DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSES' DESCRIPTIONS:

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE RHETORICAL MOVE STRUCTURE AND ITS EFFECTS ON POTENTIAL STUDENTS

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Abstract

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) offer digital learning opportunities for students around the world. Most of the MOOC platforms include a course description which provides information about the advertised MOOC and, therefore, play a crucial role in both informing potential participants and in persuading them to attend the course. Despite the large number of studies that addressed MOOCs, to my knowledge, none of them have addressed the complex rhetorical function of MOOC descriptions. Therefore, this study sets out to understand and reveal the rhetorical move structure of MOOC descriptions and their rhetorical effect on potential students. A thorough critical theoretical investigation of the relevant literature has been conducted to be able to put forward an analytical tool that is capable of describing the rhetorical move structure of MOOC descriptions. Afterward, a corpus of 70 MOOC descriptions was compiled from an online MOOC platform called Udemy.com. This corpus was then analyzed in depth to investigate the rhetorical move structure of MOOC descriptions. Moreover, 12 interviews were conducted with potential MOOC students from different countries (e.g., Greece, Hungary, Serbia, Romania and India, among others), different educational backgrounds (e.g., business and computer science), and from both genders to reveal the nature of the influence (effects) of the different moves and steps on the readers. The outcomes of the rhetorical move structure analysis made it possible to propose a so called Rhetorical Move Structure (RMS) model for the study of MOOC descriptions and show that MOOC descriptions consist of seven main moves, namely, Presenting credentials, Introducing the offer, Highlighting benefits, Incentivizing, Soliciting action, Defining the audience and Presenting proof. The findings of the interview study suggest that some moves and steps (e.g., Syllabus) have positive influence on the readers, some have neutral impact (e.g., Incentives), while other moves and steps negatively affect the interviewees (e.g., Reviews). Based on the results of the rhetorical move structure analysis and the interview study, pedagogical recommendations for the training of teachers are also presented. The presented RMS model may be considered as a valid and reliable framework of analysis as well as a tool by which tutors may be able to produce effective MOOC descriptions. Furthermore, the results of the interview study may help in increasing the efficiency of the MOOC descriptions by highlighting those factors which positively influence the interviewees and avoiding those which negatively impact their attitude. The study contributes

new findings to various fields of applied linguistics, namely that of ESP, teacher training, persuasion research and the theory of discourse and genre analysis.

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Acronyms

MOOC: Massive Open Online Course

SPL: Sales Promotion Letter

SC: Sub-corpus

RMS: Rhetorical Move Structure

MD: MOOC Description

Chapter 1: Introduction

Over the past few decades, the rapid growth of technology has revolutionized several facets of human life, including education. With technology providing the means to communicate and access online resources, the number of platforms offering Massive Open Online Courses (henceforth referred to as MOOCs) has increased considerably. Hoy (2014) defines MOOCs as "online classes that anyone, anywhere can participate in, usually for free. They are made up of short video lectures combined with computer graded tests and online forums where participants can discuss the material or get help" (pp. 85-86). The objective of MOOC descriptions is therefore not merely to inform. This challenges the application of the conventional perception of the aim of traditional course descriptions, which is to inform students taking a particular course about its aims, content and requirements. MOOC descriptions are intended not only to inform, but also to attract students interested in a topic to take a specific course. There have been various studies regarding the learners, instructors, and providers of MOOCs, among others (e.g., Hone & El Said, 2016; Hoy, 2014; Hew & Cheung, 2014; Guo et al., 2014; Christensen et al., 2013; Mackness & William, 2010), but none of them, to the best of my knowledge, have approached MOOC descriptions from a generic point of view, nor from the perspective of the factors that motivate large numbers of students to enroll in MOOCs.

Hoy (2014) claims that anyone can create MOOCs, which implies that MOOC designers might not all have the necessary training. Furthermore, researchers, even if they are very good as researchers, may not necessarily be similarly good in teaching, and/or may not necessarily have the necessary educational background to be able to teach, prepare materials, or write course descriptions among others. The pedagogical implication of this study is hoped to fill this gap by providing a theory- and data-based model of the MOOC description genre, which would help MOOC instructors in writing effective MOOC descriptions.

Therefore, this descriptive, exploratory study has a complex set of empirical (aims 1 and 2), theoretical (aim 3), and pedagogical/educational (aims 3 and 4 below) purposes:

1. Based on corpus and interview data, it intends to explore the genre of MOOC descriptions to reveal:

1.1   its emerging stereotypical rhetorical move structure (RMS),

1.2   how it compares to the genre of the sales promotion letter (SPL),

1.3   the linguistic composition of the moves/steps that constitute it,

1.4   its communicative purpose(s).

2. It aims to investigate the dominant rhetorical effect of MOOC descriptions on potential students to see whether they have the ability to convince the readers to take the course.

3. On the basis of the results of the empirical investigations and the outcomes of earlier research, this study aims to propose a theory- and data-based model for the study of the generic (i.e., rhetorical move) structure and rhetorical effect of MOOC descriptions.

4. Based on the theoretical and empirical outcomes of the study, it intends to formulate implications and propose recommendations to online tutors with regard to writing effective MOOC descriptions.

      With these purposes in mind, the dissertation seeks to answer the following main research questions (for the sub-questions see Table 4 in Chapter 5):

1.   What is the rhetorical move structure of MOOC descriptions?

2.   What is the effect of MOOC descriptions on potential students?

2.1   Do they have the ability to convince the readers to take the course?

2.2   If yes, how?

3.   How can the genre of MOOC descriptions be modeled

3.1   in terms of its rhetorical move structure?

3.2   in terms of its rhetorical effect?

4.   What pedagogical implications and recommendations may be formulated based on the outcomes of this study with regard to writing effective MOOC descriptions?

      The thesis consists of altogether eight chapters. The current (first) chapter includes an introduction to the research topic and the theoretical and empirical project conducted. This chapter therefore discusses the rationale and the relevance of the topic, and presents the aims and the main research questions in order to provide the necessary background for the undertaking.

      The second chapter presents MOOCs by providing detailed information regarding the students, instructors, and providers of MOOCs. This is hoped to familiarize the reader with the context of MOOC descriptions so that later on the outcomes of the investigation can be adequately interpreted. As MOOCs are considered to constitute a special area of ESP, the chapter also introduces the concept and the state of the art in the field of ESP by describing – in the light

of recent research – the ESP learner, ESP practitioner, and the process of needs analysis and materials design.

Chapter 3 turns towards the theory of genre analysis by reviewing previous research on this topic. This chapter discusses in particular the RMS analysis as introduced by Swales (1981, 1990). Then the application of this type of analysis is demonstrated in different genres, such as the genre of SPL by Bhatia (1993) and the genre of MOOC descriptions by Hajeer (2020). Finally, this chapter focuses on MOOC descriptions from the point of view of digital and academic promotional genres to establish the relationship between these two genres and the genre of MOOC descriptions.

Chapter 4 starts with reviewing the literature on the topic of persuasion as the dissertation seeks to uncover whether MOOC descriptions have the ability to convince the readers to take the course. Then, the chapter turns towards clarifying the differences between some related, but still different key concepts, namely persuasion, manipulation, and argumentation. Then, the focus is shifted towards consumer behavior and the process of decision-making of the consumer. Afterwards, it provides an overview of the literature on the external and internal factors that affect the behavior of the consumer (i.e., the student who takes the course).

Since the dissertation presents the outcomes of a complex theoretical and empirical study, involving several stages and means of data collection and analysis, Chapter 5 provides an overview of the methods that were used for the empirical investigations: the corpus-based (text analysis) study and the interview study. This section is only concerned with providing a general overview so that the logic of and the rationale behind the various components of the undertaking are clarified and explained; however, the details of the two types of investigations can be found in the sixth and the seventh chapters.

Chapter 6 is dedicated to presenting the details of the corpus-based investigation, that is, those of the so-called RMS analysis. It starts by furnishing extensive information about the methods of corpus design and data analysis to ensure the replicability of the study. Afterwards, based on the findings of the analyses, the stereotypical rhetorical move structure of the MOOC description genre is modelled and examined in depth, the various moves and steps are identified and defined, and examples are provided as illustrations.

Chapter 7 is concerned with the interview study which intends to investigate the effects of MOOC description on potential students. Like the sixth chapter, it begins by describing the

research methods used to present as much information as possible regarding the participants, the instrument, as well as the procedures of data collection and data analysis. The second, major part of the chapter presents and discusses the outcomes of the interviews to address the effects of MOOC descriptions on the interviewees.

Chapter 8 focuses on answering the research questions that the study raised. First, it provides details about the RMS of MOOC descriptions by brining into attention the similarities and differences between MOOC descriptions and SPLs, and discussing the communicative purpose of MOOC descriptions. Furthermore, this chapter highlights the different effects of MOOC descriptions on potential students. Moreover, it provides the pedagogical implications and recommendations of the study. Finally, this chapter presents an account of the limitations of the current study, highlights the novelties it offers for various areas of applied linguistics and provides suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: Understanding MOOCs as Special ESP Contexts

2.0 Setting the Scene

Even though the focus of the current dissertation is MOOC descriptions as a special kind of genre and their rhetorical effect on potential students, it is crucial to provide an account of MOOCs and the parties involved in these courses as the same partakers are concerned in both MOOCs and MOOC descriptions (i.e., the tutors and the potential students). This overview is hoped to help better understand the effects MOOC descriptions (written by the instructors) may have (or may be expected to have) on potential students.

The increasing numbers of online courses in general and MOOCs in particular may reflect the increasing numbers of tutors (trained and untrained) who are participating in online education. In MOOC platforms such as Udemy.com, writing the course description is a task that is left to the tutor who might not be aware that MOOC descriptions are not merely informative texts but might also have other communicative purposes. Therefore, one of the aims of this study is to contribute to the field of ESP by formulating implications and suggesting recommendations that could help online tutors (who may or may not have training in education) write effective MOOC descriptions in English that are able to persuade students to enroll in a particular MOOC. An overview of the field of ESP should provide a deeper understanding of how the pedagogical/practical implications of the study could contribute to the field of ESP. Understanding the applications of the implications and recommendations requires extensive knowledge of the surrounding circumstances of the ESP field. For this reason, the following subsections discuss the role of needs analysis, materials design, ESP learners, and the distinctive roles of ESP practitioners.

The current chapter is divided into two main sections: understanding MOOCs and an overview of research on the relevant aspects of ESP as well as its constitutive elements and participants. The section on understanding MOOCs comprises five subsections. The first one proposes a working definition of MOOCs and it provides information about their history. The second subsection presents information about the students who typically join MOOCs such as their age, their educational background, and their country of origin. The third section turns towards the various types of MOOC instructors, and discusses the studies that addressed what motivates MOOC tutors to launch such courses and the challenges they encounter when they design them. Fourth, details regarding the platforms that provide MOOCs are presented with

special emphasis on the Udemy.com platform, which is investigated by the current research. The fifth subsection seeks to explore the studies available on the course descriptions of MOOCs in particular. Finally, a summary of the main claims of the overview is provided to pave the way for the purposes of the present investigation.

The second part of this chapter (on ESP) includes four subsections. The first subsection furnishes a historical overview and explores the various, competing definitions of ESP. The second subsection, focusing on needs analysis and material design, provides an explanation of terms and various studies that demonstrate the role of needs analysis which is a necessary process for materials design. The third subsection, on the ESP learners, furnishes an overview about the ESP learners. The fourth subsection delineates the various roles of the ESP practitioner. The term ESP practitioners is used here instead of ESP teachers because Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) argue that ESP practitioners are more than teachers, as they play complex roles such as researching, collaborating, evaluating, course designing and material providing besides teaching.

2.1 Understanding MOOCs

2.1.1 Introducing and Defining MOOCs

In the digital age, the Internet has become an increasingly important source of knowledge and a tool for learning (McAuley et al., 2010; Porter, 2015). Computers (Beatty, 2010), mobile devices (Zhang, 2012) and their various programs, platforms, and applications can offer the average person a window into this vast world of information, providing never-before-seen access to knowledge which has given access to learning for people around the globe (Weis, Benmayor, O'Leary, & Eynon, 2002). A recent development in this democratization of learning has been the introduction of MOOCs. MOOCs are considered as a means to facilitate access to higher education for millions of people interested (Patru & Balaji, 2016). Entities which act as MOOC providers can be divided into non-profit colleges and universities such as Stanford, Yale, and Harvard, and for-profit MOOCs providers such as Coursera, Udacity, and Udemy (Rhoads, 2015).

Hoy (2014) defines MOOCs as

a group of online classes that share several key features. The
most obvious is that all content is delivered online, either through video,

slideshows, discussion boards, or any combination thereof. Courses are
usually developed by well-known figures in the field from large research
institutions, but in reality, anyone can create a MOOC (p. 86).

Additionally, most of these online courses have online debate groups where tens of thousands of students (or tutors) may share their experiences as well as their opinions regarding a course that they have taken or are currently attending (Hoy, 2014). This study is based on Hoy's (2014) definition of MOOCs as this definition may be argued to be the most inclusive since it addresses the channel and mode of delivery in addition to the instructors of MOOCs.

From a historical point of view, Hodges (2008) alleges that email-based courses marked the beginning of open online learning. Wiley and Gurrel (2009), however, postulate that the web-based courses, where enrollees can schedule their own studying time, started as soon as the world wide web was open for the public. That is, open education resources and open learning preceded the rise of MOOCs (Stracke, Downes, Conole, Burgos, & Nascimbeni, 2019). The first MOOC was introduced in 2008 by Stephen Downes and George Siemens at the University of Manitoba on the topic of Connectivism Learning Theory. In the beginning, about 25 students took the MOOC for credits, but later around 2,300 students enrolled in the course to learn about the taught topic, which can be considered a great success for the first MOOC (Rhoads, 2015). Afterwards, the number of MOOCs, and the number of MOOC students started to increase rapidly due to the huge media campaigns (Rhoads, 2015). One MOOC platform (edSurge) reported that 1,200 MOOCs were offered on this platform from more than 200 universities and taken by over 10 million students (Rhoads, 2015). Later, many modified versions of MOOCs were introduced, which were argued to have met the needs of various kinds of audiences (Stracke et al., 2019). An example may be of Small Private Online Courses (SPOC), which alleges to provide more interpersonal connection with the students (Guo, 2017).

The first MOOC that was introduced by Stephen Downes and George Siemens did not concentrate on the content of the course per se; instead, the emphasis was on the idea of establishing networks and sharing resources across these networks (Stracke et al., 2019). The idea of this MOOC was guided by the Connectivist Learning Theory by Siemens (2004). This theory suggests that the world consists of a group of networks where social and physical issues can be solved through the cooperation of collaborating individuals (i.e., group work) (Rhoads,

2015). The type of MOOC that follows the connectivist pedagogy was labeled as 'cMOOC', where 'c' stands for connectivist. Another type of MOOCs, called 'xMOOC' (where x stands for eXtened) came into the scene in 2011, which is a type of MOOC that is concerned with providing educational content to a wide public audience (Stracke et al., 2019).

Many scholars were excited about MOOCs and considered them as potential tools to revolutionize higher education forever by making it available for large numbers of students (Selingo, 2012). Others, however, were concerned whether MOOCs are indeed capable of replacing conventional classroom education (Toven-Lindsey, Rhoads & Lozano, 2015). Altbach (2013), nonetheless, had a different perspective as he regarded MOOCs as a new means for the western academia to dominate higher education in the rest of the world by making it accessible to everyone. Despite the various attitudes towards MOOCs, it is extremely difficult to deny the fact that the MOOC movement has influenced higher education (Rhoads, 2015).

Jordan (2014) researched the trends of enrollment and completion of MOOCs, focusing on the platforms Edx, Udacity, and Coursera due to their media attention and the author's claim that they reflect the higher education sector (p. 153). The author gathered data from 88 courses and found that the number of enrolled students ranged between 4,500 and 226,652, with a median value of 42,844. The rate of students who completed the course, in other words, the students who gained completion certificates for the courses, ranged from 0.9% to 36.1%, with a median value of 6.5% (p. 147). These relatively low completion rates have also been reflected in other studies on MOOCs, such as the one by Pursel, Zhang, Jablowkow, Choi and Velegol (2016).

Research on the students' dropout reasons suggests four factors responsible for the high dropout rates, namely, personal, social, academic and course-related factors (Aldowah, Al-Samarraie, Alzahrani, & Alalwan, 2020). Incompetent online skills (Khalil & Ebner, 2014), the lack of previous experience concerning MOOCs (Yamba-Yugsi & Luján Mora, 2017) can be considered as personal reasons for dropout. Social factors are for instance limited social interaction with other students, the instructor or the content that discourage students from completing the MOOC they enrolled in (Whitehill, Mohan, Seaton, Rosen, & Tingley, 2017). The course-related factors include course design, level of difficulty, time and the price, whereas academic factors contain the feedback and the encouragement that is received from the instructors (Aldowah et al., 2020).

Qiu (2020) affirms that the low course completion rate in Udemy is not an indicator of failure, as 92% of the students who joined courses in Udemy mentioned that the MOOCs they enrolled in helped them achieve their goals. Not every student joins the course intending to take the whole course from A to Z. According to Qiu (2020), 30% of the enrollees were motivated to take a particular course in order to be able to build something (e.g., application or software), 25% joined some courses to learn for various exams (e.g., language exam), or to get help with career change, and 10% needed aid in setting up their businesses.

2.1.2 The Students of MOOCs

In an attempt to know more about the students participating in MOOCs, Christensen, Steinmetz, Alcorn, Bennett, Woods and Emanuel (2013) investigated Coursera, a MOOC platform, using an online survey. They identified the types of students enrolling in MOOCs and their reasons for registering. Approximately 35 thousand students participated in this survey, of which 79.4% hold bachelor's degrees or higher. Moreover, this study revealed that over 40% of the participants were less than 30 years old. Apart from being educated and young, the majority of MOOC students were males, employed, and from developed countries. In addition to identifying the characteristics of the students, the study also attempted to uncover their reasons for joining MOOCs. More than 90% of the students were motivated to participate in MOOCs for two main reasons: curiosity and gaining skills to boost their performance in their workplaces (Christensen et al., 2013). While Christensen et al.'s (2013) research seems to have yielded substantial results, it is unclear whether these results can be generalized to other MOOCs platforms such as Udemy.com, Edx.com, or udacity.com, since these platforms might provide different types of courses which may attract different types of participants with varying motivations. To further understand the motives that encourage students to join MOOCs, Milligan and Littlejohn (2017) conducted an investigation to unravel the motivation to participate in Medical and Data science MOOCs. The results of the research suggest that the students took the courses to learn new skills, increase their efficiency at work, broaden their professional knowledge and to increase their chances of getting better positions or roles at work (Milligan & Littlejohn, 2017).

MOOCs can also be directly affiliated with universities, as seen in Mackness et al.'s (2010) study on the participants in a MOOC set up by the University of Winnipeg. Similarly to Christenson et al. (2013), this study also offers insight into learners' perspectives on MOOCs,

and reveals the appeal that these courses have for students. Participants in the study commented favorably on the autonomy which MOOCs allowed, as well as their openness, in terms of free enrollment and flexibility. Nonetheless, negative aspects were noted as well, such as a lack of interaction for some students as well as language issues for students from English as a foreign language (EFL) background (Mackness et al., 2010).

Abeer and Miri's (2014) study shed light on the factors that impact the MOOC quality from the perspective of the enrollees. The study reported four main design features that determine the quality of MOOCs. They included visualizing the content, the instructor quality of explanation, the variety of assignments and the support that is received from the tutor (Abeer & Miri, 2014). Abeer and Miri's (2014) investigation concluded that students' competency and the design of the course are mutually dependent factors. That is, competent students tend not to complete an ill-designed MOOC while incompetent students left well-designed courses unfinished (Abeer & Miri, 2014).

2.1.3 The Instructors of MOOCs

Although instructors are usually authoritative figures in a particular field, it should be noted that almost anyone can design and teach a MOOC (Hoy, 2014). Rhoads (2015) differentiates between two types of MOOC instructors, namely, cMOOC and xMOOC instructors. In the case of cMOOC, the instructor is not the only source of knowledge, and the direction of the course is rather defined by the students (Rodriguez, 2012). With xMOOC, however, the tutors exercise more control (e.g., including and excluding material) over the content of the course (Rhoads, 2015). At the very beginning of MOOC movements in higher education, Allen and Seaman's (2014) investigation reported that 77% of their participants (instructors) said that they find MOOCs an inappropriate method for teaching due to the large number of students which may hinder the interaction between the teacher and the students. Evans and Myrick (2015) carried out a research to measure the satisfaction of MOOC educators with MOOCs. Their results suggest that the more MOOCs the instructors teach the more satisfied they become. Also, when the participants were asked whether they would consider teaching a MOOC, only a fraction below 2% said they would not (Evans & Myrick, 2015).

After investigating the existing body of literature on MOOCs, Hew and Cheung (2014) could identify three main types of motives that drive instructors to create MOOCs. The first type reflects a desire to gain new experience from using the MOOC format, as designing a MOOC

provides instructors with valuable experience in online education. The second reflects a desire for personal gain in terms of reputation or career goals. Lastly, instructors are also motivated by a sense of altruism, and see MOOCs as a means to help others by providing students worldwide with access to higher education (Hew & Chung, 2014, pp. 49-50). However, Lowenthal, Snelson and Perkins (2018) believe that MOOC instructors are encouraged by intrinsic motivations more than extrinsic ones. This claim was also substantiated by Doo, Tang, Bonk and Zhu's (2020) study, which examined what motivated instructors to design MOOCs. The results showed that almost 87% of the motives were intrinsic, such as serving the community, interest in modern learning technology and personal growth. About 13% percent of the instructors were motivated by extrinsic factors, such as institutional goals, research purposes and financial gains.

MOOCs can also present challenges to instructors, who are not able to connect on a personal level with the thousands of students enrolled in their course as they would in a conventional classroom. This concern is reflected in the interviews with MOOC instructors conducted by Mackness et al. (2010). Another concern that was expressed by several MOOC tutors was the long time that designing a MOOC demands (Doo et al., 2020). Doo et al.'s (2020) investigation included 142 MOOC instructors. They were also asked whether they received any type of training before designing their MOOCs. Surprisingly, only 13.38% of the participants reported that they had received professional training prior to designing their MOOCs. The rest, nonetheless, learned it by doing.

2.1.4 The Providers of MOOCs

According to Rhoads (2015), there is a difference between MOOC providers and MOOC producers in the sense that the latter includes those who design and teach MOOCs, while the former involves the organizations that support the development of MOOCs and facilitate access for the online learners. As the current dissertation investigates a go-profit platform (i.e., Udemy), the present section seeks to shine a light on go-profit platforms.

MOOC platforms seek to increase the number of enrollees by developing the quality and the interactivity of the courses provided (Conache, Dima, & Mutu, 2016). The most popular MOOC platforms in sequence are Coursera, EdX, Udacity, Udemy and Khan Academy (Conache et al., 2016). According to Cetina, Goldbach and Manea (2018), Udemy offered 65,000 online courses on more than 142 topics, and these courses were taken by 20 million students. The students who enroll in Udemy MOOCs are from around 200 countries and one

third of them are from the United States (Qiu, 2020). Szabó (2021) carried out an investigation into the Udemy Platform in order to reveal the most popular courses in Udemy and the number of enrollees. The most popular courses in Udemy are the programming language Python with almost 24 million students, web development (8 million), ethical hacking (7.7 million) and photoshop (8.3 million) among others (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Number of Participants in the Most Popular Topics of the Udemy Platform in 2020
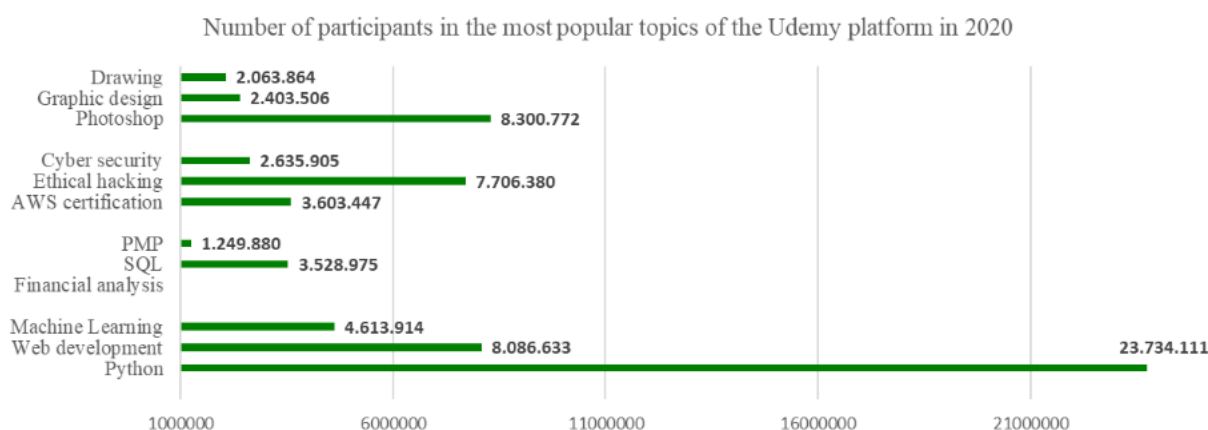
Note. Adapted from "Online Platform Courses Between Education and Business" by E. Szabo, 2021, *Annals of'Constantin Brancusi'University of Targu-Jiu,* (1/2021)*,* p. 202. Copyright 2021 by Academia Brâncuşi Publisher.

Udemy platform is different from the rest of the go-profit platforms in the sense that they give the chance for anyone to produce and participate in the platform. Put simply, anyone can produce a MOOC, and anyone can participate in a MOOC in Udemy (Conache et al., 2016). Not being supported by prestigious universities is a major drawback for the Udemy platform (Cetina et al., 2018). Qiu (2020) argues that Udemy is a sustainable "learning ecosystem" (p. 2018) in the sense that besides being able to spread knowledge, the instructors of Udemy can also get paid for teaching, if they wish. The majority of the courses on Udemy are priced, but there is another platform called 'Udemy Free Resource Center' which provides free courses (Szabó, 2021). The prices of the Udemy MOOCs start from around 13 euro and vary according to the topic of the MOOC, for instance, the average price of a business course is 80 euro and the average price of a software development MOOC is 107 euro (Szabó, 2021).

Conache et al. (2016) conducted a comparative study among EdX, Udacity, Udemy, and Coursera to provide a better understanding of the popularity, business model and course design of these platforms. The results (relevant to the current dissertation) of the study suggest that Udemy and Udacity are more focused on workforce training and increasing employability whereas Coursera and EdX are concerned with students and faculty. As for the course producers, they range from individual tutors (especially Udemy) to corporations (especially Udacity), or universities (especially EdX).

The possibility of introducing MOOCs to secondary education was explored by Politis, Koutsakas and Karagiannidis (2017). The authors used the Udemy platform to introduce a computer programming course for Greek secondary school students. The students' behavior was observed and they were asked to fill in questionnaires before and after taking the MOOC. The surveys sought to collect information about the students' expectations, experience, and the reason why they joined the course or left the course unfinished. The participants in the study reported an overall very favorable experience with the MOOC. The students expected MOOCs to have a positive influence on the educational process. They also mentioned that they were satisfied with the knowledge they gained from the attended MOOC (Politis et al., 2017).

2.1.5 Advertising MOOCs

Only a few studies have been carried out on how MOOCs are advertised. Rosselle, Caron and Heutte (2014) examined MOOC advertisements from the platforms Coursera, Udacity, and Canvas in order to identify the general elements found in these promotional course descriptions. While the authors identified specific types of information such as the name of the author, the target audience, the estimated workload, and the language of the course, they did not explore the rhetorical moves made in the text, nor did they examine how potential students interact with the course description. A similar study was carried out by Liyanagunawardena, Lundqvist, Mitchell, Vacher, Warburton and Williams (2019) to reveal the categorization schemes for MOOCs in order to help inform potential participants. This investigation examined the top four major MOOC providers (Canvas Network, Coursera, edX, and FutureLearn) as well as the top four MOOC aggregators (Class Central, CourseBuffet, Coursetalk, and MOOC-List) which bring courses together from several MOOC providers. Another study by Assami et al. (2018) investigated the ways in which information from MOOC descriptions can be used to develop personalization criteria for MOOC courses (p. 1266).

While such studies extensively described the elements found in the MOOC descriptions, they also lack an investigation into the rhetorical strategies used by the course creators, as well as the impact that these strategies have on the course choices of potential students. Such investigations may yield useful information for the designers of MOOCs in terms of writing not only informative but also effective MOOC descriptions.

2.2 ESP: An Overview of Research on its Constitutive Elements and Participants

2.2.1 Introducing ESP

In an attempt to summarize the history of ESP, Johns (2013) divides the developments that ESP went through into four phases. The first period is called "The Early Years 1962 – 1981 (From Text-based Counts to 'Rhetorical Devices')" (p. 9). In this era, the main interest lied in counting the frequent grammatical structures of many types of texts. Afterwards, the rhetorical purpose was introduced into the field by the pioneers of the Washington School (Johns, 2013). Further, from 1981 to 1990 was the second period which was labeled by Johns (2013) as "The More Recent Past" (p. 9). In this period, two critical terms started to be recognized in the field, namely, genre and rhetorical moves, which indicates the expansion of the scope of the field. Additionally, needs assessment, another key concept in the field of English for specific purposes started to be discussed within the field (Johns, 2013). The third period is labeled as "The Modern Age" (p. 9), it lasted for 21 years starting from 1990. One of the main characteristics of this era is the growing interest in the intercultural rhetoric which is still present. Moreover, among other research types, corpus-oriented research in this period is utilized the most by the ESP researchers (Johns, 2013). The Future is the fourth period discussed by Johns (2013). Johns (2013) expects a bright future for the ESP field in which more quality articles are expected to be published. Also, she anticipated more professional and in-depth approaches to emerge. Besides, she foresees more detailed studies on multimodality (e.g., visual information) as the research regarding this approach is still far from being exhausted.

Scholars like Hutchinson and Waters (1987) regarded ESP as the answer to the question of why learners need to learn a language other than their mother tongue. Strevens (1988, p. 39) considered ESP as the opposite of General English, where the materials are analogous to those employed in particular contexts meaning to meet the needs of the learners. A particular ESP course may concentrate on teaching specific skill/s (e.g., writing) using new methods (Strevens, 1988, p. 40). Although Strevens's (1988) definition of ESP seems inclusive, Dudley-Evans and

St John (1998) believed that Strevens' (1988) and Hutchinson and Waters's (1987) definitions of ESP appear to be incomplete. Therefore, Dudley-Evan and St John (1998) proposed an ESP definition that is twofold: the first one focuses on absolute characteristics and pointing out that "ESP is designed to meet specific needs of the learners" and "ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the disciplines it served" (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p. 4). The second focuses on variable characteristics, including features such as being "designed for adult learners, designed for definite disciplines, apply different methodology from general English, designed for intermediate or advanced students, assume basic knowledge of the language system but it can be used with beginners" (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p. 5).

The context of the current research is relevant to this definition in the sense that a designed course/material/guide/task that intends to guide learners in writing effective MOOC descriptions in English would probably come as an answer to the tutor's needs. Such a course would also be based on the methods that are closely related to the field of online education and persuasive writing.

2.2.2 Needs Analysis and Materials Design

St John (1996) claims that "needs analysis is about understanding learners and also about understanding the communication events which the learners will participate in; analyzing samples of texts is part of today's needs analysis process" (p. 6) which are (the samples) MOOC descriptions in the current context. Needs analysis is about resolving two main questions regarding the course, which are 'Why? How?' (Flowerdew, 2013). Hutchinson and Waters (1987), however, define needs analysis as "the awareness of a target situation – a definable need to communicate in English- that distinguishes the ESP learner from the learner of general English" (p. 54). The authors believe that the specific needs of the ESP learners differentiate them from the students of English for general purposes. Alsamadani (2017) emphasized the critical role of needs assessment in identifying the competence that the ESP learners need to communicate effectively in possible academic or professional situations.

Hyland (2006) establishes that evaluating or analyzing the needs of ESP learners is an ongoing process which is carried out by ESP practitioners. Additionally, ESP practitioners are expected to adjust the teaching process according to the new insights that they discover about the students throughout the course (Hyland, 2006). Besides, by evaluating the students or analyzing their needs, ESP practitioners are also required to research or invent methods to unearth the

current language knowledge of the learners in addition to what is missing and what they need to learn (Hyland, 2006).

Many studies have been conducted to identify the needs of the learners in various fields. For instance, Prachanant (2012) carried out a study in Thailand in order to define the needs of those who work in the field of tourism. The study included 40 participants, 22 male and 18 female who worked in tourist attractions in many places across Thailand. It was a quantitative study where the researcher employed questionnaires as an instrument to collect data. The needs analysis revealed that the four skills (especially speaking) were important for the workers in the tourism field. Besides, the needs assessment revealed that the workers rarely use the language to have a general conversation. In contrast, they apply the language to supply the tourists with information, provide assistance in many situations and offer help (Prachanant, 2012). The needs assessment also shows that the most salient problems that the workers encounter are the difficulties in understanding the various accents of the tourists and the lack of competency in English language grammar when writing (Prachanant, 2012).

In the field of engineering, Alsamadani's (2017) study was conducted in Saudi Arabia in a prestigious university. It included 200 students and 25 teachers from the Civil Engineering Department. Classroom observation, semi-structured interviews and structured questionnaires were the utilized instruments in collecting data. Using class observation as a tool to scrutinize the needs of the students revealed an important factor that hinders students from communicating effectively in their potential workplaces which is the tendency of the teachers to concentrate on developing the students listening and reading skills while devoting as little as 3% of the class time to develop the students' writing skills (Alsamadani, 2017). More importantly, the questionnaire that was filled by the students uncovered that they do not consider themselves competent in English speaking and writing skills (Alsamadani, 2017). Furthermore, the interview with the ESP teachers at the university brought their concerns to the surface as they commented that the current curriculum primarily focuses on developing the reading skills of the students not taking into account the vitality of the writing skills (Alsamadani, 2017).

Lu (2018) carried out a study in which he was aiming to assess the English language needs and the challenges that the Taiwanese nurses face. Lu (2018) interviewed nine nurses and observed ten other nurses in a Taiwanese hospital that provides medical services in English. The findings of the study revealed the fact that the reason behind the difficulties that the nurses are

facing is that their needs in the field were never scrutinized (Lu, 2018). Additionally, one of the main challenges that faced the nurses was the lack of the appropriate set of pertinent vocabulary which hindered them from communicating properly. Therefore, the nurses tended to hesitate or to ask for their colleagues' help when sharing information with the patients which, unfortunately, led the patients to misinterpret the situation (Lu, 2018). This, along with other challenges such as pronunciation, not understanding unfamiliar accents as well as employing negative coping strategies could raise some serious issues regarding the patients' safety (Lu, 2018). The nurses described the methods of teaching English in the university as ineffective as the teachers focused mainly on reading skills and grammar-translation instead of communication skills. Based on the findings of this study, Lu (2018) provided some pedagogical suggestions. Lu (2018) mentioned that investing more effort in improving the communication skills of the nurses would assist them in building the patient-nurse relationship which is proved to be crucial in such cases.

Despite the several studies that focus on the students' needs in many fields (Alsamadani, 2017; Lu, 2018; Prachanant, 2012), to my knowledge there have not yet been studies that would shed light on the needs of online tutors when it comes to writing effective MOOC descriptions in English.

In ESP classes (similarly to other classes), the selected materials are expected to meet the objectives of the course (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). ESP practitioners can pick ESP materials from already published coursebooks. It is also conceivable to support the chosen coursebook (or coursebooks) with complementary chapters, units, or activities. Further, ESP practitioners might even have to design the materials themselves, should the published ones lack suitable content (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). Likewise, Bocanegra-Valle (2010) argued that ESP language teaching differs from EGP (English for General Purposes) teaching in that there is not a coursebook that is abided by from cover to cover; instead, there are selected or designed units, activities, or chapters that meet the prerequisites of ESP learners. Anthony (2011) stated that it is extremely difficult for ESP material designers to locate the fitting materials that suit the local necessities of their students, given that the main aim of the material in the market is to make profits for the producers/publishers. Which is to say, the companies that publish these materials strive to make them (materials) as inclusive as possible by making the coursebooks as general and transferable among disciplines (Anthony, 2011). With this in mind, it is assumed that

in the majority of cases, ESP practitioners are required to write a part, if not all, of the material for a presented course.

2.2.3 The ESP Learner

Strevens (1988) believes that ESP learners are divided into two main categories: The first category includes those whose careers require them to speak English, while the other category includes those who are learning a certain discipline in English. Two subcategories belonging to the latter category are highlighted by Strevens (1988) based on the practical experience the learners have in the activity they are practicing. The first subcategory includes those who have experience in their domain, but in their mother tongue, while the other sub-classification entails those who do not have any experience, but English was part of their training. Strevens (1988) raises three key presumptions that ESP learners have. The first assumption claims that learners impose their previous learning experiences on their present learning process. The second assumption states that the individual perceptions of themselves as learners. It seems that, on one hand, those who are still in training tend to anticipate more success for themselves; on the other hand, those who are currently working tend to be pessimistic and experience feelings of incompetence. Thirdly, ESP learners have distorted thoughts regarding the utilization of language that they are learning in the ESP classroom. Hindered by such thoughts, the usefulness of the learned language seems unclear to them.

There have been many studies that focus on the ESP learner (Avand, 2009; Dmitrenko & Budas, 2021; Sazdovska, 2007). Hung (2011), for instance, examined ESP learners' perceptions with regard to introducing video blogs into teaching. The investigation reported that study vlogs helped students follow their learning processes, professionally develop and manage their learning time. Nonetheless, some difficulties related to time, technical issues and real-time communication were also present (Hung, 2011). Al-Khezzi and Al-Dousari (2016) examined the impact of using educational mobile applications on ESP learners. The findings of the study proved the efficiency of mobile applications in improving the participants' comprehension of vocabulary and grammar (Al-Khezzi & Al-Dousari, 2016).

Other researchers (Dmitrenko & Budas, 2021; Lynch & Maclean, 2003) reported on the influence of feedback on the ESP learner. Lynch and Maclean's (2003) study's findings reveal that teacher's feedback had a vital role in improving the oral performance of the ESP learners. This was also corroborated by Dmitrenko and Budas' (2021) investigation which suggests that

the outcomes of the autonomous ESP learning process are substantially influenced by the teacher's written feedback.

Avand (2009) investigated the effect of introducing translation to the reading comprehension of 25 ESP learners. Avand (2009) reported that using translation improved the reading comprehension of the participants. Sadeghi, Hassani and Hemmati (2013) investigated the impact of genre-based instruction on ESP learner's reading comprehension. After dividing the participants into control and experimental groups, a genre-based approach was taken to instruct the control group only. Afterwards, both groups were tested and the findings of the study suggest that genre-based instruction positively influenced the test results of the control group. Similarly, the results of Sukmawati and Nasution (2021) show improvement in ESP learners' writing skills after genre-based instruction sessions.

Even though the ESP learner has been the focus of many studies, still there have not been investigations which researched the course designers or online MOOC instructors who teach in English. Although investigating the instructors of MOOCs as ESP learners is not the aim of the current study, it is hoped that its proposed pedagogical implications may aid MOOC instructors in producing effective MOOC descriptions.

2.2.4 The ESP Practitioner

As for the role of the ESP teacher, Dudley-Evans and St John (1991) prefer to differentiate between two main terms (practitioner and teacher) as they allege that the ESP teacher has several roles in the classroom other than just teaching. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) list five main roles that the ESP practitioner is expected to fulfill, namely, teacher, researcher, course designer and material provider, collaborator, and evaluator. Exploring the roles of the ESP practitioners is expected to set the scene for the pedagogical implications section as the main audience to whom such pedagogical implications may be relevant are ESP practitioners of aspiring MOOC instructors.

2.2.4.1 The ESP Practitioner as a Teacher and Researcher. Apart from contributing individual consultations to the students to help them reach their language-related goals, given that they are (ESP practitioners) the communication experts, the difference between ESP practitioners and English for general purposes' teacher is that ESP practitioner is not an expert in the target discipline, instead, the professional learner is the one who is in disposal of the specialist knowledge (Dudley-Evans & John, 1998). For instance, English for Legal purposes'

practitioner does not necessarily have a degree in law. However, Dudley-Evans and St John (1991) find it inevitable for the ESP practitioner to have a good understanding of the discipline in which they are involved (e.g., science and engineering). Still, Anthony (2011) does not agree with Dudley-Evans and John's (1998) ideal description of the roles of the ESP practitioner. Anthony (2011) claims that ESP practitioners do not always have the required time to research fields that are not in their area of expertise as a way to familiarize themselves with the target disciplines. A misconception has occurred regarding the level of the target discipline knowledge that is required from an ESP teacher. This has caused confusion to many ESP practitioners discouraging them from being creative or in some cases leading them to abandon the ESP approach altogether (Anthony, 2011). In the circumstances, to fill the gap, experts in the target disciplines have been asked to teach ESP even if they are not qualified as language teachers.

According to a study carried out in Indonesia (Wu & Badger, 2009), ESP practitioners who encountered some situations in the ESP classroom where they had not been competent regarding the specialty field knowledge, reported that such situations affected their confidence negatively and consequently their performance as ESP practitioners. Such phenomena lead ESP practitioners in Wu and Badger's (2009) study to either avoid discussing topics that they are not familiar with or to take the risks and participate in the debate. Chen (2000) approaches the researcher role of the ESP practitioner from a unique, yet logical angle. Chen (2000) claims that ESP practitioner training (if provided) is not as good and as professional as it should be. Therefore, he suggests ESP practitioners conduct their own research in order to familiarize themselves with the area that they are interested in teaching rather than doing research only to select materials.

2.2.4.2 The ESP Practitioner as a Course Designer and Material Provider.
Bocanegra-Valle (2010) asserts that the difference between ESP and EGP is the absence of a coursebook that is abided by, instead, selected or designed units, activities or chapters that meet the needs of ESP learners are employed. But do all ESP practitioners make good material designers? Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) insist that the term material provider should be utilized instead of material designer because a good ESP teacher is not necessarily a good course material designer. Additionally, Barnard and Zimach (2003) suggest that ESP practitioners should not lack the experience in teaching ahead of involving themselves in material designing activities.

In the process of selecting and/or designing the course material, Bocanegra-Valle (2010) claims that ESP practitioners go through the following stages. First, should already published materials exist, ESP practitioners move to the next stage which is to evaluate these materials based on the learners' needs. In case these materials comply fully with these needs, practitioners implement the material, if not, they would have to choose either one or both alternatives. The two alternatives are either to start designing in-house materials or to modify the existing material (adding, editing, deleting, simplifying, reordering, replacing, extending, etc.) to match the learner's needs. Afterward, implement these materials and test them. According to Kurtán (2010), "[t]here is no textbook which can be directly applied in educational contexts, fully satisfying the needs without any modifications" (p. 57).

Bocanegra-Valle (2010) discusses two important points concerning the course material design. The first issue is that the target disciplines are continuously changing, so it is extremely important for the ESP teacher to keep their materials updated regularly. The other issue that Bocanegra-Valle (2010) raised is also vital, the internet has opened numerous opportunities for ESP practitioners especially in terms of materials providing. It is becoming harder and harder to avoid the influence of the internet on the profession, not only for teachers but also for learners. It is also challenging to keep up with the ESP profession even if the involved parties are "computer-literate".

Although an ESP teacher is not necessarily a good material designer, it is not optional (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998), apparently, ESP practitioners are required to be able to design materials. Marjanovikj-Apostolovski (2019) states that ESP teachers only resort to material designing when they have exhausted all the existing material. This is understandable as designing materials is a time and effort-consuming task.

2.2.4.3 The ESP Practitioner as a Collaborator. According to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), collaboration might take different forms. ESP practitioners might find themselves in an academic institution where they cooperate by simply reviewing the course descriptions as well as the curriculum in order to have a deeper understanding concerning the target specialization. Another shape of cooperation might occur when the ESP practitioner uses materials from other specialist classes that the students attended, or are currently attending, as carrier content. Finally, what Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) consider as the highest level of

collaboration is when the ESP practitioner and the subject teacher co-teach classes to address subject-related as well as language-related skills.

Esteban and Martos (2002) conducted a case study in an attempt to explore the possibility of collaboration between a content teacher and an ESP practitioner and both of them with the students. The study focused on a postgraduate course on Foreign Trade. The findings of this study supported Dudley-Evans and John's (1998) idea about the possibility of collaboration between the content teacher and the ESP practitioner. Moreover, Esteban and Martos (2002) highlighted the conditions on which this collaboration depends. First, they found that the success of such collaboration depends mainly on the level of interest of the ESP practitioner in the specialization of the subject. The second condition is the extent to which the content teacher believes that English will favorably contribute to the training of the students. As for the collaboration between both of them (content teacher and ESP practitioner) and the students, Esteban and Martos (2002) considered this collaboration a crucial aspect, especially when the students have clear aims that they aspire to reach by attending a particular course. Although it is possible and might yield numerous benefits for the students, Räisänen and Fortanet-Gómez (2008) believe that collaboration between the content teacher and the ESP practitioners is still rare because most of the universities that they surveyed deal with ESP courses as separate courses. Räisänen and Fortanet-Gómez (2008) suggest that in order to have an effective ESP course, the collaboration between the ESP practitioner and the content teacher must be promoted. One way to promote it is by convincing the content teachers about the impossibility of excluding the language teachers if one of their (content teachers') course's aims is to teach or to improve the foreign language of the learners.

Anthony (2011) alleges that the collaboration between subject specialists and ESP practitioners might be possible in ideal situations, but in real-life situations and with all the limitations (e.g., time) that are posted on ESP practitioners, collaboration is difficult to accomplish. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) account of the collaboration possibilities between the content teacher and the ESP practitioner appears to be ideal somehow since the collaboration between them requires not only energy and time (Anthony, 2011), but also discussions and meetings between both teachers (Räisänen & Fortanet-Gómez, 2008) or even creating a language department in each university that addresses the ESP learners' needs which already started to happen in Asia (Anthony, 2011).

