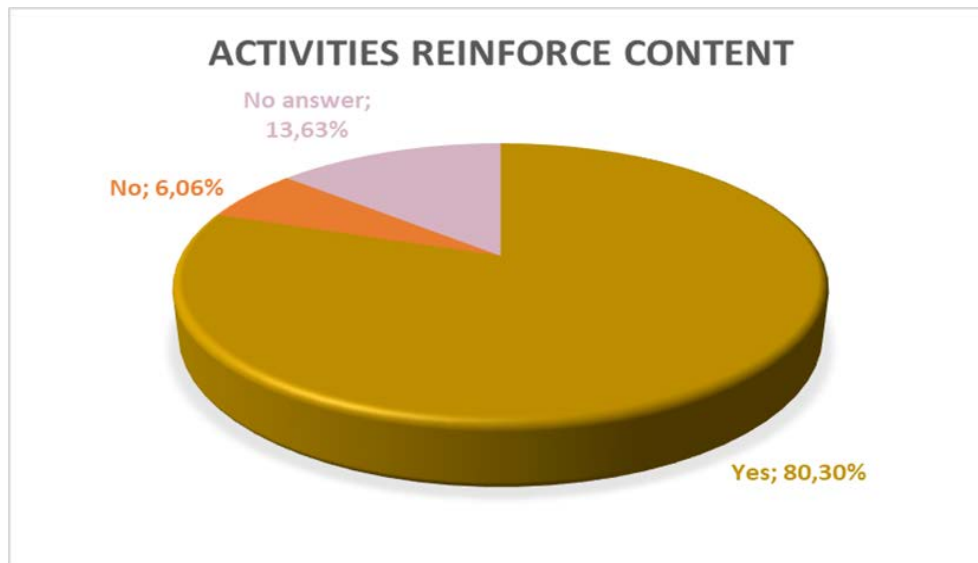


Figure 19. Answers to the question on reinforcement of content by activities.

Regarding the level of specificity of the content, approximately 70% consider it adequate and slightly above 16% indicate that it has been too general (Figure 20):

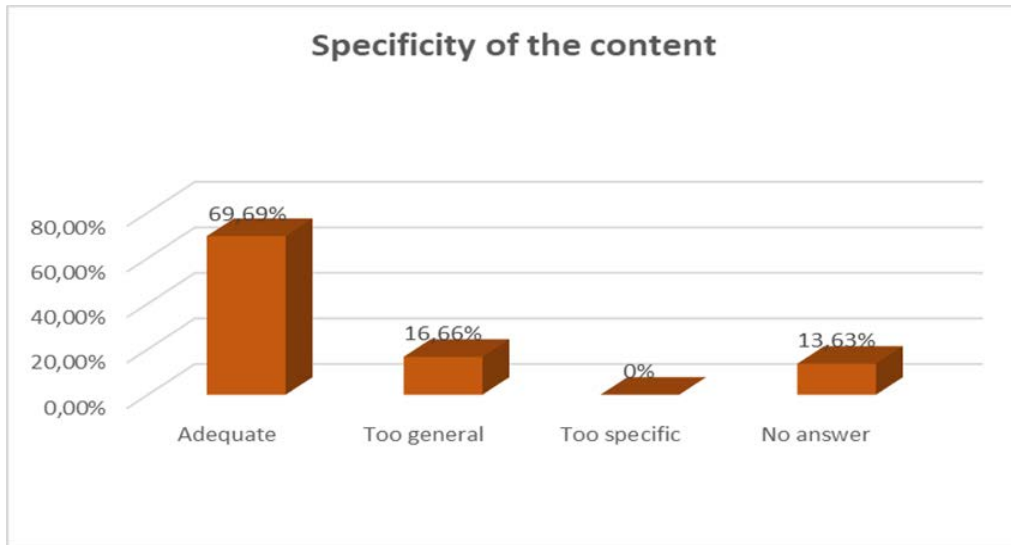


Figure 20. Specificity of the content.