2.2.4.4 The ESP Practitioner as an Evaluator. Hyland (2006) affirms that evaluating or analyzing the needs of the ESP learners is an ongoing process that is carried out by the ESP practitioner. Furthermore, the practitioner is expected to adjust the teaching process according to the new information that they discover about the students along the process. Moreover, by evaluating the students or analyzing their needs, the ESP practitioners are also required to find or invent methods to reveal the current language knowledge of the learners, what is missing and what they would like to learn (Hyland, 2006).

Apart from analyzing the needs of ESP learners, ESP practitioners are also advised to conduct another type of analysis which is scrutinizing and evaluating the specialist discourse. Basturkmen (2010) insists that the analyst should be able to identify the approach (e.g., text analysis and ethnography) of analysis that suits their goals. Practitioners should also determine the type of data that they are going to need to collect and then after finalizing the analysis they also should be able to use these insights pedagogically.

Long (2005) believes that ESP practitioners should not adopt one method in evaluating the learners or the materials because each course is unique in terms of the purposes and the needs. Thus, ESP practitioners should have at their disposal the essential skills that are needed to conduct an appropriate needs analysis which would yield useful data for designing and teaching the course (Long, 2005). Apparently, these skills include the ability to conduct unstructured interviews, surveys, questionnaires, observations, structured interviews and tests (Long, 2005, p. 37). A more detailed discussion about the process of needs analysis has been provided in section 4.3 Needs Analysis and Material Design.

It would appear from the literature on the roles of the ESP teachers, that the relationship between these roles can be described as symbiotic. This is implied in Basturkmen's (2010) framework on needs analysis and curriculum development. Basturkmen's (2010) framework constitutes three main levels for developing curriculum starting with needs analysis (i.e., evaluating) then investigating the specialist discourse (i.e., researching) and finally, determining the curriculum (i.e., course designing and material providing).

2.3 Summary

The aim of the current chapter was to provide an overview of the outcomes of research on MOOCs in order to help the reader gain a deeper understanding of the context and the participants that surround MOOC descriptions. Insights about the development trajectory, the

students, the tutors, and providers were given. The most significant findings of previous research that bear relevance to the current investigation can be summarized as follows:

- **MOOCs** are pre-recorded online courses that can be accessed or provided by anyone around the world.

- MOOC **proponents** saw an opportunity for a large number of people to have access to higher education while the opponents were either skeptical or saw it as another tool in the hand of the west to control higher education around the world.

- **Students** enroll in MOOCs in order to improve their professional knowledge, learn a new skill to advance at work, or out of curiosity. Studies reported that the autonomy which MOOCs provide and high-quality design of the courses were received positively by the students, while lack of interaction and low quality (design) courses were not.

- The **instructors** of MOOCs are motivated by the desire to achieve their career goals, help students gain experience, or by possible financial gains. The main challenges that MOOC instructors face are the lack of training and the fact that designing a MOOC is time-consuming.

- Some MOOC **platforms** provide courses for free (e.g., Coursera) while others offer paid courses besides the free ones (e.g., Udemy).

- There have not been studies addressing the rhetorical aspects of MOOC descriptions, that is, their special characteristics as persuasive texts which aim to convince students to enroll.

Chapter 3: The Theory of Genre Analysis in Identifying the Generic Features of MOOC Descriptions

3.0 Setting the Scene

This chapter offers an overview of the theory of genre analysis, as the current study presents an RMS analysis, based on the theory of genre analysis, which is hoped to help understand the underlying rhetorical organization of MOOC descriptions. This chapter also presents the genres to which MOOC descriptions may be argued to belong (i.e., digital, promotional and academic genres) so that the connection between these genres and the genre of MOOC descriptions is established.

The current chapter is divided into five parts. The first part offers a historical overview and a definition of genre. It comprises two subsections in which the notions of communicative purpose and the flexibility of genre are discussed in more detail. The second section provides an outline of the approaches according to which genres have been analyzed so far. This section is divided into three subsections where the first one focuses on rhetorical move structure analysis (Swales, 1981, 1990) as the current study adopts this approach for analyzing MOOC descriptions. The second subsection inspects the RMS analysis of the Sales Promotion Letter genre carried out by Bhatia (1993) due to the shared similarities between the SPL and the MOOC description genre. The analysis of the genre of SPL produced an RMS model of the sales promotion letter that was deemed adequate and thus utilized in Hajeer's (2020) pilot study as a starting point for analyzing the RMS of MOOC descriptions. The third subsection presents Hajeer's (2020) pilot study of MOOC descriptions as this investigation is considered as the starting point for the current analysis. Given that MOOC descriptions are provided exclusively online, the third section delineates the special features of written digital genres. The fourth section provides an account of the so called academic promotional genres (Bhatia, 1998) as MOOC descriptions also belong to this genre. Finally, a summary of the most important outcomes of previous research is provided from the perspective of the aims of the present study.

3.1 The Theory of Genre Analysis

The traditional definition of genre is to be found in literature and rhetoric, and it involves using the concept of genre as a means to categorize various discourses such as poems, novels, elegies or epics, among others (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995; Miller, 1984; Yates & Orlikowski, 1992). Bhatia (1993) however argues that the field of discourse analysis developed from the

plain analysis of discourse to a deeper one through four phases. The first phase stressed analyzing the *register*, that is, the lexico-grammatical features of a particular discourse (Halliday, McIntosh & Strevens, 1964). The second phase was pioneered by Selinker, Lackstorm and Trimble (1973), who took a step further and examined the rhetorical function of grammatical structures in English for science and technology. The third phase is *interactional analysis*, and it assumes an interaction and meaning negotiation between the writer and the reader (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). In other words, the third approach claims that meaning does not lie in the words of the text or the speech per se, but in the invested effort to comprehend the message, thus, it is created by the sender and the receiver of the message. In order to reach a sufficiently detailed and systematic description of a particular genre, a special type of model of analysis is needed. Such a model is expected to include "socio-cultural (including ethnographic) and psycholinguistic (including cognitive) aspects of text-construction and interpretation with linguistic insights" (Bhatia, 1993, p. 47).

Genre analysis started to occupy an important position in the field of linguistics during the eighties (Bhatia, 1993). Henceforth, genre analysis has been utilized to investigate professional and academic discourses to provide insights into the "form-function correlations which can be employed for several applied linguistic purposes, including the teaching of English for specific purposes" (Bhatia, 1993, p. 47). Yates and Orlikowski (1992) proposed the term "genre of organizational communication" (p. 301) (e.g., report or sales letter) which, they allege, has emerged as an answer to the needs of the recurrent social-communicative practices at the time. Such practices may include the exchange of information among different parties.

There have been many attempts to define genre. The most often cited definition is the one put forward by Swales (1990), who defines genre as

> a class of communicative events the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. Communicative purpose is both a privileged criterion and one that operates to keep the scope of a genre as here conceived narrowly focused on comparable rhetorical action. In addition to purpose, examples of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms

of structure, style, content and intended audience. If all high probability expectations are realized, the exemplar will be viewed as prototypical by the parent discourse community. (Swales, 1990, p. 58)

In this definition, Swales (1990) highlights the main factors that shape genres such as communicative purpose, discourse community and the structure of the genre. These aspects of the genre will be explored in the following sections.

Yates and Orlikowski (1992) state that genres are social institutions that not only influence the communicative practices of a particular community, but can also be influenced by them. They derive this view from Gidden's (1984) theory on structuration. Structuration theory refers to the construction, reconstruction and alterations of social institutions by the individuals who respect social regulations. That is, these particular social rules influence the practices of the individuals, and can simultaneously be transformed or modified by them. Furthermore, Yates and Orlikowski (1992) discussed the terms "substance and form" where substance refers to the social motives, themes and topics that are involved. Form, however, refers to the tangible and observable aspects of the genre such as the organization of the text units or the language utilized. The previously mentioned perspectives address pivotal issues that need to be explored in order to gain a deeper understanding of the term genre. These issues are the communicative purpose and the flexibility of genre.

3.1.1 Categorizing Genres According to their Communicative Purpose(s)

Bhatia (2017) believes that communication is not simply constructing texts by gathering well-formed sentences, but it is about the impact that they have on the receiver, i.e., the discourse community. The ability to achieve the communicative purpose requires, doubtlessly, a certain amount of knowledge regarding the communicative practices that the community members use. Bhatia (1993) states that there are many aspects of genre that can alter its structure, like the channel or the form, nonetheless, the communicative purpose(s) that a particular genre works toward achieving, identify this structure. Furthermore, if a genre that hosts a constellation of communicative purposes experiences an alteration in one of the communicative purposes, it results in forming a new genre or subgenre. Bhatia (1993) assures that the communicative purpose is a reliable criterion in defining subgenres, yet, this might not always be true.

Over the last four decades, the communicative purpose has been used as a primary criterion to decide whether a discourse belongs to a particular genre or not. However, the growth of genre studies led to the complexity of the term 'communicative purpose' which undermines its efficiency in deciding the genre of a particular discourse (Askehave & Swales, 2001, p. 197). According to Askehave and Swales (2001), assigning a communicative purpose to a text is a difficult task as the specialists of a particular discourse community might not agree on the nature of the communicative purpose(s) of a particular discourse. Further, there might be some purposes of a genre that are not made public by the producers. For example, the published aim of a news agency is to update the audience on the latest news, however, this agency might be aiming to influence public opinion as well.

Askehave and Swales (2001) highlighted the genres of shopping lists, short response letters to recommendations (i.e., responses to letters written by university professors to recommend an assistant professor for a teaching job at another university) and company brochures to demonstrate the uncertainties that cloud the process of identifying the communicative purpose. The genre of shopping lists, for example, does not exclusively function as a reminder. Instead, they might as well be used as a way to control impulsive purchases. Furthermore, shopping lists may be utilized as a tool to show (e.g., to the shop assistant) the shopper as a healthy romantic partner in special situations. Similarly, the short response letter to recommendation might not only be to thank the recommender for their time and effort as the content of such letter suggests. Another communicative purpose of these short responses may be to promote a particular institution to the recommendation writers as these short responses are printed on fancy papers and signed by the scholars of the university. Finally, the genre of company brochure has a more complicated communicative purpose than only to promote a product or a service (Askehave, 1998). Askehave and Swales (2001) believe that establishing robust ties with other corporations is considered a critical means in the industrial market. This can be seen as a communicative purpose that encourages companies to present themselves as competent partners through their brochures.

Askehave and Swales (2001) raise the issue that the communicative purpose should not be the sole criterion that decides the membership of a particular genre. Put differently, the field of genre analysis is concentrating more on the textual aspect of genre analysis rather than the context (Askehave & Swales, 2001). Askehave and Swales (2001) suggest two procedures for

analyzing genre: text-driven and context-driven. The text-driven procedure focuses on the structure, style, content (what is said and what is not said), purpose and context, among others. The context-driven model consists of six steps: (1) identifying the discourse community, (2) identifying values, goals, material conditions of the discourse community, (3) identifying the rhythm of work and horizon of expectation, (4) identifying genre repertoire and etiquettes, (5) repurposing the genre, and (6) identifying the features of genre A, genre B genre C and genre D. Askehave and Swales (2001) claim that such approach would lay spectacular results with regard to investigating the context of a particular genre (Myers, 1990).

3.1.2 How Flexible is a Particular Genre?

Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995) maintain that genres are not static, instead, they change according to the given situation. Therefore, genre knowledge is best viewed as "a form of situated cognition embedded in disciplinary activities" (p. 3). That is, authors should be able to show their understanding of a particular genre, and its developments, by producing pieces of work that belong to this particular genre (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995).

Genres are enacted through rules that shape and can be shaped by the discourse community (Giddens, 1984; Swales, 1990; Yates & Orlikowski, 1992). Nonetheless, there are some genre rules which can be ignored following the requirement of social interaction. For example, in the genre of meetings, the absence of a formal agenda of the meeting does not exclude the meeting from the genre membership (i.e., meeting genre). Notwithstanding, there is a certain number of rules which need to be abided by and these rules are decided by the discourse community (Yates & Orlikowski, 1992). To exemplify, a coincidental gathering in a corridor with three employees would not usually be considered a meeting (Yates & Orlikowski, 1992).

The number of rules that are modified or changed in a particular genre raises a critical question as for identifying any genre; does a change in the motive or the form of a particular discourse (e.g., sales letter) disqualify it from belonging to a particular genre? Miller (1984) suggests that the identification of genre is determined by the time, culture and the "sense of recurrence of rhetorical situations" (p. 162). Yates and Orlikowski (1992) address this question by invoking the notion of subgenre within genres. To illustrate, grocery shopping lists can be considered as a subgenre of the shopping list genre.

In an attempt to explain the procedure of production, reproduction and change over time,

Yates and Orlikowski (1992) proposed the Genre of Organizational Communication: Production, Reproduction, and Change Model presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Model of the Genre of Organizational Communication: Production, Reproduction, and Change
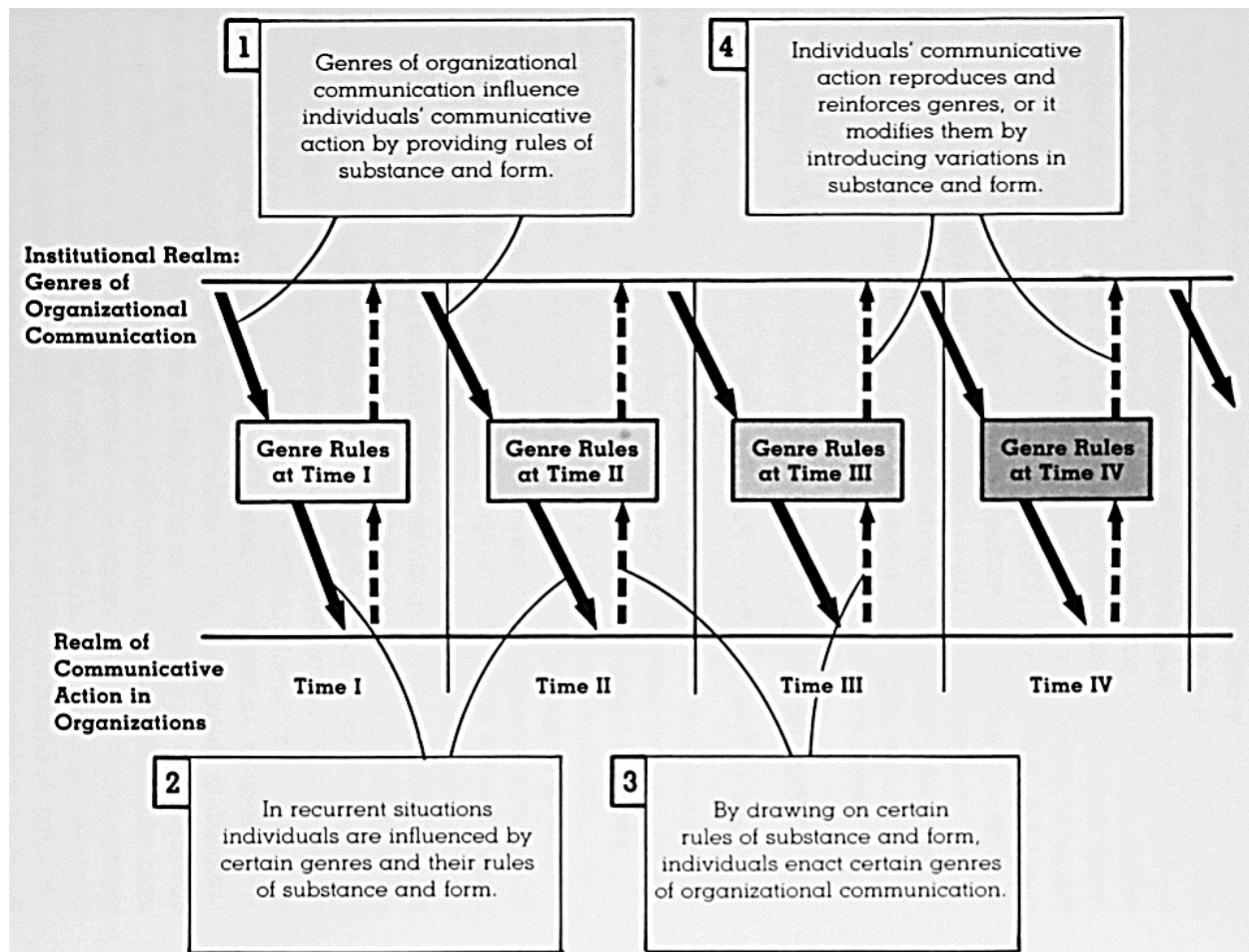
Note. Adapted from "Genres of organizational communication: A structurational approach to studying communication and media" by J. Yates and W.J. Orlikowski's, 1992, *Academy of management review, 17*(2), p. 307 (https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1992.4279545). Copyright 1992 by Academy of Management.

The change usually starts with the institutional genre influencing the discourse community by providing the set of rules that are expected to be respected. After the members of the discourse community had been influenced by particular sets of forms and content and ignored

others, they pass this knowledge to other members. This procedure causes a change in the form and content of the genre that they received in the first place. These modifications are consequently introduced to the genre itself. Such changes can be seen in the genre of MOOC descriptions as the changes kept being introduced to the genre of traditional course descriptions. Such changes include the change of the medium, i.e., the Internet, communicative purpose authors and the audience, among others.

Erickson (1997) examined how the medium can influence human interactions. He analyzed online conversations from a conversational platform called Café Utne to reveal their communicative purpose and regularities. The study found that although the main communicative purpose of these conversations was to have a cheerful and respectful interaction, some extracts had a sophisticated communicative purpose. For instance, many participants tended to use polite jokes and wordplay that are irrelevant to the topic of discussion in order to reduce the tension created by the lack of face-to-face communication. Lassila-Marisalo (2014) examined the development of the long non-fiction narrative genre. The study reported that using the world wide web to present such a genre provided more multimodal tools which supported the delivered message by increasing its credibility.

In addition to Erickson (1997) and Lassila-Marisalo (2014), many other studies (Jurayev, 2020; Kamberelis & Bovino, 1999; Luginbühl, 2014) examined the ability of genre to develop and reshape in response to social or medium pressure. Nonetheless, there has not been a study that examined the potential changes that may occur in the course description genre in response to the social or medium change pressure. Hence part of the motivation for the current investigation.

3.2 Genre Analysis in Practice

Studying a particular discourse can be approached in three ways: by examining the language use, investigating the linguistic structure beyond the sentence level, and studying the socio-cultural context (Biber, Connor, & Upton, 2007). Language use has been researched from many perspectives such as speech act theory (Dunn, 2003; Tsoumou, 2021), functional linguistics (Dreschler 2015; Kučerová, 2012) and register studies (Kytö, 2019; Malcolm, 2005). The study of the linguistic structure beyond the sentence stresses the role of the lexico-grammatical features in a particular text, cognitive (i.e., text coherence) and computational angle which concentrates on modeling "discourse organization for the purposes of information retrieval and natural language processing" (Biber et al., 2007, p. 6).

As for the social context, Berkenkotter and Hucker (1995) highlighted the vitality of understanding the social context in aiding the authors with deciding the effective rhetorical strategies for a particular target situation. Biber et al. (2007) point out that the qualitative approach for understanding the social contexts primarily investigates the author(s) and the receiver of a particular piece of discourse in an attempt to gain a greater understanding of the context (e.g., Abdel Latif, 2019; Okamura, 2006). This method might accompany the corpus-based approach which involves studying a corpus of the genre under investigation and is fundamentally quantitative. This approach investigates large numbers of texts, ideally collected from public resources, where the writers are anonymous in most cases. Despite the distinctive features, the corpus-based approach and the careful observation of the authors/receivers can be combined to deepen the study of the discourse under investigation.

To illustrate, Connor and Mauranen (1999) conducted a corpus-based study of 34 grant proposals in the science and humanities in order to investigate the rhetorical move structure of this genre. Afterwards, in Connor (2000), there was a follow-up study where she conducted five text-based interviews with male and female writers in order to have relevant insights with regards to the authors themselves.

Identifying the structural units of written discourse has received considerable attention in discourse studies as identifying these structural units could lead to a better understanding of how a particular text is created (Biber et al., 2007). There have been many attempts (e.g., Meyers, 1985; Youmans, 1991) to identify the smallest unit of analysis in written texts. Meyers (1985), for example, suggested that the smallest units start with the proposition followed by the t-unit or sentence, then the paragraph and lastly the whole text. These attempts, nonetheless, failed to provide a method which may help in dividing a full written text into "well-defined discourse units" (Biber et al., 2007, p. 10). Biber et al. (2007) scrutinized the previous literature on corpus-based research and could identify two segmentation systems, namely *top-down* and *bottom-up.* Both bottom-up and top-down analyzing systems share the same set of analytical steps. However, the difference lies with the order of these steps. With top-down corpus-based analysis the investigation procedure is as following:

- First ,*identifying the potential functional types of the discourse units*.
- The second step is *segmentation* in which the text is divided into units based on the first step.

- Thirdly, *classification*, is where the discourse units in the corpus are categorized according to their function.

- Then comes the *linguistic analysis* of each unit where the lexical and grammatical characteristics are scrutinized.

- The fifth step is the *linguistic description of discourse categories,* in which a description is provided concerning the linguistic characteristics that were identified in the previous step.

- The sixth step, *text structure*, involves an analysis of the full written text as a sequence of discourse units with regard to the general classification of each one of those units.

- Finally, a detailed account of the organizational patterns across the whole texts of the corpus is delivered in the so-called *discourse organizational tendencies step*.

One example of top-down analysis may be Mann, Matthiessen and Thompson's (1992) study which examined text coherence and the connection between the different parts of a particular text. Put simply, how different parts of the text support, justify or explain each others. More relevant example to the current dissertation is the Rhetorical Move Structure Analysis (RMSA) that was developed by Swales (1981). A further account about this approach is provided in section 2.3.1 (Rhetorical Move Structure Analysis).

The bottom-up analytical system, on the other hand, includes the same analytical steps as in the previous one, except that they are ordered differently. The order of the analytical steps of the bottom-up approach is as follows: Segmentation, Linguistic analysis of each unit, Classification, Linguistic description, Communicative functional categories, Text structure, and Discourse organizational tendencies. Bottom-up analysis was not as popular as the top-down analysis among discourse analysts since it requires developed computational resources that were not easily accessible at the time. Now, however, with technological development, discourse analysts can investigate hundreds or thousands of texts using computers. In contrast, applying the top-down approach to thousands of texts, although possible, is rather daunting as it is done manually (Biber et al., 2007).

One of the approaches of bottom-up analysis is the Vocabulary Based Discourse Units (VBDU) approach. Biber, Csomay, Jones and Keck (2007) explain this approach as "a block of discourse defined by its reliance on a particular set of words. The boundary of a VBDU is identified as the place in a text where the author/speaker switches to a new set of words." (p. 156). That is, in most cases, authors use a set of vocabulary throughout a particular section or

when discussing a specific aspect and they tend to choose another set of vocabulary when they start writing about a different section or aspect. For instance, Csomay et al. (2007) revealed that specific VBDU units (e.g., start looking it, and can do it) were used by an instructor to address class management issues in the classroom such as assigning tasks.

Although interesting, this approach is beyond the scope of the current study since the current study focuses on the top-down analyzing system, therefore, it will not be discussed any further. The following section delineates one type of top-down analysis which is the rhetorical move structure analysis, the main prominence of the dissertation.

3.2.1 Rhetorical Move Structure Analysis

Swales's (1981, 1990) rhetorical move structure approach focuses principally on the communicative purpose of a section (a sentence or more) of a specific text. According to Swales (1981), a text consists of many parts and each part has a distinctive communicative function which it seeks to achieve; this communicative intent is not impartial as it contributes to the key intention of the whole text. Thus, as defined by Biber et al. (2007), a move "refers to a section of a text that performs a specific communicative function" (p. 23). To give an example, Bhatia's (1993) The Sales Promotion Letter's model follows this form of scrutiny (i.e., rhetorical move structure) and it claims that the major goal of the SPL is to convince the recipient of the letter to purchase a product or a service. However, each move has its own purpose; for instance, *pressure tactics,* which aims to put pressure on the client, at the same time contributes to the main goal of the letter, namely, to persuade. Another characteristic of moves is that they do not have a standard length, that is the length of the moves varies (Connor & Mauranen, 1999). Besides, some types of moves reoccur in a particular genre which is why they are called conventional, whereas other moves do not occur as frequently and are labeled as optional (Kanolksilpatham, 2007). Some types of moves entail one or more components that define it, such components are named by Swales (1990) as *steps* (see Table 1 for more detail).

By applying RMS theory in the academic field (e.g., for the study of research articles), Swales (1981) worked toward helping non-native students enter the academic discourse community by facilitating the academic writing process. Put differently, when students are aware of the particles (i.e., moves or steps) that constitute a particular genre, it becomes easier for them to associate these parts with their functions (i.e., communicative purposes). This knowledge guides students in the process of producing effective academic research papers. RMS theory led

to the development of the Create a Research Space (CARS) model by Swales (1990), which may be used to analyze the structure of the introduction sections of academic research articles.

The CARS model (Table 1) is based on the RMS analysis of 48 introduction sections of research articles (Swales, 1990). As shown in Table 1, the first move is labeled as *Establishing a territory* which refers to the communicative purpose of this move. Furthermore, move 1 comprises three steps, each one with a label that reflects its communicative purpose. Attaining the communicative purpose of the first move requires ensuring that each step has achieved its assigned communicative function. In the first step, *Claiming centrality*, the author is expected to demonstrate an interest in the area under investigation. This step usually, but not necessarily, occupies the first position in the introduction. The second step, *Making topic generalization*, is where the writer refers to the frequency and complexity of the topic in order to establish the territory of research. The final step of the first move, *Reviewing items of previous research*, is dedicated to providing an account of the previous literature in the field, which enables the writer to situate their research. Move 2, establishing a niche, is considered to be a crucial move as it links Move 1 (i.e., *establishing a territory*) to Move 3 (i.e., *Occupying the niche*) through addressing the objective of the presented study. Move 2, can be presented by utilizing one of the four strategies; Step 1A, *Counter claiming*; Step 1B, *Indicating a gap*, Step 1C, *Question raising*, and Step 1D, *Continuing a tradition*. Swales (1990) provides examples of how to fulfill these steps linguistically:

Step 1A, Counter Claiming   *Emphasis has been on…, with scant attention given to…*
Step 1B, Indicating a Gap   *The first group...cannot treat and is limited to…*
Step 1C, Question Raising   *The second group...is time consuming and therefore expensive…*
Step 1D, Continuing a Tradition   *Both suffer from the dependency on… A question remains whether…* (p. 154)

Swales (1990) describes Move 3, Occupying the niche, as different from the other two moves in the sense that this is the place where the authors stop exploring previous literature and start introducing their own research by *Outlining purpose or Announcing present research, Announcing principal findings* and *Indicating research article structure.*

Table 1

CARS Model for Research Article Introductions

Move 1:	**Establishing a territory**	
	Step 1	Claiming centrality **and/or**
	Step 2	Making topic generalization(s) **and/or**
	Step 3	Reviewing items of previous research
Move 2:	**Establishing a niche**	
	Step 1A	Counter-claiming **or**
	Step 1B	Indicating a gap **or**
	Step 1C	Question raising **or**
	Step 1D	Continuing a tradition
Move 3:	**Occupying the niche**	
	Step 1A	Outlining purposes **or**
	Step 1B	Announcing present research
	Step 2	Announcing principal findings
	Step 3	Indicating RA structure

Note. Adapted from *"Genre analysis: English in academic and research context"* (1st ed., p. 140), by J. Swales, 1990, Cambridge University Press. Copyright 1990 by Cambridge University Press.

Even though move analysis was first developed by Swales (1981) to help non-native speakers in writing research papers, the framework, thenceforth, has found its way into other areas of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teaching such as English for Business and English for Communication (Kanoksilapatham, 2007).

  Campbell and Naidoo (2017) investigated the rhetorical move structure of the genre of the white papers. For-profit organizations produce white papers to promote high-tech services and products. The RMS analysis revealed the moves that constitute this genre, namely, introducing the business problem, occupying the business solution niche, prompting action, establishing credibility, and providing disclaimers or legal consideration. Due to the absence of clear guidelines for the writers of the white papers genre, Campbell and Naidoo hoped that their study may fill this void.

  Yu and Bondi (2017) conducted an RMS analysis of Corporate Social Responsibility reports (CSR), which is an extensive document about the social and environmental performance

of a particular corporate. The authors investigated 18 CSR reports published by banks and energy companies. The examination revealed 15 moves, namely, presenting corporate profile, presenting corporate governance, stating values and beliefs, stating missions, showing commitment, establishing credentials, stating strategies/methods/practices, previewing future performance, presenting performance, presenting an internal action, detailing an issue, presenting individual cases, describing external circumstances, introducing an aspect of CSR performance, presenting risk and difficulties.

RMS theory continued expanding and has been applied to the study of many other textual genres, such as research articles in the domains of computer sciences (Posteguillo, 1999) and research articles in the field of biochemistry (Kanoksilapatham, 2005), among others. Stoller and Robinson (2013), for instance, analyzed the move structure of full-length chemistry journal articles. After identifying the RMS of chemistry articles, the findings of the study were converted into instructional material for the benefit of chemistry students and faculty. Another example may be Shabani and Emadi's study (2021) which investigated the rhetorical move structure of dental sciences research article abstracts. The study scrutinized 251 abstracts from four Iranian dentistry journals. The results of Shabani and Emadi (2021) are hoped to aid EAP (English for Academic Purposes) understand the needs of the dental students and to serve as a guideline for those who are interested in publishing dental research.

The emphasis of the current dissertation is on MOOC descriptions as promotional genres as it was established by Hajeer (2020) based on empirical data that MOOC descriptions may be claimed to belong to this genre type. The following section is therefore dedicated to shedding light on the genre of Bhatia's (1993) Sales Promotion Letter. The analysis of this genre produced a rhetorical move structure of the sales promotion letter that was found adequate and thus used in Hajeer's (2020) study as a starting point for analyzing the move structure of MOOC descriptions.

3.2.2 Bhatia's (1993) Model for the Sales Promotion Letter

In order to reveal the rhetorical move structure of the SPL genre, Bhatia's (1993) examination of this genre yielded a model that consists of seven moves, each of them with a communicative purpose to attain. These communicative purposes help achieve the overall communicative intent of this genre, which is to persuade the audience to buy a product or a service. In what follows, an account of each one of these moves is provided.

The first move identified by Bhatia (1993) in the SPL model is ESTABLISHING THE CREDENTIALS of the company where the writer works. The SPL writer achieves this by being as precise as possible in setting apart the requirements of the target audience (i.e., the company), which will make the author's company appear as an expert in providing the needed services or products (Bhatia, 1993).

The second move is INTRODUCING THE OFFER: Bhatia (1993) describes this move as the most imperative one in the SPL since it is supposed to fulfill the gap (i.e., the audience needs) that was created in the first move. This move incorporates three sub-moves: presenting the product or service, producing a thorough description of the product, and positively evaluating the product or service to highlight its value.

The third move, OFFERING INCENTIVES, is the move that is used to convince the readers to buy a product or hire a specific service by proposing a discount or other special offers (Bhatia, 1993).

The next move is ENCLOSING DOCUMENTS. As the audience of the SPL consists chiefly of businesspeople, who do not have enough time to read long letters, SPLs tend to be simultaneously brief and informative. Seeking to reach that goal, this move's function is to inform the recipient that there is more detailed information which will follow, should they become interested in the bid.

The next move, SOLICITING RESPONSE, is considered by Bhatia (1993) as especially critical as it is the main end of any business communication. In other words, the end of any business letter is to encourage the receiver to establish or strengthen a particular type of relationship with the sender.

The sixth move, USING PRESSURE TACTICS, intends to put psychological pressure on the client to make a quick decision. Although it might come across as similar to offering incentives, it is different in the sense that it does not pose any additional gains; instead, it warns the client that they will lose something (e.g., time, a discount, an offer) if they do not act quickly.

The objective of the last move, ENDING POLITELY, is to end the SPL with a favorable impression. It might be thought that it is intuitive to end politely; nonetheless, Bhatia (1993) assures that it is not the case with all business letters, especially those letters that are sent to express dissatisfaction or to sever business ties with another party.

Table 2

Sample Analysis of a Sales Promotion Letter

4 December 1987 Mr Albert Chan 1 Sophia Road, 05–06 Peace Centre Singapore 0922 Dear Sir	
We are expertly aware that international financial managers need to be able to ask the right questions and work in the market place with confidence.	Establishing Credentials
Corporate Treasury Services, Standard Bank, now provides a week-long Treasury Training programme designed to develop awareness and confidence in managers.	Introducing the offer. Offering Product or service
We explain the mechanics of foreign exchange and money markets. We discuss risk from an overall standpoint and practical hedging techniques to manage foreign exchange risks. We also discuss treasury management information systems, taxation and the latest treasury techniques. We will be holding our next Treasury Training Programme from 24–28 February 1987, inclusive. The fee for the Training Programme will be US$1,500 per person to include all luncheons and a dinner as indicated in the schedule as well as all course materials.	Essential detailing of the offer
The programme is both rigorous and flexible. It can be tailored to fit the needs of a whole corporation or just a few levels within the company.	Indicating value of the offer

We are pleased to inform you that if your company sponsors 6 or more staff for the course, we will offer you a discount of US$100 per person.	Offering incentives
For your convenience, I enclose a reservation form which should be completed and returned directly to me.	Enclosing documents
If you have any questions or would like to discuss the programme in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact me (Telephone No. 532 6488 / telex No. 29052).	Soliciting response
As the number of participants at each training programme is limited, we would urge you to finalize as soon as possible your plans to participate.	Using pressure tactics
Thank you very much for your kind consideration.	Ending politely
Yours faithfully Mr. G. Huff	

Note. Adapted from *Analyzing genre: Language use in professional setting* (1st ed., pp. 99-102), by V. K. Bhatia, 1998, Routledge. Copyright 1993 by Taylor & Francis.

Many studies that researched business genres employed Bhatia (1993) SPL framework. Zarei and Darani (2013), for instance, employed Bhatia's (1993) SPL model to reveal the rhetorical move structure of English and Persian spam emails. The results indicate that Persian and English spammers use the moves and steps that are utilized in SPL. However, the frequency and the length of the moves differs between English and Persian email spam. To illustrate, English email spam included more of the second move, i.e., establishing credentials, than the Persian spam. Moreover, the English spammers employed more words to establish their credentials.

Semchuchot and Soontornnaruerangsee (2017) adopted Bhatia's (1993) SPL model to scrutinize the CEO messages in in-flight magazines. These magazines are distributed for free in airplanes. Semchuchot and Soontornnaruerangsee (2017) found that CEO letters exhibit three moves from Bhatia's SPL model, namely, establishing credentials, introducing the offer and ending politely. Moreover, introducing the offer was found to be the most frequently used move.

Apparently, the context of Bhatia's SPL model is business communication. However, although the MOOC descriptions genre is promotional (Hajeer, 2020), it also belongs to the academic context since it serves as informative course descriptions for online tutorial courses as well. Therefore, the next section presents and discusses Hajeer's (2020) RMS analysis of MOOC descriptions to pave the way for the investigation this dissertation focuses on.

3.2.3 Hajeer's (2020) RMS Model for the MOOC Descriptions Genre

The objective of this pilot study was to devise a model that is both theory- and data-based to make sure that it is capable of revealing the generic characteristics of the MOOC description genre in terms of its rhetorical move structure. This study used Biber et al.'s (2007) top-down approach (see Appendix B for more detail about the top-down approach) to identify the organizational pattern of MOOC descriptions. The first step of this approach is investigating the genre in order to gain a deeper understanding of its special nature (Biber et al., 2007). After studying a corpus that consists of altogether 15 MOOC descriptions, it was discovered that the genre shares many resemblances with Bhatia's (1993) SPL rhetorical move structure, such as establishing the credentials of the product or service provider and attracting the potential students by offering incentives. Therefore, Bhatia's SPL model was chosen as a starting point for conducting the analysis (Hajeer, 2020).

Still, Bhatia's (1993) SPL move structure needed to be modified in order to make it compatible with the stereotypical generic characteristics of MOOC descriptions. These modifications were based on iterative text analysis (hence its data-based nature) and resulted in the final, theory- and data-based version of the model, referred to here as the (preliminary) MOOC Descriptions Model (see Figure 3). It is called "preliminary", as it is based on the results of a pilot study only and is thus expected to need further refinement based on the analysis of a larger corpus. This model is going to be used to analyze the MOOC Description corpus of the current dissertation.

For his pilot study, and to be able to propose the preliminary version of this model, Hajeer (2020) used the same methods that are used in the present dissertation. In the pilot study, the terms *MOOC descriptions* and *Promotional MOOC descriptions* were used interchangeably before deciding to settle for *MOOC descriptions*. The word *promotional* was deleted from the term to avoid limiting the descriptions to one function (i.e., promoting). The outcome of the

analysis, the (preliminary) theory- and data-based MOOC Descriptions Model (Figure 3) consists of seven main moves.

The first move, PERSONAL CREDENTIALS, comprises three sub-moves including *awards*, *experience*, and *previous products*. MOOCs tutors establish their qualifications by referring to their achievements in a specific theme, namely, previous courses that they had already taught, books they had written, or lectures they had delivered; for example: "*This course is taught by Wordpress author and teacher, Dr Andy Williams, who has over a decade of experience using and teaching Wordpress to people of all skill levels*". In some cases, they mentioned the awards that they have received due to their outstanding achievements in a certain field. Additionally, MOOC tutors may highlight the knowledge that they have acquired.

The second move, INTRODUCING THE OFFER, entails three other sub-moves as well, which are *introducing the offer*, *syllabus*, and *gaps in other courses*. MOOC instructors begin the MOOC description by briefing the readers about the course. Then, they might introduce the syllabus of the course in an attempt to give a thorough delineation of the topics that are going to be covered during the course. Finally, endeavoring to draw the potential students' attention away from other courses (in this platform or in others), some teachers tend to point out the gaps in other courses; to illustrate, "*More in-depth training techniques than any other course*".

BENEFITS is the move in which tutors explain to the latent student the advantages that they will gain, should they attend the described course. Two sub-moves comprise this move, which are the *benefit of the skill* and the *benefit of the MOOC itself*. By introducing the advantages of the skill itself, the tutor seeks to persuade possible students that the skill itself (not this particular course) is promising; to give an example, "*Start teaching English online and earn a lucrative source of income as a freelance teacher!*". However, by introducing the advantages of the course, the writer of the MOOC description highlights the benefits that potential students would gain if they learned this specific skill with this teacher. For instance, "*This complete course is the best way to find out and start teaching online straight away*".

Instructors in MOOC descriptions can provide special deals and prices, but these are not the only incentives that they utilize. Through examining promotional MOOC descriptions, it was noticed that the nature of incentives that tutors exercise are predominantly money-back guarantees and instant responses to the students' questions, among others (Hajeer, 2020). To illustrate, "*You will get Udemy Certificate of Completion available for download, 30-day money*

back guarantee". An illustration of answering students' questions can be seen here: "*I'll be here for you every step of the way. If you have any questions about the course content or anything related to this topic, you can post a question in the course or send me a direct message*". Additionally, it is worth noting that there is a significant difference between both addressees (SPL and MOOCs); on one hand, SPL's audience is one party, since these letters are sent to a particular company. On the other hand, the MOOC descriptions audience is students who have access to the Internet and are interested in a certain topic, as the MOOC description is not addressed to any actual party (Hajeer, 2020).

With the fifth move, SOLICITING RESPONSE, the writers of the MOOC descriptions try to solicit a response from the potential enrollees, but the expected response from the students is not to contact the instructor; instead, they are encouraged and asked to enroll in the course (Hajeer, 2020). For example, "*Are you ready? Then take this course and start speaking German right away!*".

AUDIENCE TARGETING is the move in which tutors explicitly describe their targeted audience. Simply speaking, teachers mention whether possible students require special knowledge to be able to attend this MOOC, should be of a certain age, or meet any other requirements (Hajeer, 2020). For example, "*You might be an experienced English teacher, but you want to know how to adapt your skills to the online world. You might be new to teaching, and you want to know the essential tools and knowledge*".

The final major move in the model is PROOF, in which the authors of the promotional MOOC descriptions back their claims with many types of evidence. MOOC tutors included reviews from previously enrolled students (Hajeer, 2020). For instance, "*This is better than any other course I have come across... the presentation is simply superb*". In such testimonies, students write their opinions not only about the course, but also about the instructors themselves. For instance, "*Michael hands us a template where much of the complexity is reduced so that I can focus on the more personal stuff of my story*". Another sub-move also exists within this move that takes place when the tutor imparts their own personal story in the description. Furthermore, the *statistics* sub-move is correspondingly attached to the *proof* move, in which teachers support their allegations with statistics.

It is also worth noticing that the moves in MOOC descriptions lack a canonical order of moves/steps, as at this phase of the investigation it was not possible to spot a systematic arrangement of the moves in MOOC descriptions (Hajeer, 2020).

Figure 3

Preliminary Theory- and Data-based MOOC Descriptions Model
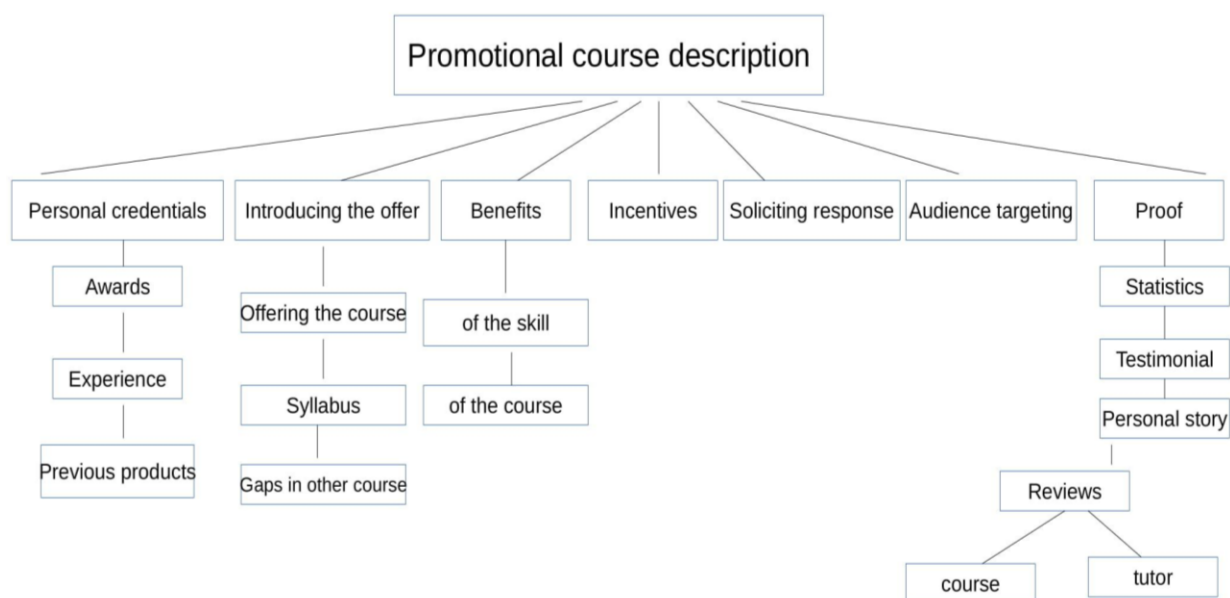
Note. Adapted from "Rhetorical Move Structure of Massive Open Online Courses' Descriptions" by A. Hajeer, 2020, *English for Specific Purposes World, 61*(22), p. 14. Copyright 2020 by English for Specific Purposes World.

The empirical evidence suggests that the model proved to be effective in providing an accurate description of the current MOOCs' descriptions corpus. The seven moves that the Model defined were able to make bare the rhetorical intents that the descriptions included. Although Hajeer's (2020) research identified the RMS of MOOC description, many other aspects have not been addressed in his study. Therefore, apart from testing Hajeer's (2020) theory- and data-based MOOC description model on a larger corpus, the current research aims at providing a thicker description of the MOOC description genre. This description can be gained through following the methods (Table 3) of analyzing genre proposed by Kanoksilapatham (2007). That is, this dissertation is going to provide a delineated account of the linguistic features

in order to reveal how these features interact with each other to form a move. Besides, the dissertation is also going to take into account analyzing the length of the moves and the implications it (i.e., the length) might pose. Furthermore, the frequency of using these moves is also going to be investigated along with the implications. Such an analysis is expected to reveal important (yet unrevealed) information about this genre which would help gain a better understanding of its nature.

Table 3

General Steps Often Used to Conduct a Corpus-based Move Analysis

Step 1:	Determine rhetorical purposes of the genre
Step 2:	Determine rhetorical function of each text segment in its local context; identify the possible move types of the genre
Step 3:	Group functional and/or semantic themes that are either in relative proximity to each other or often occur in similar locations in representative texts. These reflect the specific *steps* that can be used to realize a broader *move*.
Step 4:	Conduct pilot-coding to test and fine-tune definitions of move purposes.
Step 5:	Develop coding protocol with clear definitions and examples of *move types* and *steps*.
Step 6:	Code full set of texts, with inter-rater reliability check to confirm that there is clear understanding of move definitions and how *moves/steps* are realized in texts.
Step 7:	Add any additional *steps* and/or *moves* that are revealed in the full analysis.
Step 8:	Revise coding protocol to resolve any discrepancies revealed by the inter-rater reliability check or by newly 'discovered' *moves/steps*, and re-code problematic areas.
Step 9:	Conduct linguistic analysis of move features and/or other corpus-facilitated analyses.
Step 10:	Describe corpus of texts in terms of typical and alternate move structures and linguistic characteristics

Note. Adapted from *Discourse on the move: Using corpus analysis to describe discourse structure* (1st ed., p. 34) by D. Biber, U. Connor, & T.A. Upton, 2007, John Benjamins. Copyright 2007 by John Benjamins B.V.

3.3 MOOC Descriptions as a Digital Genre

Askehave and Nielsen (2005) suggest that online genres should not be treated as traditional written texts as they are affected by the medium itself, i.e., the Internet. Two main issues were brought about by the increasing popularity of digital platforms and the Internet (Askehave & Nielson, 2005; Miller, 2015). The first issue is about stability and change, and the possibility of conciliating them. The second issue regards the way how genres can be structured and controlled in such an unstable context, i.e., in the digital world (Askehave & Nielson, 2005; Miller, 2015).

Lorés (2020) states that academic and scientific textual digital genres are receiving crescive attention in the field of discourse analysis and linguistics. Many studies approached digital genres by using the framework of the Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA) (Herring, 2007; Tannen & Trester, 2013). Most of these studies shed light on the sociolinguistic aspects of digital genres (Thurlow & Mroczek, 2011), primarily in blogs and social media. To exemplify, Stewart (2017) addressed the issue of the language of appeasement in higher education. MacGregor-Mendoza and Moreno, (2020) examined how Spanish is used as a heritage language in Instagram to forward notions of identity in the U.S.-Mexico border region.

Notwithstanding, academic and scientific texts received less attention "perhaps because the affordances that the digital medium offers have not (or not yet) been fully exploited in these contexts" (Lorés, 2020, p. 2). With regard to textual digital genres, CMDA focused principally on academic blogs (Bondi, 2018), university webpages (Caiazzo, 2010) and academic homepages (Hyland, 2012).

Although the platform of Udemy.com itself has its homepage that includes many recommended courses, each course has its own homepage that contains pictures, course descriptions, reviews and hyperlinks, among others. Askehave and Nielsen (2005) define a homepage as the

> top-level document of a website which performs two overall functions. First, it introduces the user to the general content of the site by presenting 'informative' tables of contents and providing 'enticing' text bits. Secondly, it functions as the official gateway of the website as it enables the reader to access and navigate the site by providing navigational tools or links that branch off into the website as a whole (pp. 123-124).

Askehave and Nielsen (2005) emphasize the similarities between the homepage genre and the traditional written genres (e.g., journalism). First, the homepage genre has been shown to be similar to the newspaper front page and to the exordium. The exordium is a promotional genre that was used by ancient orators in Greece. They used the exordium to praise themselves and their speech at the beginning of their presentation. Despite the fact that exordium is oral, written genres started to exhibit its characteristics such as the tendency to catch the reader's attention at the beginning. Eventually, these features found their way into the homepage genre (Askehave & Nielsen, 2005). The second area, where similarities have been found, is between newspapers' front page and the home page, and it is rather related to the layout, form and content. The similarities stem from their tendency to draw attention by using attractive headlines, figures, pictures and fonts, to name but a few. Askehave and Nielsen (2005) assure that identifying the similarities between the homepage and the traditional genre is not a suggestion to consider homepage genre as merely a digital manifestation of the traditional genres since the medium (i.e., the Internet) enriches the home page genre with many unique features such as hypertext, multimodality and the possibility to navigate. Askehave and Nielsen (2005) proposed a genre model that takes into consideration the generic features of the text and the medium, thus it is a two-dimensional model (see Figure 4). This model represents the navigating and reading procedure when visiting a web page. When navigating, the visitor zooms out of the text and utilizes the text itself as a way to navigate other web pages or digital texts. In such cases, the communicative purpose, links, and rhetorical strategies should be investigated. However, when in the reading mode, visitors concentrate on the text itself and deal with it as a traditional printed genre. Hence, the analysis of web pages should also emphasize the communicative purpose, moves and rhetorical strategies.

Figure 4

Model of Navigating and Reading Modes
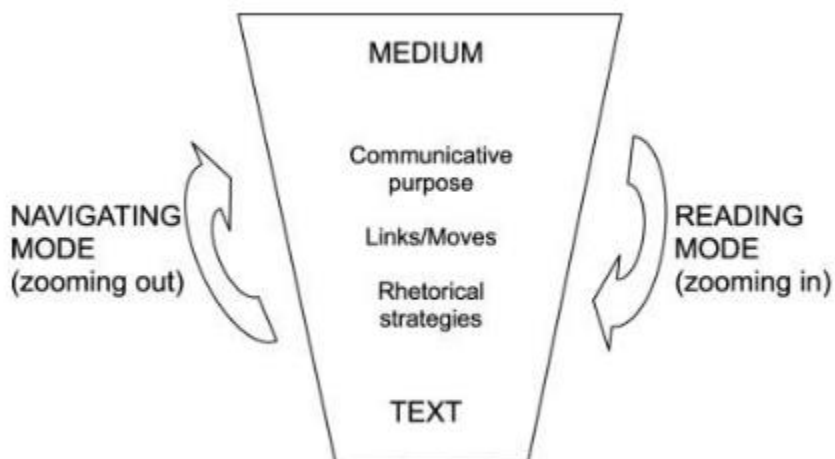
Note. Adapted from "Digital Genres: A Challenge to Traditional Genre Theory", by I. Askehave, & A.E. Nielsen, 2005, *Information Technology & People, 18*(2), p. 127 (http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09593840510601504). Copyright 2005 by Emerald Insight.

Whereas Askehave and Nielsen (2005) addressed the similarities between home page genre and traditional genres such as journalism, Mill (2005) shed light on the differences between the online and the offline medium when writing an advertising text. According to Mill (2005) writing for online readership is different from writing to the offline readership. That is, special attention should be paid to the length of the texts, the used fonts and the pointers, among others. While with offline texts the reader is expected to read the whole texts, online readers skim the texts and move quickly from one section to the other looking for specific information (Mill, 2005). Mill (2005) suggests that with online copywriting, critical information should be positioned at the beginning of the text and the information should be arranged in a reader-friendly and navigable structure. In other words, it is preferable to break long texts into smaller sections and arrange them logically. Besides, it is recommended to use subheadings, bullets, numbering, emphasis, and highlighting, to name but a few. Mill (2005) asserts that each section of the copywriting should be able to act independently if possible since the readers may access the copywriting through many access points. Put differently, the readers may enter the copywriting through online search engines depending on the words they used to search the

content. Therefore, it is recommended to use straightforward titles and clear introductory paragraphs. Another way to augment the efficiency of an online written advertisement is to increase the interactivity of the text by adding hypertext links and starting a dialogue with the readers which can be achieved by inviting feedback from the readers or starting a poll.

For effective copywriting it is best to use the inverted pyramid style of writing as it helps the reader grasp the crucial information at the beginning (Mill, 2005). The author explains that employing this style means to start the copywriting with the conclusion, then providing the key information and end with the background. He adds that the conclusion should answer the question of who, where, when, what, why and how. This facilitates the reader's task by giving them the most critical information at the beginning.

Figure 5

The Inverted Pyramid
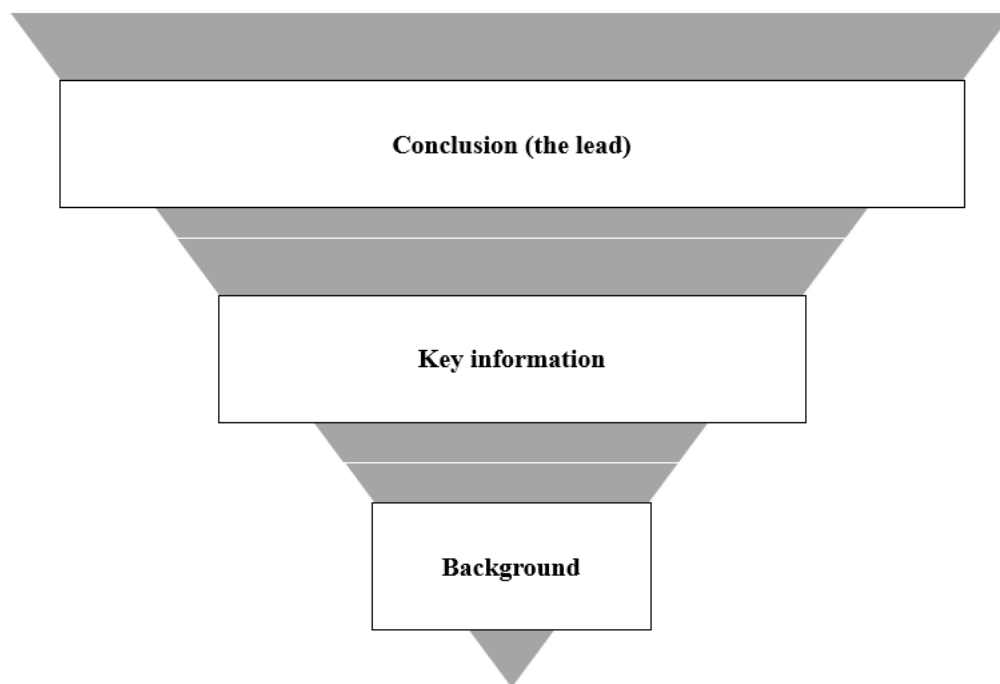
Note. Adapted from *Content is King: Writing and Editing Online* (1st ed, p. 12), by D. Mill, 2005, Elsevier. Copyright 2005 by David Mill.

3.4 MOOC Description as an Academic Promotional Genre

Featherstone (2007) points out that one of the main characteristics of today's world is its consuming nature. Therefore, promotional features can be observed in professional, academic and even personal contexts. Professional and academic genres have been widely influenced by promotional genres as a result of the rapid development of the promotional genres (Bhatia, 2005). This galloping development is the accessibility to a huge amount of information facilitated by new technology, the "compulsive nature" of promotional genres and the "competitive nature of much of professional and academic activities" (Bhatia, 2005, p. 1), among others. One of the most popular promotional genres is advertising, the principal aim of which is to inform about and promote a particular product or idea in order to sell it.

In an earlier study, Hajeer (2020) has shown that the MOOC description genre may be regarded as promotional too, as the main communicative purpose is to persuade possible students to purchase or enroll in a particular online course. Still, bearing in mind that MOOC descriptions promote academic and educational genres, it appears inaccurate to ignore their relevance to the academic realm.

Bhatia (1997) conducted a study to investigate the promotional aspects of introductory genres in the academic context. The aim of these genres is to introduce academic works like academic papers or books, amongst others. Bhatia (1997) differentiates between two types of book introductions. The first one is the introductory chapter of the book which provides the context that may help the readers comprehend the rest of the book. That is, the main communicative purpose of this chapter is to equip the reader with the necessary knowledge to understand the book. The second type of book introduction is separated from the content of the book itself. According to Bhatia (1997), in addition to introducing the book, these introductions (i.e., preface, introduction, foreword, and acknowledgment) may be used by the producers as a means to promote their product. The study reported that the preface is dedicated to two functions which are establishing the needs of the audience and highlighting the favorable aspects of their product to implicate the satisfaction possibility of these needs. Similarly, introductions also exhibit many aspects of the promotional letter like the excessive use of adjectives, soliciting responses from the readership by asking them to provide comments on the book, and establishing credentials by mentioning previous products, for example, our first grammar book has been well received. The foreword, notwithstanding, is written by a well-known academic in order to

promote the book (Bhatia, 1997). Another study that addressed the expression of gratitude in prefaces of academic books in linguistics was conducted by Alonso-Almeida (2020). The author collected and investigated a corpus that consisted of the book prefaces which were written between 2000 and 2019 in the field of linguistics. Although the genre of prefaces is supposed to be academic, the analyzed texts contained instances of the language of affect and appraisal which makes it an appropriate context to express gratitude for third parties (Alonso-Almeida, 2020).

The key aim of higher education used to be improving human development and embracing great minds (Askehave, 2007). However, promotional features found their way to higher education discourse influenced by the education market explosion in the last few decades (Zhang, 2017). There have been many studies which addressed the introduction of promotional features to the genres of higher education.

Askehave (2007) carried out a study to research the student prospectus, which is a highly promotional genre. Askehave (2007) compared the international students' prospectus genre of four countries, namely, Finland, Scotland, Australia, and Japan in order to identify its features. Afterwards, a more in-depth analysis was carried out on the international student prospectus of the University of Sterling in Scotland. This analysis examined the rhetorical moves and the lexico-grammatical characteristics of the texts. Askehave (2007) reported several similarities between the international student prospectus and the advertising discourse such as the usage of imperative clauses to draw the attention of the reader in a friendly manner to solicit action, for instance, *move in and feel at home*. She mentioned that the international student prospectus genre utilizes a structure, a set of rhetoric moves, a layout and a design that works in tandem to promote the image of the university.

Another example from higher education discourse would be of Zhang (2017), who investigated five university website homepages in order to reveal their structural organization, rhetorical moves, and communicative purpose. Here the prominence is given to the results that are related to communicative purpose. The study reported that the principal communicative purposes of this genre are welcoming the students, informing them about the university and promoting the image of the university. For instance, *you are always welcome to visit us on campus* (welcoming) and *there are convenient options for transportation and amenities in the area surrounding the campus* (informing and promoting). Four out of five universities' "About us" pages include a welcoming excerpt at the first or second position of the page. This is written

normally by the president of the university. Part of the page, as its title also suggests (i.e., about us), is also dedicated to informing the students about the history of the university. Apparently, the promotional aim of this genre is demonstrated through establishing the credentials of the university by highlighting its great history, using positive adjectives to describe the university and its achievements (e.g., picturesque and convenient), employing impressive facts (e.g., logo, anthem and history), figures and statistics about the university, and listing its publications. Zhang (2017) maintains that choosing a university is a two ways process where the university attracts the possible students (i.e., students who choose to apply) in order to increase the number of options for the admission process by promoting itself, while potential students are choosing the ideal university for them from among the wide options.

The shared element of the previously mentioned sources (Askehave, 2007; Bhatia, 1997; Zhang, 2017) is that they all use the informative nature of the genre as a tool to promote the product by highlighting its positive features. According to Bhatia (2004), the informative and promotional functions of the language are likely to work in harmony. The genres which employ promotional features in addition to their informative function are getting established with names like "*infomercial*, *infotainment* or *advertorial*" (Bhatia, 2004, p. 101).

3.5 Summary

The aim of this chapter was to set the scene for the current study by providing an overview of genre theory, discussing the theory of RMS analysis as well the relevant studies of the field, and finally by exploring the genres to which MOOC descriptions may be argued to belong. The most important claims from the point of view of the present undertaking can be summarized as follows:

- Genres are flexible and they are influenced by many factors such as the discourse community and the medium.

- While some scholars believe that the genre to which a particular discourse belongs can be defined by the communicative purpose only, other scholars believe that deciding genre membership is a more complicated task. Therefore, it needs to be taken into consideration what context (what discourse community) the genre appears in.

- When conducting an RMS analysis, the text under investigation is segmented into units according to their rhetorical function. For example, in the analysis of the SPL genre which was

carried out by Bhatia (1993), the texts were segmented into moves and steps that reflect their communicative purpose(s).

- Genres may have many functions. For instance, SPLs are informative and promotional at the same time.

- Writing to offline readers is different from writing to online readers as research shows that online readers tend to have a shorter attention span and they also tend to skim the text looking for information.

- Recent studies have shown that promotional features can be witnessed in academic genres such as book introductions, student prospectus and university website homepages, too.

Chapter 4: MOOC Descriptions as Persuasive Texts

4.0 Setting the Scene

The primary aim of this chapter is to familiarize the reader with the key concepts to this study. Therefore, the current chapter is divided into eight sections. The first section provides a definition of persuasion for the purposes of the current investigation and explores Aristotle's (1954) three elements of persuasion, namely ethos, pathos, and logos. The latter is motivated by the very nature of MOOCs, where it is very likely to see the tutor promoted (ethos) as well as the MOOC itself. Furthermore, Bhatia (1993) suggests that promotional genres tend to appeal to the emotions (pathos) of the readers, for instance, by using psychological pressure tactics.

Even though the terms of persuasion, argumentation, manipulation, and advertising are often used together and may thus seem synonymous at first sight, there are significant differences between them. Therefore, the second part aims to clarify the exact meanings of these concepts and demonstrate their relevance for the purposes of this study. After establishing MOOC descriptions as persuasive texts, the focus of the review of the literature will shift to the role of potential students as consumers and the role of MOOCs as products. Afterwards, an account of the consumer behavior and the decision-making process concepts is provided in order to offer deeper insights into the external and the internal factors which may influence potential students. Finally, a summary of the most significant outcomes of previous research is provided.

4.1 Persuasion

Language, if used properly, can be an effective tool that impacts people's beliefs or positions regarding a particular matter in accordance with the communicative intention of the persuader (Árvay, 2004, p. 231). Perloff (2010) defines persuasion as "a symbolic process in which communicators endeavor to convince other people to change their attitudes or behavior regarding an issue through the transmission of a message, in an atmosphere of free choice" (p. 38). Perloff's (2010) definition is inclusive, and it adds the aspect of *freedom of choice* to the definition, distinguishing persuasion from coercion and manipulation. Jones and Simon (2017), however, provided a more extensive explanation of the elements that constitute persuasion. According to Jones and Simon (2017, p. 22), persuasion is a complex of three components: human communication, attempted influence and modifying judgments. In almost all of the cases, persuasion exclusively occurs between human beings when they exchange messages. Still, in some cases it is used as a metaphor to indicate a non-human action, for instance, the seriousness

of the situation persuaded the police to intervene. Influencing others refers to changing the way others take action, perceive or think. The third component is modifying judgment which means that "Message recipients are invited to make a judgment of some sort" (Jones & Simon, 2017, p. 22).

Two main factors determine whether a statement is convincing or not: either the statement itself is a fact, or it is well backed by evidence (Aristotle, 1954). According to Aristotle (1954), persuasion consists of three main appeal types, namely, ethos, pathos and logos. The three types of appeal were present in Bhatia's (1993) RMS analysis of SPLs in many moves. For example, Establishing Credentials is the first move of the SPL model, and it aims at portraying the letter sender (i.e., ethos) as trustworthy (Bhatia, 1993, p. 96). Another example can be found in the sixth move, namely Using pressure tactics, where the writer of the SPL uses emotions (i.e., pathos) in the process by placing psychological pressure on the reader (Bhatia, 1993). The following three subsections offer further overview with regard to Aristotle's (1954) three appeals.

4.1.1 Ethos

Baker (2015) defines ethos as "the credibility or trustworthiness that we establish in our communication. It is the degree to which we are perceived to be ethical, believable, trustworthy, competent, responsible, and sincere" (p. 2). Ethos focuses on the character of the persuader. It suggests that the party who is trying to persuade should be trustworthy because the recipients are more likely to believe credible speakers than believing those who are not (Baker, 2015).

Braet (1992, p. 311) declared that the credibility of the speaker sets the foundation for successful persuasion. Additionally, the author believes that the credibility of the communicator arises from how the spectators perceive the persuader. In other words, if the audience did not attribute "good sense, virtue and good will" (p. 311) to the persuader, they (persuaders) would not be recognized as credible. Braet (1992) highlighted two ways in which ethos can appear in a speech: the first takes place when spectators infer qualities that the speaker possesses through the indicators that they (the speakers) intentionally took account of in the speech; the second takes place when the persuader directly argues that certain traits should be attributed to them. Hovland, Janis and Kelly (1968) concluded that the communicator's "intentions, expertness and trustworthiness" (p. 35) are essential as a particular message could be judged negatively if delivered by persons of low credibility. The gender of the source, their age, what they look like,

as well as their perceived social status, proved to be effectual with respect to the ethos of the persuader and consequently their persuasive endeavors (Arnold, 1988, pp. 44-45). Other ethos-related factors have been proven to facilitate persuasion as well. To give an example, Goethals and Nelson's (1973) research found that the more likenesses the persuader shares with the addressees, the easier it is to persuade this specific audience.

The role of ethos in TV commercials was investigated by Feltham (1994), who found that there is a strong connection between logos and ethos. The study reported that if a person is perceived as reasonable, informative and persuading then they are also considered credible and reliable. Sheckels (2002), however, studied the negative advertisements in the context of political campaigns. Sheckels (2002) claimed that targeting the character of a particular politician can negatively affect the opinions of their advocates. Another study was carried out by Akinrinlola (2021) to reveal the role of ethos in Bank advertisements in Nigeria. The study demonstrated how these advertisements promoted the banks' experience and character to convince potential customers to hire the services of the banks.

4.1.2 Pathos

Pathos is chiefly concerned with the content which is delivered by the speaker. Baker (2015) defines pathos as an "appeal to an audience's beliefs, feelings and emotions. An appeal to pathos causes an audience not just to respond emotionally, but to identify with the communicator's point of view" (p. 2).

Pathos can be understood as influencing the audience by appealing to their sentiments (Read, 2007). It is linked with the sentiments that the speaker can provoke in the audience since the judgment of the addressee differs according to the emotions that they experience in a given situation. Research has shown that in many cases rational urges are not used alone in persuading the target audience (Demirdöğen, 2010). Therefore, to persuade the target audience, numerous communicators tend to exploit emotions such as sympathy, humor, or even fear (Stiff & Mongeau, 2016). Other emotions include security, love, greed, pity and humor (Gabrielsen & Christensen, 2010). Fear has received considerable attention from researchers because of its importance. Stiff and Mongeau (2016), for example, refers to the process in which the persuader highlights the negative ramifications that would occur if the target addressees did not follow the delivered message. This explains to some extent why Bhatia's (1993) SPL model included

pressure tactics, the objective of which is to provoke fear (e.g., the fear of missing a discount) in the addressees.

Anthony and Gladkov (2007) analysed the rhetorical appeals in 245 fundraising letters. According to Anthony and Gladkov (2007), the fundraising discourse employs three strategies to target the emotions of the audience, namely, appealing to the audience's view (e.g., appealing to the moral values), drawing a vivid picture and using charged language.

4.1.3 Logos

Logos stimulates the reason of the receivers since it rests on their abilities to mentally handle a set of provided information. Aristotle (1954) mentioned that "persuasion is effected through the speech itself when we have proved a truth or an apparent truth by means of the persuasive arguments suitable to the case in question" (pp. 22-23). Logos is found in the speech itself through the stipulations that appeal to the logical thinking of the target audience (Aristotle, 1954). Baker (2015) defines logos as "the overall logicality and coherence of the message. Appeals to logos are necessary where facts or processes are of utmost importance" (p. 2).

For the communicator to be able to construct a persuasive piece, they should assess the audience's "information processing patterns" (Demirdöğen, 2010, p. 192). Evidence is used by persuaders to support their allegations, and it has been proven that contributed evidence influences the addressees' attitudes over time, if not instantaneously (McCroskey, 1969). Perloff (2010) claims that evidence includes "factual assertions, quantitative information, eyewitness statements, testimonials, or opinions advanced by credible sources" (p. 188). Evidence, however, should not always be seen as rational because it can be emotional as well, for instance, when people donate money for the children of Africa because the statistics show that the starvation rates are spiking (Perloff, 2010).

Anthony and Gladkov (2007) examined the role of logos in fundraising letters. They reported that these letters utilize 12 rational appeals to convince the readers to donate their money. Some of these are using descriptive or narrative examples, providing comparisons, using supporting facts and statistics and using the authority of someone other than the author of the letter (Anthony & Gladkov, 2007). For instance, the following is an example of a narrative description from the corpus that Anthony and Gladkov (2007, p. 125) collected:

Ted is a single father with three children under 10. He's never been on welfare

and he's always had a job doing manual labor…There was a time when he felt

like he had no choice but to tolerate his wife's constant abuse and neglect of

their children. Then Ted decided the children deserved a chance to start over

in another town, no matter how difficult it might prove to be.

The study of rhetorical appeals has started with Aristotle's contributions and is still prevailing and expanding by rhetoricians and philosophers (for a detailed discussion see Biber et al., 2007). The rhetoric appeals received great attention in many areas of expertise, such as advertisements (Bolatito, 2012; Crompton & McAlea, 2000; Toppano & Toppano, 2014; Vu, 2017), politics (English, Sweetser, & Ancu, 2011; Mshvenieradze, 2013), legal studies (McCormack, 2014; Yakutina, Milyaeva, Tarasova, & Rostovtseva, 2020) and education (Oeppen Hill, 2020; Shorner-Johnson, 2013), to name but a few. Notwithstanding, little to no attention has been paid to the rhetorical appeals in course descriptions in general or to MOOC course descriptions in particular. Even though the focus of the current dissertation is not the rhetorical appeals of the MOOC course descriptions, it aspires to provide a deeper understanding of the impact of such appeals on potential students by exploring the opinions of the interviewees about the efficiency of MOOC descriptions in convincing them to enroll in the courses.

4.2 Argumentative, Manipulative or Persuasive?

Argumentation is seen as a dialogue between two parties (van Eemeren, Garssen, Krabbe, Snoeck Henkemans, Verheij, & Wagemans, 2014). On one hand, meaning exchange can be explicit, and in such a case the recipient is present and engaged in the discussion (Toulmin, 2003); for instance, the presidential debate where both candidates are involved in a face-to-face conversation. On the other hand, this dialogue might be implicit, in which case the addressees are not substantially involved in the discussion; for example, a particular newspaper's readers are not physically present in front of the article's author (Toulmin, 2003). Like in persuasion, in the case of argumentation, it is employed by communicators to support a claim that they proposed by providing the audience (i.e., an individual or a group) with "backing, data, facts, evidence, considerations, features" (Toulmin, 2003, p. 12).

MOOC descriptions might be classified as argumentative by some readers since their writers raise claims and support them with evidence, but this claim seems imprecise. In the previous subsection (3.2 Persuasion), persuasion is described by Aristotle (1954) as having three

appeals (i.e., ethos, pathos, and logos) which indicates that influencers do not exclusively utilize logic to achieve their communicative intention. However, this does not appear to be the case in argumentation theory as it is defined by van Eemeren et al. (2014). Van Eemeren et al. (2014) define argumentation as a

> communicative and interactional act complex aimed at resolving a difference of opinion with the addressee by putting forward a constellation of propositions the arguer can be held accountable for to make the standpoint at issue acceptable to a rational judge who judges reasonably (p. 7).

In this definition, it was made clear that argumentation should employ nothing except logic to strengthen a proposed statement. Put simply, argumentation should not appeal to the emotions of recipients, unlike persuasion.

So far, it has been demonstrated how persuasion may be distinguished from argumentation from a theoretical point of view, i.e., in the sense that it (persuasion) appeals to the emotions of the audience. While this argument asserts that targeting the sentiments of the target audience is a critical difference between argumentation and persuasion, it might be perceived as an attempt to equate persuasion with a third related concept, manipulation. This, however, may not be accurate. Therefore, it is essential to clarify the difference between manipulation and persuasion.

Harré (1985) affirms that in the case of persuasion, the audience should benefit from the delivered message, which does not prevent the persuaders from having their interests met (Harré, 1985). In MOOC descriptions, the benefit of the students is the MOOC itself. Additionally, research has shown that in the case of paid courses, the students are made aware of the price, i.e., the benefits of the tutor (Hajeer, 2020). As for manipulation, the message is beneficial for the persuader, but not exactly beneficial for the audience. In addition, the communicative situations that can be described as manipulative are those situations in which the addressees are unaware of the persuader's influence on them or are heedless about the gains of the communicator (Harré, 1985, p. 126).

4.3 MOOCs as Written Advertisements

MOOC descriptions are used to persuade students to enroll in a particular MOOC (Hajeer, 2020). Thinking of MOOCs as products, MOOC descriptions might be thought to be so-called intrusive advertisements that appear on someone's screen uninvited, which may be argued as an inaccurate assumption. Advertisements are primarily created to promote a particular product; however, that is not always the case, as there are various advertisements that work towards alerting, informing, or seeking help (Cook, 2001). Janoschka (2004) analyzed the context of advertisements and found that it consists of three main elements: sender, receiver, and message. The sender of the message can be a company, an agency, or an individual, but the beneficiaries are large numbers of people (Janoschka, 2004). It is true that thousands of students enroll in MOOCs (Hoy, 2014), but that is not necessarily due to well-written MOOC descriptions. Many other factors might influence the number of participants, such as accessibility, price, and topic, among others. Furthermore, despite the fact that MOOC descriptions are utilized to promote a product, they are still not used to advertise the course to large numbers of people.

In order to reach a large number of addressees, advertisements use many tools such as images, layout, or language (Goddard, 2002). Cook (2001) adds music as a possible tool too and mentions that these means of grabbing attention can be used together or separately. The description of the genre of advertisements, as presented by Cook (2001), does not seem to fit MOOC descriptions since they do not include multimodal content such as images or music. What is more, advertisements appear suddenly in our lives and are "presented in short bursts" (Cook, 2001, p. 219), which is not the case with MOOC descriptions. Approaching advertisements from the perspective of the receivers, it is obvious that advertisements do come uninvited. In other words, advertisements meddle in consumer activities on the TV, online, in the streets, in metro stations, and many other places (Cook, 2001). MOOCs as courses are advertised (see Appendix A) online using images, short texts, and videos, but not MOOC descriptions. Mothersbaugh et al. (2020) mentioned that interruptive advertisements do not engage the audience (i.e., low-involvement), however, the advertisements that are sought by the consumers are more likely to engage the audience (i.e., high-involvement). Reading a particular MOOC description in Udemy.com happens only when the student enters the website through a link,

engine search, or advertisement. That is to say, only potential students who are interested in the course can enter the course page and view the course description.

Knowing that MOOC descriptions are not included in intrusive advertisements and the fact that they are promotional texts in their nature, it was necessary to review the literature on copywriting (i.e., advertising texts). Petty and Cacioppo (1986) mentioned that the consumer's level of involvement with the product determines the purchasing intention. Advertisements that are unintrusive and relevant to the interests of the viewer are more attractive to the consumers (Zulkifly & Firdaus, 2014). Seemingly, only interested potential students choose to read MOOC descriptions. Previously, copywriting was called 'writing advertising texts', but today it means "the creation of virtually any type of text (advertising, journalistic, literary, SEO-texts) for all channels of information dissemination: mass media, books, the Internet, and non-mass speech, pitch, presentations" (Gnezdilova & Selezneva, 2019, p. 601). Moreover, there are many types of copywriting such as literary, media, public relations, business, advertising, and SEO (i.e., texts for online placements) copywriting (Gnezdilova & Selezneva, 2019).

The current dissertation is concerned with MOOC descriptions which may be regarded as written promotional texts. However, technical writing seems to be relevant in the case of MOOC descriptions since the texts tend to be informative as well. Blickle and Passe (1963) define technical writing as "writing which deals with subject matter in science, engineering and business" (p. 3). Henson (1994) maintains that although several businesses and industries employ technical copywriting to positively influence the behavior of the consumers, it has not received enough attention from the academic or professional community. Those who are involved in producing technical copywriting face two main issues: first, the lack of a systematic approach to technical copywriting. Second, copywriting is perceived as ethically inappropriate since it is thought to appeal to the sentiments and to use deceptive information (Henson, 1994).

Kover (1995) took this a step further and conducted 20 semi-structured interviews with advertising copywriters in order to uncover the implicit theories of copywriting, if present. The theories that were uncovered are based on a simple twofold concept, grabbing attention, then delivering a message. The interviewees mentioned that the produced text is a result of an internal conversation they have with a representative of the target audience. Subsequently, the message is modified in order to fit the needs and desires of the target audience (Kover, 1995). Due to the little attention that copywriting receives in academia, education on copywriting is being carried

out by practitioners on social media and online platforms (Blynova & Kyrylova, 2018; Gnezdilova & Selezneva, 2019). Therefore, one of the aims of the current study is to formulate implications and propose recommendations to online tutors with regard to writing effective MOOC descriptions.

4.4 Potential Students as Customers

MOOC descriptions in Udemy.com include a section titled 'Who this course is for', and this section includes a description of the potential students who would benefit the most from the course (Hajeer, 2020). Hajeer (2020) argued that MOOC descriptions are of a promotional nature as the main communicative purpose of these descriptions is to convince the students to enroll in the course. This and the financial gain that the tutors wish to have by selling these MOOCs may allow regarding the relationship between the potential students and the tutors as similar to the relationship between consumers and sellers. This may make the term of target marketing relevant to the context of the dissertation.

It is almost impossible to create a product that satisfies the needs of all customers; therefore, enterprises employ a so-called target marketing strategy (Camilleri, 2018; McDonald, Christopher, & Bass, 2003). According to this strategy, a particular product aims to satisfy the needs of a specific segment of the audience instead of mass marketing that targets all consumers (Solomon, 2017). Solomon (2017) highlights the importance of market segmentation in the process of identifying consumer behavior and ultimately being able to influence it. He adds that the audience can be segmented from many perspectives such as the demographic aspect (e.g., age or gender), psychographic (e.g., lifestyle or psychology), or according to their consuming habits. Mothersbaugh et al. (2020) believe that targeting one segment of the market is more effective than targeting many segments with a particular product or service. The smaller the segment is the more likely the product or service is adjusted to their needs (Mothersbaugh et al., 2020). The authors of MOOC descriptions use categories such as age, interests or professions to identify the ideal potential students for an advertised MOOC (Hajeer, 2020). Identifying the market segments provides a deeper comprehension of the target audience's needs which would consequently help the service/product providers to tailor their product or service to the needs of the consumers (Camilleri, 2018). This would give them a competitive edge over the other marketers, Camilleri (2018) added.

Mothersbaugh et al. (2020) claim that the process of segmentation includes four steps which start with defining the needs that the product or service is capable of meeting. Second, identifying the customers who have similar needs. After that, a description of the groups should be provided. This description includes details regarding the target group such as their age, gender and position. This would provide a thorough understanding of the target groups, which would help create a more effective marketing strategy. The last one is selecting a target group(s) that will receive the focus. Being able to identify the target audience requires the marketers to collect a surplus amount of information (Camilleri, 2018; McDonald et al., 2003; Mothersbaugh et al., 2020; Solomon, 2017). Understanding the details of segmenting the market may shed light on the process that is used by the authors of MOOC descriptions for writing the 'Who this course is for' section.

Camilleri (2018) states that there are five essential classifications for audience segmentation, namely, demographic, geographic, psychographic, behavioral and product related factors. Demographic segmentation is a popular method for segmenting the market as it is concerned with measurable factors such as marital status, race, age, religion and nationality, to name but a few. With geographic segmentation, however, the location of the target audience is under the focus. This might be extended to the weather, population size, and natural deposits among others. Psychographic segmentation takes into consideration the motive, personal attributes, passions and way of life (Camilleri, 2018). For instance, rich business travelers who are accustomed to a high-quality lifestyle appreciate excellent airline services (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007). Behavioral segmentation deals with the buying habits of the consumers while product-related segmentation deals with the benefits that the product or the service itself can provide (Camilleri, 2018). The literature on MOOCs provides a description of the audience that enrolls in MOOCs based on age, sex, employment, socioeconomic, educational level and location. Most of those who enroll in MOOCs are younger than 30 (Hoe et al., 2014). A quarter of the participants in MOOCs are 18-24 while less than half are 25-34 (Cole & Timmerman, 2015).

As for the gender distribution, Dillahunt, Wang and Teasley (2014) declare that more than two-thirds of the enrollees are males. Nonetheless, the number of female enrollees is growing (Hoe et al., 2014). As for the employment status of the participants in MOOCs, Christensen et al.'s (2013) study revealed that 50% of the partakers are full-time employed, 17%

are students, 12% are self-employed, 7% are part-time employed, 7% are unemployed and 7% are retired. Regarding the financial status of the enrollees, Hansen and Reich (2015) conducted an investigation to identify the participants in a MOOC provided by HarvardX. Their results showed that MOOC partakers come from various financial backgrounds, however, the largest part lived in wealthy vicinities. Concerning the educational background, 80% of the enrollees have a university degree (Baturay, 2015) which reflects the high educational levels of the partakers. Finally, the geographical distribution of the enrollees showed that around 33% live in the USA and a similar percentage resides in Europe while the rest are from the developing countries (Christensen et al., 2013).

4.5 Consumer Behavior and the Decision-making Process

Since the aim of MOOC descriptions is to influence the decision-making process of potential students, it is necessary to gain a greater understanding of the factors that affect the behavior of the target audience. So far, it has been established that the main goal of written advertisement texts is to persuade the reader about a particular product or service. Put differently, these texts aim at influencing the behavior of the readers and encouraging them to purchase the advertised product or service.

According to Mothersbaugh et al. (2020), the beliefs and the knowledge about consumer behavior dictate the marketing strategies and regulations. Furthermore, marketing decisions which are based on well-grounded research are more likely to thrive. Solomon (2017) defines consumer behavior as "the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires" (p. 28). In this definition, Solomon (2017) highlights the fact that consuming is a process that may include many participants, objects and actions. That is, the consuming process does not merely include a seller and a buyer since the buyer might not necessarily be the user or the one who chooses the product. The consumed target might not be merely a product as it may be a service or an idea. Finally, purchasing is not the only behavior that concerns the field of consumer behavior, but also using and discarding them as well. Mothersbaugh et al. (2020) mention that the process of consumer behavior is complicated and although many large companies invested in investigating it, success is not warranted. Researching consumer behavior may only help in increasing the chances of succeeding. This wide view of consumer behavior would help explain the indirect impact on consumer choices (Mothersbaugh et al., 2020).

There have been many attempts (Narayana & Markin, 1975; Nicosia, 1966) to produce a model that explains the decision-making process of the consumers.

In consonance with Stankevich (2017), there is a five-stage framework that is considered as the classical consumer decision-making process model. The five stages of this model are "needs recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and finally post-purchase behavior" (Stankevich, 2017, p. 10). This traditional approach examines the decision-making process from a logical angle which considers the consumer as a rational decision-maker who collects information and decides in the light of serious contemplation of the advantages and disadvantages of their decision (Solomon, 2017).

In agreement with Kotler and Keller (2006), the entire process of decision-making starts when an individual realizes that they have a need which is triggered by an internal (e.g., hunger or thirst) or an external motivation (e.g., a new car or computer). Notwithstanding, marketers may induce this process by triggering a sense of dissatisfaction which subsequently leads to creating a new need for the individual (Stankevich, 2017). The second stage involves searching for information and in this stage, the consumer is more open to receiving information about a product (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Customarily, searching for the information commences internally (e.g., memories and past experiences), however, if this internal research did not yield useful information, the consumer turns to external sources such as friends, family, newspapers or the Internet, to name but a few (Belch & Belch, 2004). This leads to the third stage which is the evaluation of alternatives. This process is where the consumer makes a final decision as to which product or service provider to choose among the abundance of options in the market (Belch & Belch, 2004). As reported by Kotler and Keller (2006), different processes guide the consumers' choice among the alternatives as some of them are guided by the attributes of the products while others by the benefits of the product, among others. The fourth stage is executing the buying process where consumers usually make five micro-decisions which are choosing the brand, the dealer, the quantity, the timing and the payment method (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Post-purchase behavior is the last stage in this model. Here, consumers begin to wonder whether they made the right decision as they become more sensitive to the information that supports their decision and to the extra product features that the other brands provide (Kotler & Keller, 2006).

4.6 Factors Influencing Consumer Behavior

Revealing the rhetorical effects of MOOC descriptions on the readers is one of the aims of the present dissertation. Thus understanding the underlying factors on which such rhetorical effects may be built seems to be of utmost relevance. The factors that affect the consumers' behavior are divided into external and internal (Mothersbaugh et al., 2020; Solomon, 2017). Internal factors include perception, learning, memory, motivation, personality, emotions and attitudes while external factors include the culture, subculture, demographics, social status, reference groups, family, and marketing activities (Mothersbaugh et al., 2020). The following subsections will elaborate further on the relevant concepts to the current dissertation.

4.6.1 External Factors

This section provides an insight into the elements that affect consumer behavior externally. The various subsections explore culture, subculture, social status and reference groups as external factors that may play a role in influencing the choice of potential students. The last subsection (i.e., Reviews) is linked to reference groups as MOOC descriptions may be presenting the writers of the reviews as a reference group.

4.6.1.1 Cultural and Subcultural Influence. Mothersbaugh et al., (2020) highlight the cruciality of the role of culture in influencing the behavior of the consumer. They believe that culture is not a simple term, instead, it includes a constellation of aspects like the knowledge, the rules, the traditions, and the values of the society members. Even though the culture does not control the natural motives of the human being, still, it influences the timing and the manner of meeting such needs (Mothersbaugh et al., 2020). According to Zsubrinszky (2005), culture "influences the very core of an individual's actions towards others and his expectations concerning their actions toward him" (p. 52). Hofstede (1984) believes that culture may affect the values of the consumer. Culture can also influence the aims of the consumers (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), and even how they classify, see, and think about their environment (Nisbett, Richard, Kaiping, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001). Furthermore, culture determines the reaction of the consumers to advertisements, prices and discounts, among others (Carstensen, Shavitt & Barnes, 2020).

When addressing culture as an important factor in influencing consumer behavior, subcultures should also be mentioned (Mothersbaugh et al., 2020). Karkhanis (2019) defines subculture as "a distinct cultural group that exists as an identifiable segment within a larger,

more complex society e.g., nationality, social class, language, etc." (p. 33). Solomon (2017), however, points out that shared beliefs or references may also constitute subcultures. An example of subculture within society may be the American societies in which three main subcultures reside, namely, Hispanic Americans, African American, and Asian Americans. When deciding to advertise to a particular subculture, the marketers should pay special attention to the cultural differences and respect the beliefs, morals and traditions of the targeted subculture (Karkhanis, 2019).

Despite the lack of research with regard to the influence of cultural factors on MOOC students Liu, Brown, Lynch, Barnes, Baker, Bergner and McNamara (2016) examined the cultural factors that influence the behavior of MOOC students. The study focused on three dimensions, namely, course activity profile, quiz activity profile and most connected forum peers. The study reported that these three dimensions are influenced by cultural factors. For example, the users of the MOOC forums were strongly linked to MOOC students from the same country or a culturally related country (Liu et al., 2016).

4.6.1.2 Social Status. Engel, Blackwell and Miniard (1990) explained that the term social class is used to refer to categorizing the groups of people who demonstrate a similar behavior based upon their economic status (p. 106). Social classes are usually accepted by the members of the society as a fact (Beready George, 1977). Gherasim (2013) highlighted many characteristics of social classes. He believes that social classes share similar patterns in terms of their behavior and favorites including how they dress, where they live and what are their hobbies, to name but a few. Factors such as education, earnings, and workplace can decide the social class that someone is placed in, nonetheless, it is possible to move among the social classes. Finally, the social group determines the position of its members in society (i.e., lower position or higher position). Although the income of the person is a crucial determiner of their social class, it should not be the only determiner (Solomon, 2017). That is, when wondering whether the income or the social class is more reliable in predicting consumer behavior, the type of the product is the determiner. In other words, if the reason for buying the product is to impress other people, then the social class is a better predictor. However, if the product is being purchased for its function, then the income is a better predictor (Solomon, 2017).

Hansen and Reich (2015) conducted an investigation to identify the participants in a MOOC provided by HarvardX. The findings showed that the largest part of MOOC students

lived in wealthy vicinities. This might carry an indication to the social status of the MOOC enrollees. That is, enrolling in a MOOC may imply that the enrollee holds a higher social status.

    4.6.1.3 Reference Group. Individuals typically need encouragement to make a decision concerning purchasing something (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). Conforming to the social norms can be considered as one of the motives that incentivize human behavior (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). Mothersbaugh et al. (2020) define reference groups as "[a] group whose presumed perspectives or values are being used by an individual as the basis for his or her current behavior" (p. 227). That is, individuals use reference groups as guides for their actions in particular situations (Mothersbaugh et al., 2020; Noguti & Russell, 2014). For example, consumers might seek the advice of a friend or a family member before buying a product, or they may totally rely on the advice of a celebrity or an influencer (Hoonsopon & Puriwat, 2016).

    The online community can be considered an important platform for exchanging opinions and for social interaction (Ding, Lin & Zhang, 2020). Such online communities are frequented by people with specific consumer needs and they use the network to search for information about particular products, take part in shopping dialogues or even to establish personal relations (Hajli, Shanmugam, Powell, & Love, 2015). Searching online for others' opinions about products has become a popular method before deciding on purchasing since online communities provide free and reliable information (Ding et al., 2020). This might be attributed to the fact that there is an abundance of information about each product which overwhelms the purchasers and hinders the process of decision-making (Gan & Li, 2018). Put simply, the recommendations that are provided by reference groups facilitate the decision-making process by minimizing the irrelevant details (Gan & Li, 2018). Ultimately, in order to win the approval and the recognition of the reference group, the consumers allow the reference group's opinions to influence the decision-making process (Ding et al., 2020).

    In order to improve the awareness of a particular product, or to increase the number of customers, marketers encourage customers to share their opinion about the advertised product (Smith, 2011). Mayer (2012) claimed that consumers usually consider the opinions of friends and family members, as these insights may provide further information about a particular product. Amazon website, for example, demonstrates that the consumers' reviews section had become a noticeably popular section regardless of the consumers' purchasing intentions (Hu, Zhang, & Pavlou, 2010). More relevant context to our dissertation is MOOC descriptions. Hajeer

(2020) states that the authors of MOOC descriptions include positive reviews (opinions) from previous students in the description in order to favorably influence the choice of the readers. Teng, Khong, Goh and Chong (2014) conducted a study to investigate the effectiveness of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) on the readers, i.e., the online consumer reviews. The study examined students' opinions about studying abroad. The results of their research showed that high-quality arguments are the most persuasive factor in electronic word of mouth. The criteria for measuring the quality of the reviews were accuracy, timeliness, relevance and strength. Besides the quality of the arguments, they also measured the credibility of the reviews in terms of the expertness and trustworthiness of the review writers. The results assure that credibility affects the persuasiveness of the reviews.