When asked to rate the usefulness and degree of interest of the content (the topics discussed in the course), nearly 62% believe that the usefulness and interest of the course is very high or extremely high and 19,69% deem it to be moderately interesting. No student considers its usefulness null and 13,63% of students did not answer the question, as we can observe in Figure 21:

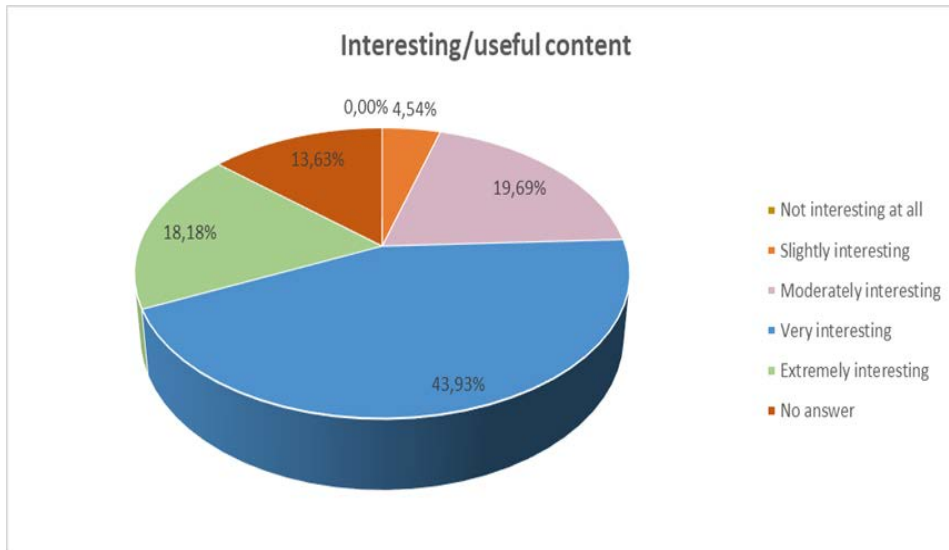


Figure 21. Perception of interest/usefulness of the content.

Another one of the questions that we were interested in was in exploring the nature of the difficulties students encountered in completing the course. As may be observed in Figure 23, 54,54% of students encountered no difficulties at all, another 12,12% had difficulty meeting the given deadlines, 7,57% lost interest, another 4,54% of respondents had difficulty accessing the content and 6,06% of the students experienced difficulties related to the lack of time (Figure 22):

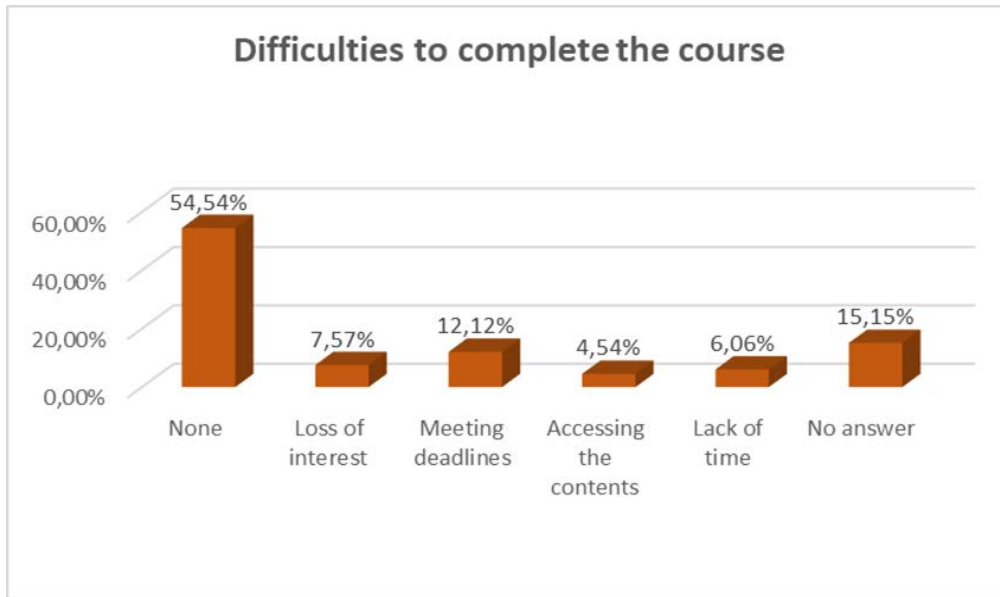


Figure 22. Difficulties to complete the course.