In addition to the source credibility and the argument quality, Teng et al. (2014) discussed other factors that affect the persuasiveness of the online reviews such as the source attractiveness (e.g., familiarity, similarity, and likability), source perception (e.g., usefulness, helpfulness, and social ties), and the source style (e.g., length, visual cues, and dispersion). Banerjee, Bhattacharyya, and Bose (2017), however, attributed special importance to the source's trustworthiness. Banerjee et al. (2017) provided a model which can help in categorizing the reviews based on their trustworthiness, high or low trustworthiness. The model which they provided includes six determining factors, namely, the positivity, involvement, experience, reputation, competence, and sociability of the reviewer. The higher the rate of these factors, the more credible a review is (Banerjee et al., 2017).

Regarding the helpfulness of reviews, Mariani and Borghi (2020) investigated the relationship between helpful eWOF and successful businesses by analyzing almost 400,000 online reviews. The findings suggest that the helpfulness of the reviews increased their positive impact (Mariani & Borghi, 2020). As for the positivity of the reviews, Weisstein, Song, Anderson and Zhu (2017) conducted a study to investigate the effect of negative reviews on the consumers' opinions. The results suggested that negative opinions discourage the customers with purchasing intention.

4.6.2 Internal Factors

The aim of the current section is to equip the reader with a general understanding of the internal factors (e.g., how they perceive a particular MOOC description) that may play a vital role in influencing the decision-making process of the MOOC potential students. Although the

internal factors that impact consumer behavior are discussed in a different section, still, they are connected to the decision-making process. Belch and Belch (2004) link some of the internal factors that affect consumer behavior to the decision-making process (see Figure 6). The following subsections explain the internal factors that affect the decision-making process of the consumer, namely, perception, learning, memory, emotion, attitude and motivation.

Figure 6

A Basic Model of the Consumer Decision-making Process
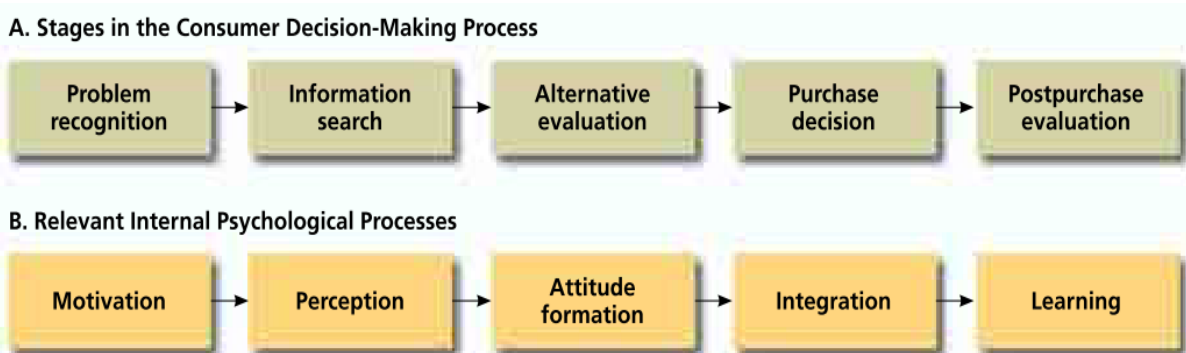
Note. Adapted from *Advertising and Promotion* (6th ed., p. 105), by G. Belch and M. Belch, 2004, McGraw-Hill. Copyright 2003 by McGraw-Hill Companies.

4.6.2.1 Perception, Learning and Memory. Sensations can be explained as the reaction of the sensing organs, i.e., eyes, skin, nose, ears, mouth and fingers, to a stimulus such as sunlight or someone's voice (Kapoor & Madichie, 2012). Perception, however, is "the process by which people select, organize, and interpret these sensations" (Solomon, 2017, p. 98). Mothersbaugh et al. (2020) claim that the process of perception consists of three stages, namely, exposure, perception, interpretation and memory. The exposure stage happens when an individual encounters a stimulus such as an advertisement, while attention occurs when one or more of the sensory receptors of the individual pass stimulus to the brain. Interpretation, however, is linking meaning to the received stimulant. Eventually, this process ends with the memory using this meaning either to make a decision or to keep it in the long-term memory (Mothersbaugh et al., 2020). Even though textual genres are not pictures, still, the layout of the text can affect the reader. This allegation is substantiated by Mill (2005) who assured that fonts

and text organizing devices, among others, can play a critical role in how a specific text is perceived. For more details, check section 2.4 MOOC Descriptions as a Digital genre.

According to Krishnan and Forcum (2014), the memory of the consumer can be considered as a choice modifier. Solomon (2017) defines memory as the "process of acquiring information and storing it over time so that it will be available when we need it" (p. 150). Hayden (2009) states that the research on memory reveals similarities between human memory and the information storing process by the computer. He explains that the process starts by collecting data from external resources, then processing them in the short-term memory (RAM in computers) and finally storing this data in the long-term memory (ROM in computers). When a particular individual encounters a stimulus, the information is transmitted to the sensory memory (Hayden, 2009). Afterwards, it is passed to the short-term memory to stay there for a maximum of 20 seconds and ultimately it moves to the long-term memory. Later, the consumer can call this information back when needed (e.g., for making a purchasing decision) (Hayden, 2009). These pieces of information are stored in the long-term memory in associative networks that contain the items which are connected in a particular type of relationship (Solomon, 2017). Employing advertisements, marketers try to enhance their product, service or brand by associating them with positive items in the memory of the consumer (Khan, 2007).

In the consumer behavior context, learning refers to the behavioral changes after a personal experience or after witnessing an experience that happened with other individuals (Foxall, 2014, p. 39). Learning takes place either in a high-involvement event, where the individual is willing to learn, or a low-involvement situation, where the individual expresses little or no willingness to learn about the product or the service (Mothersbaugh et al., 2020). The method of communicating the advertisement relies on the level of involvement of the consumer (Mothersbaugh et al., 2020). For example, the consumers whose favorite TV shows are interrupted by an advertisement are less likely to be involved in the learning process (Mothersbaugh et al., 2020). Taking MOOC descriptions as an example, it seems plausible to see the potential students as highly involved as they chose to read a particular MOOC description. Several theories have been developed to address the learning aspect of the consumer behavior (Kapoor & Madichie, 2012). Some of these theories concentrate on the relationship between the stimulus and response such as the behavioral theories, while others focused on the cognitive aspect that regards the consumer as a problem solver and an abstract learner (Kapoor &

Madichie, 2012). Covering the research and theories on consumer learning exceeds the limits of the current research length and scope wise; therefore, no more details will be addressed.

      4.6.2.2 Emotions and Attitudes. Chaudhuri (2006) states that emotions such as sadness or happiness influence the choices which consumers make and their perception of advertisements. Emotions can be considered as an axiomatic individual adventure (Chaudhuri, 2006). Mothersbaugh et al. (2020) claim that emotions are either triggered by the surrounding context or by the imagination of the individual and that emotions are usually escorted by physical symptoms such as accelerated heartbeats or rapid breathing. Furthermore, emotions are connected to behaviors that may vary depending on the context or the personality type of the individual; for instance, fear may cause a particular individual to escape while sadness may induce crying (Mothersbaugh et al., 2020).

      Marketers employ the power of emotions for their advantage by linking their products or services to positive emotions such as happiness or joy (Solomon, 2017). However, some marketers utilize negative emotions as well in order to trigger a particular behavior, put simply, marketers may expose the consumer to a discomforting situation and then offer the solution (Solomon, 2017). The reason may be that when people experience negative feelings, they involve themselves in pleasant experiences or different activities to distract themselves and consequently to reduce the negative feelings (Andrade, 2005; Zillman, 2015). Emotions are an essential component of attitude formation (Chaudhari, 2006). Attitudes can be defined as "an enduring organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes concerning some aspects of our environment. It is a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object" (Mothersbaugh et al., 2020, p. 392). Here, Mothersbaugh et al. (2020) refer to the complex nature of attitudes as there are many factors which play important roles in forming them.

      Lavidge and Steiner (1961) claim that the process of forming an attitude starts with the cognitive stage, then the affective stage and finally the conative stage. That is, the sequence begins with a belief regarding an object or a person, then there is the brand evaluation (the affective stage) which leads to the behavioral changing stage (Chaudhari, 2006). However, Ray (1973), suggests that attitude formation may happen in a different sequence. He postulates that the process of attitude formation may start with the conative stage by providing the example of impulsive purchasing where consumers crystallize an opinion after buying a product or a service

(Ray, 1973). Notwithstanding, Gorn (1982) postulates that the affective stage may be the beginning of the attitude formation process. To exemplify, this sequence may take place when the consumer is exposed to an image that triggers a positive emotional response, afterwards they form a favorable belief about the product which leads to purchasing intention (Chaudhari, 2006).

After forming an attitude, the commitment to these attitudes varies depending on the person (Solomon, 2017). According to Solomon (2017) there are three types of commitment. Firstly, compliance, which is a form of attitude that depends on the punishment and reward principle. That type of attitude is weak and likely to change when better opportunities arise or when the punishment does not exist anymore. The second level of commitment is identification, which occurs when consumers purchase a service or a product in order to be accepted by a reference group such as family or friends. Finally, internalization, which is characterized by a rigorous involvement with the object or the person. At this level, the attitudes become amalgamated in the value system, which increases the challenge of influencing them. Emotions and attitudes are critical factors that may influence the behavior of the potential students. Therefore, the interview schedule that is used for the current study includes a question regarding the emotions (if any) that were triggered in the potential students when they read MOOC descriptions. This question seeks to explore the range of triggered emotions in the readers and whether they influenced their attitudes towards the described course.

4.6.2.3 Personality and Motivation. Personality is defined by Chaudhuri (2006) as a "set of inferences about a person which determines the person's behavior" (p. 92). Kapoor and Madichie (2012) add that personality is a combination of inheritance and experience. Marketers are not able to alter the personality of the consumer because personality, in general, is stable and consistent (Kapoor & Madichie, 2012). Still, cultural, psychological and social events may influence the personality of the human being (Kapoor & Madichie, 2012). Mothersbaugh et al. (2020) divide the approaches to personality into two categories, namely, the multitrait approach and the single trait approach. The multitrait approach defines several traits to have a holistic understanding of the individual personality while the single trait approach focuses on one trait to gain a deeper comprehension of a constellation of behaviors (Mothersbaugh et al., 2020). An example of the multitrait personality approach may be the five-factor model by McCrae and John (1992). This approach takes into consideration five main features when trying to understand the human personality which are, extroversion, neuroticism (e.g., mood and temper), agreeableness

(e.g., sympathy and politeness), openness to experience and conscientiousness (e.g., preciseness and carefulness) (McCrae & John, 1992). Examples of single trait approaches may be the studying of consumer ethnocentrism, need for cognition or consumer need for uniqueness (Mothersbaugh et al., 2020). Marketers target one or more traits of the personality of the consumer in order to influence the decision-making process and thus motivate them to purchase their products or services (Mothersbaigh et al., 2020).

Kapoor and Madichie (2012) define consumer motivation as "the processes that lead people to behave as they do. It occurs when a need arises in the consumer which he wishes to satisfy" (p. 112). In such a case, the consumer experiences a state of stress that needs to be relieved or minimized (Kapoor & Madichie, 2012). According to Tauber (1972), the pioneer of revealing shopping motivations, consumers are motivated by sundry motives that can be categorized into psychological (e.g., self-gratification or role-playing) and social (e.g., conformity or social status). Eastlick and Feinberg (1999), however, postulate that consuming motives are divided into utilitarian and hedonic motives. Utilitarian motives are encouraged by the desire to accomplish a functional need (e.g., buying medicine to cure a sickness) while hedonic motives wish to fulfill a non-functional need (e.g., emotions or fantasies) (Kapoor & Madichie, 2012). Needs can be categorized according to their level of compulsion and the more compelling a specific need is, the more likely it becomes a motive (Jisana, 2014). Maslow (1943) hierarchically arranged the needs of humans in accordance with their level of importance (see Figure 7). These needs start with the physiological needs which are important for survival such as food, water, air, shelter, sleep and sex. Subsequently, comes the safety needs, social needs (e.g., friendship and family), esteem (e.g., confidence and accomplishments), and finally, self-actualization (e.g., authenticity and creativity) (Maslow, 1943). Individuals attempt to start with meeting the most important need first and only after satisfying this need, they move up the hierarchy to satisfy the next one (Jisana, 2014).

Figure 7

Maslow Hierarchy of Needs

Note. Adapted from "Consumer behaviour models: An overview" by T.K. Jisana, 2014, *Sai Om Journal of Commerce & Management, 1*(5), p. 36. Copyright 2014 by Sai Om Publication.

Bearing in mind that there are many motives, conflicts may occur among positive and negative motives and here the marketers intervene to provide a solution (Solomon, 2017). According to Mothersbaugh et al. (2020), there are three key types of motivation conflict, namely, approach-approach, approach-avoidance and avoidance-avoidance motivational conflict. In the approach-approach motivational conflict, the consumer is in a position to choose between two desirable options (Mothersbaugh et al., 2020). An example from the context of the current dissertation may be of a potential student who has to choose between two attractive MOOCs. The approach-avoidance motivation conflict occurs when the product or the service has negative and positive outcomes (Mothersbaugh et al., 2020). For example, a MOOC that includes an explanation about all the aspects of a particular skill (i.e., positive), but it does not dive into the

details of each aspect (i.e., negative). The avoidance-avoidance conflict takes place when the consumer is facing two unpleasant choices (Mothersbaugh et al., 2020). For example, when they need to learn a specific skill because it is extremely important for their job. They have two options, either to spend money to purchase the MOOC (i.e., undesirable) or to lose their job (i.e., undesirable).

The internal factors that could influence the decision making process of consumers are related to emotion, motivation, memory, learning, perception, attitude formation and personality. The writers of MOOC descriptions may be employing one or more of these factors in order to affect the reader's choice and thus persuade them to enroll in the promoted MOOC.

4.7 Summary

The main goal of the current chapter was to set the scene for this study by reviewing the relevant literature on some key terms such as persuasion, consumer behavior and the decision-making process. The three types of appeal (i.e., ethos, pathos and logos) were discussed in detail accompanied by recent studies which investigated one or more of these appeals in different contexts to demonstrate the application of Aristotle's (1954) theory of persuasion. Moreover, the notions of manipulation, argumentation and persuasion were explained in order to clarify the differences between them as the study argues that MOOC descriptions are persuasive texts. The most significant outcomes of research from the point of view of the present study can be summarized as follows:

- MOOC descriptions are not typical intrusive advertisements that appear uninvited on billboards or computer screens. MOOC descriptions are pursued by readers who are looking for information about MOOCs.

- Copywriting is an advertising text which aims at providing information about a particular service or a product and persuading the readers to purchase it.

- The fact that MOOC tutors provide their courses in exchange for financial return, and the promotional nature of MOOC descriptions seems to suggest that the relationship between the instructors and the students is also a relationship between a seller, who is trying to sell a product to a buyer, who is searching for the best deal in the market.

- The writers of MOOC descriptions seem to employ many strategies in MOOC descriptions to influence the decision-making process of the readers.

- The factors which influence the decision-making process of the consumer are divided into internal (e.g., personality and motivation) and external factors (e.g., culture and social status). These factors appear to be used by the writers of MOOC descriptions (knowingly or unknowingly) to convince the potential students to enroll in the course.

Chapter 5: Methods: Overview

The dissertation study employs a complex research approach to address the previously stated main research questions (see Table 2). Two main methods of scrutiny are used. First, text analysis of the promotional MOOC descriptions from the generic perspective is carried out in order to reveal the generic structural features of this genre. Second, a qualitative investigation is pursued, using interviews, to obtain a deeper understanding of the effects that MOOC descriptions have on potential students. Table 4 provides an overview of the aims, the research questions, the data sources, and the methods of analysis.

Table 4

The Aims, Research Questions, Data Sources and the Methods of Analysis

Aims	Research Questions	Data Sources	Methods of Analysis
1. The aim of this study is to explore the genre of MOOC descriptions to reveal:	1. What is the rhetorical move structure of MOOC descriptions?	A corpus that consists of 70 MOOC descriptions	Genre analysis: Swales' (1981) rhetorical move structure theory. Bhatia's (1991) SPL model.
1.1 the stereotypical rhetorical (move) structure of MOOC descriptions,	1.1 What moves and steps can be identified in MOOC descriptions?	The corpus + pilot study (see section 3.2.3 Hajeer's (2020) RMS Model for the MOOC description) which has shown considerable similarities between MOOC descriptions and Bhatia's (1993) SPL.	
1.2 how it compares to the genre of the sales promotion letter,	1.2 What similarities and differences can be identified between MOOC descriptions and sales promotion letters?	The corpus.	

Aims	Research Questions	Data Sources	Methods of Analysis
1.3 the linguistic composition of the moves/steps that constitute it, 1.4 its communicative purpose(s).	1.3 What linguistic means of expression are used to express the moves and steps in MOOC descriptions? 1.4 Based on the outcomes of the move analysis, what communicative purposes of MOOC descriptions may be identified?	The corpus. Review of the relevant literature on argumentation, persuasion, manipulation and advertising.	Lexico grammatical analysis.
2. It aims to reveal the dominant rhetorical effect of MOOC descriptions on potential students.	2. What is the effect of MOOC descriptions on potential students? 2.1 How do potential students perceive the main aim(s) of MOOC descriptions? 2.2 Which aspects/elements of MOOC descriptions do potential students find useful in identifying the main aim(s) of the course? 2.3 Which parts of MOOC descriptions influence potential students the most in their decision i.e., to enroll or not in the course? 2.4 In what ways does each move/step of the rhetorical structure of MOOC descriptions influence the choice of potential students i.e., to enroll in the course?	12 semi-structured interviews with potential students	Qualitative analysis: thematic analysis of the interviews.
3. On the basis of the results of the investigation and the outcomes of earlier research, this study aims to propose a theory- and data-based analytical model	3. How can the genre of MOOC descriptions be modeled 3.1 in terms of its rhetorical (move) structure? 3.2 in terms of its rhetorical effect?	The results of: - the rhetorical move structure analysis, - the interview study, - earlier theories/research in the field on	

Aims	Research Questions	Data Sources	Methods of Analysis
for the study of the generic (i.e., rhetorical move) structure and rhetorical effect of MOOC descriptions.		rhetorical move structure theory applications.	
4. Based on the outcomes of the study, formulate implications and propose recommendations to online tutors with regard to writing effective MOOC descriptions.	4. What pedagogical/practical implications and recommendations may be formulated based on the outcomes of the study with regard to writing effective MOOC descriptions?	The proposed theoretical model (from RQ3). The results of the thematic interview analysis (from RQ2). ESP literature.	

Chapter 6: The Corpus-based Study: Analyzing MOOC Descriptions

6.0 Setting the Scene

The aim of this chapter is to explore and describe the genre of MOOC descriptions to reveal: (a) the stereotypical rhetorical (move) structure of MOOC descriptions, (b) how it compares to the genre of the sales promotion letter, (c) the linguistic composition of the moves/steps that constitute it and (d) its communicative purpose(s).

This chapter consists of two main sections. The Methods section provides an account of the research methodology applied, i.e., the criteria and the procedures of corpus design, the procedures of data analysis, and the measurements that were taken to ensure the reliability and the validity of the study. The results and discussion section presents the results of the RMS thematic and linguistic analysis and discusses them. Finally, a summary of the chapter is provided to assess the value of the research and compare the findings to previous research.

6.1 Methods

This section provides details regarding the procedures of the corpus design and analysis to ensure the replicability of the study. It also includes an explanation of the measures that were taken in order to ensure the reliability of the study. Furthermore, an account of the methods that were employed in the pilot study (Hajeer, 2020) is provided. Moreover, this section furnishes a sample analysis of a MOOC description to familiarize the reader with the RMS analysis process. Finally, this section provides a statistical analysis of the data as for the number of words per move, the number of moves per sub-corpus and the number of words per sub-corpus.

6.1.1 Criteria and Procedures of Corpus Design

The procedure of corpus design took place over a period of one year 2020-2021. Altogether, a corpus of 70 MOOC descriptions were collected from one MOOC platform called Udemy.com. MOOC descriptions in Udemy.com are written by the tutors themselves; therefore, the odds of encountering irregularities and new techniques in the descriptions are higher than in a platform where the descriptions are written by the platform (i.e., marketing/sales specialists or directors). The descriptions are open access; therefore, it was unnecessary to ask for access permission. The criteria of selecting texts to be included in the corpus are based on the number of words, as well as the type of the courses offered. The number of words is between 600-1000 words as this is the average number of words in most of the observed MOOC descriptions. In

addition, descriptions with this number of words are more likely to include pertinent data for the study. Regarding the variety of the courses, I chose the course descriptions which are more frequented by students. This decision was not easy to make as there are various courses on this platform. The chosen MOOC descriptions are thus from MOOCs that focus on computer sciences (e.g., ethical hacking and programming), business (e.g., marketing, management, and financial analysis), and education (e.g., train the trainer, online teaching, and teacher training). For a sample course description from each of the three groups, see Appendices C, D and E.

6.1.2 Procedures of Corpus Analysis

The procedures of data analysis started with incorporating the corpus into Atlas.ti v7.5.7. This software is used in qualitative research, and it provides a function that helps in manually assigning tags for text units. The process started by identifying the moves and the steps that were previously identified for the rhetorical move structure analysis of MOOC descriptions in a pilot study (Hajeer, 2020; see Figure 6 for more detail). However, since the current corpus is larger than the one in Hajeer's (2020) study, some moves and steps of the MOOC descriptions were not yet identifiable by his model.

After identifying the moves and steps following Hajeer's (2020) preliminary theory- and data-based MOOC Descriptions Model (Figure 3), the moves and steps of the corpus were separated into sub-corpuses (henceforth SC). Each sub-corpus included one type of the identified moves. For instance, the Incentivizing sub-corpus comprised the identified text units that belong to the INCENTIVIZING move. An in-depth and multi-stage thematic and linguistic analysis was then conducted on each sub-corpus as based on Bhatia's (1993) analysis of SPL.

The first stage of analysis was thematic in the sense that the SCs were scrutinized to identify the communicative purposes of each move or step and the communicative strategies for achieving them. This stage was conducted manually by going through each move to identify the employed methods for achieving the communicative purposes.

The second stage, on the other hand, included a linguistic analysis of each sub-corpus to gain a deeper understanding of the lexico-grammatical features expressing the communicative purpose of each move and step. The software which was used for the linguistic analysis is UAM corpus tool3. With the help of this software, it was possible to conduct a part-of-speech (POS) analysis of the sub-corpora. Next, the top ten nouns, compounds, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and coordinators were located for each sub-corpus. This was deemed necessary to

be able to determine whether the frequency of these parts of speech contribute to achieving the communicative purpose of the moves. With the help of the software, it was also possible to identify the grammatical patterns (e.g., tense, voice) that may have also contributed to accomplishing the purpose of each move.

6.1.3 The Methods of Hajeer's (2020) Pilot Study

This sub-section provides an outline of the methods that were used in the pilot study that was carried out by Hajeer (2020). This pilot study is an integral part of the current dissertation as it proves the validity of the model that was used to analyze the current corpus of MOOC descriptions.

RMS analysis was conducted on a corpus that comprised 15 MOOC descriptions. These descriptions were randomly divided into three groups where each group included five descriptions. Afterwards, each group was utilized for conducting one of the three stages of piloting, namely, applying the SPL model, piloting the preliminary MOOC descriptions model, and piloting the theory- and data-based model.

The aim of the first stage of analysis was to apply Bhatia's (1993) SPL model to analyze five MOOC descriptions. This provided the necessary empirical evidence to complement the model. The analysis started with segmenting MOOC descriptions into moves. Next, the moves of the SPL model were assigned to text segments of MOOC descriptions in accordance with their communicative purpose. The assignment of the SPL moves to the segmented units of the MOOC descriptions was based on the definitions that Bhatia (1993) provided for these moves. The modifications to Bhatia's (1993) SPL model resulted in the emergence of the Preliminary MOOC Descriptions Model (Figure 8).

Figure 8

Hajeer's (2020, p. 14) Preliminary MOOC Descriptions Model
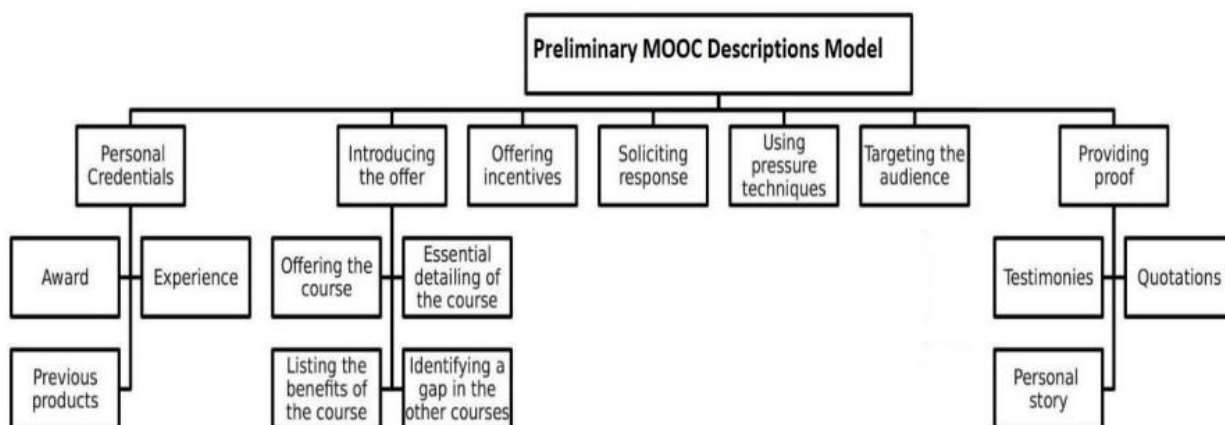
Note. Adapted from "Preliminary MOOC Descriptions Model" by A. Hajeer, 2020, *English for Specific Purposes World, 61*(22), p. 12. Copyright 2020 by English for Specific Purposes World.

After complementing and modifying Bhatia's (1993) SPL model to become compatible with MOOC descriptions, the second stage of piloting was initiated. In this stage, the Preliminary MOOC Descriptions Model was piloted on five MOOC descriptions. The second stage used the same procedures of analysis that were used in the first one. The results of the second stage indicated that the Preliminary MOOC Descriptions Model failed to identify all the moves and steps in the descriptions. Consequently, some changes were introduced to the theory-based model to improve its capability in revealing the RMS of MOOC descriptions. These changes brought to light the MOOC Descriptions' Model (see Figure 9).

In the third stage, MOOC Descriptions Model (Figure 9) was employed to analyze the RMS of five MOOC descriptions in the corpus. The seven moves model could identify the moves and the steps of all the descriptions effectively. Most of the moves of the model could be detected in the descriptions. Based on the analysis, seven rhetorical moves were identified that compose this genre and distinguish it from other related genres (e.g., SPLs): Personal credentials, Introducing the offer, Benefits, Incentives, Soliciting action, Targeting the audience and Proof. As the model has been found to offer a reliable and valid means for the rigorous

analysis of this genre, it was chosen as a starting point for the analysis of the corpus of the current study.

Figure 9

Hajeer's (2020, p. 14) MOOC Descriptions' Model
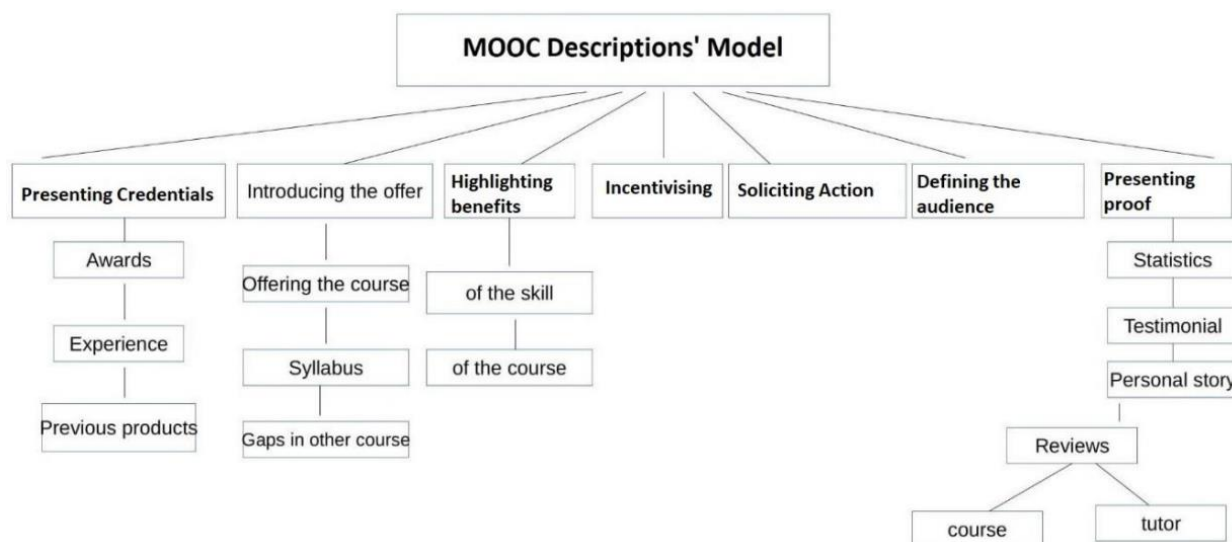
Note. Adapted from "Rhetorical Move Structure of Massive Open Online Courses' Descriptions" by A. Hajeer, 2020, *English for Specific Purposes World, 61*(22), p. 14. Copyright 2020 by English for Specific Purposes World.

6.1.4 The Reliability and the Validity of the Coding Procedure

As the identification of the variables of analysis (i.e., the moves and steps) depends on interpretation, the process of ensuring the validity and reliability of the RMS analysis was carefully designed and consisted of several steps. First, another coder (co-coder) was trained to code the MOOC description. An integral part of the coder training is the ability to identify the moves and the steps; therefore, a definition of each move and step was provided, together with examples for illustration. After that, ten MOOC descriptions were randomly chosen from the corpus using an online software called random.org. This software was used to choose 10 random numbers between 1-70. The ten chosen MOOC descriptions were separately coded by me and by another coder. Afterwards, the two sets of coding were compared, and the discrepancies were identified. The percentage of discrepancies between the two coders was 14%. These differences

were negotiated with the co-coder after which an agreement was reached in each case. It is necessary to mention that the statistical testing of the reliability of coding was not possible due to the (small) size of the corpus. Based on the above, the coding of the corpus may be regarded as reliable.

6.1.5 Sample RMS Analysis

Table 5 incorporates a sample RSM analysis of a MOOC description in the corpus. The description is designed to promote a course about the Amazon Web Services (AWS). As can be seen, the tutor starts with incentivizing the readers by promising them help and continuous update of the MOOC (i.e., M4 INCENTIVIZING). Next, the writer identifies the ideal potential students for the course (M6 DEFINING THE AUDIENCE), who are beginners in this case. Subsequently, the tutor highlights the benefits of being an AWS certified specialist. Then he proceeds with presenting his experience and qualifications, referring to the gaps that exist in other courses, and listing the syllabus, among others.

Table 5

Sample RMS Analysis of a MOOC Description in the Corpus

Welcome! I'm here to help you prepare and PASS the newest AWS Certified Solutions Architect Associate exam. [May 2020 Update]: 20+ videos have been updated to keep up with AWS UI changes. [February 2020 Update - SAA-C02]: The course has been updated for the NEW 2020 exam version. Overall, 80 videos have been added or updated, and the course is now 22 hours long. Happy learning! [July 2019 Update]: Few lectures refreshed, including AWS Budgets and EC2 placement groups.	M4 Incentivizing
Beginner's welcome: no need to know anything about AWS!	M6 Defining the audience
The AWS Certified Solutions Architect Associate certification is one of the most challenging exams. It's great at assessing how well you understand not just AWS, but making sure you are making the best architectural decisions based on situations, which makes this certification incredibly valuable to have and pass.	M3-S2 Highlighting the benefits of the skill
Rest assured, I've passed it myself with a score of 982 out of 1000. Yes, you read that right, I only made one mistake! Next, I want to help YOU pass the AWS Certified Solutions Architect Associate certification with flying colors.	M1 S2 Experience

This is going to be a long journey, but passing the AWS Certified Solutions Architect Associate exam will be worth it!	M3-S2 Highlighting benefits of the skill
This AWS Certified Solutions Architect Associate course is different from the other ones you'll find on Udemy. Dare I say, better (but you'll judge!)	M2-S3 Gaps in other courses
We will spend over three hours discussing solution architecture on AWS in depth. ·It covers in-depth all the new topics on the AWS Certified Solutions Architect Associate SAA-C02 exam ·It's packed with practical knowledge on how to use AWS inside and out as a solutions architect ·It teaches you how to prepare for the AWS exam AND how to prepare for the real world ·It's a logical progression of topics, not a laundry list of random services ·It's fast-paced and to the point ·It has professional subtitles	M2-S1 Procedure description
·All 500+ slides available as downloadable PDF	M4 Incentivizing
Concretely, here's what we'll learn to pass the AWS Certified Solutions Architect Associate exam: ·The AWS Fundamentals: IAM, EC2, Load Balancing, Auto Scaling, EBS, EFS, Route 53, RDS, ElastiCache, S3, CloudFront ·The AWS CLI: CLI setup, usage on EC2, best practices, SDK, advanced usage ·In-Depth Database comparison: RDS, Aurora, DynamoDB, Neptune, ElastiCache, Redshift, ElasticSearch, Athena ·Monitoring, Troubleshooting & Audit: AWS CloudWatch, CloudTrail ·AWS Integration & Messaging: SQS, SNS, Kinesis ·AWS Serverless: AWS Lambda, DynamoDB, API Gateway, Cognito ·AWS Security best practices: KMS, SSM Parameter Store, IAM Policies · VPC & Networking in depth · AWS Other Services Overview: CICD (CodeCommit, CodeBuild, CodePipeline, CodeDeploy), CloudFormation, ECS, Step Functions, SWF, EMR, Glue, OpsWorks, ElasticTranscoder, AWS Organizations, Workspaces, AppSync, Single Sign On (SSO) · Tips to ROCK the exam	M2-S2 Syllabus
This AWS Certified Solutions Architect Associate course is full of opportunities to apply your knowledge: ·There are many hands-on lectures in every section ·There are quizzes at the end of every section ·There's an AWS Certified Solutions Architect Associate practice exam at the end of the course ·We'll be using the AWS Free Tier most of the time	M2-S1 Procedure description

·I'll be showing you how to go beyond the AWS Free Tier (you know... the real world!)	
I am an AWS Certified Solutions Architect Associate, AWS Certified Developer and AWS Certified SysOps,	M1-S3 Qualification
the author of highly-rated & best-selling courses on AWS Lambda, AWS CloudFormation & AWS EC2.	M1-S2 Other products
I've already taught 250,000+ students and received 70,000+ reviews.	M1-S1 Experience
I've decided it's time for students to properly learn how to be an AWS Certified Solutions Architect Associate. You are in good hands!	M7- S3 personal story
This course also comes with: ✔ Lifetime access to all future updates ✔ A responsive instructor in the Q&A Section ✔ Udemy Certificate of Completion Ready for Download ✔ A 30 Day "No Questions Asked" Money Back Guarantee!	M4 Incentivizing
Join me in this course if you want to pass the AWS Certified Solutions Architect Associate Exam and master the AWS platform!	M5 Soliciting action
Who this course is for: ·Anyone wanting to acquire the knowledge to pass the AWS Certified Solutions Architect Associate Certification ·Solutions Architects who want to know how to leverage all AWS services for their solution architecture (MD42)	M6 Defining the audience

6.1.6 Statistics Related to the Corpus

The MOOC description (MD) corpus consists of altogether 1,229 moves and steps. The largest number of moves belongs to the PROOF SC (M7), which consists of 315 steps. The majority of the moves belong to the REVIEWS SC (M7-S1). The lowest number of moves belongs to the SOLICITING ACTION SC (M5), with a total of 91 moves (see Table 6).

Table 6

The Number of Words per Moves

	Move	Word	Avg. word/move
Move	N=1229	N=58960	
M1 Presenting credentials	**131**	**4564**	
M1-S1 Experience	85	3173	37
M1-S2 Other products	21	550	26
M1-S3 Qualification	14	279	19
M1-S4 Addressing needs	11	562	51
M2 Introducing the offer	**156**	**17024**	
M2-S1 Procedure description	70	7294	104
M2-S2 Syllabus	51	8108	159
M2-S3 Gaps	35	1622	46
M3 Highlighting benefits	**203**	**9276**	
M3-S1 of the course	137	5837	42
M3-S2 of the skill	66	3430	52
M4 Incentivizing	**188**	**4792**	**25**
M5 Soliciting action	**91**	**1775**	**19**
M6 Defining the audience	**145**	**7678**	**53**
M7 Proof	**315**	**13851**	
M7-S1 Reviews	232	10678	46
M7-S2 Facts	47	1654	35
M7-S3 Personal story	22	1272	58
M7-S4 Statistics	14	247	18

Figure 10

The Number of Moves per Sub-corpus
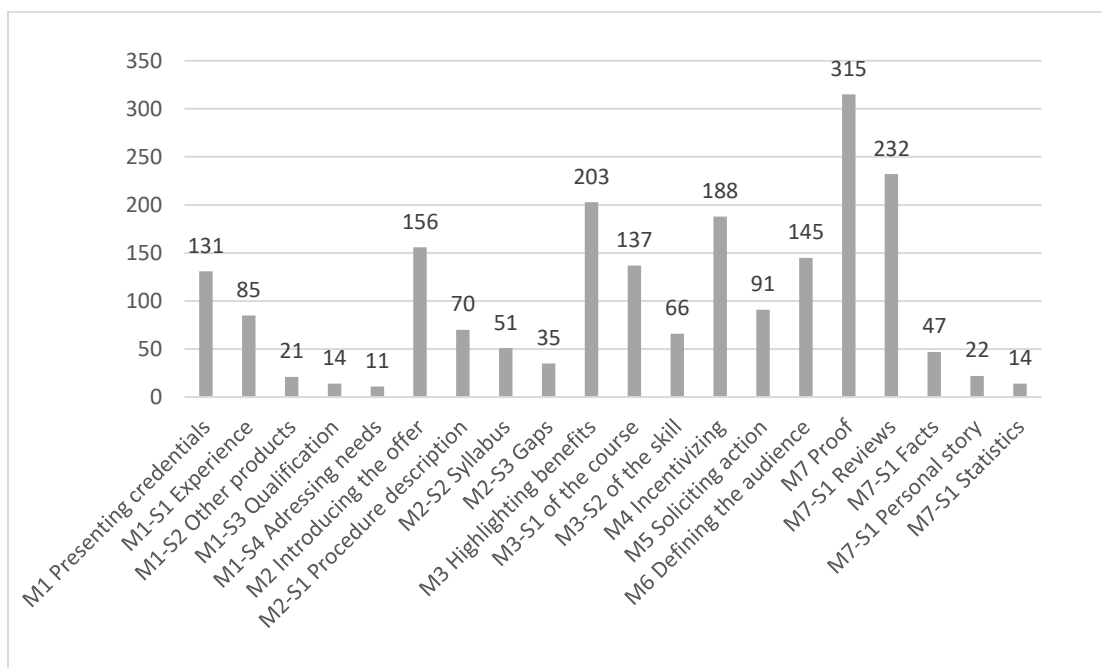
The current MD corpus consists of 58,960 words in total, and the average number of words per one MOOC description is 842 words. The second SC (i.e., INTRODUCING THE OFFER) includes altogether 17,024 words, which is thus the most dominant move from the point of view of word frequency, while the lowest number of words belongs to SOLICITING ACTION SC (M5). As for the steps, the largest number of words are used to write about REVIEWS (M7-S1), while the lowest to describe STATISTICS (M7-S4) (see Figure 11). As for the average number of words per move or step, SYLLABUS (M2-S2) ranks number one with 159 words per move/step whereas STATISTICS is the last on the list with 19 words only (see Figure 12).

Figure 11

The Number of Words per Sub-corpus
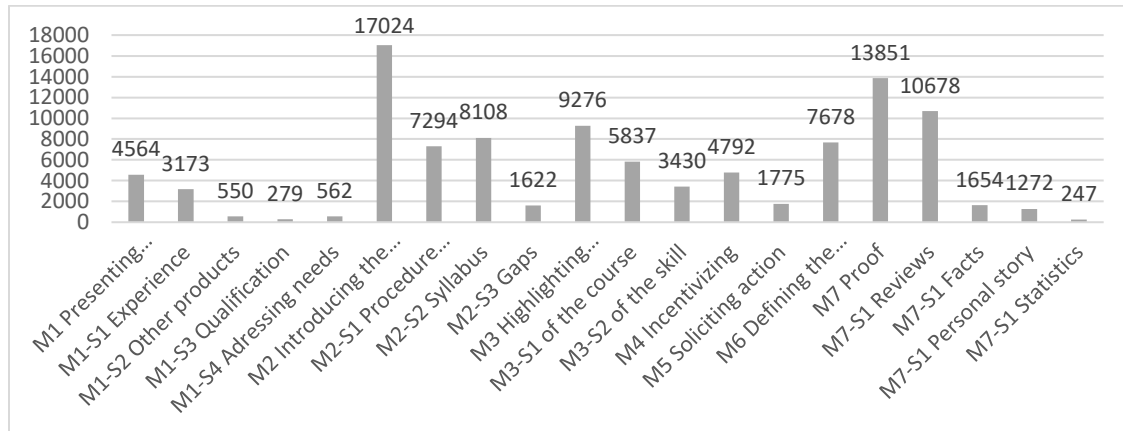
Figure 12

The Number of Words per Move
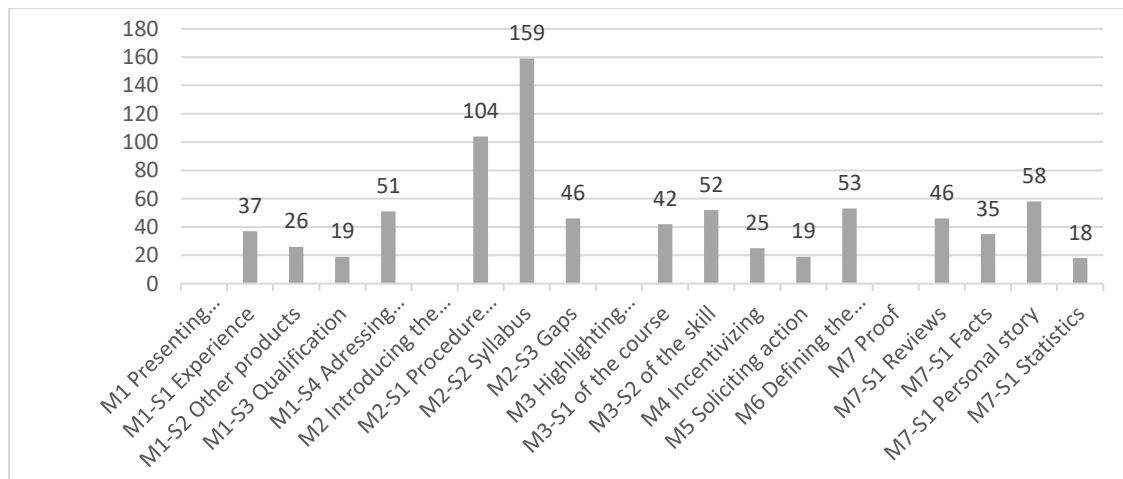
6.2 Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the RMS and lexico-grammatical analysis of the sub-corpora, and discusses these results. The discussion is provided in the following seven subsections devoted to the various moves.

6.2.1 Move 1: The PRESENTING CREDENTIALS Sub-corpus

According to Hajeer (2020), the main aim of this move is to show the credibility of the tutor of the course. Based on this pilot study, I claimed that it consists of three steps which are AWARDS, EXPERIENCE, and PREVIOUS PRODUCTS. By highlighting their previous experiences, the awards that they were granted, and by mentioning their contributions to a particular field, the authors of MOOC descriptions may be aspiring to establish their trustworthiness as tutors.

Although Hajeer's (2020) study investigated a yet uncharted genre at the time, it was a pilot study that studied a limited corpus consisting of 15 MOOC descriptions only. Still, as its findings brought new insights for several areas within genre analysis (the study of discourse and rhetorical move structure, ESP, etc.), it motivated further research in the field. Hence the present research. As, however, the current research is conducted on a considerably larger corpus, rather unsurprisingly, its outcomes demonstrate certain discrepancies with Hajeer's earlier 2020 study.

The present analysis revealed two additional steps, which are ADDRESSING NEEDS (M1-S4) and QUALIFICATIONS (M1-S3). It was also observed that the step AWARDS, which was discovered by Hajeer (2020), occurred only four times in the corpus of the current investigation, three of them were in one MOOC description. After the addition of two steps (i.e., ADDRESSING NEEDS and QUALIFICATION), and the elimination of one step (i.e., AWARDS), presenting credentials consists of four steps: EXPERIENCE (M1-S1), OTHER PRODUCTS (M1-S2), QUALIFICATIONS (M1-S3), and ADDRESSING NEEDS (M1-S4). The following subsections present them in further detail.

6.2.1.1 The EXPERIENCE SC (M1-S1). One of the employed means to demonstrate the credibility of the tutors is highlighting their experience in a particular field (Hajeer, 2020). This step is customarily introduced in one of three ways. The first method is starting with a question, for example, "*What makes me qualified to teach you?*" (MD6). The second way of introducing this step is when the tutors introduce themselves, for instance, "*I'm David Bombal, and I have been teaching networking courses for over 15 years*" (MD13). Finally, starting this step directly without an introduction, to illustrate, "*This is based on my 25 years of experience as a SAP management consultant transforming businesses using SAP*" (MD52).

The current scrutiny showed that the tutors establish their experience not only in their specializations, but also in the field of teaching. In other words, some MOOC tutors may be

aware that their field related experience is not enough for promoting a successful MOOC, thus, they try to highlight their experience in teaching as well, for instance, "*quality Instructor who has a corporate training and university teaching background and continues to be an active investor*" (MD30). The previous example includes a reference to the tutor's expertise in instructing in addition to their experience in investing, being an investor himself.

The analysis also demonstrated that some MOOC tutors took a quantitative approach to substantiate their experience. These numbers usually highlight the years of experience or the number of students who took the tutors' courses. MOOC instructors tend to mention the number of years which they spent in being active members in their field, for instance, "*I have 10+ years' experience in the digital marketing industry*" (MD35), the number of years which they spent in teaching the skill, for example, "*many years of researching and teaching international politics*" (MD59), or both, for example, "*Expert in pharmaceutical Industry - +8Years & Expert in teaching Chemistry +4Years*" (MD55). In addition to the years of experience, tutors may appertain to the number of the students who took the advertised course, to illustrate, "*Over 28 000 students have taken my course on Udemy*" (MD31), or the number of students whom the tutor taught throughout their years of teaching, for example, "*I have taught over 40,000 students on my other courses*" (MD47). Apart from the quantitative approach, many tutors took a qualitative approach to display their experience by accentuating the positive influence of the course on these students, for instance, "*I will go out of my way to help you succeed just like I've done for thousands of my other students*" (MD33).

Working toward stressing their experience, many MOOC descriptions' writers provide the names of the institutions in which they have taught, for example, "*I used to manage a suite of transferable skills courses at the University*" (MD62). They also mentioned the companies that they have worked for, for instance, "having *worked with big companies like IBM, Mitsubishi, Fujitsu and Saab in the past*" (MD18). The previous example includes the names of many well-known and prestigious companies which may reflect the extensive experience of the tutor. Another way of accentuating credibility is by giving additional detail. Some MOOC tutors added further detail about the experience that they have gained throughout their years of experience, for example, "*I learned how to maintain a really high closing percentage...work less, earn more and enjoy the process a lot more*" (MD29).

The results of the analysis may have many implications. One of them is that there might be a correlation between the number of years of experience or the number of the previously taught student and the quality of the course. That is, the higher the numbers the more qualified the instructor is to teach the course. The other implication is regarding the correlation between the mentioned institution or workplace and the quality of the course. Put simply, the more prestigious the institution is, the more qualified the teacher is to teach a MOOC.

Table 7

How MOOC Tutors Highlight Their Experience

Communicative Purpose	How it is achieved
Highlighting the experience of the MOOC tutor	Through mentioning: -their experience in teaching -their experience in their own field -the number of years of experience - the number of the enrollees in the current course. - the total number of the students of the tutor. -the success of the previous students -names of institutions and organizations (e.g., universities or/and companies) -what they have learned over the years

6.2.1.2 Linguistic Analysis of the EXPERIENCE SC (M1-S1). As corroborated formerly, the tutors highlighted their experience by providing additional information regarding their years of experience and the institutions in which they taught, among others. This step was used 85 times out of altogether 1,229 throughout the corpus, consisting of 3,173 words out of altogether 58,960. Few patterns were identified during the analysis. These grammatical patterns were utilized by the MOOC descriptions' writers to achieve the communicative purpose (i.e., highlighting the experience of the tutor).

Present perfect tense was utilized by the tutors to refer to their experience in a particular field. Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan (2000) believe that the perfect aspect of the present tense is used to discuss an event or a state that took place during a previous frame of time, and is still true, for example, "*Mr. Hawke has embarked on a crusade*". The meaning of this example is that Mr. Hawke began the crusade sometime in the past, and he continues to be on the crusade when this sentence (i.e., the previous example) was written (Biber et al., 2000, p. 157). The writers of MOOC descriptions used the perfect aspect of the present tense to appertain to the expertise that they have gained prior to writing such MOOC descriptions, for instance, "*I have trained more than 10,000 executives and leaders*" (MD8). Other tutors used present perfect continuous for the same purpose (i.e., to refer to their experience), to illustrate, "*I have been teaching networking courses for over 15 years*" (MD13). The perfect and the progressive/continuous aspects are conventionally used to mention past situations that were in progress for a period of time (Biber et al., 2000).

Although the present perfect tense and the present perfect continuous tenses were dominant, the simple present tense was also used to emphasize the experience of the tutors. Biber et al. (2000) claim that the present simple tense can be used to provide information about a habitual activity that is repeated over time, for example, "*She listens to music*" or "*He plays the guitar*". Likewise, simple present tense was exploited by MOOC writers to refer to their expertise, for instance, "I'm *a full time English teacher*" (MD1). In this example, the tutor indicates that he practices teaching repeatedly. That is, he gained experience in teaching by repeatedly doing it.

One of the ways which were exploited by tutors to appertain to their experience was drawing attention to the number of learners that they have taught. For that reason, tutors mainly used numbers that are preceded with expressions that intend to increase the mentioned number which are: more than, over and a symbol (+). For example, "*I have personally conducted trainings around the world in more than 30 countries*" (MD8), "*I have trained over 100 consultants*" (MD31) and "*I've already taught 65,000+ students and received 19,000+ reviews*" (MD16).

Table 8 exhibits the most frequently used verbs, nouns, adjectives, pronouns, prepositions, and conjunctions. Among the most frequent nouns are the words *years, experience, companies, instructor, course,* and *students*. The frequency of these particular words suggests that they were crucial in referring to the years of experience of the instructors. That is, the

communicative purpose of the EXPERIENCE (M1-S1). Similarly, the most frequent adjectives such as *professional, international, successful, and personal* were possibly used to highlight the positive side of the tutors' experience. The personal pronouns that were used are *I, you,* and *it*. This might show how the majority of the instructors chose a direct conversation-like approach to deliver the message. For example, "*But who am I to teach that, you might ask. I work as a penetration tester in Germany*" (MD17). This example also includes one of the most frequently used verbs in this move which is the verb *work*. Besides, many other verbs were used to refer to the experience of the instructors such as teach, create, have, and consult. These verbs were used by the instructors when they explained their experience in a particular field or in teaching a particular skill. Thus, the communicative purpose of the move.

Table 8

POS Analysis of the EXPERIENCE SC (M1-S1)

POS	N=2819	Tokens
Nouns	N=915	*course, years, students, experience, training, skills, world, instructor, companies, thousands*
Verbs	N=466	*be, have, has, teach, work, will, help, created, can, consulting*
Adjectives	N=298	*more, many, professional, own, international, successful, personal, theoretical, real, online*
Adverb	N=105	*well, now, just, only, already, quickly, where, personally, around, over*
Pronoun	N=241	*I, you, my, your, it,*
Preposition	N=386	*of, in, to, for, from, with*
Coordinating Conjunction	N=147	*and (132), but (6), or (5)*
Subordinating conjunction	N=23	*that, if, because*

6.2.1.3 The OTHER PRODUCTS SC (M1-S2). Some tutors refer to other products which they have created to stress their credibility. In Hajeer's (2020) pilot study, this step was labeled as PREVIOUS PRODUCTS, which – based on the present analysis – seems inaccurate. Therefore, in the current investigation, the name was changed to OTHER PRODUCTS (M1-S2), as the products that might be mentioned in the MOOC descriptions are not necessarily released prior to the MOOC description. Put differently, the writers of MOOC descriptions can update these descriptions from time to time, hence, the possibility of adding a reference to a recent product (e.g., a book or another MOOC) is not excluded.

The goal of this step is to demonstrate the exceptional knowledge of the tutors by revealing information about their contributions to the field that they specialize in. Seemingly, by mentioning these contributions, tutors might be seeking to establish and strengthen their credibility. Some instructors name a website that they manage, for example, "*I run a website called The IELTS Teacher*" (MD4). Others cite other MOOCs which they uploaded onto the same platform, for instance, "*My other Udemy courses are the perfect complement to 'German Made Simple' and will help you reach an intermediate and advanced level of language proficiency*" (MD3). Additionally, in one of the cases, a MOOC description included the Facebook page of one of the tutors, to illustrate, "*Walker's Facebook page "TJ Walker Speak to Influence" is the #1 page for 7-day a week video tutorials on how to be a better public speaker and communicator*" (MD38). In a different case, the tutor mentioned a book they authored, for instance, "*The professor of this course is also the author of '101 Crucial Lessons They Don't Teach You in Business School'*" (MD39).

Some of the tutors not only mentioned their contributions, but they also offered further detail about the products' success. To further illustrate, one of the MOOC writers stated that their books were translated to many languages and distributed in many countries, which indicates the books' popularity and success, for example, "*I've written about in my published books, which are available in more than 13 translations in 100 countries*" (MD23). Another MOOC description included a reference to the positive feedback that the previous courses received, for instance, "*And I have already made an online hacking course which has 20000+ students, and people seemed to like it*" (MD17).

6.2.1.4 Linguistic Analysis of the OTHER PRODUCTS SC (M1-S2). The current step was located 21 out of altogether 1,229 times throughout the corpus, and it consists of 555 out of

altogether 58,960 words. Many linguistic means were applied to attain the communicative purpose, i.e., to impart information about other products. The verb tenses employed by the MOOC descriptions' writers were simple present and present perfect tenses, for instance, "*I'm the author of Linux for Beginners, Python Programming for Beginners*" (MD15). In this example, the tutor presents himself as the author of two main books using the present simple tense. Another example, "*I have already made an online hacking course*" (MD17), here the tutor cited an online course that he released later. Biber et al. (2000) claim that the perfect aspect of the present tense is used to discuss events that occurred during a recent period of time and might be still in progress. It is worth mentioning also that the present perfect and the present simple tense were used 23 times while past tenses were used four times only.

It was corroborated in the prior section (5.3.1.3 The OTHER PRODUCTS SC) that MOOC instructors tend to attach a positive evaluation to their products. The key adjectives which were used to favorably evaluate the products were *best, perfect, great, bestseller, hands-on, better,* and *highly rated*. To illustrate, "*the author of highly-rated & best-selling courses on AWS Lambda, AWS CloudFormation & AWS EC2*" (MD42). Due to the limited number of words of OTHER PRODUCTS, it was difficult to spot any frequency in the rest of the POS. Yet, Table 9 includes the top ten POS.

Table 9

POS Analysis of OTHER PRODUCTS SC (M1-S2)

POS	N=485	Tokens
Nouns	N=181	*course, tutor, training, trainer, media, skills*
Verbs	N=69	*do, will, develop, like, have, cover, learn*
Adjectives	N=44	*other, best, perfect, covered, great, own, bestseller, hands-on, better, highly rated*
Adverb	N=22	*even, well, recently, actually*
Pronoun	N=30	*you, I, my, your*
Preposition	N=65	*of, to, in, on, for, with*
Coordinating	N=20	*and (20)*

Conjunction		
Subordinating conjunction	N=4	*that, if*

6.2.1.5 The QUALIFICATIONS SC (M1-S3). This step was not included in Hajeer's (2020) study; however, it was observed 14 times out of altogether 1,229 moves and steps. The purpose of this step is to strengthen the credibility of the tutors by bringing their qualifications to light. The types of these qualifications vary depending on the subject of the MOOC. Some tutors appertain to their university degrees (e.g., BA, MA, or PhD), while others refer to the certificates or the tests which they passed, as the following examples show:

(a) "I have a PhD in molecular biology and a master's degree in technical communication" (MD6).

(b) "I hold a chemical engineering degree from the 'Ecole Nationale Supérieur de Chimie de Paris, Chimie ParisTech', one of the top tier chemical engineering schools in Europe" (MD56).

(c) "I completed my PhD in eighteenth century literature in less than 3 years" (MD62).

(d) "I qualified as a Cisco Certified Interwork Engineer (CCIE) in 2003" (MD13).

(e) "I've passed the AWS test myself with the score of 984 out of 1000" (MD16).

In example (a), knowing that they are highly respected academic qualifications, the tutor refers to their PhD and master's degree to strengthen their credibility. Interestingly, in example (b), the tutor attempts to strengthen their credibility even more by revealing the name of the university which issued the degree. Moreover, the tutor explicitly describes this university as being one of the top universities in Europe to further accentuate its credibility. The instructor in example (c), highlights his credibility somehow differently. He declares the fact that he completed his PhD studies in three years, which is a relatively short period of time, to implicate his high competence.

Apart from mentioning the university qualifications, some tutors pointed out other non-academic institutions that issued the certificates. In example (d), the tutor states that he qualified as an interwork engineer from CISCO, which is a prestigious institution that provides technical education. Furthermore, in example (e), the instructor not only alludes to the certificate that he

holds, but he also reveals his score, which is relatively high, to implicate his high competence, and thus, his credibility.

The limited number of words (279) in QUALIFICATION made it almost impossible to track any linguistic patterns or frequent linguistic features. Nonetheless, a closer linguistic analysis revealed three main patterns in this step. Firstly, in 12 out of the 14 quotes, the writers of MOOC descriptions used the personal pronoun *I* to refer to their qualifications (see examples a, b, c, d, and e). Secondly, in ten of the cases, the present tense was used to relate to the fact that they hold these certificates. The other four quotes included the past tense to refer to the fact that they got the qualification sometime in the past. Finally, the key verbs which were used to appertain to the qualifications were *have, qualify, pass, complete, be, certify,* and *hold*.

6.2.1.6 The ADDRESSING NEEDS SC. The current step was used 11 times throughout the corpus, nonetheless, it was not discovered in Hajeer's (2020) pilot study. In Bhatia's (1993) analysis of the SPL, he revealed that one of the ways to present the sender's credential is by addressing the needs of the letter's receiver.

Mentioning the needs of the target audience reflects the knowledge and the experience of the sender in a particular field. This step was used in the present context (i.e., MOOC description) for the same reason. That is, when the tutors addressed the potential students' needs, they indicated that they (i.e., the tutors) have enough experience to scrutinize what the audience needs.

The current step includes 534 parts of speech (see Table 10 for more detail). This limited number makes it difficult to find patterns or recurring lexis. Still, the evidence suggests that the writers used three primary linguistic patterns to present this step. The first one includes a closed-ended question that refers to the needs of the readers, for example, "*Have you taken the IELTS Writing exam in the past and not received the Band 7 or above you needed?*" (MD4). With this question, the writer implicates that their materials would help the students get a high score in the IELTS language test. Secondly, using conditional forms to address the needs of the readers, for instance, "*If you are looking for true value, you have come to the right place*" (MD8). Contrary to the previous example, instead of implicating, the tutor mentioned clearly that their MOOC contains high-quality content. Finally, informative statements were used in many places, to give an example, "*You haven't had the proper training, and you have never seen how analysts in large firms do their work*" (MD26). In this example, the tutor addresses the needs of the potential

students using declarative assertive statements. Using this method instead of asking closed-ended questions may imply the writer's high level of confidence in their MOOC and their long experience in the field, and thus, their credentials.

Table 10

POS Analysis of SYLLABUS SC (M2-S2)

POS	N=534	Tokens
Nouns	N=109	*course, students, skills, trainers, firm, time, people*
Verbs	N=136	*do, have, be, know, will, want, publish, teach, start, find*
Adjectives	N=44	*different, online, best, first, true, sure, own, multiple, successful, practical*
Adverb	N=46	*often, here, just*
Pronoun	N=63	*you, your, we, it, yourself*
Preposition	N=56	*to, of, in, on, for, about*
Coordinating Conjunction	N=25	*and (15), or (6), but (3)*
Subordinating conjunction	N=5	*if, because*

6.2.2 Move 2: The INTRODUCING THE OFFER SC

Hajeer (2020) claimed that "the communicative purpose of this move is to present the offer (i.e., the course) to potential students" (p. 15). Moreover, he stated that this move incorporates three steps, namely, OFFERING THE COURSE, SYLLABUS, and GAPS IN OTHER COURSES.

Based on the results of the current larger scale analysis, two modifications needed to be introduced in the RMS Model. Firstly, OFFERING THE COURSE was deleted. Hajeer (2020) defined this step as the step that "provides a concise description of the course that is being offered" (p. 15) and he provided the following example, "*Are you ready to take your career to the next level? In this course, you will learn everything you need to know about business from*

starting a company to taking it public" (p.15). Hajeer's (2020) definition states that this step is a concise description within the MOOC description, which implicates that OFFERING THE COURSE is a summary of the MOOC description. Evidently, such description was not detected during the current investigation. Moreover, the previous example which was provided by Hajeer (2020) does not include a concise description of the course, but it mentions the benefits of taking the course. This indicates that Hajeer's (2020) choice of the example, or perhaps the methods of analysis, depended on the location of the step at the beginning of the MOOC description, rather than depending on the function of the step.

The second modification, however, was the addition of a step labeled PROCEDURE DESCRIPTION (M2-S1), which was not revealed by Hajeer's (2020) pilot study. This step and the other two steps (i.e., M2-S2 SYLLABUS and M2-S3 GAPS IN OTHER COURSES) are discussed in further detail in the following subsections.

6.2.2.1 The PROCEDURE DESCRIPTION SC (M2-S3). Although it was located 60 times out of altogether 1,229 moves and steps in the MD corpus, PROCEDURE DESCRIPTION was not mentioned in Hajeer's (2020) research. Evidently, the key function of this step is to offer further information regarding the ways in which the MOOC is delivered.

In order to accomplish this communicative purpose, MOOC descriptions' writers offered various information regarding the structure, methods of teaching, and tools, among others (see Table 11). The tendency of MOOC instructors to mention further details might be attributed to the fact that they aim at reducing ambiguity and thus, providing reassurances to the potential students.

One type of the provided detail touches upon the length of the MOOC and the needed time to finish it, for instance "*this Digital Marketing course is so complete and it is not something you can finish in couple of days or weeks. This program will take 3 to 4 months till you can complete the course*" (MD45). This example refers to the ideal time to finish this course (i.e., three or four month), although it is possible to finish it within a relatively shorter or longer period. Bearing in mind that upon purchasing the course, students would have full access to the material. Another reference to the time can be found in the following example: "*You can take the whole course and complete all the curriculum in one sitting, but we recommend you revisit the curriculum and let it wash over you again*" (MD57). Here, unlike the previous instance, the writer points out that the course is short enough to be finished in one session, notwithstanding, he

asserts that it should be viewed many times to fully harness the promised benefits. Apart from referring to the required time to take the course, MOOC authors also highlighted the length of the course itself, that is, the combined length of the video recordings, to illustrate, "*This course contains 20 lectures and over 1 hour of video content from leaders in quantum physics and consciousness*" (MD57). The previous example includes a reference to the number of the lectures as well as their combined length which is more than one hour. Another type of information that MOOC tutors provided is connected to the order of the topics in the course, for example:

> there are 3 ways to take this course as follows:1. You can take the entire course in order.2. You can take the entire course in order and then skip ahead when prompted in the lessons to do so. 3. You can choose to take only the topics that interest you the most. (MD9)

This example demonstrates the knowledge of the tutor of the various levels of previous knowledge or different interests of the potential students. The first approach (i.e., taking the entire course in order) might be targeting the students with limited previous knowledge of the topic, while the second approach (i.e., skipping ahead when prompted) seems to be targeting the learners who have more advanced understanding of the topic. The last approach (i.e., the topics that interest you the most) is likely to be aimed at those students who have extensive background regarding the course, but they are interested in complementing their knowledge by studying specific parts of the MOOC. In a different MOOC, the writer explicitly mentioned that students with higher levels of knowledge can concentrate on what interest them, for instance, "*If you ARE already an expert at many Azure topics, you can easily skip the sections that you already know and focus on the ones you have not yet had much exposure too*" (MD14). Furthermore, other instructors linked the described course to another one. To explain, they referred to the ideal order of taking the sections in the current course and in another MOOC (advertised by the same tutor) on the platform, for instance, "*The ideal path is to study both the Classic interface utilizing this course as well as the Lightning Experience interface using my ADX201 course series*" (MD12).

The authors of MOOC descriptions may also provide further detail regarding the structure of the MOOC by offering a step-by-step guide pertaining to how they are going to proceed with the course. See the following two examples for this phenomenon:

The first step we are going to take is to setup our WordPress website. We are going to use a wordpress theme and little by little we are going to build our website and along the way we will follow some specific digital marketing instructions. In addition, we are going to build powerful landing pages to increase sale, online shop, product pages, complete WooCommerce, and much more. After we completed our website for marketing, we will start to learn more about digital marketing strategies. (MD45)

and

First, you will implement modern SEO for your blog, eCommerce, or business website that sets you up for boundless long-term potential while also getting you early results. Next, you will build up your social media marketing to give your business amazing branding, drive sales and boost your SEO efforts. (MD33)

In this example, the tutor points out the structure according to which he intends to deliver the course. Evidently, the tutor here is attempting to spell any detail that might help in reducing the uncertainties that potential students might encounter before enrolling in the course.

Apart from explaining the structure, many MOOC tutors made sure to discuss their methods and styles of teaching. Most of the tutors described their MOOCs to be engaging, fun, and interactive, for example, "*we've tried extra hard to make this course fun, relevant, entertaining, and punchy*" (MD43), "*the course tries to be as engaging as possible*" (MD43), and "*The course is structured to be interactive, with activities spread throughout and a multiple choice quiz after each section*" (MD52). Other tutors assured the potential students that the classes are highly practical with limited theoretical parts, for instance, "*This course follows a hands-on approach, which means that the whole course is structured around one big application and the different concepts will be explained detailedly as they are introduced in this application*" (MD20), and "*There is little theory – mainly examples, a lot of tips from my own experience as well as other notable examples worth mentioning*" (MD31). However, there is an example where the tutor attempts to strike the right balance between theory and practice, "*Bridging the gap between theory and practice, each module's assignments have been designed to both reinforce*

theory and feel rewarding" (MD64). In the later example, the tutor described the practical part of the course as rewarding which may indicate that those tutors, whose MOOCs are practice oriented, intended to make their courses more attractive to the potential students by emphasizing the rewarding (i.e., practical) aspect and reducing the theoretical content. Instead of describing the style of teaching in few words, some tutors, delved into the detail of the teaching methods, for example:

> This course is taught with The BA Guide's TEACH, SHOW, DO.
>
> TEACH - First, you learn a concept. You'll learn not only what it is but also how and when to use it.
>
> SHOW - Once you understand the concept, we enhance your understanding by walking you through real-world examples to give it some context.
>
> DO - You then put your new knowledge to the test by completing activities and quizzes. This will not only validate you fully understand the concept, but it will also greatly increase your ability to retain the information. (MD37)

The example demonstrates the details that the author mentioned in the text to offer a complete picture of the teaching methods. The reason for this delineation might be argued to be reducing the level of uncertainty regarding the teaching methods. As seen in the previous example, the tutor attempts to find the balance between theory and practice by teaching the concepts, accompanied with examples, before giving the chance to the students to practice them. What is also worth noticing is the reference to the tools which can be used to practice the learned concepts such as activities and quizzes. Highlighting the tools (e.g., quizzes, activities, handouts, and glossaries, to name but a few) that are used throughout the course was not uncommon in the descriptions; for example, "*Complete Follow-Along Guide you can print to aid in note taking and remembering what you learned*" (MD30), and "*High-quality animations, superb course materials, a gamebook simulation, quiz questions, handouts and course notes, as well as a glossary with new terms*" (MD40). In addition to mentioning the tools that are used to tackle the practical aspect, some tutors provided explanations and definitions to clarify complicated terms for potential students, for example, "*Modeling is the concept of making complex thoughts, ideas, requirements, and processes easier to understand by putting them into a graphical format*"

(MD37), "*The most significant aspect of 'Bharat' (the cultural name of India) is that this is a land of Seekers , and not Believers of any particular religious doctrine (although we have over 33 million Gods and Goddesses in this country)*" (MD67), and "*ISO 13485:2016 is the international standard for the quality management system of medical devices' manufacturers and suppliers*" (MD68).

Table 11

The Communicative Purpose of the PROCEDURE DESCRIPTION SC (M2-S1)

Communicative purpose	How it is achieved	Examples
offering further information regarding the way in which the MOOC is delivered	- The duration of the course	"*This program will take 3 to 4 months till you can complete the course*" (MD45)
	- The structure	"The first step we are going to take is to setup our WordPress website" (MD45)
	-Methods and styles of teaching	"*we've tried extra hard to make this course fun, relevant, entertaining, and punchy*" (MD43)
	-Explanation of difficult key terms	"*Modeling is the concept of making complex thoughts, ideas, requirements, and processes easier to understand*" (MD37)
	-Tools and content	"*High-quality animations, superb course materials, a gamebook simulation*" (MD40).

6.2.2.2 Linguistic Analysis of the PROCEDURE DESCRIPTION SC (M2-S1). This step was used 60 times out of altogether 1,229 moves and steps and it consists of 5542 words out of altogether 58,960. The results of the POS analysis (see Table 12 for more detail) show that nouns constitute fractionally below 27% of the words. The top ten (1482 occurrences) nouns in

this step are *course, analysis, data, section, way, website, video, methods, language,* and *techniques*. These words were mainly used to describe the procedure of the MOOC, for example, "*there are 3 ways to take this course*" (MD9), "*we shall review and discuss many examples of published research articles in peer-reviewed journals, which have used the techniques we learn about in the course*" (MD51) and "*Moreover, every video also has a 'Summary of Actions' slide*" (MD32). Verbs, however, constitute a bit above 20% of the current step, and the top ten verbs (1118 occurrences) are*, will, learn, know, use, help, build, make, start,* and *understand*. Most of these verbs (92%) are active while less than 8% of them are passive. The authors used the present simple tense to provide detail regarding the MOOC, for instance, "*the concepts of this course are still current*" (MD39), "*This is the benefit of having the complete course*" (MD14), and "*each section is backed up with a real project*" (MD19). The second dominant tense is the future tense. The simple future was used to offer a glimpse of the future to the potential students shall they enroll in the course, for example, "*we will take a lot of deep dives*" (MD19) and "*you will have to get your hands dirty*" (MD17). The past tense was used to refer to the efforts or the tools that the tutors used to create the MOOC, for example, "*we even added some jQuery to the mix*" (MD22), or to explain a particular term, for instance "*it explains how every detail in this tradition was geared towards a human being's immediate and ultimate well*" (MD66).

The instructors were addressing the readers directly using the pronoun *you* while they referred to themselves using the pronoun *I*, for example, "*I wanted to let you know that I have currently released*" (MD12) and "'*ll walk you through setting up Wordpress on your own computer so that you don't need to pay for the web host*" (MD25). Some tutors also referred to themselves and to the potential students using the inclusive pronoun *we*, for instance, "*We are gonna hack real open-source applications*" (MD17), "*That's why we will go through the entire process of building and launching our website projects*" (MD22). Adjectives such as *different, new, digital, complete, important, great, beautiful, free, comprehensive,* and *ultimate* were spotted in 498 places. It is worth mentioning that this step does not contain any negative adjective. Instead, all the adjectives positively described the procedure of the course and its benefits. For instance, "*will learn how to build and run a successful, beautiful, responsive-design website*" (MD25). The positive adjectives were used in this move to promote the structure and the teaching methods of the course to make it even more appalling to the readers and consequently help achieve the function of the move and the MOOC description. For instance,

"*The course is a comprehensive 10 module guided video course*" (MD64) and "*That's why I structured this training around a cool and complete project that's fun to code*" (MD22)

Table 12

POS Analysis of the SYLLABUS SC (M2-S2)

POS	N=5524	Tokens
Nouns	N=1482	*course, analysis, data, marketing, section, way, techniques, video, research, methods*
Verbs	N=1118	*be, will, learn, can, have, get, know, take, use, help*
Adjectives	N=498	*different, new, best, complete, important, main, great, possible, beautiful, own*
Adverb	N=325	*then, up, truly, very, differently, only, already, really, simply, mainly*
Pronoun	N=460	*you, we, your, it, my, what, I*
Preposition	N=710	*to, of, in, for, on, with, by, about*
Coordinating Conjunction	N=239	*and (202), or (24), but (11)*
Subordinating conjunction	N=65	*that, as, if, whether, while*

Altogether 304 conjunctions were used including 239 coordinators and 65 subordinators. The key coordinator which was spotted in 202 places is the additive coordinator *and*. It was used to link words, phrases, and clauses. To illustrate, "*skip the sections that you already know and focus on the ones ...*" (MD14), "*you will learn more and more HTML5 and CSS3 features*" (MD22), "*hints that will significantly improve the speed and efficiency of your business*" (MD31). The excessive use of the additive *and* may be attributed to the nature of the move which is to provide further information regarding the course. As for the subordinators, they mainly referred to the time order and causality, such as *while, after, once, as, till, because* and *so*. For example, "*you can then watch over-my-shoulder as I buy a domain name and hosting*" (MD25),

and "*This program will take 3 to 4 months till you can complete the course*" (MD45). The examples show how the subordinating conjunctions (i.e., as and till) facilitated the process of information providing about the duration and the structure of the course. In other words, accomplishing the communicative purpose of the move.

  6.2.2.3 The SYLLABUS SC (M2-S2). Hajeer (2020) recognized the SYLLABUS (M2-S2) as an incorporated step in the INTRODUCING THE OFFER (M2) move. This step includes an account of the topics that are covered in the course, arguably, to familiarize the potential students with the contents of the course, that is, what to expect from the course advertised. This information is presented in one of two layouts: bullet points or a block of text (see Table 13).

  As shown in Table 13, the two methods of presenting the SYLLABUS (M2-S2) are either a narrative block of text or a list with bullet points. However, in some blocks of text, tutors used boldface letters too to highlight the main sections of the syllabus, for instance "***Types of computers***, ***parts of a computer***, ***computer storage***, ***5 generations of programming languages***, *and* ***steps to programming systems and applications*** *will all be covered*" (MD70).

  The writers of MOOC descriptions used various ways to organize the syllabus such as dividing them into modules, sections, parts, or topics. For example, "*The course covers the following topics*" (MD13), "*The course is divided currently in 4 sections*" (MD31), "*This course is broken up into 6 parts*" (MD46) and "*This cover modules such as Sales and Distribution …*" (MD53). Furthermore, the tutors utilized different methods when introducing the syllabus. Some provided the syllabus without an introduction while others would add an introductory line such as "*Here is what you will learn*" (MD15), "*The course will cover*" (MD53) and "*You will learn how to*" (MD54).

Table 13

The Layouts of the SYLLABUS Step (M2-S2)

Bullet points	Block of text
Operations and rules of equations	We start with an overview of the quantitative
Simple equations and advanced equations	research process and discuss the main
Like terms	components which include research questions,
Functions and manipulating functions	research hypothesis, research design, data

Bullet points	Block of text
Inequalities and graphing inequalities Graphing points, lines, parabolas, and circles Systems of two equations and systems of three equations Polynomials and factoring Exponents and radicals Ratio and proportion, complex fractions, and rational expressions Imaginary numbers Exponential and logarithmic functions. (MD2)	collection, and data analysis. We discuss the differences between research question and research hypothesis, and overview the important parts and expectations of research design (including ethics considerations). From there we move on to data collection methods, where we focus mainly on survey sampling methods and designed experiments for collecting data. For sample surveys, you will learn how to use (i) five probability sampling techniques (simple random sampling, systematic sampling, cluster sampling, stratified sampling, and multi-stage sampling), and (ii) five non-probability sampling techniques (voluntary response sampling, convenience sampling, quota sampling, judgmental sampling, snowball/chain-referral sampling). (MD51)

As for the topics of the syllabus, different approaches characterized their representations. One method is to mention a list of the topics which can be seen in Table 13 above. Other tutors took it a step further by providing a detailed description of each topic, for example "*Section 2 - Key Insights about the Tourism Industry - Discover Key Insights about the Tourism Industry and its contribution to Global GDP, the rise of Experiential Tourism, Personalization of Travel and the rise of Sustainable Tourism*" (MD69). In the previous excerpt, the tutor provided extended information about the sub-topics which are covered. However, the following example suggests that the writer supplied detail about the practical implications of the topic, i.e., how this particular topic would help improve the potential students' knowledge or skill, for example, "*The working basics of the three most fundamental Theories of International Relations, so that you*

can incorporate the principles of those theories to your arguments, or you can spot when others operate with those theories even without realizing it." (MD59).

  6.2.2.4 The Linguistic Analysis of the SYLLABUS SC (M2-S2). The SYLLABUS step comprises 4815 words, most of them (1710) are nouns. The top ten (1710 occurrences) nouns are *course, section, analysis, data, research, techniques, topics,* and *series*. These nouns were utilized to introduce the syllabus of the courses, for example, "*This course also goes through the requirements of the new AZ-300 exam: Microsoft Azure Architect Technologies, section by section*" (MD14) and "*In this course, you will learn about topics such as IP addressing*" (MD13). No compounds or phrases were located more than once.

  The current move includes 789 verbs out of altogether 4,815 words and the most frequent ten verbs are *be, will, learn, use, cover, make, discuss, look,* and *understand* (see Table 14). These verbs also seem to contribute to the accomplishment of the communicative purpose which is to introduce the detail about the contents of a particular course, for example, "*You will learn the answers to questions like What is the Python For Loop, what is Python used for*" (MD18) and "*In the second section I will discuss the main tools that you can use to analyze and understand a business*" (MD18). The previous two instances show how verbs like *understand, use, discuss* were employed to introduce the topics that would be covered during the course. In the preceding examples, both authors used the simple future tense to list the skills that the students would learn if they joined the course. The majority of the authors used the present and the future simple, for instance, "*Here is just a hint of all the topics we cover*" (MD66). The main used pronouns are *you, we, your, it* and *my*. The usage of these pronouns may reflect the conversational nature of this move. Put simply, the tutor addresses the reader directly, for example, "*How to ace the Q&A session of your speech and answer literally any question*" (MD9) and "*In this section I will discuss more advanced techniques such as: rankings, scenario analysis*" (MD9).

  Altogether, 520 adjectives were located and the most frequent are *different, important, perfect, sure, powerful, common, best, aware, complete,* and *hands-on*. Most of these positive adjectives promote the content and the topics which are promised to be covered, for instance, "*The course is divided currently in 4 sections and I will be adding new sections to address other important issues*" (MD31), and "*Discover what Industry 4.0 is, what the Industry 4.0 Environment is and the different kinds of Internets*" (MD69).

As for the coordinators, evidently, the number of the coordinating conjunctions is higher than the subordinating conjunctions which may reflect the lack of complexity in the clauses. Moreover, the additive coordinating conjunction *and* was by far the most frequent among the others, for instance, "*How does targeting work and how is the data collected*" (MD35) and "*What are the different referencing styles and how can you conform to them*" (MD62).

Table 14

POS Analysis of the SYLLABUS SC (M2-S2)

POS	N=4815	Tokens
Nouns	N=1710	*course, section, analysis, data, research, techniques, topics, series*
Verbs	N=789	*be, will, learn, use, cover, make, discuss, look, understand*
Adjectives	N=520	*different, important, perfect, sure, powerful, common, best, aware, complete, hands-on*
Adverb	N=234	*just, then, truly, very, differently, easily, effectively, currently, actually*
Pronoun	N=285	*you, we, your, it, my, what, I*
Preposition	N=589	*to, of, in, for, for, on, with, by, about*
Coordinating Conjunction	N=229	*and (198), or (13), but (6)*
Subordinating conjunction	N=32	*that, as, so*

6.2.2.3 The GAPS IN OTHER COURSES SC (M2-S3). According to Hajeer (2020), this step "is utilized by some tutors to accent the excellence of their courses compared to other MOOCs online" (p. 17). That is, the writers of MOOC descriptions highlight or implicate the drawbacks of the other courses in the platform to gain a competitive edge over them. Highlighting such gaps in other courses may be accomplished by mentioning them explicitly, for example, "*Unlike other SAP course that just covers a single module, this course covers SD, MM,*

IM, WM, LE and much more" (MD53). Notwithstanding, implicating the gaps could also be achieved by highlighting the positive features of the current course compared to others, for instance, "*Drawing Academy is one of, if not the most comprehensive character drawing course out there*" (MD64).

There have been many factors that the tutors exploited to demonstrate the competitiveness of their MOOCs over others' in Udemy.com. Firstly, mentioning the quantity of the material, for instance, "*this course is longer than any other train-the-trainer course on this platform. It has more lectures than any other course and more hours (23+) than any other train the trainer course.*" (MD8). In the previous example, the tutor mentions that his course includes more hours of video streaming than any other course in the platform (i.e., Udemy.com), implicating that the other courses have less video recordings than his. Others, however, claimed that their methods of teaching are superior to others', for instance "*in schools, colleges and universities, Quantum Physics is taught with a dry and almost exclusively technical approach which furnishes only a superficial insight on its foundations*" (MD58).

Another aspect which was brought up when the tutors compared their MOOCs to others' is whether such courses are updated or outdated, for example "*A lot of other courses on Udemy get released once, and never get updated.*" (MD18), and "*Many, perhaps most other courses on Udemy teach you old, obsolete versions of C++. If you are going to learn C++, it's imperitive that you learn the Modern version*" (MD21). Furthermore, the practicality of the course was also a factor that the tutors used to further portray a positive image of their courses, to illustrate, "*The challenge with learning HTML5 today is that most courses focus only on theory and cover every tag without seeing the big picture. However, in my course, you will code HTML, CSS, and JavaScript in more than 25 real-world projects*" (MD23). The writers of the descriptions claimed that their course concentrates on the practical side, which makes this course more advanced than the other courses in the platform. One more factor of comparison was the sources based on which the course was created, for example, "*Some of the research references include studies from the Harvard Business School, Kelley School of Business, and McKinsey Global Institute.*" (MD32). In this instance, the tutor refers to sources that sound prestigious in order to distinguish his course. One last factor which was mentioned only for one time in the corpus is regarding the certificate that the MOOC provides, for instance, "*other websites do not provide you with direct help from English lawyers nor do they provide you with the certificate*" (MD63).

Apart from painting a favorable image of the courses, some MOOC descriptions included comparisons between the tutors. Surprisingly enough, only the aspect of experience was considered in these comparisons, for instance, "*There are a lot of Python courses on Udemy – Your instructors, Tim and Jean-Paul are pretty unique in that between them they have around 70 years of professional programming experience*" (MD18) and "*and you will struggle to find someone with as much industry and training experience than your instructor Frank has*" (MD21). The preceding two examples demonstrate how the two instructors accentuated their long experience with the subject compared to other instructors.

GAPS IN OTHER COURSES (M2-S3) is the move in which the instructors show their MOOC's supremacy over other courses. The communicative purpose of this move was achieved by comparing the promoted MOOC to other MOOCs from many perspectives. The perspectives which were revealed through the analysis are the material quantity, practicality, and the contemporaneity of the course or the experience of the tutors.

6.2.2.4 The linguistic analysis of the GAPS IN OTHER COURSES SC (M2-S3). This move includes 1622 words from a total of 58,960 words. The top ten (418 occurrences) nouns in frequency of occurrence are *course, Udemy, training, theory, version, instructor, development,* and *years*. These nouns were utilized to highlight the gaps of the other courses, for example "*This course is different from the other ones you'll find on Udemy. Dare I say, better*" (MD16). The previous excerpt also shows how the tutors used the adjective *better* to promote their own course. However, the authors of MOOC descriptions also used negative adjectives to criticize the other courses, for instance, "*It's a sad fact that most C++ courses do not teach Modern C++, but focus on old, obsolete versions of C++*" (MD21).

The most frequent verbs in order of frequency are *will, do, find, get, need, learn, can* and *teach*. The majority of the verbs were active and used the present simple tense. For example, "*this Web Development course is without a doubt the most comprehensive web development course available online*" (MD41). The main pronouns which were used to accomplish the communicative purpose are *I, you* and *they*. The pronoun *I* was used by the instructors when they addressed themselves, the pronoun *you* was used to address the reader, while *they* was used to address the other courses or the other producers of other courses. For instance, "*other websites do not provide you with direct help from English lawyers nor do they provide you with the certificate*" (MD63).

Noun, adjective, prepositional and adverbial phrases were spotted frequently in this step which are, *this course, any other course, the other ones in Udemy, on Udemy, out there, in the market, available anywhere, most complete, better than,* and *the best*. These phrases were employed repeatedly to help achieve the function of the step. The following example shows how they used the adjective phrase *better than* to compare the MOOC to other courses. Also, the noun phrase *this course* is used to refer to the promoted course, "*this is better than any other course out there*" (MD59).

Table 15

POS Analysis of the GAPS IN OTHER COURSES SC (M2-S3)

POS	N=1622	Tokens
Nouns	N=418	*course, udemy, training, theory, version, instructor, development, years*
Verbs	N=260	*be, will, do, find, get, need, learn, can, teach*
Adjectives	N=177	*different, virtual, available, complete, unique, best, comprehensive, thorough, old, outdated*
Adverb	N=106	*most, only, just, even, also, more, specifically, then, actually*
Pronoun	N=111	*you, I, it, your, they, them, their, we*
Preposition	N=185	*of, to, on, in, from, for, then, with, by, at*
Coordinating Conjunction	N=55	*and, but, or*
Subordinating conjunction	N=17	*that, if, though*

6.2.3 Move 3: The HIGHLIGHTING BENEFITS SC

According to Hajeer (2020), "in order to add value to the course itself, tutors tend to outline the benefits that readers would receive if they decided to enroll in the course" (p.17). He also mentioned that this move constitutes two steps: OF THE SKILL (M3-S2) and OF THE COURSE (M3-S1). The former refers to the benefits of taking the described course itself, while

the latter mentions the benefits of learning the skill or the subject itself. The outcomes of the current investigation coincide with Hajeer's (2020) pilot study in the sense that both studies list the same two steps under this move. The following two subsections attempt to deliver further information regarding these two steps.

6.2.3.1 The BENEFITS OF THE COURSE SC (M3-S1). The goal of this step is to list the benefits that potential students would gain if they took the course. In most cases, this step is future-oriented, and it discusses the future of the enrollees themselves. That is, it demonstrates the positive influence of the learned knowledge and skill on the life of those who choose to take the course.

Some tutors claim that taking their courses would definitely improve the professional performance of the students, or equip them with the right set of skills that are needed for a particular job, for example, "*In short you will learn specifically why, what, when, where and exactly how to sell more, sell faster, avoid unnecessary stress and learn to love what you do*" (MD29), "*this course will teach you how to be a successful investor*" (MD30), and "*I'll guarantee that after taking this course you'll have the knowledge you need to build a responsive, beautiful website with the latest version of Wordpress*" (MD25).

Other tutors went as far as guaranteeing that their courses are able to positively alter the attitude of the students towards their professions or boost their confidence when applying for a job, for instance, "*you will love public speaking by the end of this course*" (MD9), "*you'll actually enjoy using Wordpress too*" (MD25), and "*You can crack your upcoming interviews easily with the learning from this course*" (MD27). Other tutors are confident that their courses deepen the students understanding and consequently enable them to start discussions with experts, for instance, "*At the end of this course, you will be able to confidently discuss networking topics*" (MD13), and "*You are about to learn powerful, expert-level skills to understand and speak about most problems of international politics like a confident expert*" (MD59). Moreover, in some cases, the writers of MOOC descriptions believe that their courses equip the learners with the knowledge they need to pass an exam in a particular skill and get certified, for example, "*These courses will help you be fully prepared for the CCNA 200-125 exam, or CCENT 100-105 exam, or ICND2 200-105 exam!*" (MD13), "*This course will help you in covering everything you will need to know as you prepare for possible future exams*" (MD55),

and "*This course also allows you to gain the Legal English Language Certificate Level 1 which is a qualification delivered by an accredited training organization*" (MD55).

In an attempt to highlight the benefits of taking the course, several tutors portrayed bright images of the future of potential enrollees. These bright images promise outstanding jobs, more money and a better life. Many tutors asserted that by taking their courses, potential students would have the chance to get or start more enjoyable jobs, for example, "*you will be able to market your skills and authentically set yourself apart from everyone else who does what you do. You're one of a kind and this course helps you market your unique talents so your business can succeed*" (MD34), "*you can use the skills you build in this course to get a better job*" (MD11). Other tutors, however, concentrated on the financial aspect by promising the potential students a higher income, for instance, "*this course will teach you everything you need to know and do to get your online course the attention it deserves, so you start attracting and enrolling more students and earning passive income from your course every single month*" (MD10). What is more, in few cases, the tutors promised a life-changing experience. That is, the life of the potential students would be altered after taking the course, to illustrate, "*Life often comes down to a few short moments and giving a perfect speech or presentation can change your life and the lives of countless others*" (MD9), and "*The guides in The Tao of Quantum Physics course share eye opening views of Science and Spirituality merging that will change your life forever*" (MD57).

BENEFITS OF THE COURSE (M3-S1) is the step in which the instructors discuss the advantages of taking the course. The main advantages which were located in the current investigation were, improved professional practice, positive attitude, better jobs, preferable well-being and higher income. Mentioning the advantages of taking a particular course is likely to be a step towards accomplishing the communicative purpose of the MOOC descriptions which is to persuade potential students to enroll in the course.

6.2.3.2 The BENEFITS OF THE SKILL SC (M3-S2). The communicative purpose of this step is to present the benefits of the taught skills. That is, it differs from the previous step (i.e., Benefits OF THE COURSE) in the sense that when instructors present the benefits of acquiring the skill, they refer to the positive outcomes that potential students would gain if they learned the skill itself regardless of what MOOC they choose to enroll in. The tactics which the

tutors use to achieve the communicative purpose of this step work in tandem to form a favorable future for the potential enrollees.

Ostensibly, many tutors indicate the importance of the skill in the market. For example, "*Companies throughout the world (from the smallest to the largest) rely on networks designed, installed, and maintained by networking engineers*" (MD13), and "*But why should you learn web hacking. Mostly because there is the biggest demand on the market. Wherever you go to work right now as a penetration tester, around 80 % of the projects are web hacking related*" (MD17). In these two examples, the instructors explain how these skills are demanded in the job market. Other tutors indicate that through referring to the new job opportunities that would be available to the potential student, "*Now is a great time to learn Salesforce and change your career to the cloud*" (MD12), and "*MBA students acquire valuable technical skills, which makes them the leading candidates for senior roles within corporations*" (MD40). Moreover, other tutors not only referred to the job opportunities, but they also referred to the privilege of job security that awaits potential learners, to give some examples, "*Secure Future. There is high demand for Financial Analysts on the job market, and you won't have to be concerned about finding a job*" (MD26), and "*Those who develop strong presentation skills and public speaking skills do well in school, secure jobs and promotions*" (MD38). Furthermore, some tutors claimed that the skills which they are teaching would guarantee the potential students an enjoyable work in the future, for instance, "*. You can find the true hacker in yourself. It is a very creative and exciting job*" (MD17), and "*Investing can be fun and really fun when you do it well!*" (MD30). Last, there were surplus references to the high salary jobs that are awaiting the potential students, for instance, "*To get those high paying jobs you need an expert knowledge of Python*" (MD18), "*Salary. A Financial Analyst job usually leads to a very well-paid career*" (MD26), and "*Salary/Income - it is not a coincidence that MBA graduates earn 40% more than their peers*" (MD40).