Finally, the degree of satisfaction has been very high, with more than 61% of students who were very satisfied and 18,18% reasonably satisfied. 15,15% of the student population did not answer this question, thus we infer that they had no strong interest in voicing a strong opinion either way. Two students (6,06%) said their satisfaction was low:



Figure 23. Level of satisfaction.

Furthermore, when asked specifically if their expectations had been met, 75,75% stated yes and 10,60% no. 13,63% of students did not answer this question (Figure 24):

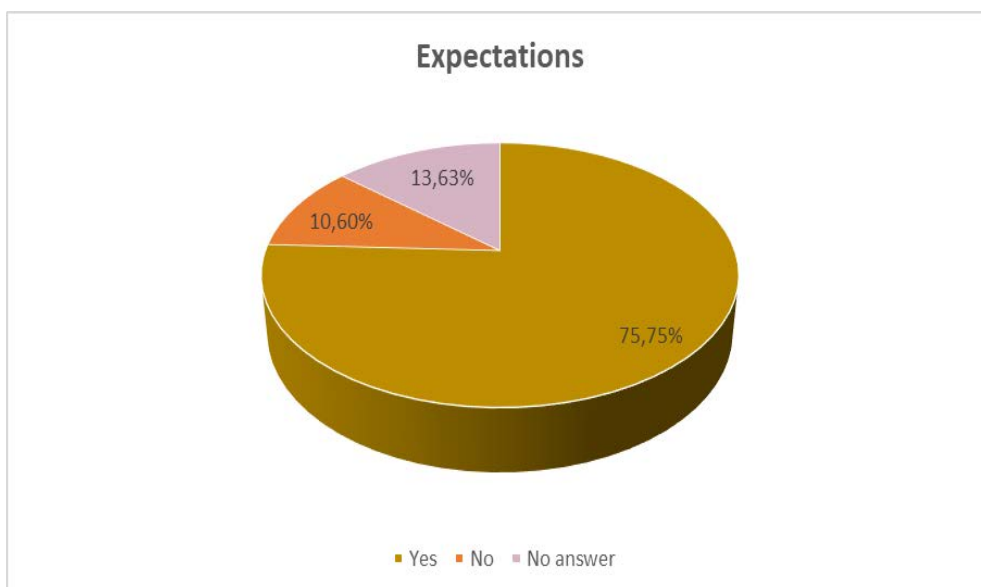


Figure 24. Expectations met.

All this quantitative data suggests positive results in terms of the duration and content of the course, as well as its suitability and degree of applicability to the general training needs or interest of the students.

On the other hand, the qualitative data drawn from the final questionnaire enabled us to complete the quantitative data and to reflect on the results. We grouped the observations and perceptions of the students in categories considering firstly, the usefulness or aspects having a more positive assessment as well as aspects that can be improved upon, and secondly, different elements related to its design, teaching method, activities, and general comments on preferences or applicability. Finally, we extracted information on the interest in going deeper in other themes or courses. In the following section, we will include the categories and examples of comments provided by students in the different sections of the questionnaire.

1. Comments regarding its usefulness and positive aspects. We grouped the more positive aspects into categories in terms of the type of element alluded to: content, teaching method, activities, preferred content, and other comments, from which we have extracted a representative sample:

1.a. Content:

1.a.1. *The content was very clear and easy to follow.*

1.a.2. *It has been very useful as an introduction. I would like to go deeper into the world of PSIT.*

1.a.3. *It looks at the different settings and specifics that can be used in real life.*

1.a.4. *I recommend the resources (x 5).*

1.a.5. *What I liked most was the longer bibliography at the end of each video.*

1.a.6. *In general, all the content and didactics of the course were very good.*

Preferred content/ more popular content:

1.a.7. *I liked the entire first module.*

1.a.8. *What I liked most is the rich global training it offers. It touches on the most important aspects of PSIT.*

1.a.9. *What I liked most about the course was the part that explained in detail what Translating in Public Services is and what Interpreting in Public Services is. I would like to go deeper into this theme, as well as into research as a topic.*