Like THE BENEFITS OF THE COURSE, the current step aims at accomplishing the local function (mentioning the benefits of learning the skill) and the global one which is to convince the reader to take the course. To achieve this, many approaches were taken such as accentuating the high market demand and the advantage of having secured and enjoyable work. As for the linguistic analysis, the following subsection offers the analysis of the two steps (i.e.,

OF THE COURSE AND OF THE SKILL). The reason for presenting them together is the fact that their representations seem to be closely connected and difficult to separate.

      6.2.3.3 Linguistic analysis of the HIGHLIGHTING BENEFITS SC (M3). This move consists of 5996 out of altogether 58,960 words. The POS analysis shows that 1598 words are nouns. The top ten (1598 occurrences) nouns are *course, skills, everything, training, strategies, way, time, students, tools,* and *analyst*. These nouns were used to refer to the benefits of the course, for example, "*This course will get you up and running in no time*" (MD40), and "*you'll learn everything you need to know*" (MD8). As for verbs, 1,229 of them were used in the current sub-corpus and the top ten (1,229 occurrences) verbs are *will, be, learn, can, know, need, do, teach, have,* and *use.* As ascertained previously, HIGHLIGHTING BENEFITS is a future oriented move which is why the modal *will* was used for over 100 times to refer to the future benefits of taking the course, for instance, "*you will also know how to create great lessons that help students*" (MD1), and "*you will learn to enjoy public speaking*" (MD9). Moreover, in most cases, the active voice was used instead of the passive voice. Personal pronouns such as *you, your, yourself*, and the inclusive *we* were used to address the readers to tell them about the benefits of taking the course, for instance, "*you will have the knowledge and confidence to go out and find motivated students*" (MD1), and "*to get a better job and increase your hourly rate*" (MD11).

      It was established in the previous section (6.2.3.2 The BENEFITS OF THE SKILL SC (M3-S2)) that tutors tend to paint a bright image of the future for those who would enroll in the course. This can be shown in the number of positive adjectives that were utilized to describe the future benefits of the course such as *able, real, complete, successful, effective, right, comprehensive, great, public,* and *personal.* The following example demonstrates how these adjectives are used, "*we will teach you the comprehensive skills needed to be a financial analyst*" (MD17), and "*This course will teach you how to be a successful investor*" (MD30). Beside simple adjectives, there were some expressions that were spotted such as *highly effective, highly motivated*, and *fully prepared*. Also, there were many prepositional phrases which were repeatedly employed such as *in this course, of this course, by the end of this course, of the course, by the end of the course, after taking this course, at the end of this course* and *from this course.* Coordinating and subordinating conjunctions were also exploited by the writers of MOOC descriptions. The coordinating conjunctions which were used are *and*, *or* and *but*. The

dominating coordinator was and, while but was only used for 9 times. The subordinates which were used are *that, as, if, so, because* and *after*. For example, "*Mostly because there is the biggest demand in the market*" (MD30) and "*After you are done with the course, you will get*" (MD32).

Table 16

POS Analysis of the BENEFITS OF THE COURSE SC (M3)

POS	N=5996	Tokens
Nouns	N=1598	*course, skills, everything, training, strategies, way, time, students, tools, analyst*
Verbs	N=1229	*will, be, learn, can, know, need, do, teach, have, use*
Adjectives	N=619	*able, real, complete, successful, effective, right, comprehensive, great, public, personal*
Adverb	N=385	*even, only, exactly, just, quickly, never, actually, really, highly, ever*
Pronoun	N=523	*you, your, what, it, I, our, yourself, them, we, our*
Preposition	N=727	*to, in, of, for, with, on, by, as, from, about*
Coordinating Conjunction	N=269	*and, or, but*
Subordinating conjunction	N=81	*that, as, so, if, because, after*

6.2.4 Move 4: The INCENTIVIZING SC

The Incentivizing SC included 188 INCENTIVIZING (M4) moves. The writers of MOOC descriptions "offer the advantages that a potential student would gain if they decided to enroll in the course. These incentives are designed to give the impression of gaining something extra—other than the recorded lectures—after joining the course" (Hajeer, 2020, p. 18). In other words, the instructors attempt to attract the potential students to enroll in their MOOCs by offering them additional gains. Still, due to the limited corpus size, Hajeer (2020) could not

reveal sufficient detail about this move. The current analysis reveals four main methods which the tutors exploited to incentivize the students which are: personal support, extra material, course updates and risk-free experience.

First, potential students were offered help by the tutors in many ways. One of these is offering to answer the student's questions regarding the course, for example, "*If you have any questions about the course content or anything related to this topic, you can always post a question in the course or send me a direct message*" (MD1) and "*Free helpful support in the course Q&A when you have questions or get stuck*" (MD22). Another approach to offering help was through offering the students to review their projects and give feedback, for instance, "*I'll read your outline and give you my own personal thoughts on where you might need some additional detail, or information to make the actually writing of your story easier*" (MD5) and "*At the end of the challenge, you will send us the work you've done, and we will reply with personalized feedback. This makes for an interactive student experience that optimizes what you will learn from the course*" (MD26). Finally, tutors would also offer help to the students by adding them to online platforms where they can discuss their questions with other students and with the tutors themselves, for example, "*There is also a Facebook Group for participants on this course. This will allow you to communicate with other people on the course, share ideas and get some inspiration from others*" (MD26) and "*Personal invitation to my Facebook community after you complete the course*" (MD33).

Second, some tutors offered the readers additional materials other than the recorded lectures. In some cases, web based resources were offered to potential students if they enrolled in the course, for example, "*Each section has additional web-based resources for you to do further research and expand your knowledge beyond the requirements of the exam*" (MD14) and "*This course comes with a companion website, The Academic Word List Learning Lab, which contains hundreds of activities to help you improve your ability to use each word*" (MD47). Other MOOCs offered free electronic books to the potential students to incentivize them, for instance, "*You'll receive a 37-page workbook to follow along with the video program*" (MD47) and "Free access to my e-book "*Best Resources for Web Design and Development with HTML5 & CSS3*" (MD22). Apart from books and websites, many tutors offered worksheets and exercises so students can practice what they learn or the slides or transcripts of the lectures, for instance, "*Plus you get worksheets, checklists, resource lists, real-world examples, and demos so you can*

apply everything you learn to marketing your own online course" (MD10), "*There is also a transcript of each video to help you follow the material and know how to spell new terms*" (MD52) and "*Build up your own vocabulary booklet using the worksheets that come with each lesson*" (MD47).

Third, updating the course is argued to be one of the utilized ways to incentivize the potential students to take their courses. This is basically a promise to keep the MOOC updated with the latest information available in a particular field, for example, "*I regularly update this course to reflect the current marketing landscape*" (MD33) and "*A great value, since this course is updated as Microsoft changes the exam requirements over time. This course will be ready for you when you are ready to take the exam*" (MD14). Finally, a risk-free experience was also offered in almost all the descriptions in the corpus. According to Udemy.com, this incentive is offered by the platform itself. Interestingly, examples of two approaches in presenting this incentivizing tool were witnessed. One way is to present this incentive while mentioning that it is offered by the platform itself, for example, "*you have 30 days to ask Udemy for a refund*" (MD11) and "*the course comes with Udemy's 30-day unconditional, money-back-in-full guarantee*" (MD26). The other approach however is presenting this incentive claiming that it was offered by the tutors themselves, for instance, "*I'm so confident that you'll love this course that we're offering a FULL money back guarantee for 30 days!*" (MD26) and "*There is a 100% Money-Back Guarantee for this course. And the instructor also provides an enhanced guarantee*" (MD8).

Offering updates, personal support, risk-free experience and extra materials are the ways in which the readers were incentivized to take the course. Incentivizing the students by offering the previously mentioned benefits may be believed to further convince the potential students to enroll in these courses.

6.2.4.1 The Linguistic Analysis of the INCENTIVIZING SC (M4). The POS analysis revealed that the current move consists of 4,051 words, of which 1205 are nouns. The top ten nouns are *course, questions, money, guarantee, access, refund, bonus, students, risk,* and *content*. These words were utilized to refer to the incentives that potential students would gain if they enrolled in the course. For example, "*If you have any questions about the course content*" (MD56), and "*One month 100% Money back guarantee*" (MD68). Some of the spotted noun

phrases are, *this course, the course, no questions, no risk, any questions, money-back, every step of the way* and *direct message*.

The top ten used verbs (776 occurrences) are *will, be, have, help, guarantee, added, comes, get, give,* and *do*. In more than 55% of the cases, verbs were presented in the simple present tense, for instance, "*There is also a Facebook group for participants*" (MD68), and "*This course does not cut any corners*" (MD68). The rest of the verbs were dominantly presented in the future tense, for example, "*I will be here for you every step of the way*" (MD56), and "*I will read your outline and give you my own personal thoughts*" (MD56). Moreover, active voice was used in more than 95% of the cases (see the previous two examples). Personal and possessive pronouns such as *you, your,* and *my* were used 369 times indicating what it seems like a conversation between the tutor and the readers, for example, "*you will save yourself over $12,000*" (MD56).

The number of the adjectives which were used is 269. The top ten adjectives are *free, new, full, additional, downloadable, available, extra, direct, ready,* and *complete*. Noticeably, all the adjectives are positive which may be attributed to the promotional nature of MOOC descriptions. The following two examples demonstrate how some of these adjectives were utilized in presenting the incentives to the potential students, "*Once again, a complete update of the course*" (MD14), and "*The course is constantly updated with new content, with new projects and modules*" (MD41). Furthermore, there was no evidence of frequent adjective phrases or compounds.

The top eight prepositions that were used are *to, of, with, in, for, on, from,* and *by*. There were also many prepositional phrases which were used frequently such as *of this course, for you, with your purchase, from my experience, with you, inside the course,* and *of the course*. These prepositional phrases were also used to achieve the communicative purpose of this move (i.e., to offer the incentives), for instance, "*I'll see you inside the course*" (MD23) and "*If you are not completely satisfied with your purchase, you'll be given a refund*" (MD36). Beside prepositions, the POS analysis revealed the top ten (185 occurrences) adverbs which are *always, just, so, here, simply, completely, constantly, continually, once,* and *well*. For instance, "*you can always post a question in the course or send me a direct message*" (MD6), and "*Meaning if you are not completely satisfied with the course or your progress, simply let Tim or J-P know and they will refund you 100%*" (MD18).

As for the conjunctions, the POS analysis showed that 200 conjunctions were spotted, 146 of which are coordinating conjunctions (*and, or, but*), while the rest are subordinating conjunctions such as *if, that, as* and *so*. The conditional *if* was especially used when offering a refund in case the potential students were not satisfied with the course, or when offering help for the students. For instance, "*I invite you to send me a message if you have any questions about the content of this course*" (MD59) and "*If you feel like your training career is not about to soar after attending this course, you're entitled to a 100% refund*" (MD8).

Table 17

POS Analysis of the Incentivizing SC (M4)

POS	N=4051	Tokens
Nouns	N=1205	*course, questions, money, guarantee, access, refund, bonus, students, risk, content*
Verbs	N=776	*will, be, have, help, guarantee, added, comes, get, give, do*
Adjectives	N=269	*free, new, full, additional, downloadable, available, extra, direct, ready, complete*
Adverb	N=185	*always, just, so, here, simply, completely, constantly, continually, once, well*
Pronoun	N=369	*you, your, I, my, it, me, we, our, them*
Preposition	N=383	*to, of, with, in, for, on, from, by*
Coordinating conjunction	N=146	*and, or, but*
Subordinating conjunction	N=54	*if, that, as, so*

6.2.5 Move 5: The SOLICITING ACTION SC

As suggested by Hajeer (2020), SOLICITING ACTIONS (M5) is used by the writers of MOOC descriptions to "remind the readers, more than once, if necessary, to enroll in the course" (p.18) using indirect language. Notwithstanding, the evidence which was collected during the

current study suggests otherwise. The results of the analysis demonstrate the usage of not only indirect, but also direct means to urge the potential students to enroll in the course, for example, "*Order this course now*" (MD5).

The writers of MOOC descriptions employed many ways to directly encourage the potential students to participate in the course. In other words, the instructors gave clear instruction(s) telling the readers what to do, for example, "*Enroll in this Train the Trainer course today*" (MD8). The orders, nonetheless, were not simply about purchasing or enrolling in the course. Firstly, some of the orders were about gaining the benefits of enrolling in the course such as advancing one's career, increasing one's salary, passing an exam, or gaining a competitive advantage. For instance, "*Well, my friend, stand out of the crowd. How you're asking? It's simple: enroll to this course in order to unlock your writing hidden abilities, and get your work done in a very concise, coherent and stylish way*" (MD49), "*Buff up your resume/CV and become interview-ready by learning real-world SQL in this course*" (MD43), "*If you are ready to get that first paid programming job, or to move up to a more senior programming position, then this course is for you*" (MD21), and "*Grow in your career, and make teaching fun with engaging learning techniques that guide people through a learning process that sticks*" (MD7). In the previous examples, the tutors encouraged the readers to take the courses implicitly by urging them to benefit from the opportunities that the MOOC would grant them. Secondly, another way of instructing the students to take the course was through asking them to join the other students who already joined the course and are enjoying its benefits, for instance, "*join the other 20,000 successful students who have already mastered shell scripting and the linux operating system with one of my top-rated courses*" (MD15), "*Join over 13,000 students from 150 different countries*" (MD4). The latter two example exhibit the exploitation of the number of the enrollees in what seems like an attempt to make the course more attractive for the potential students. Asking the students to join previous employees was not the only method as some other instructors asked the students to join them (i.e., the tutors) to enjoy the course, for instance, "*Join me in this course if you want to pass the AWS Certified Solutions Architect Associate Exam and master the AWS platform*" (MD42) and "*Join me on this adventure today! I'll see you inside the course*" (MD23).

Thirdly, in some cases, the students were cautioned not to miss the opportunity that the advertised MOOC offers, for example, "*Do not waste time and money on exam after exam after*

exam. Take this course to improve your English, learn the tips, tools and techniques to get the band score you need, and achieve IELTS Writing success now" (MD4), and "*You will not want to miss out on this course*" (MD8).

Apart from the direct imperative method, other tutors applied two indirect approaches to encourage the readers to take their MOOC. The first one includes a question to the potential students, such as "*are you ready?*" (MD39), "*Why not get started today?*" (MD21), and "*Ready to enroll*" (MD32). Evidently, the writers of the preceding examples followed a more tactful way when they asked the potential students to take the course by asking questions instead of giving instructions. Secondly, some MOOC descriptions exhibited the usage of polite statements that can be interpreted as a warm invitation to enroll in the course. For example, "*I will see you in lesson 1*" (MD44), "*Ermin and I hope to see you as a student in the course when we next meet!*" (MD11), "*Let's draw something awesome*" (MD64).

In some limited cases, there were some excerpts that solicit actions other than enrolling in the course. In three cases, the potential students were asked to leave comments or send messages (for the tutors) that includes suggestions on how to improve the course, for example, "*This is the first course of this kind and I am committed to make it as useful for you as possible. So please feel free to get in touch with suggestions on how I can improve this course*" (MD59) and "*If you have any suggestion to help improve the quality of this material, then please let me know. I will do my best to take it into account*" (MD56).

SOLICITING ACTIONS (M5) deals with asking the students to enroll in the advertised course. Hajeer (2020) focused mainly on the indirect methods that the instructors use. However, the current analysis reveals many other ways to accomplish the communicative purpose of this move such as, deliberately asking the reader to enroll in the course, asking the readers to join those who already took the course and asking indirect questions. Besides, the investigation reveals that SOLICITING ACTION also deals with requests other than joining the course as some of the instructors urged the readers to leave comments and messages that help improve the MOOC. While the present subsection reveals the techniques of achieving the communicative purpose, the subsequent one focuses on the linguistic perspective.

6.2.5.1 The Linguistic Analysis of the SOLICITING ACTION SC (M5). This move consists of altogether 1799 words. The verbs and nouns have similar amount of frequency. This might be attributed to the large number of verbs that the tutors used to encourage the potential

students to enroll in the described MOOC. The top ten verbs (400 occurrences) that were used to urge the students to enroll in the courses are *get, take, click, are, is, join, enroll, start, learn,* and *improve.* To give examples, "*Then just click the 'Take this course' "button, and let's start this fantastic journey together!*" (MD56), "*Enroll now and start growing your business*" (MD33), and "*Improve Your YouTube Channel, Get More Views & Subscribers, and Make More Money*" (MD44).

The top ten nouns (439 occurrences) which were used in this move are *course, button, time, career, industry, skills, success, exam,* and *future*. Most of these nouns were utilized to achieve the communicative purpose of the current move, i.e., urge the students to enroll in the course. For instance, "*Go ahead and click the enroll button*" (MD44), and "*Do not waste time and money on exam after exam after exam*" (MD4). Some noun phrases were repeatedly located in this sub-corpus such as *your career, this course, your future, the next level,* and *the enroll button*. For example, "*Don't risk your future success*" (MD26) and "*Take your career to the next level by getting you Legal English Language Certificate*" (MD63).

The adjectives of the current move are chiefly used to refer to the course or the potential students. The top ten adjectives (134 occurrences) are *ready, best, free, own, new, simple, different, interested, meaningful,* and *public.* For instance, "*Discover my simple 7-step portrait drawing system*" (MD65) and "*Are you ready?*" (MD21). There were not any frequent adjective phrases or compounds in this move. However, there were some prepositional and adverbial phrases such as *for you, to the next level, after exam, to success, right away, so much* and *more effectively*. For example, "*If you are serious about learning about IT and taking your skills to the next level*" (MD70) and "*Then take this course and start speaking German right away!*" (MD3). It is worth mentioning that adverbials and adverbial phrases mostly referred to the present time like, *today, right away, now,* and *soon*. This may be argued to be an attempt from the tutors to encourage the students to take actions as soon as possible.

The subordinating conjunction *if* was identified 16 times in the current move. Tutors exploited it to achieve the ultimate communicative purpose, for instance, "*If you are interested in becoming a Salesforce Admin, take this course.*" (MD12), "*Join me in this course if you want to pass the AWS Certified Solutions Architect Associate Exam and master the AWS platform*" (MD42) and "*If you are ready to improve and go higher than you ever thought you could with your portraits then this course is for you!*" (MD65). The preceding three examples demonstrate

how the writers of MOOC descriptions used the conditional *if* to link taking their courses to other positive achievements such as passing an exam or improving a particular skill. In addition to subordinating conjunctions, the additive coordinating conjunction *and* was used 62 times to link words and clauses, for example "*Enroll now and start growing your business*" (MD33), and "*learn the tips, tools and techniques to get the band score you need*" (MD4).

Table 18

POS Analysis of the SOLICITING ACTION SC (M5)

POS	N=1755	Tokens
Nouns	N=439	*course, button, time, career, industry, skills, success, exam, future*
Verbs	N=400	*get, take, click, are, is, join, enroll, start, learn, improve*
Adjectives	N=134	*ready, best, free, own, new, simple, different, interested, meaningful, public*
Adverb	N=129	*now, today, then, ahead, very, together, just, soon, away, forward,*
Pronoun	N=168	*you, your, I, me, it, we, yourself, them*
Preposition	N=210	*to, in, on, of, for, with, by, from*
Coordinating conjunction	N=68	*and (62), or (5)*
Subordinating conjunction	N=25	*if (16), that (3)*

6.2.6 Move 6: The DEFINING THE AUDIENCE SC

Hajeer (2020) mentioned that the objective of the current move is "defining the potential beneficiaries either by listing the features of the MOOC itself, or by describing the target audience (i.e., potential students)" (p. 18). The features of the course include the level of difficulty as well as the orientation of the course whether practical or theoretical and the characteristics of the potential enrollee such as age and profession, among others (Hajeer, 2020).

Customarily, there is a section at the end of every MOOC description with the title *Who this course is for.* Still, in many cases, this move was located at other parts of the MOOC descriptions. The results of the current analysis regarding this move demonstrate substantial similarities with Hajeer's (2020) pilot study. Both studies establish that the audience is defined through highlighting the level of difficulty of the course and the characteristics of the audience, for instance, "*This course is perfect for absolute beginners with no previous coding experience, or anyone wanting to add C++ to their existing skillset*" (MD21). Still, the current investigation could further reveal the methods that the instructors used to define the audience since the corpus of the study is larger than Hajeer's (2020).

The present research reveals many ways of defining ideal candidates for the MOOCs. First, some instructors defined the audience by mentioning their profession or occupation, for instance "*Who this course is for: Professionals who manage virtual teams, Project Managers, IT Managers, Virtual Team Leaders, Directors*" (MD32) and "*This course is designed for high school juniors and seniors, and college undergraduates*" (MD61). Second, other tutors defined the ideal candidates by referring to their level of knowledge. In other words, the ideal enrollees would need to have reached a specific level of knowledge in order to be able to join the advertised MOOC; for instance, the tutor of the following course mentions that the course is for "*Students who took my Beginner's Guide to Information Technology course and want to dive deeper into the world of IT*" (MD70). Additional example would be of another instructor who mentions that the enrollees should be "*Current Algebra 1 and Algebra 2 students*" (MD2). Evidently, other MOOC descriptions' writers chose to widen, instead of narrow, the criteria for the potential students. Arguably, this might be because they wish to increase the number of the enrollees. This was accomplished by announcing that potential students only need to be interested in the topic, for example, "*Anyone interested in shell scripting or shell programming*" (MD15) and "*Individuals interested in the problems of international politics, particularly those who regularly watch the news, read newspapers or follow on-line media*" (MD59).

The third way of selecting the right audience for the MOOC was through addressing the wishes of the potential students, that is, identifying the ideal students through their wishes. One of these needs was to pass a particular exam, for example, "*It is aimed at students who are trying to achieve Band 7 but will also be extremely valuable for any students aiming for Band 6 or Band 8. Even Band 9 students will learn something new here*" (MD4), and "*College students*

taking course(s) in IT that want to do well on their tests" (MD70). Other aspirations were linked to improving the potential students' careers or increasing their income. For instance, "*Established coaches, consultants and other service professionals with a desire to turn their expertise into a passive income stream*" (MD10), and "*People who want a successful career in Finance*" (MD26). Some tutors tackled the aspirations of those potential students who would like to improve their knowledge or master a definite subject or skill. To give an example, "*Students who want to learn the English: use of articles, prepositions, correct punctuation and idioms*" (MD63), and "*Anyone who wants to write an academic text, such as essays, dissertations, theses, presentations and research papers*" (MD47).

Other tutors took a different approach to identifying the characteristics of the ideal students by addressing their irrelevant expectations. For example, "*If you are looking for a course with lots of animation, special effects, and music, then this is not the course for you*" (MD8), and "*Course is not designed for someone who is looking for a 'Get Rich Quick' scheme or other questionable and unproven investing practice*" (MD30).

The function of DEFINING THE AUDIENCE is identifying the type of audience that would benefit from a particular course. The analysis divulges some of the tactics that were used such as addressing the needs of the students, mentioning the level of the students or the difficulty of the course, among others. Such techniques might be considered as a way to further persuade the readers to take the course by convincing them that it matches their needs. This, consequently, helps in accomplishing the aim of the MOOC description.

6.2.6.1 The Linguistic Analysis of the DEFINING THE AUDIENCE SC (M6). This move consists of 5,041 words of which 1,393 are nouns. The top ten nouns (1,393 occurrences) in order of frequency are *course, students, anyone, skills, knowledge, people, college, career, school*, and *level*. Most of these nouns were used to accomplish the communicative purpose of this move, which is to identify the ideal characters of the ideal audience, for instance, "*Students with some knowledge about HTML and CSS*" (MD22), and "*This course is best suited for beginner-level students*" (MD23). The sub-corpus contained noun phrases which were frequently located such as *this course, the course, your knowledge*, and *your career*.

The number of verbs which were used in this move is 1058 and the top ten verbs (1058 occurrences) are *is, want, are, will, have, do, be, learn, can*, and *get*. These verbs are mainly used to provide the characteristics of the ideal audience. Almost 80% of the verbs were in the present

simple tense while the rest were distributed among the other tenses. Furthermore, almost all of these verbs were in the active voice. To give some examples, "*Those that want to live a life filled with Joy, Trust & Adventure*" (MD57), and "*YouTubers struggling to grow their channel, get views, get subscribers, and make money with YouTube*" (MD44). The main pronouns which were used in this move are *you, who, your, it, them,* and *they*. These pronouns were basically used to refer to the audience and to the course. To give some instances "*Maybe you need to pass a citizenship test or college entrance exam*" (MD60), "*Experienced salespeople who aren't getting the results they want*" (MD60) and "*It is designed for people who want to become management consultants*" (MD31). However, it is worth mentioning that there was a total absence of the pronouns *I, my, me, we* or *our* which were used earlier (i.e., other moves) by the tutors to refer to themselves.

Few prepositional phrases were frequently used throughout the sub-corpus such as *for you, who this course is for, for this course, in this course* and *for people*. The most frequently used one is the *who this course is for* phrase. This prepositional phrase is mentioned in each MOOC description since the policy of the Udemy platform obliges the tutors to include such a section in their MOOC descriptions. Interestingly, the sub-corpus did not exhibit any frequent usage of adjective or adverbial phrases.

The main coordinating conjunctions which are used are *and, or* and *but*. For example, "*You might be an experienced English teacher, but you want to know how to adapt your skills to the online world*" (MD1), "*Homeschool parents looking for extra support with algebra*" (MD2), and "*Researchers and Postgraduate students (Honours, Masters, PhD), interested in learning about quantitative research methods*" (MD51). Besides, subordinating conjunctions were also used in the current move, and they were conditionals in most cases. The following two examples demonstrate the MOOC writers methods in defining their target audience by using the conditional if and whether, "*In short, if you are a human being who hopes to live in a meaningful, congruent and fruitful way - or help others to do the same, studying modern applied psychology will be an invaluable investment of your time*" (MD54) and "*Whatever the reason you have for thinking about studying chemistry , Whether you were Chemistry student, Pharmacy student, Biology student, Nursing student or Engineering student, this course will help you to understand the essential basics of Chemistry*" (MD55).

Table 19

POS Analysis of the SOLICITING ACTION SC (M6)

POS	N=5041	Tokens
Nouns	N=1393	*course, students, anyone, skills, knowledge, people, college, career, school, level*
Verbs	N=1058	*is, want, are, will, have, do, be, learn, can, get*
Adjectives	N=432	*new, interested, complete, own, own, perfect, high, basic, online, successful*
Adverb	N=276	*then, never, even, only, now, just, already, before, perhaps*
Pronoun	N=467	*you, who, your, it, their, the, yourself, them*
Preposition	N=638	*to, for, in, of, with, on, from, about*
Coordinating conjunction	N=226	*and (116), or (73), but (26)*
Subordinating conjunction	N=64	*if (41), whether (8), that (3)*

6.2.7 Move 7: The PROOF SC

Hajeer (2020) claims that "[t]his move includes many forms of proof that tutors use to back their statements such as statistics, reviews, testimonials, or personal stories" (p. 19). Nonetheless, the results of the current analysis show that TESTIMONIALS were used only once in the MD corpus. Thus, it seemed plausible to exclude this step from PROOF. Alternatively, another step labeled FACTS was introduced to the present move as there were many instances where the instructors of MOOCs used unsupported facts to back their claims. Now, the PROOF move consists of four steps sequenced according to the frequency of occurrence REVIEWS, FACTS, PERSONAL STORIES, and STATISTICS. The following subsections discuss these steps in further detail.

6.2.7.1 The REVIEWS SC (M7-S1). Hajeer (2020) defined REVIEWS as "the opinions of previous students regarding the course or the tutor. These reviews are copied from the 'Reviews' section—designed by the platform—and pasted in MOOC descriptions" (p. 19). He

also pointed out that there are two types of reviews. The first type provides feedback about the course while the second type about the tutor. However, the current study could locate reviews which contain feedback about both, the tutor and the course in the same review, for instance, "*perfect for absolute beginners at the start of their coding journey! Angela is an amazing tutor and can explain in the most simple and comprehensible way even complex coding notions. Learning web development cannot get any more fun!*" (MD41), and "*An Excellent Course. I was Impressed by Chris's Level of Knowledge, Experience and Expertise. This course has differently give me knowledge that will help me improve my work and help me integrate into work with Charcoal*" (MD65).

Although the feedback about the courses were given by a large number of students who came from different backgrounds, four patterns were identified (see Figure 13). The first pattern was found in the reviews which praised the course itself without giving many details, for example, "*Excellent for exam preparation!*" (MD14), and "*Very informative, to the point and covered all the foundations of digital advertising*" (MD35). Secondly, some students not only praised the course, but they also mentioned that they recommend it to other students. For instance, "*I have just finished this course, and I highly recommend it. I would say that the introduction video gives a good indication of what to expect. You will not be disappointed!*" (MD39), and "*The first impression is great and I lovely recommend the course to everyone who wants to improve his speech*" (MD9). Beside (or apart) from praising and recommending the course, many reviews were comparison oriented in the sense that the students were comparing the courses to other ones in the Udemy platform or across MOOCs' platforms. To illustrate, "*Having gone through other related courses on other platforms, I can say this course is the most practical and readily applicable course on web design and development I have taken*" (MD22), " *I'm at (Salesforce's) Destination Success right now and your course goes more in-depth than the classroom courses here, and for 1% of the cost*" (MD12), and "*This is better than any other course I have come across... the presentation is simply superb*" (MD4). Finally, other students took the feedback a step further and provided detail about what they learned from the course or they mentioned how the course helped them achieve their goals. To give an example:

> I had very limited programming experience before I started this course, so I have really
> learned a lot from the first few sections. It has taken me from essentially zero

programming skill to a level where I'm comfortable using Python to analyze data for my lab reports, and I'm not even halfway done the course yet. There are other courses out there which focus on data analysis, but those courses are usually targeted at people who already know how to program which is why I chose this course instead. (MD18)

In the previous example, the student provided a review which described how the course helped him improve his programming skills. What is more, this example can also demonstrate how the patterns can be combined in one review. That is, the writer of the review not only described how he accomplished his goals, but he also furnished a comparison between the current course and other courses across the internet. The following example, however, contains feedback from a student who illustrated how the course helped him at work, for example, "*Another amazing course by Jason Cannon. This course helped propel my bash scripting to a whole new level. Now, I can't stop automating my workflow! :) Pretty soon everything will do everything itself*" (MD18).

As for the feedback on the tutors, the reviews' writers utilized many ways to express their satisfaction with the tutors (see Figure 13). First of all, many of them extended their gratitude towards the tutor by thanking them for providing the course or/and praising the tutors for their experience, helpfulness, knowledge or style, among others. For instance, "*Thank you Krista for making this so clear and understandable! You are a fantastic tutor*" (MD2), "*Absolutely fantastic tutorial series. I cannot thank you enough. The quality is first class and your presentational skills are second to none. Keep up this excellent work. You really rock!*" (MD19), and "*Mike is awesome and learning so much so far! Mike thanks so much for the really awesome course! I am sure that when I take the admin exam soon that I will pass with flying colors!*" (MD12). Other than praising the tutors, some other students applauded the teaching methods of the tutors. For example, "*Andy is great. He used visuals for everything he say. I was able to pause him and go to my site and test my understanding in all areas that I did know. The results and excitement are fantastic*" (MD25), "*I like the way all the information as kept generic. he called characters by their functions (like protagonist, Emotion, Reason). This allowed me to think in terms of my characters without any biasing or cooling*" (MD5), and "*The pace of the lectures is perfect. Jeremy keeps the lectures interesting, engaging, and knowledgeable at the same time. Great work*" (MD36). Apart from praising and thanking, many students demonstrated their satisfaction

by recommending the tutor (and thus the course) to the readers, for example, "*Ingo has a ton of experience in German teaching. You can tell all of the best practices and good tips come to life here. His pace is perfect for the beginner so don't be intimidated! Highly recommend*" (MD3) and "*Great course, great instructor. I enjoyed every minute of it. I recommend this course 100%*" (MD15). Finally, several students provided further detail in their reviews. These details were typically about the knowledge they acquired from the tutor throughout the course. The following example neatly illustrates this case:

> I attended this two-hour workshop (Bullseye) where Jason demonstrated the principles of his Rule the Room approach for teaching adults. Jason did an excellent job of demonstrating the difference in adult learning styles and how it's possible for both non-educators and educators plus those with presentation experience to fulfill an educational role with adult students. His material has great application possibilities for a wide variety of situations--classes, presentations to adult audiences, interviews--his work is terrific! (MD7).

There were many reviews where the previously mentioned approaches (or some of them) were combined in one review, for instance in the following extract:

> This is a fabulous course, and I would give it six stars if such a rating were available! Everything is very clearly explained, and Andy promptly answers any question you might have. If you are interested in using and learning WordPress, you owe it to yourself to take this outstanding course (MD25).

Evidently, the previous extract demonstrates how the writer did not only praise the course, the teaching methods, and the teacher for being helpful, but also, he recommended the course for those who are interested in the topic.

It is worth mentioning that all the reviews that the students provided were positive. This might be attributed to the fact that these reviews were selected from a set of reviews (provided by the students in the review section) by the instructors and introduced to the MOOC

descriptions. Given the promotional nature of MOOC descriptions, it may be argued that the tutors tend to ignore the negative or critical reviews and focus on the favorable ones.

Figure 13

Communicative Purposes in Course and Tutor Reviews

Course Reviews
Praise the course
Recommend the course
Compare it to other courses
Highlight what the student learned

Tutor Reviews
Thank the tutor
Praise the teaching method
Recommend the tutor
Highlight what they learned from tutor
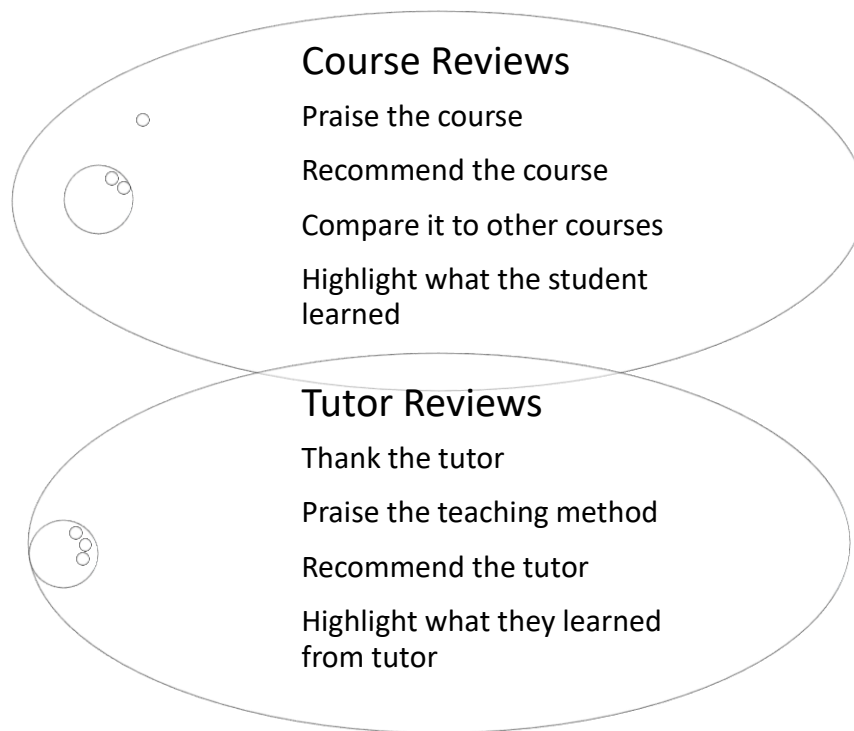
6.2.7.2 The linguistic analysis of the REVIEWS SC (M7-S1). The REVIEW step consists of altogether 9859 words, and it occurred 46 times. The average number of words per move is 232 words. The largest word count belongs to the noun category with 2,635 nouns while the lowest belongs to the subordinating conjunctions (see Table 20 for more detail). No further discussion will be provided in this section since the reviews are provided by the students of the MOOCs (not the instructors) which surpasses the focus of the dissertation.

Table 20

POS Analysis of the REVIEWS SC (M7-S1)

POS	N=9859	Tokens
Nouns	N=2635	*course, students, instructor, udemy, time, knowledge, way, years, concepts*
Verbs	N=2014	*is, are, have, was, can, will, thank, learn, recommend, would*
Adjectives	N=961	*great, best, good, new, own, excellent, easy, few, amazing, clear*
Adverb	N=766	*very, really, just, now, here, ever, highly, extremely, definitely*
Pronoun	N=988	*I, you, it, my, me, your*
Preposition	N=1109	*to, for, in, of, with, on, from, about*
Coordinating conjunction	N=373	*and (315), but (27), or (27)*
Subordinating conjunction	N=104	*that (47), as (14), if (12)*

6.2.7.3 The FACTS SC (M7-S2). This step was not identified in Hajeer's (2020) pilot study, notwithstanding, the current investigation located this step 47 times in the corpus. Even though the manifestations of this step do not vary in the style or the communicative purpose (i.e., to back the claims), still, the present research revealed that there are two chief types of the presented facts. The first type provides information about the field, the skill or the industry itself, for instance, "*The training industry is going through dramatic changes in this current digital era. Just showing up for a day, standing in front of people and reading a few bullet points will no longer cut it*" (MD8), "*The Internet is extremely important in modern life today and all websites and Internet communication relies on networking. This reliance is only predicted to continue with the growth of the Internet of Things (IoT) in the next few years*" (MD13) and "*The fact is, Python is one of the most popular programming languages in the world – Huge companies like Google use it in mission critical applications like Google Search*" (MD18). The second type, however, exhibits statements regarding those who are involved in a particular field. For example,

"*Many developers make a generous living off of creating custom WordPress themes and selling them on websites like ThemeForest. Freelance designers and developers can also take on WordPress projects and make an extra $1,000 - $5,000+ per month*" (MD24) and "*If you manage a virtual team today, then you'll probably continue to do so for the rest of your career. If you don't, then you probably will in the next 5 years*" (MD32).

Even though the current step is called FACTS, this does not imply that the statements themselves are facts, but they were presented as facts. The evidence demonstrates the lack of hints or reference to the sources of such information which is why it seems plausible to regard them as unsupported statements/facts.

6.2.7.4 The Linguistic Analysis of the FACTS SC (M7-S2). This step was located 47 times and it comprises 1550 POS. The average number of words per move is 37 words. Table 21 shows that most words are nouns such as *Course, people, words, learner, learning, industry, time, today* and *world.* These words were used to achieve the communicative purpose of the step by mentioning some facts that support the claims of the instructors.

Table 21

POS Analysis of the FACTS SC (M7-S2)

POS	N=1550	Tokens
Nouns	N=433	*course, people, words, learner, learning, industry, time, today, world*
Verbs	N=287	*is, are, be, will, have, taught, learn, need, know, can*
Adjectives	N=177	*new, one, different, industrial, digital, amazing, skilled, successful, popular*
Adverb	N=112	*just, probably, never, very, then, really, entirely, highly, unfortunately*
Pronoun	N=104	*you, your, it, we, their*
Preposition	N=179	*of, to, in, with, on, by, for*
Coordinating conjunction	N=73	*and (55), but (11), or (6)*

POS	N=1550	Tokens
Subordinating conjunction	N=18	*If (7), as (3), that (2), because (2)*

Such claims are pertinent to the importance of the skills in specific time or place, or its importance for certain people. Moreover, the MOOC writers employed a set of positive adjectives such as *new, amazing, skilled, successful,* and *popular* to add a favorable impression to them. For example, "*The fact is, Python is one of the most popular programming languages in the world*" (MD18) and "*Unfortunately, many people do not receive the key educational information and best practices that make the difference between success and failure from a successful investor*" (MD30).

6.2.7.5 The PERSONAL STORY SC (M7-S3). Like FACTS, this step does not exhibit a noteworthy variety in terms of thematic patterns. The personal stories which were located in MOOC descriptions were mainly about the story of success of the writers and/or how they helped other students. Put simply, the main aim of this step is to prove to the potential students that the skills developed or the knowledge taught in the advertised MOOC are indeed useful, since they (the skills) proved to be helpful to the tutors themselves. For example, the following extract shows how the instructor provided a personal story to prove the efficiency of the skills that he teaches.

> After the first couple years of my sales career, I got sick of the grind...the unreturned phone calls, feeling burnout...worrying about if a large sale would close or not...and I completely changed my approach. I learned how to maintain a really high closing percentage...work less, earn more and enjoy the process a lot more. My entire mindset changed. (MD29)

Some other tutors took this a step further by referring to their role in helping other students succeed. Seemingly, this is a way of proving the practicality of the course by showing that it was not only useful for the tutor, but also for other students. For instance,

They were able to discover interesting things about user behavior, create dashboards to track and measure progress on team goals, pull data for the exec team to use in investor pitch decks, and get data driven about decisions they made. They've since helped many team members buff up their data analysis skills and helped students land jobs. (MD43)

The previous two instances demonstrate the usage of the top ten nouns, adjectives, and verbs (see Table 22) in facilitating the function of PERSONAL STORY. The linguistic analysis of PERSONAL STORY does not reveal any linguistic patterns or compounds which might be attributed to the small size of the sub-corpus.

Table 22

POS Analysis of the PERSONAL STORY SC (M7-S3)

POS	N=1268	Tokens
Nouns	N=307	*course, students, Udemy, team, years, lesson, theory, month, thousands*
Verbs	N=240	*are, can, learn, have, be, help, know, create, become, start*
Adjectives	N=109	*own, good, successful, high, useful, ethical, best, personal, happy, perfect*
Adverb	N=71	*just, most, here, already, enough, very, well*
Pronoun	N=121	*I, my, it, you, their*
Preposition	N=149	*to, of, in, for, on, with, about, from*
Coordinating conjunction	N=47	*and (38), or (6), but (3)*
Subordinating conjunction	N=14	*because (4), if (4), that (3)*

6.2.7.6 The STATISTICS SC (M7-S4). As ascertained earlier, the key aim of the STATISTICS step is to back the claims of the tutors with different types of (numerical) proof.

STATISTICS thus uses the power of numbers to support the statements of the descriptions. Evidently, numbers were chiefly used in connection with the number of students who attended the course and the rankings (the students' collective evaluation of the MOOC) of the courses themselves. To give an example regarding the number of enrollers and reviews, "*there are around 100,000 students who have left around 19,000 reviews*" (MD18) and "*OVER 16,000 DELIGHTED STUDENTS HAVE TAKEN THIS COURSE*" (MD33). The previous two excerpts demonstrate how the tutors use the number of enrollees or reviews to promote their courses. The following two instances, however, exemplify the usage of ranking of the courses within the Udemy platform to promote the course and portray it in rather a favorable light, "*#1 MOST PURCHASED BUSINESS COURSE ON UDEMY!*" (MD39) and "*With over 12,000 ratings and a 4.8 average, my Web Development course is one of the HIGHEST RATED courses in the history of Udemy!*" (MD41).

Due to the limited number of words in STATISTICS (247) no linguistic analysis is provided.

6.3 Summary

This chapter has provided ample information regarding the methods of conducting the study (including definitions and examples as well) to ensure its replicability and reliability. Moreover, this chapter also aimed at presenting the results of the investigation in depth, and in comparison to my previous pilot study in the topic, as well as interpreting these results to gain a deeper understanding of the RMS of MOOC descriptions, their communicative purposes and the ways of achieving these communicative purposes. Table 23 includes the main findings with regard to the communicative purposes and how (i.e., using what methods/strategies) the writers attempted to accomplish these communicative purposes.

Table 23

The Moves and Steps, Their Communicative Purposes and How They Were Achieved

	Communicative purpose	Methods for achieving the CP
M1 PRESENTING CREDENTIALS	Demonstrate the credibility of the tutor of the course	
M1-S1 EXPERIENCE	Highlighting the experience of the MOOC tutor	Through mentioning: -their experience in teaching -their experience in their own field -the number of years of experience - the number of the enrollees in the current course. - the total number of the students of the tutor. -the success of the previous students -names of institutions and organizations (e.g., universities or/and companies) -what they have learned over the years
M1-S2 OTHER PRODUCTS	Demonstrating the exceptional knowledge of the tutors by revealing information about their contributions to the field that they specialize in.	- Including a website that they manage. - Offering further detail about the products' success. - Referring to the positive feedback that the previous courses received.
M1-S3 QUALIFICATION	Strengthening the credibility of the tutors by highlighting their qualifications.	- Mentioning the university qualifications (e.g., PhD or MA) - Pointing out other non-academic institutions that issued the qualification.
M1-S4 ADDRESSING NEEDS	Mentioning the needs of the target audience.	Discussing the needs of the student which are relevant to a particular MOOC
M2 INTRODUCING THE OFFER	Presenting the offer (i.e., the course) to potential students	
M2-S1 PROCEDURE DESCRIPTION	Offering further information regarding the ways in which the MOOC is delivered	- Offering various information regarding the structure, methods of teaching, and tools. - Highlighting the length of the MOOC and the needed time to finish it. - Providing a step-by-step guide pertaining to how the students are going to proceed with the course.

	Communicative purpose	Methods for achieving the CP
		- Referring to the tools which can be used to practice the learned concepts such as activities and quizzes
M2-S2 SYLLABUS	Familiarizing the potential students with the contents of the course	Mentioning a list of the topics that would be covered in the MOOC. Providing a detailed description of each topic
M2-S3 GAPS	Highlighting or implicating the drawbacks of the other courses in the platform.	Mentioning the quantity of the material. - Whether other courses are updated or outdated. - Comparing the level of the experience of the tutors.
M3 HIGHLIGHTING BENEFITS	Adding value to the course	
M3-S1 OF THE COURSE	Listing the benefits that potential students would gain if they took the course	Promising improved professional practice, positive attitude, better jobs, preferable well-being and higher income.
M3-S2 OF THE SKILL	Referring to the positive outcomes that potential students would gain if they learned the skill itself regardless of what MOOC they choose to enroll in.	Accentuating the high market demand and the advantage of having secured and enjoyable work.
M4 INCENTIVIZING	Attracting the potential students to enroll in their MOOCs by offering them additional gains.	Offering updates, personal support, risk-free experience and extra materials are the ways in which the readers were incentivized to take the course
M5 SOLICITING ACTION	Encouraging the potential students to take the course	- Deliberately asking the reader to enroll in the course. - Asking the readers to join those who already took the course. - Asking the readers to join the tutor. - Posing questions (e.g., would like to enroll in the course)
M6 DEFINING THE AUDIENCE	Defining the potential beneficiaries from the MOOC either by listing the features of the MOOC itself, or by describing the target audience	Mentioning the audience's profession or occupation, their level of knowledge (e.g., beginner or advanced), their aspirations (e.g., to speak German fluently) or level of interest in the topic.
M7 PROOF	Supporting the tutor's statements with statistics, reviews, facts or personal stories	

	Communicative purpose	Methods for achieving the CP
M7-S1 REVIEWS	Highlighting the positive experience (with the MOOC) of the previous students.	Reviews are selected from a set of reviews (provided by the students in the review section) by the instructors and introduced to the MOOC descriptions. Given the promotional nature of MOOC descriptions, it might be argued that the tutors may ignore the negative or critical reviews and focus on the favorable ones.
M7-S2 FACTS	Supporting the claims of the tutors with facts	Positive information about the field, the skill, the industry itself or about those who are involved in the field (e.g., investors, businesspeople, programmers)
M7-S3 PERSONAL STORY	Proving to the potential students that the skills developed or the knowledge taught in the advertised MOOC are indeed useful	Adding a story of success of the writers and/or how they helped other students.
M7-S4 STATISTICS	Backing the claims of the tutors with different types of (numerical) proof	Highlighting the number of students who attended the course and the rankings (the students' collective evaluation of the MOOC) of the advertised MOOC compared to other MOOCs.

Chapter 7: The Interview Study

7.0 Setting the Scene

The aim of the interview study is to reveal and to obtain a greater understanding of the effects of MOOC descriptions on prospective students. Also, it intends to distinguish the ways in which each move of the descriptions influences the decisions of the readers concerning whether to enroll in the course or not. The empirical data obtained is hoped to provide information on the actual moves that influence prospective students the most in their decision concerning enrollment.

This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section is dedicated to providing details regarding the research methods of the interview study. It consists of four subsections, namely, participants, instruments, the methods of data collection and the methods of data analysis.

The second part turns towards presenting the results of the study and discussing them. It consists of ten subsections, relating to the emerged themes from the interview analysis, namely, Layout, Syllabus, Credentials, Reviews, Description of The Procedure, The Benefits of the Course, Incentives, The Level of Difficulty, Feelings and Suggestions. Finally, a summary of the main findings of the interview study is provided.

7.1 Methods

7.1.1 Participants

According to Christensen et al. (2013), MOOC students are typically from all over the world, educated, and adults (see 1.3 The Students of MOOCS for more details about the traits of MOOC students). The criteria of selecting the interviewees followed Christensen et al.'s (2013) listed characteristics of MOOC enrollees. This might help in selecting participants who share similar characteristics with those who usually enroll in MOOCs. This could yield relevant information to the current investigation. Therefore, the interviewer approached potential interviewees (e.g., fellow researchers, BA, MA and PhD students, colleagues) by asking them whether they were interested in MOOCs and whether they would be willing to share their experiences in an interview. Those who were selected for the study are university students or fresh graduates, 18-40 years old, from both genders, and from various nationalities (see Table 24 for more detail). The names appearing in the table are pseudo names to ensure the anonymity of the participants. Furthermore, they are able to speak and read texts in English, since the interview and the description language was English. The interviewees have attended or are still attending university programs (BA, MA or PhD) where the teaching language is English. Their domain of study was not considered since the

MOOCs that they would be interested in taking might not be related to their specialization. For instance, an interviewee took MOOCs related to computer science, although he studies applied linguistics at the university.

The number of the interviewees was not predetermined as the aim was to reach a saturation level where no new information emerges from the interviews. Since no new information emerged from the 11th and 12th interview, it was plausible to believe that the saturation level was reached. The number of the interviewees is thus 12, and the estimated time of the interviews was 40-60 minutes.

Table 24

List of the Interviewees, Their Country of Origin and Their Interest

Name	Country	Interest
Nikos	Greece	Ethical hacking
Gréta	Hungary	Presentation
Sara	Hungary	Statistics
Minyue	China	Business administration
Anuka	Mongolia	Business administration
Mantresh	India	Photoshop (Graphic design)
Natasha	Serbia	Startups (Business)
Samer	Syria	Photoshop (Graphic design)
Marry	Romania	Python (programming language)
Mariam	Tunisia	Public speaking
Aisha	Turkey	Public speaking
Alina	Kazakhstan	Java (Programming language)

7.1.2 The Instrument

This study adopts the interview schedule that was piloted by Hajeer and Toptsi (2022) to investigate the effects of MOOC descriptions on potential students. The design of the interview schedule was guided by the research questions as well as the RMS analysis of MOOC descriptions by Hajeer (2020) (see Figure 3). The interview schedule comprises three main parts: introduction, six ice breakers, and 12 main questions (see Appendix F). The introduction presents the interviewees with some information about the aim of the interview

and its expected time duration. Furthermore, it ensures the interviewees' anonymity and also prompts the participants to give honest responses as the study concentrates on their experience. The second part of the interview schedule gathers some data from the participants regarding their age and specialization. Dörnyei (2007) considers this a critical unit in the interview schedule, since such questions "set the tone and create initial rapport" (p. 121).

Then, 12 questions are presented (see Appendix F). The main questions start with one general question that is designed to extract general information as for the reasons that encouraged the interviewees to rank the courses the way they did as well as what the interviewees thought the aims of the descriptions were. This question might sound invalid, as addresses what is thought to be obvious. However, as this research focuses on potential student experiences, it is essential to know the perception of the interviewees themselves and ignore any assumptions that the researcher might have. Questions 4-10 are based on the RMS analysis of MOOC descriptions (Hajeer, 2020) intended to elicit as much information as possible regarding the effects of such descriptions on potential students (see Appendix F). For instance, the following question "In the description, there is a segment where the instructor writes about their own credentials. Did that have an influence on your choice? If yes, did it influence your choice positively or negatively? Please also explain why" is derived from the first move of the RMS analysis, which deals with the credentials of the tutor. The focused nature of questions 4-10 might mislead the reader into categorizing them as leading questions, which is inaccurate. These questions can be thought of as a guidance that ensure the relevance of the elicited information and give the interviewee the freedom to answer. To illustrate, by asking "Were there any quotes from famous people in the text?" the interviewer is directing the conversation towards eliciting information regarding the effect of testimonials on the interviewer.

7.1.3 Procedures of Data Collection

As mentioned earlier (in 7.1.1 Participants), after selecting the interviewees, they were asked about the topics of the MOOCs that they would be interested in taking. This information is essential to the interviewing process as the three MOOC descriptions that are going to be presented for the interviewees would be selected according to the interests of the interviewees. The interviewing process consisted of two stages. In the first stage, the interviewer showed the interviewees three MOOC descriptions (nominated by the interviewer) taken from MOOCs of their interest. By choosing interesting topics for the students, it was assumed that they had rudimentary knowledge of the topic, which would lead to a better understanding of the MOOC descriptions.

After receiving the descriptions, interviewees were asked to read the three descriptions and decide which MOOC they would be interested in taking based on its description. Subsequently, they were asked to rank the other two descriptions with numbers two and three: two referring to the second choice and three referring to the last choice. The first two interviews were conducted face-to-face whereas the rest of the interviews were held online using the ZOOM platform as a precaution against the spread of COVID-19.

The second stage started right after ranking MOOC descriptions. It began with the interviewer asking the interview questions with regard to the first-ranked MOOC description. Afterwards, the interview questions (1- 12) were asked again, but this time regarding the other two MOOC descriptions.

7.1.4 Procedures of Data Analysis

The transcribed interviews consisted of altogether 3,273 words. A thematic analysis was used to investigate the transcribed interviews, starting with a reading of the interview transcripts to obtain an understanding of the text as a whole (Agar, 1980). After that, writing descriptions of the text units that conveys meaning, for instance, "I think the main reason is that he put all the information together which made me confused, and I felt that the teacher would have done it in a clearer way". The description that may be assigned to this excerpt is that the interviewee is explaining his dissatisfaction with the layout of the MOOC description. Such descriptions would help later in assigning labels to these units. However, it is worth noting that these descriptions are "not just descriptive summaries of data but attempts to synthesize them into higher level analytic meanings" (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2018, p. 95).

The next phase of analysis involved incorporating the transcribed interviews into Atlas.ti v7.5.7. This computer software is used in qualitative research, and it provides a function that helps in manually assigning tags for text units. The next step was breaking the interview transcripts into meaning units, (i.e., text units that convey a meaning), then assigning labels to these codes. Based on the coding, a list of themes (see Table 25) that contains all the emerging themes were constructed.

Table 25

The Recurring Themes as Based on the Analysis of the Interviews

Emerging Theme	Example
Layout	"I think the main reason is that he put all the information together which made me confused, and I felt that the teacher would have done it in a clearer way" Minyue
Syllabus	"I was more interested in what is going to be taught rather than who is teaching, and for me it is more important to see the type of content rather than who is the teacher" Alina
Credentials	"There are no credentials, nothing about the person, in other course descriptions it did not really matter but now it matters. If it is here, maybe it would be relieving, comforting" Sara
Reviews	"Yes, this is why I chose A at the beginning because there were reviews from others and I think that this is important for the product or anything because people check the reviews of something before they buy it" Natasha
Description of the Procedure	"He (instructor) started with the approach and how to learn about this skill, and step by step guide and what to do. It sounded very good to me. As for photoshop, he said what it is and how to get into it, this is basically the introduction" Samir
Benefits of the Course	"I feel this description is too exciting, he talks about how much exciting the course is, how much exciting the topic is but he does not talk much about the technical aspects of the course, the course descriptions" Nikos
Incentives	"Actually, I really like the part of getting a certificate. When I participate in a workshop or a training, I really like to have

Emerging Theme	Example
	a certificate that proves my participation in that training" Aisheh
The Level of Difficulty	"And also, by giving descriptions to these topics that also made it helpful to me as a beginner to give me idea about the course which can later help me to make a decision whether this is the right thing for me" Nikos
Feelings	"I think definitely excitement which came from the overview from the units presented in each topic. I was like oh, I do not know these, how do you do that. That was excitement" Alina
Suggestions	"I would not add incentives. It is not important because if they trust me, they can choose and select my course" Mantresh

7.2 Results and Discussion

The current section provides an account of the recurring themes (see Table 25) that were revealed during the data analysis process. These themes relate to layout, syllabus, credentials, reviews, description of the procedure, benefits of the course, incentives, level of difficulty and feelings. The last subsection (i.e., suggestions), however, includes the recommendations of the interviewees to improve the efficiency of the MOOC descriptions that they were shown.

7.2.1 Layout of the MOOC Description

The theme "layout" refers to the visual impression that a MOOC leaves on the reader. The analysis of the interviews revealed four factors that contribute to the impression the layout of MOOC descriptions makes, namely, the organization, length, language of the descriptions and the location of the moves within the MOOC description.

Organization was highlighted by many interviewees as an essential factor in ranking the courses. MOOC descriptions were presented either as a block of text or divided into sections and bullet points. None of the descriptions that were presented as block of texts were ranked first by the interviewees. That is, most of them found it difficult to read or understand such descriptions. When, for example, Minyue was asked about the reasons that made her rank one of the descriptions as number three, she said: "I think the main reason is that he put

all the information together which made me confused, and I felt that the teacher would have done it in a clearer way". Another interviewee, Nikos, explained ranking one of the MOOC descriptions as third the following way:

> [h]is info was not presented in a very organized way. In others the info was presented in a very logical fashion while this one just presents a whole list of information without any organizational strategy like bullet points or anything like that. The others used bullet points, numbered lists and heading to organize the info but this one did not. He just gives you a big block of text that is a bit intimidating and a bit overwhelming. It just gives you all these information and you have to read all this. Nikos

What Nikos and Minyue said reflects the importance of the layout of the description in leaving a positive impression on the reader.

Beside bullet points, using bold type face to highlight specific parts of the course description attracted the attention of two interviewees, namely, Aisheh and Sara. They both asserted that using boldface type to highlight particular words or expressions made the description more attractive. When Aisha, for instance, was asked about what made her interested in one of the course descriptions she answered, "First of all I like the style they offer, the writing style and that they highlight some important things in bold for instance 'one to make a difference', 'inspiring' …". Similarly, Sara answered "It has bullet points. It was also convincing because of the bold type face". The previous two excerpts show the favorable reaction of the two interviews towards the employment of boldface type in the text and describing it as likable and convincing.

Some of the interviewees expressed the concern that disordered texts may indicate that the instructors themselves are disorganized which could affect the perceived quality of the MOOC itself. Sara said, "I was bored reading this. They did not highlight anything ok. It is like a small essay not a course description. Mmm, for me that is a lack of credibility". Minyue supported Sara's opinion when she stated that the tutors "might have a good background but if you don't make the info clear in the description many people will not see the information".

Apart from organizing the text, the quality of the written description plays an important role according to some interviewees. For example, Nikos and Samer mentioned

that ill-written texts discredit the author. When Samer was asked about the reason which led him to rank one of the descriptions as number one he answered "The academic writing is good and the organization and that reflects the person who wrote the text that he has good knowledge of English. It reflects a lot about the author in general". Samer admits that he was influenced by the good writing skills of the author even though the topic of course descriptions was about graphic design.

Finally, the location of some of the moves influenced the interviewees' choices. To explain, Gréta reported that the Reviews did not influence her choice because they were toward the end of the description. She also mentioned that if they were at the beginning of the MOOC description, they would have negatively influenced her choice.

> Maybe if they are at the beginning it would influence me in a negative way in the sense that ooh yeah, they say that it is wonderful, and it is at the beginning of the description and maybe there is a reason for that. But here, you read the description and maybe you have a full picture about the course, so it did not impact my choice in this case. Maybe, if the beginning I would wonder why, but not in this case. Gréta

Another example may be of Sara and Nikos who stated that mentioning the level of difficulty of the course at the very beginning of the description (e.g., the title) had a favorable effect on her choice and encouraged her to read more. About that she said, "First of all the title is convincing because I am a beginning researcher". The title of the description that Sara refers to is "*Quantitative Research for Beginners*". She explained that knowing the level of difficulty of the course from the beginning encouraged her to read more.

Although the interview questions did not address the layout of the MOOC description, still the interviewees expressed its undoubted cruciality. Evidently, the organization of the description, its writing up, and the location of the moves seemed to have played an essential role in impacting the interviewees' choice. This coincides with Mill's (2005) postulation regarding the difference between the offline and the online reader. While in offline texts the reader is expected to read the whole texts, online readers skim the texts and move quickly from one section to the other looking for specific information (Mill, 2005).

7.2.2 Syllabus

The theme labelled as "syllabus" refers to the overview or the breaking down of the course into the topics that are covered in the course. Evidently, the data shows that the syllabus is a key part of the description for almost all the interviewees. Many of them believe

that a well-written syllabus reflects the professionality and knowledge of the tutor, as well as the good quality of the course.

The interview analysis reveals that the syllabus is not only about the topics of the MOOC, but it comprises other information between the lines such as the qualification of the instructor, the credibility of the reviews and the level of difficulty of the course. Anuka, for instance, believes that the syllabus determines whether the qualifications of the instructor are credible when she said, "Actually I choose first the syllabus then the qualification of the person". Alina expressed a similar opinion when she said,

> I was more interested in what is going to be taught rather than who is teaching, and for me it is more important to see the type of content rather than who is the teacher. Alina

Anuka mentioned that the syllabus also decides whether she would continue and read the reviews of the previous students or not. Anuka stated,

> Okay, if this A include their syllabus more detailed way, then I would read these reviews but actually there is not detailed syllabus that is why I did not read the reviews. If there is a good syllabus then I would be more believing of these reviews. Anuka

Put simply, in her opinion the syllabi determine the credibility of the reviews. Besides determining the credibility of the qualifications and the reviews, syllabi also help the readers in measuring the level of difficulty of the MOOC. To exemplify, Mantresh believes that the syllabus reveals everything he needs to know about the course,

> Teachers should teach according to the syllabus which is the most important and without syllabus I do not think anyone will choose any course. If I have to read any course, then I read the syllabus and then choose the course. Mantresh

Mantresh here mentions that he only decides which course to take based on the syllabus. Therefore, when he was asked about how he measures the level of difficulty he said, "From the syllabus I know the level of difficulty, he mentioned all the tools and the details which is enough".

After investigating the importance of the syllabus, the interviewees were asked about what makes an effective syllabus. Some of them gave examples of what they described as good and bad syllabi. However, all of them declared that the amount of detail decides the quality of a syllabus. Put simply, the more relevant details are mentioned about the topics of the syllabus the more attractive it is for them.

What I like here is that the description is, I mean it has the course overview. When I think about a MOOC in programming, I do not know what to expect. I mean I know that there should be description what our learners are saying and reviews and that is always expected but what I am really curious about is topics to be taught and A is the only among the three that has the topics broken down in the description. Alina

The detailed syllabus encouraged her to rank this MOOC description as number one. Similarly, Gréta in the following quote expresses her satisfaction with one of the MOOC descriptions because of the substantial amount of the provided information about the themes of the course. Gréta said:

[t]here was this list of the stages of the course, and it was more thorough than the other two so you can see exactly what you will learn. Maybe the other courses are just as thorough in the units of the course and different focuses, but this seems to know the sequence of the stages and what they want to teach from the beginning. Gréta

Well-written and detailed syllabi also helped in developing positive feelings toward the MOOC description. Mary expresses that clearly when she said "the syllabus was well informative and detailed and made me feel excited that I can learn all the things that have been mentioned". Apparently, knowing more details about the topics of the course increased Mary's confidence in her abilities to learn a new skill, which made her excited about starting the course.

The following two excerpts exemplify the syllabi that are not detailed enough and consequently they were not ranked first by the interviewees. Alina was asked about the reason why she was uninterested in one of the syllabi and she replied:

> [h]ere, they outline the course that there is a hands-on challenge and then there are these 8-portfolio project which is a massive project to be undertaken because it is a lot. Anyway, if we are programmers, we may understand it but here I don't. there is no elaboration as what it means. At least one or two sentences for each project and I may have been more interested about this course or I may have decided whether it good for me or whether I can do that. If I don't feel at this moment that I can do this project I feel that this course does not give me more info to take my decision. It creates more uncertainty and ambiguity for my. Alina

She was confused because the provided information was not enough for her to make an informed decision which is why she said that she would not take the course. What Alina said may be reflecting the negative impact that an undetailed syllabus may have on the reader. Another example may be of Nikos, who said that he lost interest in one of the MOOC descriptions because

> [i]t did not provide much info about the actual course. It provided few topics. It said this is what you are going to learn. But it did not say deeper descriptions about these topics. they did not give any introduction about what these topics are, how to use them. It did not provide practical info like the first one. Nikos

Like Alina, Nikos' dissatisfaction with the provided details is a reason for not finding this MOOC description as effective as the one with the detailed syllabus.

What has been discussed so far shows the importance of a well-designed syllabus. A professional syllabus seems to highly impact the choice of the readers. It may even replace or determine the credibility of other sections of the MOOC description such as the reviews, the qualification of the instructor, among others. The analysis of the interviews also revealed that the efficiency of the syllabus depends mainly on the detailed delineation of the topics that are going to be covered during the course. Put simply, the more relevant and informative the details are, the more effectively they help the potential students in making their decisions, and the more positive the impression they, the details, leave is.

7.2.3 Credentials

The RMS analysis in section 6.2.1 PRESENTING CREDENTIALS SC revealed that the PRESENTING CREDENTIALS move (M1) consists of three steps, QUALIFICATION

(M1-S1), EXPERIENCE (M1-S2) and OTHER COURSES (M1-S3). The interview study was conducted to measure how effective these steps are. Surprisingly, the qualifications of the tutors were not as influencing as their experience or the other courses that were taught are.

Only one interviewee mentioned that she was affected by the qualification of the instructor. Mary read three MOOC descriptions about programming and then she ranked them according to the positive impact which they had on her. When she was asked whether the qualifications of the instructor affected her choice, she answered "It is because that the author of the course is a British programmer who went to Oxford and that one information that made it be my first choice". Evidently, Mary decided to rank this programming course as number one because the instructor of the course attended the well-known university of Oxford. When she was asked about the reason for ordering the other two descriptions as two and three, she replied "I was also excited about them as well, but I was more excited when I read the C knowing that the tutor is from Oxford". This excerpt demonstrates the positive impression that the issuer of the qualification (Oxford) had on her rather than the qualification itself.

A question about the qualifications was raised to Sara during the interview and her answer was:

> [t]here are no credentials, nothing about the person, in other course descriptions it did not really matter but now it matters. If it is here, maybe it would be relieving, comforting. Sara

Mantresh was interested in graphic design, and he read MOOC descriptions about a design software called Photoshop. Mantresh highlighted the triviality of the qualifications when he stated that "The experience enough for photoshop and qualification is not needed and with his experience he can train us well". In his opinion, experience can replace the qualification but not the other way around.

Unlike the qualifications, the experience of the instructor seemed to have caught the attention of the interviewees. Most of them highlighted the importance of the experience of the tutor. However, many of the interviewees were skeptical about the experience of the tutors, which is why they had various different criteria.

Minyu and Nikos, for instance, were interested in the size and the location of the company in which the instructors gained their experience. Minyu, who was interested in one of the courses because the tutor is a company CEO said:

[f]or a CEO it is not very necessary where he graduated but which one is his company If a very small company, then the course is not attractive but if big then it is attractive. Minyue

Minyue believes that the bigger the company, the more credible the experience of the tutor is. Nikos, on the other hand, was more convinced by the location of the company in which the instructor works. When Nikos was asked about the experience of the tutor, he said, "the teacher said here 'I work as a penetration tester in Germany' and here you know OK this guy, he is a professional he does that himself so that is good".

In Mariam's case, irrelevant experience had a negative effect on her choice. Mariam said,

He is an experienced man in his field. He is an award-winning professor and it is WOW but still when I see this entrepreneurs I feel it is not for me this is more business oriented and I am not interested in this field Mariam

Mariam is a university student who would like to improve her public speaking skills. What she said may indicate that relevance is a critical factor with regards to the experience of the tutor. That is, a reader is more likely to be attracted to a particular course if the experience of the tutor is relevant to the topic of an advertised MOOC.

Aishah and Samir were rather interested in how the instructors presented their experience. They both declared that it is not enough for the instructor to say that he has experience, but he has to demonstrate that through examples about their previous achievements. Aishah was interested in public speaking as well and when she was asked whether the experience of the tutor affected her choice, she answered:

[t]hey have more than 50 courses, it is huge experience and also 'three instructors, three different perspectives' they also developed programs for government agencies

and conferences and so on. I suppose I mean the range is large and in different fields. I think this explanation gives me the idea of them being professional. Aishah

Samir was interested in Graphic design, and was exposed to three course descriptions about a designing software called Photoshop. Samir expressed his dissatisfaction with the student reviews as follows:

> Samir: So, because it was a bit exaggerating. He did not talk about the awards of the projects or achievements. Only reviews from people and it was not very interesting to me. Although it is good to have it or to see it, it would be nice to see something more persuasive than this.
> The interviewer: What would be more persuasive?
> Achievements that I can search and read, things that shows that he is really professional that he is well known and advanced and projects that he had done that I can see and search. Samir

So far, the discussion was about the field experience that the MOOC providers have. Sara and Minyu also expressed their concerns regarding the tutor's experience in teaching.

> For me I like practical lesson and not every successful person can be a good teacher. Although he has experience in real life. It does not mean that he can really teach people in a good way. I believe that successful people are not necessarily good teachers. So, if you take the course and you find the teaching is not good or you find that his opinion is not good for you then you can return the course. Minyu

Establishing credibility and gaining the trust of the audience help reach the ultimate goal of a copywriting which is to convince the readers to take action (Mill, 2005). Evidently, most of the interviewees were not affected by the qualifications of the instructors except for Mary who was influenced by the institution that issued the qualification (Oxford) rather than what the qualification primarily represents, i.e., successfully passing the institution's requirements to receive the qualification. Although the qualifications were deemed useless by the interviewees, one of them mentioned that it would be better to see the qualifications of the tutor. This may implicate that having the qualifications of the tutor mentioned in the description would not affect the reader neither positively nor negatively. Notwithstanding,

not mentioning them would negatively affect the MOOC description. Most of the interviewees highlighted the importance of including the experience of the tutor in the description. The aspects that the interviewees highlight with regard to the experience of the tutor are, relevance, the size and the location of the institutions from which they gained experience, and teaching experience. Even though the contributions of the tutors to their area of expertise was acknowledged as a separate step (M1-S2 OTHER PRODUCTS) in the RMS analysis, the interviewees linked them to the experience of the tutor. Put simply, some interviewees mentioned that the instructors should mention their contributions to a particular field as a demonstration of experience.

7.2.4 Reviews

Reviews include the opinions of the previous students who participated in a particular MOOC. The interviewees were divided into three parties when they were asked about the efficiency of the Reviews in the MOOC descriptions. They either considered the reviews unnecessary and unreliable, were positively affected by them, or only contemplated the reviews that provided information about the MOOC.

When Minyue and Samir were asked about their opinions about the reviews that they read in the descriptions, they answered that the reviews were unnecessary, and did not positively impact their choice. Samir said, "the last one included reviews, and I did not feel interested because I am pretty sure I can find reviews somewhere if I look for it online". Minyue also added that the reviews in the MOOC descriptions are unnecessarily time-consuming when she said "I do not think that it is very important to give this kind of long customer review. It is kind of waste of time". Moreover, Minyue believes that including the reviews of the previous students in the MOOC descriptions discredit the MOOC itself and she expressed this in the following way:

> I think it is not good because it makes me feel sad. As it is not a course but a product. So, I think if you want to make the course description look more serious then there must not include customer opinion in it. Minyu

Many interviewees such as Samir, Gréta and Minyue were skeptical about the source of the reviews. For instance, Gréta said:

> I do not like reading them usually. Because you never read bad ones and I understand that this is promotional material. Before you read them you know that they are going

to be about how wonderful the course is. I read them by bumping into them. I must say I can predict beforehand what they say. Gréta

The excerpt demonstrates Gréta's concern regarding the credibility of the reviews. Samir, however, was more open in expressing his doubts by saying, "But for reviews, you can ask your roommates and friends to write you reviews, it is easy". Samir points out how easy it is to have fake reviews. Similarly, Minyue declared a similar opinion when she said:

[w]e do not know the reviews are real or not, I myself can write some opinions and no one else would know cause if I am the teacher of the course, I will only write good opinions about the course. Minyue

Others, like Aishah and Alina, did not doubt the credibility of the reviews, but they were not sure whether the reviews could help them make a decision because they believe that different people have different needs and what was helpful for some may not be for them by definition. To express this point of view, Alina said,

In MOOC it is so individual and every learning comes with vast background experience and knowledge in that area and it is difficult to rely on what others say because we are really different, like this one person says here in the review 'it is a good mix of theory and practice' but what if I am more into theory or more into practice and I do not really want to say the mix. Alina.

Natasha was the one interviewee who was positively influenced by the reviews of the MOOC description. When she was asked whether she was influenced by the reviews she replied,

Yes, this is why I chose A at the beginning because there were reviews from others and I think that this is important for the product or anything because people check the reviews of something before they buy it. Natasha

Unlike her, Nikos, Alina and Mantresh indicated their susceptibility as to be influenced by the reviews if they include helpful information. Mantresh said:

[t]hey (previous students) just mentioned about the teacher and how he is clear but he did not mention anything about the course. I want to know about the course not only the teacher. Mantresh.

Notwithstanding, when the interviewees were asked to describe a helpful review, Nikos had the most articulate opinion when he said:

I think a helpful review gives some info about the content of the course. Not just good things. I want to know what you (previous student) learnt exactly, like what content did you take from the course and how could you apply it in your life. I do not want to see the feedback about how good the course is or mind blowing or whatsoever, but I want to see some practical things as well. I want to see people talk about how the course helped them. So, if I was making my own course, I would try to find reviews like that. Nikos

Nikos' opinion is inclusive because it contains what the other interviewees said. He thinks that a helpful review may include some description of the MOOC, the learning outcomes, and the applications of the course in real life. To further examplify, Alina said,

Again, no I didn't really connect to reviews, no emotions, no impressions, I didn't really connect with reviews, they are all 5 stars but again what is 'this is the best course in Udemy' or 'good job' I just don't feel that it gives me an understanding of what is good in this course. Alina

Again, the excerpt here reflects the confusion that the reviews caused to Alina since they were not clear. The ambiguity caused by not mentioning the reason behind praising the teacher or the MOOC seems to have a negative effect on the interviewee.

The RMS analysis revealed that REVIEWS was used 232 times and a total of 13,851 words which are the highest numbers among all the moves and steps. This may reflect the importance that the MOOC instructors attribute to REVIEWS. However, the interview analysis suggests differently. The majority of the interviewees were skeptical about the credibility of the reviews which is why they consider them a waste of time. Still, some of the

interviewees said that they would consider reading them if they contained useful information about the course itself. This might imply that adding reviews with useful information may increase their chance of being read.

It was established previously (4.6.1.3 Reference Group) that the reference group is an external factor that is likely to impact the individual behavior (Solomon, 2017). Furthermore, it established that the consumers are encouraged by the marketers to share their positive opinions about the products or the services they tried before in order to increase the number of the customers (Smith, 2011). Nonetheless, this strategy does not seem to be effective for the participants of the current study in the sense that most of them would rather skip this section and read other parts of the MOOC description. This might be attributed to the fact these reviews are chosen and added to the description by the authors, which may hurt the credibility of these reviews.

7.2.5 Description of the Procedure of the Course

The description of the procedure was welcomed by the interviewees. The majority of the interviewees expressed their satisfaction with this part of the MOOC description. Since the description of the procedure also discusses the approach of the MOOC, many participants commented on the approach of the course.

Samir was one of the students who were positively influenced by the description of the procedure when he said:

> [h]e (instructor) started with the approach and how to learn about this skill, and step by step guide and what to do. It sounded very good to me. As for photoshop, he said what it is and how to get into it, this is basically the introduction. Samir

The previous extract demonstrates Samir's satisfaction with the course description since the instructor described the procedure in detail and thoroughly introduced the software. Gréta explained why this description of the procedure is important by saying:

> [i]n offline courses I would describe the classroom and how many people will be there in the course room, what the atmosphere would be like. So, in online courses I would do something similar and give for example how to complete the units, will there be an exam at the end, or after each unit. Otherwise, you cannot imagine how you will be taking this course, that actually was not really mentioned anywhere. Gréta

The description of the procedure was not mentioned in any of the MOOC descriptions that Gréta read. Still, she felt the need for them to familiarize the potential students with the course.

As for the approach of the course, there were some interviewees who were attracted to the practical approach and others who preferred a balanced approach between theory and practice. Nikos communicated his interest in practical approach when he added,

> He (the instructor) talked about how practical this course is, so he talks about how to use this knowledge in the future. So, you are not to learn theoretical things and abstracts but things that you can actually use. He also talked about learning by example. I am someone who prefers to learn by example so having this practical course is attractive to me. Nikos

Mary had a similar opinion to Nikos when she said, "there was the idea of learning by practice because I like also the theoretical part of everything, but it is easier for me to learn by practice". The following excerpt, nonetheless, is from Anuka who said that she favors a balance between theory and practice. She expressed this point of view when she said, "Some courses offer some practical experience, and you can learn theory and practical as well and it is better. So, theory and practical background as well".

Evidently, the description of the procedure is one of the critical moves that help familiarize the students with the MOOCs by providing thorough information about the context of the MOOC such as the duration and the approach (i.e., practical or theoretical), among others. Regarding the approach, most of the interviewees preferred a practical approach of learning. This might be attributed to the fact that the courses that they have chosen are mainly about practice-oriented skills such as graphic design, programming and public speaking.

7.2.6 The Benefits of the Course

The Interviewees were asked about the promises that the instructors gave in the descriptions. This question intended to collect data regarding the efficiency of including the benefits of taking a particular MOOC in the description. The answers of the interviewees varied according to the nature of the promises. Based on their answers, it was possible to divide the benefits into three types, namely, realistic, exaggerated and understated.

Realistic promises left a favorable influence on the readers. Aishah was one of the interviewees who openly stated that MOOCs with realistic promises are more preferred.

Like you know they said that all the other courses make promises, but we promise this like 'real speakers and real science', and they explain it for each of them. I find them logical possible and not hard to reach. The explanation, I find it clear and realistic, yes you can reach the level they promise. They are realistic. Aishah

Interpreting the promises made them appear more reasonable and accessible. This had a positive effect on her. Aishah was also asked to further explain this point, and she answered:

[f]or instance, 'you want to be public speaker, but you are terrified to speak' anyone can feel this. 'You can be very good at your field, but you are afraid to speak in public' It is very realistic, and it is believable. 'You have value, but you feel you are not credible enough' and I feel that, you know, I think everyone feels the same. 'You want to be a trainer' yes, I know that many people wants to see one of these. Again, it is very realistic, and everybody needs to improve presenting skills and public speaking. Aishah

Aishah's opinion reflects her satisfaction with the MOOC description that she was referring to, notwithstanding, the following quotation from Nikos shows a different opinion,

Giving descriptions about the skills you are going to learn he present them in a form of questions. He raises three questions here. 'Would you like to learn how to exploit systems and computers and compromise routers?' Here he does not say directly that you are going to learn these skills but you kind of guess that you are going to learn these things because they are in the questions. But he never specifically that you are going to learn these skills about penetrating. Nikos

Seemingly, presenting the benefits in question form left a bad impression and a feeling of opacity on Nikos.

The second type of promises was the exaggerated ones. Some of the benefits that were provided in some MOOC description were perceived by the students as overstated and thus hard to reach. Natasha expressed her opinion about exaggerated promises by saying:

> [b]ecause I don't like when they, aah, I don't like when he wrote that I would reach 100 thousand dollars in one year and I do not know, when you do not reach that you will be disappointed so immediately. Then he offers the salary as how much will you make, it is, I don't know, it is not honest, that is why I did not choose this one. I do not know if you will reach this money in reality or not. Natasha

Natasha was interested in courses that teach about startup businesses. She perceived the promises that were provided in the MOOC description as exaggerated, which made her question the credibility of the MOOC itself and rank it as number three. She believes that the author provided unrealistic numbers regarding the income that she would gain if she enrolled in the course.

The last type of promises was the understated ones. That is, when the MOOC description promises less than the expectations of the interviewees. Samir, for example, commented on the promises that an instructor gave with connection to the skills that the enrollees would learn by the end of the course. Samir said that he was disappointed by the skills because the title of the course was exciting, but the benefits were less than anticipated. Put simply, the skills that the MOOC description offers are basic and do not require someone to take a whole course to learn them. Samir said:

> [t]hen I saw 'what you will learn from photoshop' then I was shocked. I was expecting something else based on the suspense that he gave at the beginning. Then I read 'crop images, whiten teeth, brighten up …. Reduce redness, black and white' … This is not what I want to learn photoshop for, anyone can do that by opening photoshop and trying things around. Samir

Highlighting the benefits of the course is one of the major themes in the RMS analysis of the current dissertation. However, the interview analysis suggests that for the promises to be effective they should be clearly stated, sufficiently explained, and above all, realistic. On

the other hand, vague, exaggerated and overstated promises left a negative impact on the interviewees. This effect is clearly expressed in their comments. Samir, for example, said,

> A was interesting at the beginning because it was promising then he kept selling it 'you will enjoy it, you will love it no matter what you get, trust me', and so on. It did not sound professional to me. It was rather business, just join and give me money. Samir

Another example of the negative effect of over promising may be Nikos' experience with one of the MOOC descriptions. Nikos was asked about the aspects that negatively affected his choice and he answered:

> I feel this description is too exciting, he talks about how much exciting the course is, how much exciting the topic is but he does not talk much about the technical aspects of the course, the course descriptions. Nikos

Aishah expressed her disappointment with one of the course descriptions by saying,

> The tone of the language is not really professional to me it is too much marketing. I understand that they have it to sell but it depends on what you want to sell. I mean chocolate ads should be different from educational content. It seems like chocolate ads, 'bestselling business course' and 'you will learn everything' how is it possible to learn everything? What is everything. I think they exaggerate; the words are not realistic. Aishah

The impression that exaggeration had on the interviewees seems to follow Mill' (2005) claims. Exaggerating and using inaccurate language in copywriting negatively impacts the efficiency of the copywriting as it encourages the readers to question the credibility of the text (Mill, 2005). Evidently, using understated description of the benefits had a negative effect on some of the interviewees as well as such promises do not seem to meet the needs of the students. The answers of the interviewees regarding the benefits of the course show that realistic promises affected them the most.

7.2.7 Incentives

Incentives include any extra material or services that the tutor of the course offers to attract the readers (Hajeer, 2020). Such materials or services may include certificates, books, websites, booklets, course updates and personal support. The conducted interviews showed that there are many types of incentives which affected their choice, namely, certificates, extra material, instructor support, and money back guarantee

One of the incentives that encouraged the interviewees to prefer some of the MOOC descriptions was the offered certificate. Mariam was positively influenced by the course description when she read that she would receive a certificate by the end of the course when she said, "Actually, I really like the part of getting a certificate. When I participate in a workshop or a training, I really like to have a certificate that proves my participation in that training". Aishah, however, gave an extensive explanation regarding the importance of the certificate for her when she stated,

> I think an official certificate is the most important for me because you know you need to get something from the course … Because when you have it you can apply for anything, and it is official, and it proves that you took the course. You know it shows that you spent money and time on something. I do not really care when they say 'amazing or incredible course', but what they give at the end. Aishah

Alina was attracted to the additional website that the MOOC description offered. This website acts as a resource that includes the information which is presented during the course and as a platform where the students can communicate. Alina said:

> I went for A because just the knowledge that this A course gives you this website with the resources which are for free it say to me that at any time if I have a problem I can go to the website and search for information and maybe there is a forum for other learners or programmers and we can do this peer learning and they can help me in upgrading my java skills. Alina

Alina sees this website as a place for getting help whenever she needs it. Similarly, Samir and Nikos were favorably influenced by the help that the instructors offer. However, this help was not presented through a different website but through the platform itself. In the

descriptions that attracted Nikos and Samir, the tutor offered to be available for help if the students had questions. Nikos said,

> He talks about 24 support and having a response within 15 hours. But really that was the only incentives. So, I get from this course is the practical knowledge and the support. It felt nice to be able to get further help so if I have questions, I can contact the instructor and get feedback that way. So that is good to me. Nikos

This type of support had a positive impact on Nikos. Samir was also positively influenced by the support of the instructor and he mentioned some excerpts from the description when he said:

> [y]es, he was saying that 'I will teach you to learn photoshop so do not worry about it if you do not have prior experience with photoshop' and 'instructor support within 24 hours', 'I do my best to answer every question' … I felt that the course is not only for business but also to teach me photoshop. That is, it is not about me paying money and not getting what I paid for. It sounded promising and nice and reassuring. Samir

He also added that the support from the instructor enhanced the credibility of the course. That is, the course was not only designed for financial gains, but it also aimed at helping the students in learning what they applied to.

Some MOOC descriptions included reference to continuous updating of the course which attracted Nikos and Alina. Nikos stated,

> He said that the course gets updated, so when you sign up you get life time access that is updated and that is nice because when I sign to the course I get full access and it will be updated. And here I feel like getting a product that is going to serve not just for some time but it can be useful for me as well in the future. That is positive for me. Nikos

Nikos here describes how updating the course can leave a positive impression. He believes that continuously updated courses are attractive because the course would be useful even later. This does make sense as the MOOC descriptions that Nikos read are connected to

computer science which is a rapidly developing industry. Alina had a similar opinion as well since she is interested in programming courses and she commented,

> The updateness of the course. I have no idea how many versions there in Java are but here they say that there is Java 8, 9, 10 etc. So, my assumption here it would really go from basics to the current states and it would also be interesting how to see the language progressed from 9 to 16 and to see what was interesting in 9 in that generation and what is different now in Java 16. Alina

Alina believes that it is interesting to follow the developing trajectory of the programming language that she chose to learn. The current MOOC description gives her the chance to do that which is why she was attracted to it more than the other two courses.

Finally, the last incentive which was referred to by the interviewees is the refunding guarantee in case the courses did not match their needs. Natasha and Gréta mentioned that they were not affected negatively nor positively by this incentive. Gréta said, "In the other two courses there was money back guarantee thing. But again, it did not really influenced my decision making". When Natasha was asked about the reason why she was not affected, she answered,

> Well probably if you are considering taking the course you would invest money in it and you do not want it back. So, if you pay for the course then you don't expect it to come back. Like when you take a language course, I pay every class and at the end I fail the language exam I can't ask the money back from the teacher. Natasha

Other interviewees such as Mariam and Alina were glad to see the money back guarantee in a MOOC description because that means a risk-free experience. Alina said,

> Something that caught my attention, and it is nice to see in the course is the thing that there is no risk involved in the course and they can guarantee money back in 30 day and maybe if I do not like the course I can claim the money back. Alina

Not mentioning the money back guarantee statement discouraged Mariam from considering one of the courses because she found it risky. Mariam expressed this by saying:

[w]hen I read this one I felt that I wanted to make it number one but when I notice
that there is no money back then I put it the second. Mariam

The interview analysis shows that the incentives had a positive influence on the
interviewees in almost all cases. Including a website in the description that could help the
students during the learning process, for example, was welcomed by an interviewee.
Moreover, the help that the instructors offer for the students was also received positively by
many interviewees. Certificates as well had a positive influence on the interviewees as they
were perceived as a proof of acquiring the skill they sought to develop. Finally, as for the
refund guarantee, some interviewees were positively influenced while others reported not
being impacted by this incentive.

7.2.8 Level of Difficulty

The Level of difficulty is usually mentioned in the WHO IS THIS COURSE FOR
section in MOOC descriptions. As mentioned earlier, this section is present in every MOOC
description since the platform requires the courses' providers to include it (Hajeer, 2020).
Still, some tutors decided to include the level of difficulty at the very beginning of the
description. This was received positively by two of the interviewees who happened to come
across such descriptions. Nikos, for example, was glad to see the level of difficulty
mentioned at the beginning of the description because it is time saving in the sense that if he
found the level of difficulty not suitable for him then he would not read the rest of the
description. Nikos said:

[i]n number one, the tutor mentioned the level of difficulty in the very beginning and
put it in bold at the beginning. NO PRIOR KNOWLEDGE. So, you see that in the
very beginning, and you say that, okay, this course is for me. Whereas this one, you
do not find that until the end and same thing with the third one, you do not find it until
the end. Here you waste your time reading the description and, in the end, you find
that OH this course is not for me, and I wasted 5-10 minutes reading this for no
reason. So, in the beginning would be the best place for that. Nikos

In another course, Nikos relied on the description of the syllabus to decide whether
the course is suitable for him or not. Nikos stated:

[a]nd also, by giving descriptions to these topics that also made it helpful to me as a beginner to give me idea about the course which can later help me to make a decision whether this is the right thing for me. Nikos

When other interviewees, such as Alina, were asked about how they knew the level of difficulty they said that they used the 'WHO THIS COURSE IS FOR' section to decide whether the course is suitable for them or not. Alina said, "I just relied on what they describe here because they say that it is absolutely good for complete beginners and for beginners in general". Sara provided a further explanation when she answered:

I could judge this based on the WHO IS THIS COURSE FOR when he mentioned that it is good for studs and PhD candidates and I think I am around research in the PhD and work as a researcher, in the university I am not a PhD candidate yet but a PhD student. So, I think I belong to this category and also, I belong to the university teachers because I teach in the university as well. So, I belong to at least three categories. Then again, they say anyone who is passionate about QUAN research. Again, it is me. Sara

Again, Sara could decide the suitability of the course based on the same section. Moreover, what Sara mentioned may imply that the more categories the reader belongs to, the more convincing the course is. That is, when Sara found that she belongs to the PhD students, university teachers and the researcher categories, she became more persuaded that the course fits her needs. Aishah also had a similar perspective as she relied on the 'WHO THIS COURSE IS FOR' section to make her decision. Aishah said:

[b]ecause they also say for whom this course is. Like I found myself here. Teachers and professionals and I thought that it is good for me. I did not think that this is difficult for me because I am in the list. Aishah

Natasha who was interested in courses specialized in startup companies, also made her decision based on the 'WHO THIS COURSE IS FOR' section, notwithstanding, the level of difficulty was not her concern. Natasha was interested in the courses because it matches

the goal that she aspires to achieve. Her goal is to improve her small business and that was the second category that the instructor mentioned in the section. Natasha said,

> I read that who this course is for, and I thought that it matches my ideas and plans …I am the second one, 'an existing a small business owner just starting out'. I started making jewelry and that what I do. It would be good to take course for it to make marketing strategy and social media and everything. It is very complicated to do it alone. Natasha

The section that discusses the level of difficulty is always provided at the end of the MOOC description since the platform decides its location. Still, some interviewees find it a reader-friendly gesture to briefly mention the level of difficulty at the beginning of the MOOC description, possibly to save the readers' time and energy. Moreover, the evidence suggests that the more categories the reader belongs to, the more appealing the course becomes. This may imply that the efficiency of this particular section depends on its inclusivity. Finally, categories that match the goals of the students also seem to be appealing for the students as they could identify with them. The idea of inclusivity in the current context seems to disagree with existing literature on market segmentation (Mothersbaugh et al., 2020; Camilleri, 2018; Solomon, 2017) which suggests that focusing on one segment of the audience is more efficient than targeting several segments simultaneously. The more specific the segment is the more likely the product or service is designed to meet their needs (Mothersbaugh et al., 2020).