1.a.10. *I would like to examine further the more practical aspects.*

1.a.11. *Regarding the themes covered I liked lesson 1, talking about the difference between being bilingual, interpreting and translating. In lesson 2 the topic that seemed new to me and important was cultural mediation.*

1.b. Teaching method:

1.b.1. *I liked the teaching in this course.*

1.b.2. *Regarding the content of this platform, I liked most the self-evaluations and the videos.*

1.b.3. *What I liked most is the educational content of the videos in this course.*

1.b.4. *I liked the PowerPoints and audios.*

1.b.5. *I liked all the videos and links you have provided.*

1.b.6. *I think it's good that this course can be taken without constraints of time or place.*

1.b.7. *The content of the video has been very helpful.*

1.b.8. *I like the videos most. Not only do they provide theory, they also display real cases, therefore, I can learn the less abstract knowledge.*

1.b.9. *The course is very modern and enjoyable. What I liked most were the videos.*

1.c. *Activities:*

1.c.1. *They have been helpful in reviewing key concepts, both those that were already clear to me as well as those in which I had questions.*

1.c.2. *They are very useful to know and to defend ourselves with.*

1.c.3. *The self-evaluations have helped me to see what themes I have a better grasp on and the ones I need to reinforce (x2).*

1.c.4. *Each part has its benefits.*

1.c.5. *They are very useful because they motivate you to consolidate your knowledge.*

1.c.6. *The activities of the last lessons are extremely useful, from memory to fragments you need to translate and interpret. Perhaps there should be more of these.*

1.c.7. *I like the activities.*

1.c.8. *The one I liked most is on what translation is and on the resources you can use.*

1.c.9. *The activities that enable you to work on practical cases to know how you would react in a similar situation have been very useful and revealing in terms of the training I already possess and where I need to explore further.*

1.d. Other comments on usefulness:

1.d.1. *Perfect (x3), Very good (x4), Adequate (x1)*

1.d.2. *In general, the course is pretty decent. You learn not only about T&I but also about the problems you may find in practise. Any improvement would be minimal, just a few details.*

1.d.3. *Thank you very much for the course. Truth is I liked it and I wanted to say so in this comment, as in other comments I have focused on what can be improved.*

1.d.4. *Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity of participating and evaluating my knowledge.*

1.d.5. *I think this online course is a perfect tool for students.*

1.d.6. *Well done! Congratulations!*

2. As for the aspects of the course that received less positive feedback or the limitations pointed out by the students, we have also grouped them considering the same categories, although this time we identified more observations related to the teaching method of these kinds of courses in general (a) or specifically in terms of this MOOC course (b). All comments are reproduced below:

2.a. General content:

2.a.1. *It would be more complete to understand the theory and cultural exchanges and customs in several countries.*

2.a.2. *I would make the course less general.*

2.a.3. *Perhaps because I have researched PSIT "extensively" during my undergraduate studies, I would have liked the course to be more specialised than what it currently is.*

2.a.4. *More practical exercises (x3).*

2.a.5. *More theory.*

2.b. Teaching method:

2.b.1. Related to the specific teaching method of MOOCs in general

2.b.1.a. *Why not the possibility of an online chat where you could talk about the answers and be able to ask questions.*

2.b.1.b. *I would include a mandatory day of personal interaction between the students and the teachers who designed the course. If face-to-face is not possible even a virtual gathering would be very helpful.*

2.b.2. Related to the design of this course specifically

2.b.2.a. *The evaluation system could be improved.*

2.b.2.b. *Add background music (x2).*

2.b.2.c. *In terms of the forum, it would be more useful if used only to ask questions or debate issues. Also, I would have liked to have had easier access to the answers to all the activities.*

2.b.2.d. *It would be great if it were mandatory to upload all the activities to the forum.*

2.b.2.e. *In the first lessons, I would explain things more concisely whereas in the last ones I would include more practical activities.*

2.b.2.f. *The activities include the answers; therefore, reflection and/or debate in the forum are not nearly as useful.*

2.b.2.g. *Some of the self-evaluations include both questions and answers taken word for word from the lessons ergo there is no reflection involved nor does it expose real cases where one might apply the knowledge learnt in the lesson to check if students have understood the content and its potential impact.*

2.b.2.h. *In the lessons, some videos can be seen from the internet, whereas others must be downloaded. I think it would be useful to unify this, thus it would be less confusing.*

2.b.2.i. *It would have been better with more activities.*

2.c. **Activities**

2.c.1. *They have been very useful, but I think it should be mandatory to upload your answers to the forum, thus generating more debating and we could learn from one another.*

2.c.2. *Perhaps the general activities of each lesson should not require twitter, as not all the students may have a twitter account (x2).*

2.c.3. *It has been useful because it helps you reflect on the learnt concepts, however, I would reduce the time of the self-evaluation because the questions are easy.*

2.c.4. *I recommend adding more practical activities such as essays or opinions on the learnt topics.*

3. Interest in going deeper in other themes or courses. We also observed that some of the themes which participants would like to examine further are more specific in nature, therefore related to the practice of interpreting, as we can observe below:

3.a. *I would have liked to go deeper in themes such as ad hoc interpreters and all the problems that this could cause.*

3.b. *I would have liked to examine further the problematic situations that may arise during the interpreting process and possible solutions one may adopt.*

3.c. *I would like to learn more about note-taking.*

On the other hand, several students point out the need to go deeper in the setting itself and demand more practise in PSIT, with more exercises:

3.d. *In general, I liked it a lot, but I would like to go deeper in practising. It would be so much better and more complete.*

3.e. *I would like to go deeper in the field of community interpreting.*

3.f. *I would like to examine further the world of PSIT.*

3.g. *In the future, it would be good to organise practicums, whether fictitious or real, but it would be very helpful for translators and interpreters to put themselves in the shoes of what this profession really means.*

3.h. *More practical exercises.*

Finally, we also include suggestions about other (more specialised) courses and the need of organising similar courses:

3.i. *I suggest offering more courses such as these and if possible, of a higher academic and university level.*

3.j. *On the other hand, I would like to see course offerings in other fields of translation (legal, economic, cultural, etc.).*

3.k. *I would like courses related to this theme with more examples of social practices and analyses of real examples.*

3.l. *The only suggestion I would make is to offer more courses such as this, most notably those that will help us improve our knowledge.*

3.m. *I hope that you will offer more courses like this one.*

All of this qualitative data provides us with a more complete image of the participants' perspective about the course. In fact, we could draw some

conclusions regarding their perception about the usefulness of the teaching method and other improvable aspects such as incorporating activities more focused on the difficulties of the professional practice, including the figure of a more 'active' teacher/supervisor, and a more effective use of the forums for debate.

5. Conclusions

In the form of general conclusions, it is worth mentioning the high degree of interest and applicability as a general and introductory training as a result of the variety of student profiles and countries of origin. Moreover, as was probably expected, the profile that manifested the greatest interest in the course were students of Languages/ Humanities although we did expect a higher participation of students from other branches of Education. The quantitative and qualitative data underscore the training potential of the tool given its main attributes (open and free) and, simultaneously, the applicability of the content to the general and introductory training need which evidently must be complemented with a deeper, specific and practical training. The ultimate goal of the course is to raise awareness of the complexity of the field, as well as to provide the possibility of learning and practising some of the main principles and strategies presented so that people interested in going further may deepen their understanding with more formal training.

As a future perspective, and with the intent of enabling a wider reach and usefulness for people working with several languages, especially in the context of multicultural populations, we are currently working on adapting the MOOC to other languages whose countries are emerging in terms of PSIT such as China, Russia, and Arab-speaking countries. In so doing the support of students and former students of the Master's in PSIT is fundamental. In fact, the English version of the course is currently available, and it has more than 40 registered participants.

6. Notes

¹ Webpage FITISPos: <http://www3.uah.es/traduccion>

² More information: <http://www3.uah.es/traduccion/es/proyectos-subvencionados/>

³ With the support of students from the *Master's in Intercultural Communication, Interpreting and Translation in Public Services (Master's in PSIT; Máster Universitario en Comunicación Intercultural, Interpretación y Traducción en los Servicios Públicos)*, the Technological Office (Oficina Tecnológica) and the Institute for Education Sciences (Instituto de Ciencias de la Educación) at the same university.

⁴ Massive Open Online Course.

⁵ Extracted at the end of October 2018.

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