7.2.9 Feelings of the Interviewees

Although the RMS analysis was not concerned about the feelings of the potential students, the interview study addressed them in order to gain deeper understanding about the efficiency of the moves and steps of the MOOC descriptions. Reportedly, the interviewees had many feelings while reading the MOOC descriptions such as confusion, excitement and reassurance, among others. There were specific features or moves that triggered these feelings.

One of the main feelings that many interviewees could identify was the sense of clarity when the MOOC descriptions were organized, and the technical terms were explained. Minyu, for example, said:

[p]roviding the information to many parts and giving each part a title made me feel very good because I could get the info I want, and he describes it in shorter sentence which is easy to understand which gave the feeling of clarity. Minyu

A clear description of the procedure of taking the MOOC also induced a favorable feeling in Aisha who answered, "First of all it is very clear about what is promised and what to expect and what to have at the end". However, in Nikos's case, he felt confused when the topics and the technical terms were not presented clearly. Nikos said, "Maybe a few times it feels a little confusing because I am not familiar with the topics maybe because I am not familiar with the technical terms".

Another feeling that was frequently reported by the interviewees was the feeling of excitement. There were many factors that induced this feeling. Providing a detailed overview of the course was one of the factors which triggered excitements in some interviewees such as Alina who said:

I think definitely excitement which came from the overview from the units presented in each topic. I was like oh, I do not know these, how do you do that. That was excitement. Alina

Another factor was the provision of a vivid image regarding the practical application of the course. Nikos' description was the most detailed when he said:

[i]t talks about hacking and stealing passwords and personal information and all that stuff and there are words like 'dangerous' and 'full control', and 'root force attacks' and it was exciting like, OH I can't wait to attack people to read sensitive files. In this sense I was excited, and it made the course interesting. And you have this image from the movies about hacking like having three computers in front of you while hacking. so, this description kind of makes this image in your head and in this way, it gets more exciting I think. Nikos

The course description that Nikos described was about ethical hacking. In his opinion, the provided description triggered a feeling of excitement in him because it draws vivid

images of hacking stereotypes using evocative expressions such as dangerous and full control.

Another factor that induced some excitement was the qualification or the experience of the instructor. Mary, for instance, was excited to start the course because the tutor of the course graduated from the prestigious university of Oxford when she said, "I was more excited when I read the C knowing that the tutor is from Oxford". Minyu had a similar opinion except that the excitement was induced by the fact that the tutor of the course is an experienced CEO. Minyu expressed this by saying, "I think the main reason that he is a CEO, so, the teacher of the course an experienced person".

The last positive feeling that the interviewees discussed was a mixture of reassurance, relief and being cared about. This type of feeling was triggered mainly by addressing the fears and the needs of the students. Feeling that their fears were addressed and then reassured, the interviewees were more attracted to the course. Mantresh fears for example were that learning photoshop may be stressful and difficult. Mantresh commented:

> [h]e (the instructor) will not cause us stress and he mentioned that his goal is to teach us photoshop without stress and that is very relieving to know that there will not be stress. He gives us very positive vibes when he says that we should not stress because photoshop is not very difficult. Mantresh

Sara wanted to learn more about statistics by taking the MOOC, however, she was not confident about her knowledge in mathematics. The MOOC provider included an assurance in the MOOC description that the enrollees do not need to be mathematicians to take the course.

> Maybe the most convincing was that the person who wrote this description mentioned that you do not need to be a mathematician to take this course as I am not very talented in math. This is very comforting, I like statistics, but I do not like math. Still, it is good for me to hear that I do not have to be a mathematician to take this course. Sara

Alina had a feeling of being cared about when the tutor of the course included some incentives such as a bonus and a book. She expressed this by saying:

> [w]ith bonus I felt some kind of being cared about. Like they care about me as a learner by guiding me through the overview and they not only care for money but also they want to support me whether with the bonus or the book. Alina

Scholars stressed the importance of emotion for influencing the decision making process of the consumer (Foxall, 2014; Hayden, 2009; Kapoor & Madichie, 2012; Khan, 2007; Mothersbaugh et al., 2020; Solomon, 2017). However, the current analysis provides deeper insight into the emotions' roles in affecting the potential students. The information that the current section yielded suggests that some moves and features of the MOOC descriptions have the power to trigger feeling. Providing coherent and informative MOOC descriptions seems to create a feeling of understanding the procedure of the course which was a welcomed feeling by the interviewees. Moreover, portraying a vivid image of the practical applications of the course triggered the imagination of the interviewees which made the course even more appealing to them. Finally, reassuring the students by demonstrating an understanding of their concerns increased the efficiency of the MOOC description.

7.2.10 Suggestions for Improving MOOC Descriptions

Towards the end of the interview, the participants were asked about the moves and steps which they would include if they were to design a MOOC description of their own. The aim of this question was to gain a deeper understanding regarding the efficiency of the different moves and steps. Table 26 includes the names of the participants and the moves that they would consider adding to their own MOOC description.

All of the interviewees referred to the importance of the credentials, such as the qualifications, the experience and matching the needs of the readers. Therefore, they all mentioned that they would include the credentials. However, some of the interviewees indicated that they would also include the contact details of the instructor. Samir expressed this by saying:

> I would include my email. If I find an email address of the instructor that would make me think that this is not only about business, but he also really cares about me getting the knowledge me if I have any questions I can ask anytime. Also, me even before the course starts, I can ask questions and get more knowledge about the course. So, it would be nice to have something like that. Samir

Another suggestion that was reported is adding a profile picture. Sara believes that adding a profile picture helps in making the course more visually attractive. Sara said, "I would introduce myself, and in visual appealing way, maybe a profile picture. I would include my profile picture".

As for the level of difficulty, seven interviewees indicated that they would explain the level of difficulty in their own MOOC description. Nikos took it a bit further by suggesting mentioning the level of difficulty at the beginning of the description in order to save the readers' time in case the course does not suit them. The other five interviewees did not consider adding the level of difficulty to their own MOOC descriptions. The main reason was that a well explained and detailed syllabus should help the potential students in deciding whether the course suits them or not.

Regarding the reviews, most of the interviewees said that they were not affected by the reviews of the MOOC descriptions that they read. Others even doubted the credibility of the reviews. However, almost all the participants answered that they would add few positive reviews to their own MOOC descriptions. When they were asked about the reason the answers were similar and can be represented by Mariam's answer:

I am not a fan of the reviews, but I will include them because there are people who read them to have an idea about the course. Mariam

That is, the majority of the interviewees were not affected by the reviews, but they think that the reviews might influence many other people. Mantresh said that he would include reviews in his description only if he thinks that the syllabus is not detailed enough. Mantresh said:

I would never mention the review but only if the syllabus is short. But if it's long and detailed then I would not mention the reviews because they are not important, because from the syllabus the student can easily judge. Mantresh

When Gréta was asked previously whether she was affected by the reviews, she answered that she does not usually read them because they are predictable since the tutors would only include the reviews that promote the advertised MOOC. Therefore, Gréta

suggested that she would avoid this problem by including a section in her MOOC description where the students have the freedom to add their opinions about the course. Gréta said:

> You know, people who would like to take a course would like to read about the opinion of the people who taken the course already. It is a trust issue. Maybe I would open a comment section which would be closer to reality than me to zing the three best ones. Practically anyone could comment and there might be bad experiences mentioned but at the same time it is more realistic. Gréta.

Six out of 12 participants mentioned that they would include different incentives such as money-back guarantee, tutor support and extra material in order to increase the efficiency of their MOOC descriptions. However, the other six interviewees find it unnecessary to add any incentive as the main focus should be on the tutor and the course itself. Mantresh expressed that by saying:

> I would not add incentives. It is not important because if they trust me, they can choose and select my course. Mantresh

The syllabus manifests a consensus among all of the interviewees. They all mentioned that they would definitely include a syllabus of their courses in the description. They believe that the syllabus is a multifunctional move that may replace many other moves (see section 6.2.2.2 SYLLABUS for detail). Similarly, most of the students seem to agree on including the benefits of the course as well.

As for the procedure, it appears that four interviewees out of twelve would include details regarding the procedure of the course. This might be attributed to the individual differences among the interviewees as some of them might tolerate ambiguity while others might not. Four other participants indicated that they would pay attention to the layout of the MOOC description. That is, they would try to organize it in a way that makes it visually appealing by using text organization techniques (e.g., bullet points, bold and italics), and making sure to have the appropriate text length. Others mentioned that they would make the description even more visually appealing by adding pictures, videos, and infographics. When Alina was asked whether she would include reviews in her own MOOC description, she answered:

[y]es, they are important, I would probably include them or maybe to have video reviews about what they like about the course. I would have 3-5 people talking, rather than a text. Alina

Alina believes that including a video or infographic is likely to look more appealing for the students. She expressed this by commenting:

[s]o, if I am designing a course description in java, I would include like how much Java programmer earn and in numbers in infographic and to show statistics about the progress of the programmers and the language from ten years ago for example and now. Information that does not need long time to process just pieces of information, knowing that nowadays there are a lot of information and reading lengthy pages is boring. Alina

Table 26

The interviewees' Rankings of the Moves

	Credential	LOD	Review	incentives	Syllabus	Benefits	Procedure	Layout
Samir	X		X	X	X			X
Natasha	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Minyue	X	X			X			
Anuka	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Mantresh	X	X	X		X			
Mary	X		X	X	X	X		
Gréta	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Sara	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Nikos	X	X	X		X	X		X
Mariam	X		X	X	X	X		
Aishah	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Alina	X	X			X	X		X

X= refers to the interviewees who consider a particular part of the description to be important, whereas an empty field indicates that the interviewee considered it unimportant.

LOD=stands for Level of Difficulty

7.3 Summary

      The aim of the interview study was to reveal the dominant rhetorical effects of MOOC descriptions on potential students. The most important conclusions that can be drawn on the basis of the data with regard to the various emerging themes are summarized in Table 27. Seemingly, the layout of the MOOC descriptions shapes the first impression that the readers perceive. That is, organized MOOC descriptions are visually appealing for the readers. The interviewees seem to have preferred more detailed syllabus and description of the learning procedure. Moreover, they may be more attracted to the descriptions that offered extensive delineation about the benefits and applications of the course, and about the experience of the tutor. Apparently, addressing the possible concerns of the students and providing reassurances had a positive impact on many participants. Furthermore, the incentives offered favorably influenced the interviewees. For more details about the findings of the interview study, see Table 27.

Table 27

The Most Important Findings of the Interview Analysis

Theme	Main Findings
Layout	- Organizing the MOOC description by dividing the text into navigable sections and using text organizing devices such as bullet points and boldface fonts left a positive impression on the interviewees. - The location of the different sections (e.g., the level of difficulty) as well as the length of the description seemed to have an influence on the participants.
Syllabus	- Many interviewees believe that a well-written syllabus reflects the professionality of the tutor, as well as the quality of the course. - A well-written syllabus may even replace or determine the credibility of other sections such as the reviews or the qualification of the instructor.

Theme	Main Findings
	- The efficiency of the syllabus relies on the detailed delineation of the topics of the MOOC.
Credentials	- The qualification of the instructor had no effect on the participants. - Reportedly, the experience of the instructor affected almost every one of the interviewees. Some of them paid special attention to the size and locations of the institution from which the experience was gained while others focused on whether the experience is relevant to the topic of the MOOC. - The interviewees linked the contributions of the tutor to the experience (i.e., the more contributions they have, the more experience they have). - Texts that contained misspellings and grammatical mistakes hurt the credibility of the tutor.
Reviews	- Many interviewees doubted the credibility of the reviews since they were chosen by the instructor. - Interviewees preferred the reviews which included information about the course rather than unjustifiably praise the course or the tutors.
Description of the Procedure	Thorough procedure descriptions were favorably received by the interviewees whereas MOOC descriptions that lacked detailed descriptions were criticized. - The practical teaching approaches were better received by the participants than the theoretical ones.
Benefits of the Course	Providing the benefits of the course using realistic language and expectations had a positive influence on the interviewees while exaggerated or understated promises were negatively received.
Incentives	Extra materials, certificates and instructor support were reported to have a favorable impact on the interviewees. However, the interviewees were divided between positively

Theme	Main Findings
	affected and uninfluenced regarding the money-back-guarantee incentive.
The Level of Difficulty	- Some interviewees preferred MOOC descriptions which briefly mention the level of difficulty at the beginning of the MOOC description.
	- The more categories (i.e., categories of the targeted audience like age, profession and interest) the reader belongs to, the more appealing the course becomes
	- Categories that match the goals of the students also seem to be appealing for the students as they could identify with them
Feelings	- Confusion occurred as a result of disorganized descriptions and unexplained terms.
	-Excitement was triggered by detailed overviews of the topics of the course and the vivid language that some descriptions included.
	- Some interviewees felt assured when their concerns were addressed in the description while others felt cared for when they were offered some incentives.
Suggestions	- The majority of the interviewees considered including the credentials of the instructor, syllabus that explains the topics of the course.
	-Although the reviews had a negative effect on most of the interviewees due to their perceived lack of credibility, they all considered adding reviews in their descriptions.
	- The interviewees expressed different opinions as for whether to include the level of difficulty and incentives in their own descriptions.
	- Many interviewees suggested making the description visually appealing by adding images, videos and infographics.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

8.0 Setting the Scene

The present investigation was conducted to reveal the rhetorical move structure of MOOC descriptions by identifying and analyzing the moves and steps that constitute this genre in a corpus of 70 MDs. Moreover, its goal was also to uncover the dominant rhetorical effect of MOOC descriptions by interviewing 12 potential students. Furthermore, based on the results of the RMS analysis and the interview study, this study proposes a theory- and data-based analytical model for the investigation of the generic (i.e., rhetorical move) structure and rhetorical effect of MOOC descriptions, called the RMS of MOOC Descriptions Model, which is hoped to fill the gap in research so far that has not yet devoted much attention to the ways in which these special types of course descriptions are constructed rhetorically. Finally, the study aims at formulating implications and proposing recommendations to ESP instructors and online tutors with respect to writing effective MOOC descriptions.

The following sections of the present chapter attempt to provide answers to the research questions of the present study in a systematic manner. The first section addresses the first research question (i.e., What is the rhetorical move structure of MOOC descriptions?) by discussing the RMS of MOOC descriptions, the similarities and differences between Bhatia's (1993) SPL model and the current RMS of MDs, and the communicative purposes of MOOC descriptions. This subsection does not discuss the linguistic means of expression used to express the moves and steps in MOOC as these details are discussed separately in the fifth chapter.

The subsequent subsections provide answers to the second research question (i.e., What is the effect of MOOC descriptions on potential students?) and the third research question (i.e., How can the genre of MOOC descriptions be modeled in terms of: its rhetorical (move) structure, and its rhetorical effect based on the outcomes of theoretical (i.e., literature-based) and empirical research). The fifth section discusses the pedagogical implication and the recommendations of the study. Finally, the limitations of the study, its novelties and the future research possibilities are discussed.

8.1 The RMS of MOOC Descriptions

Even though Hajeer's (2020) preliminary model has been successful in identifying most of the moves and steps which occurred in the MD corpus, some moves in the MOOC descriptions corpus could not be identified. Table 28 highlights in a systematic manner the

differences between the outcomes of Hajeer's (2020) pilot study and the current investigation's RMS analysis from the perspective of the moves and steps identified.

Table 28

The Differences in RMS between Hajeer's (2020) Pilot Investigation and the Current Study

RMS in Hajeer's (2020) pilot study	The RMS proposed based on this study
M1 Presenting credentials	**M1 Presenting credentials**
M1-S1 Awards	M1-S1 Experience
M1-S2 Experience	M1-S2 Other products
M1-S3 Previous Products	M1-S3 Qualification
	M1-S4 Addressing needs
M2 Introducing the offer	**M2 Introducing the offer**
M2-S1 Offering the Course	M2-S1 Procedure Description
M2-S2 Syllabus	M2-S2 Syllabus
M2-S3 Gaps in other courses	M2-S3 Gaps
M3 Highlighting benefits	**M3 Highlighting benefits**
M3-S1 of the course	M3-S1 of the course
M3-S2 of the skill	M3-S2 of the skill
M4 Incentivizing	**M4 Incentivizing**
M5 Soliciting action	**M5 Soliciting action**
M6 Defining the audience	**M6 Defining the audience**
M7 Presenting Proof	**M7 Presenting Proof**
M7-S1 Statistics	M7-S1 Reviews
M7-S2 Testimonials	M7-S2 Facts
M7-S3 Personal story	M7-S3 Personal story
M7-S4 Reviews	M7-S4 Statistics

As shown in Table 28, both RMSs comprise the same moves but they demonstrate many discrepancies regarding the steps. The first difference with regard to the steps included is the variation in the steps' ordering. Due to the lack of a systematic order of steps in the MD corpus (i.e., of any sign of them appearing in a canonical order), in the present study, the

steps were arranged according to the number of their occurrences, starting with the most frequent one. However, Hajeer (2020) did not mention the logic behind ordering the steps in his study.

As far as the first (M1 PRESENTING CREDENTIALS) move is concerned, the step AWARDS was eliminated as it was only located four times, three of which are in the same MD. To present their credentials, some tutors mentioned their qualifications, therefore an extra step to this move which is QUALIFICATION (M1-S3). Another step (M1-S4 ADDRESSING NEEDS) was also added to the first move as several tutors tended to address the needs of the students. This can be considered as an attempt to demonstrate the writer's knowledge of a particular field (Bhatia, 1993).

As for the second move (M2 INTRODUCING THE OFFER) two changes were introduced. First the step OFFERING THE COURSE was not adopted from Hajeer's (2020) RMS since he determined that the communicative purpose of this step is to provide "a concise description of the course that is being offered" (p. 15). Hajeer's (2020) definition implies that OFFERING THE COURSE is a summary of the MOOC description, notwithstanding, such descriptions were not detected by the present research. The second modification was the introduction of the step PROCEDURE DESCRIPTION (M2-S1), which was not detected by Hajeer's (2020) pilot study.

Regarding the seventh move (M7 PRESENTING PROOF), two modifications were introduced. First, the step TESTIMONIALS was not adopted from Hajeer's (2020) RMS since the current RMS analysis showed that TESTIMONIALS were used only once in the MD corpus. Second, another step labeled FACTS (M7-S2) was introduced to the present move as there were many instances where the instructors of MOOCs used facts to back their claims.

8.1.2 Similarities and Differences Between MOOC Descriptions and SPLs

This section presents the differences and similarities that Hajeer's (2020) pilot study revealed between the SPLs and the MDs from the RMS perspective. Figure 14 shows the moves and steps from SPL that were not detected in Hajeer's (2020) corpus, namely, Enclosing documents and Ending politely.

As tutors may be thought to be able to enclose documents or hyperlinks in the descriptions, not including an *Enclosing documents* move in the RMS of MOOC descriptions model might raise questions. However, it is worth noting that in this dissertation, the focus was on MOOC descriptions appearing at the Udemy platform. Here, when writing the course description, tutors are not allowed to enclose documents or include hyperlinks as this may

direct the readers to other webpages. This is the reason why, during the analysis of the current corpus, no hyperlinks or attached documents were detected, and thus no such move was included in the model.

There were also some moves that Hajeer (2020) located in his MD corpus but were not identified by Bhatia's (1993) SPL model. These moves are, the credentials of the MOOC description writer (e.g., awards, experience and previous products), criticizing other courses, targeting the audience and presenting proof (e.g., testimonies, personal stories and quotations).

Figure 14

Hajeer's (2020, p. 10) Comparison Between the SPLs' and the MDs' Rhetorical Move Structure
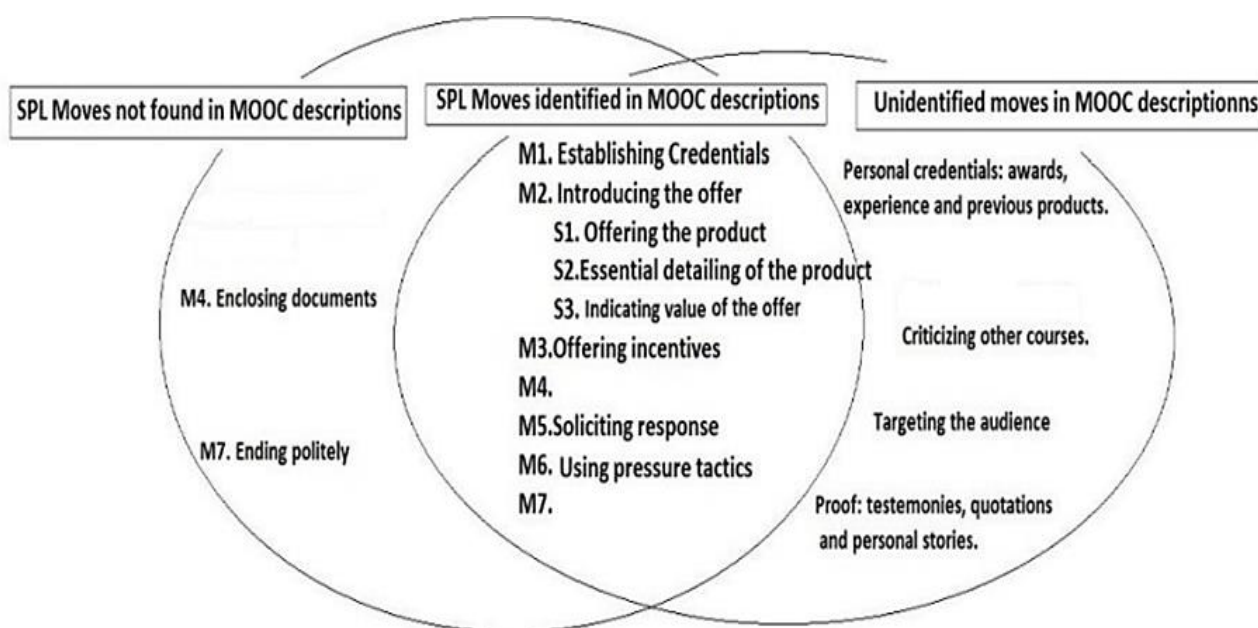
Note. Adapted from "Rhetorical Move Structure of Massive Open Online Courses' Descriptions" by A. Hajeer, 2020, *English for Specific Purposes World, 61*(22), p. 10. Copyright 2020 by English for Specific Purposes World.

Since the moves identified in this study are the same as those which were identified in Hajeer's (2020) pilot study, the comparison that Hajeer (2020) presented between the RMS of SPLs and MDs is valid for the current study too, however with some exceptions. As established earlier, the results of the RMS analysis of the current study demonstrates few differences from Hajeer's (2020) one with regard to some steps. This is believed to have

brought new perspectives to the comparison between the RMS of SPLs and MDs (see Figure 14).

Bhatia (1993) mentioned that the writers of SPLs tend to discuss the needs of the target companies in order to show the expertness of the letter sender. Similarly, many MDs exhibited some extracts in which the instructor addressed the needs of the potential students. This is why a new step was added to the first move labeled ADDRESSING NEEDS (M1-S4). Hajeer's (2020) pilot study (see Figure 3) adopted the OFFERING THE COURSE step from Bhatia's (1993) SPL model. However, since this step was not detected in the MD corpus, it was not considered. INCENTIVIZING and SOLICITING ACTIONS were also incorporated in current RMS of MDs (see Figure 15).

Figure 15

The Moves and Steps Adopted from Bhatia's (1993) SPL Model
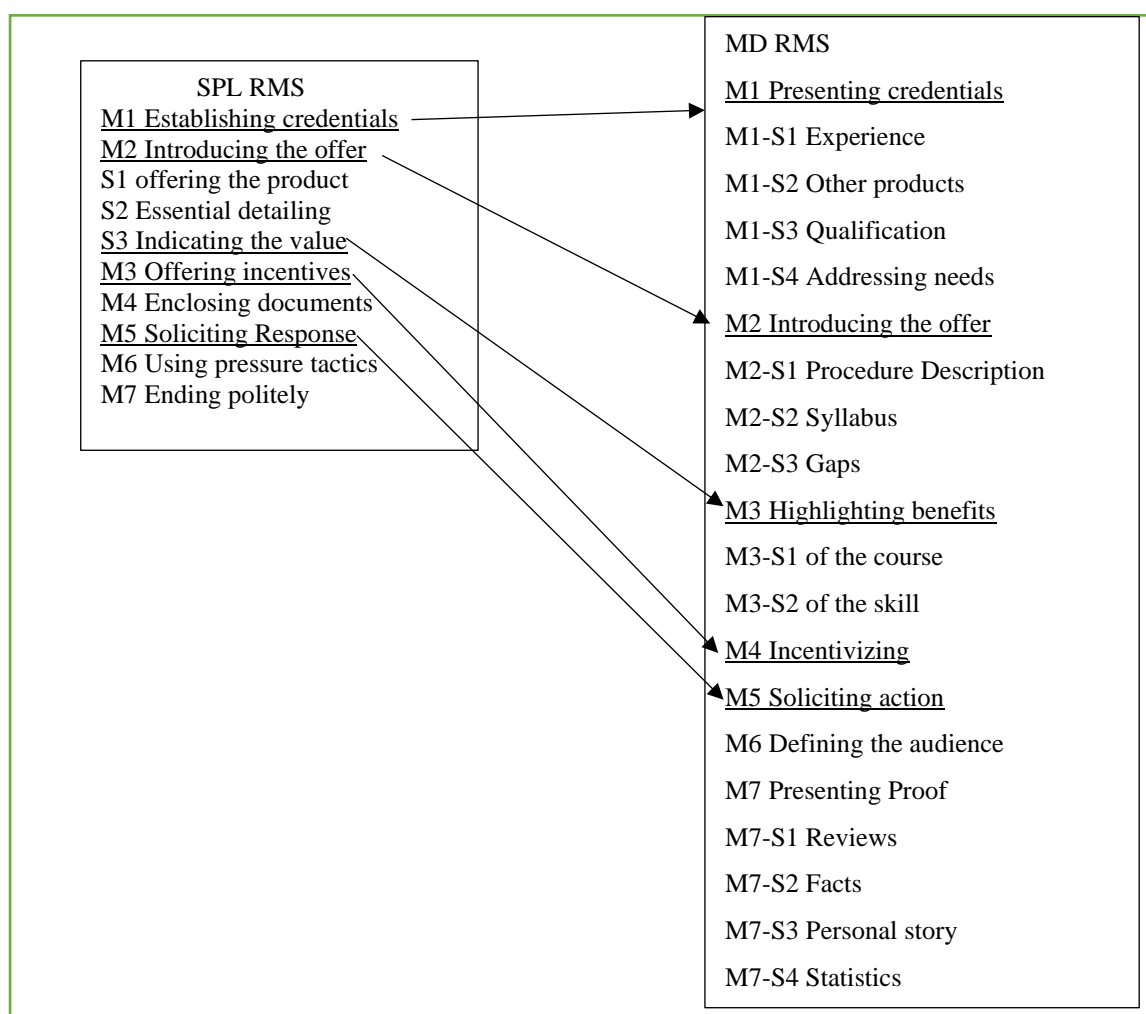
8.1.3 The Communicative Purposes of MOOC Descriptions

The present study sought to reveal the communicative purposes of MOOC descriptions by conducting an RMS analysis. The thematic analysis of each move and step of the sub-corpuses revealed a set of communicative purposes that can be reviewed in the Result and Discussion section of the fifth chapter (see Table 23 for a summary of the communicative purposes). Evidently, the communicative purposes of the moves and steps that were identified by this study were either to achieve one (or both) of two central goals: to inform or to persuade.

Except for SOLICITING ACTIONS (M5) and INCENTIVIZING (M4), all the moves and steps seem to have an informative communicative purpose, such as informing the students about the credentials of the tutors or informing them about the benefits of the course. However, a deeper look may lay different insights. Highlighting the credentials of the tutors by mentioning their qualifications or professional experience, among others, may not be only for informative purposes. Bhatia (1993) mentioned that accentuating the credibility of the service or product provider may help in persuading the buyer to purchase this particular product or service. Besides, highlighting the benefits that potential students may have access to if they enrolled in the course may be argued to be a persuasive move as it attempts to make the product even more attractive for the reader. DEFINING THE AUDIENCE may also be thought to be an informative move. However, knowing that the majority of the MD writers tend to make the audience categories (e.g., age and profession) as inclusive as possible may suggest the attempt to make the MOOC more attractive to potential readers, and thus persuade them to enroll in it.

Two steps may be argued to be purely informative, namely, SYLLABUS (M2-S1) and PROCEDURE DESCRIPTION (M2-S2) as these two steps do not seem to exhibit persuasive implications. It may be argued that the instructors may include a syllabus that covers more topics than other MOOCs in the platform and thus make their MOOC more attractive to the readers. This argument may not be accurate as the process of deciding whether the covered topics fit the needs of the potential student is likely to be subjective.

PRESENTING PROOF, SOLICITING ACTION and INCENTIVIZING may be argued to be persuasive moves as they attempt directly to affect the reader's choice by supporting the instructor's claims with proof (e.g., statistics, facts or reviews), urge them directly to enroll in the course, or seducing them by adding extra materials (e.g., booklets and quizzes).

Based on the communicative purposes of the moves and steps that were identified by the RMS analysis of the current study, it may be suggested that the dominant communicative purposes of MOOC descriptions are to inform and to persuade. That is, MDs attempt to inform the potential students about the advertised MOOC, and to persuade them to enroll in it. These communicative purposes were also concluded to be the dominant communicative purposes of SPLs (Bhatia, 1993).

8.2 The Effects of MOOC Descriptions on Potential Students

Although both Hajeer's (2020) pilot study and the current investigation found that the primary communicative purpose of MOOC descriptions is to persuade the readers to enroll in the MOOC, one of the goals of the interview study was to determine the aim of the MDs from the point of view of (as perceived by) the potential students themselves. Therefore, one of the questions of the interview schedule addressed this issue directly by asking them what they thought the aim of the MOOC descriptions that they read was. The majority of the answers suggest that the potential students were aware of the alleged intention of the instructors, which is to convince the readers to enroll in the MOOC. Some of them also mentioned that they found these descriptions provide useful information which may indicate their awareness of the informative communicative purpose too.

Regarding the aspects that potential students found useful in identifying the persuasive aims of the course descriptions, three elements were identified, namely, the reviews from previous students, incentives provided by the tutor and the highlighted benefits of the course. Despite the interviewee's knowledge of the aims of the description (mainly to persuade), they preferred this aim to be implicit. That is, whenever the instructors used explicit persuasion techniques, such as using a lot of positive adjectives to describe their MOOCs, the readers were more reluctant to take such MOOCs. For example, as the reviews from previous students are picked up by the instructors and added to the MOOC descriptions, the instructors only chose reviews that praise and portray a positive image of the course. The interviewees considered this an obvious attempt to persuade them to take the course, which had a negative effect on them. Notwithstanding, the incentives that the instructors included in their MDs (e.g., refund guarantee, personal help and extra materials) had a positive effect on the students, although they may be argued to be an explicit attempt to impact the decision-making process of the readers by making the course more attractive.

The two main elements that the interviewees found helpful in identifying the informative communicative purpose of MDs were the detailed syllabus and the procedure description. Several interviewers mentioned that these two elements yielded crucial

information about the course. Some of them went as far as depending only on these two elements to decide whether to rank this course as number one. Based on this, it may be suggested here that detailed information about the course may be an important factor that helps potential students in deciding whether to enroll in a particular course.

8.3 The Effects of the Different Moves and Steps on the Potential Students

As the questions of the interview schedule were based on the RMS analysis of MOOC descriptions, the interviews were expected to yield relevant information regarding the effect of moves and steps on the interviewees. Therefore, this subsection is dedicated to present the influence of the different moves and steps (from the RMS of MDs) on the interviewees.

The syllabus that the instructors provided highly influenced the interviewees. Several participants believe that a well-written syllabus demonstrates the competence of the tutor, and consequently the quality of the course itself. This is why the syllabus has played an important role when they were asked to rank the three MDs that they were exposed to. Moreover, many interviewees suggested that an organized and detailed syllabus might determine the credibility of other parts of the MOOC descriptions such as the reviews (from previous students) or the qualification of the instructor. The efficiency of the syllabus depends on the detailed delineation of the topics of the MOOC. That is, the more detailed a particular syllabus, the more it becomes attractive to the readers. As for describing the procedure of learning, detailed procedure descriptions were welcomed by the interviewees whereas MOOC descriptions which lacked thorough delineations were not. When they had to choose between a theoretical approach for teaching or practical one, the practical teaching approaches were better received by the participants than those which focus on the theoretical aspects of the taught MOOC.

Regarding the credentials of the tutor, the interviewees addressed two main areas, namely the qualification and the experience of the instructors. Evidently the qualification of the instructor had no effect on the participants. That is, 11 out of 12 participants mentioned that knowing about the qualifications of the tutor did not impact their decision. However, the experience of the instructor positively influenced the majority of the participants. Some of them were even attentive to the popularity and locations of the institution from which the experience was gained while others focused on whether the experience is relevant to the topic of the MOOC. As for the contributions of the instructors to their field of experience (e.g., books and conference), the interviewees saw them as part of the experience of the instructor (i.e., the more contributions they have, the more experience they have).

As far as the benefits of the course are concerned, the language that the instructors used to mention these benefits played an important role in determining the interviewees attitudes toward the MOOC descriptions that they were exposed to. That is, mentioning the benefits of the course using realistic language (e.g., adjectives) and realistic promises had positive influence on the interviewees while exaggerated or understated promises were negatively received. This, consequently, affected the rank of the MD during the interviews.

With regard to the influence of the incentives (e.g., extra material or certificates) on the interviewees, it had a positive effect in most of the cases. Extra materials, certificates and instructor support were reported to have positive impact on the interviewees. Notwithstanding, the interviewees were divided between positively affected and uninfluenced by the money-back-guarantee incentive.

Mentioning the level of the difficulty of the course by defining the ideal target audience seemed to have influenced many interviewees. Some participants welcomed the MDs which shortly highlighted the level of difficulty at the beginning of the MOOC description (e.g., beginner or advanced). The interview analysis suggests that the more categories (i.e., categories of the targeted audience like age, profession and interest) the reader belongs to, the more attractive the MOOC becomes for them. Moreover, categories that meet the aims of the readers appear to be more appealing.

As for the different types of proof that the instructors present in the MDs to back their claims, various opinions were expressed. Statistics and personal stories did not seem to highly influence the interviewees. As only two of them mentioned that they slightly affected the ranking of the MDs. The reviews, however, appear to have affected the decision-making process of the interviewees. Several participants were skeptical about the credibility of the reviews as they were picked by the tutor from the Reviews section. Put simply, the interviewees believed that only positive reviews were chosen while the negative ones were ignored by the tutors. Interviewees preferred the reviews which contained details about the course rather than unjustified praises of the MOOCs or the tutors.

8.3 The Emerged Model of the Genre of MOOC Descriptions

The theory- and data-based model, constructed on the basis of the present investigation is shown in Figure 16. The differences between the current RMS analysis, and Hajeer's (2020) and Bhatia's (1993) RMS analysis of SPL (see 7.2 The RMS of MOOC Descriptions) were taken into consideration. That is, to ensure that the model is sufficiently comprehensive, the moves and steps that were not discovered by Hajeer's (2020) or Bhatia's (1993) investigations were added to the model (e.g., M1-S4 ADDRESSING NEEDS),

whereas the moves and steps which were unidentified in their studies were introduced to the model. Moreover, the model to be proposed by this study also takes into consideration the results of the interview study which indicated the effect of the different moves and steps on the interviewees. Put simply, the moves and steps which are believed to influence the interviewees have been retained in the model.

Figure 16

The RMS of MOOC Descriptions
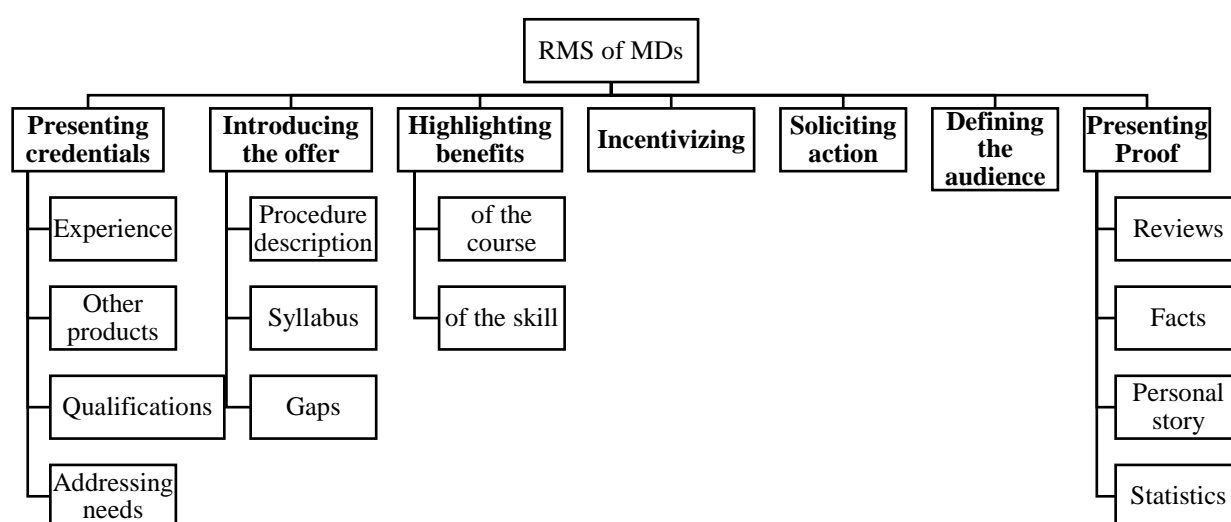
8.4 Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations

Research has shown that MOOC descriptions have a more complex communicative purpose than merely providing information. The current study has argued that besides informing the readers about the course, MOOC descriptions attempt to convince the readers to take the MOOC by employing many techniques such as mentioning the benefits of the course or providing incentives for the potential students. Hoy (2014) mentioned that anyone can design a MOOC. That is, those who upload MOOCs may not have the necessary training or knowledge in writing MOOC descriptions. Therefore, the results of the current dissertation may provide guidance for such MOOC tutors to help them write MOOC descriptions. As for those tutors who already have experience in writing offline course descriptions, the current investigation may be beneficial for raising their awareness of the alterations to the communicative purpose of course descriptions.

Doo et al.'s (2020) study revealed that only few MOOC designers received training prior to designing their MOOCs. Doo et al.'s (2020) research demonstrates the need for training programs for designing MOOCs. Even though the current investigation may not lay implications for designing MOOCs, it does, notwithstanding, provide implications for writing effective MOOC descriptions. MOOC descriptions may be argued to be of crucial importance as they convey the first impression about a particular MOOC. Therefore, in my view, recommendations for writing an effective MOOC description should be included in any MOOC designing training program. In what follows, based on the outcomes of the current research, I will provide specific ideas to aid the formulation of such recommendations/guidelines.

The interview study showed that many MOOC descriptions did not attract the students because these descriptions included explicit marketing style. To illustrate, one of the interviewees said:

[t]he tone of the language is not really professional to me it is too much marketing. I understand that they have it to sell but it depends on what you want to sell. I mean chocolate ads should be different than educational content. It seems like chocolate ads, 'bestselling business course' and 'you will learn everything' how is it possible to learn everything? What is everything. I think they exaggerate; the words are not realistic. (Aisheh)

This may be attributed to the lack of ESP training that instructors receive before authoring their MOOC descriptions. Due to this shortage in training material, MOOC instructors may search training material that might not be appropriate for advertising educational content. Due to the little attention that copywriting receives in academia, education on copywriting is being provided by practitioners on social media websites and online platforms (Blynova & kyrylova, 2018; Gnezdilova & Selezneva, 2019). The training material that is provided by these practitioners may not be based on solid theoretical background or sound empirical research. Therefore, the current dissertation is hoped to serve as solid empirical background for designing training materials for writing effective MOOC descriptions.

Avand's (2009), Sadeghi et al.'s (2013) and Sukmawati and Nasution's (2021) investigations have proved the positive effect of genre-based instruction on ESP students.

Therefore, the RMS analysis of MOOC descriptions is expected to be beneficial for those ESP practitioners who would like to teach the writing of effective MOOC descriptions. The present RMS model (see Figure 16) may be a helpful device in raising aspiring MOOC instructors' awareness of the possible moves and steps of the texts. It is a framework through which writers may be able to produce effective MOOC descriptions as well as to display all the linguistic characteristics accompanying these moves and steps based on the lexico-grammatical analysis of the moves and steps. Moreover, the results of the interview study may help increase the efficiency of the MOOC descriptions by applying these the factors that influenced the interviews and avoiding those factors which negatively impacted their attitude. For example, aspiring MOOC descriptions' writers can be taught to avoid using exaggerated promises when they write the benefits of the course.

The following subsections intend to apply the results of the text analysis and the interview study so they serve as a practical guide for those who are interested in writing course descriptions in general and MOOC descriptions in particular.

8.4.1 General Recommendations for Writing MOOC Descriptions

This section provides general suggestions that would help the tutor gain a general understanding of the mechanics of writing a MOOC description with regard to the length, layout, tone, the desired reaction from the readers and the order of the different moves and steps in the description.

- Length: it is recommended that the authors avoid producing long descriptions. Some interviewees found it difficult to be focused when they were exposed to MOOC descriptions that exceeded 800 words. Therefore, the number of words for one description is recommended to be between 600-800 words.

- Layout: MOOC descriptions writers are recommended to produce visually appealing descriptions. This can be achieved by employing text organizing devices such as bullet points or numbering to arrange multiple ideas. Authors can also use boldface, italicized and underlined fonts to highlight specific terms or concepts in the description. After writing the descriptions, authors are advised to proofread the text carefully to spot and correct any misspellings, typos, or grammatical errors. According to the results of the interview study, these errors are likely to hurt the tutor's credibility. Finally, visual attraction can also be reached through including images (e.g., tutor, review providers, or infographics), and videos (e.g., introduction by the tutor or recorded previous students' opinions) in the description.

- Tone: bearing in mind that the key aim of MOOC descriptions is to convince the readers to enroll in the advertised courses, many tutors tend to explicitly overuse the marketing style that is used in marketizing tangible products such as toys or mobile phones. The results of the current investigation reveals that using this tone is not likely to produce the desired effect (i.e., persuade the readers to enroll in the course). More details about avoiding this tone are to be found in section 8.4.2 (Recommendations Regarding the Moves and Steps).

- Feelings: it is recommended that the authors work toward triggering positive feelings in the readers. The two positive emotions that were reported by the interviewees are excitement and assurance. Tutors can integrate the element of excitement into their description through providing a detailed explanation of the course topics accompanied by vivid descriptions of how such topics can be practically utilized in the readers life. As for the sense of assurance, MOOC descriptions writer can achieve that by identifying the worries of the learners, especially beginners. These fears may range from fear of losing motivation to the fear of not keeping deadlines. After identifying these fears, tutors are recommended to highlight the solutions that their courses provide. Doing this, the tutors remove the obstacles that stands between the reader and the advertised MOOC (for more details, see 8.4.2.1 PRESENTING CREDENTIALS).

- Order: no specific order of the moves or steps was recognized by the current investigation. Nonetheless, based on the opinions of the interviewees, two suggestions may be formulated. First, authors are advised to highlight the level of difficulty of the advertised MOOC at the beginning of the description, preferably the title, for example, *German Course for Beginners*. This is likely to be welcomed by the readers as they would not have to read the whole description to know whether the course meet their needs. Second, the writers of MOOC descriptions are encouraged to locate the reviews of the previous enrollees toward the end of the description. As mentioned previously, explicit marketing tone has a negative effect on the readers. Some of the interviewees mentioned that locating the REVIEWS at the beginning of the course description had a negative effect on them as it was perceived as an explicit marketing technique. Placing REVIEWS at the end of the descriptions may therefore decrease their negative effect.

8.4.2 Recommendations Regarding the Moves and Steps

This section includes seven sub-sections where detailed recommendations with respect to the themes and the language are provided.

8.4.2.1 PRESENTING CREDENTIALS (M1). The aim of this move is to highlight the credibility of the tutor and it consists of four steps, namely, EXPERIENCE, QUALIFICATIONS, OTHER PRODUCTS, and ADDRESSING NEEDS.

- EXPERIENCE (M1-S1): as suggested by the results of the interview study, highlighting the experience of the tutor increased their credibility. The instructors can accentuate their experience in various ways. The writers of MOOC descriptions can choose one or more of the following approaches:
    - Highlighting their teaching experience:
      I've been teaching (…field...) *for* (…number…) *years.*
      I have been teaching (…field...) *since* (…number…) *years.*
      This course is the result of years of personal experience teaching (…subject...).
    - Highlighting experience in their own field:
      This course is taught by a professional (…profession, e.g., engineer/teacher/investor…).
      I have been working as a (…profession...) *since* (…year…).
      I am a professional (…profession...) *with real experience in (...field...).*
    - Highlighting the numbers of years of experience:
      Everything you see in this course is a collection of all the thing I have learnt over the years.
      This course is based on my (…number…) *years of experience in* (…field...).
    - Highlighting the number of their students:
      I have helped more than (…number…) student to (…goal...).
      I've already taught (…number…) students and received (…number…) positive reviews.
- OTHER PRODUCTS (M1-S2): tutors can also emphasize their experience by referring to their contributions to the field. In what follows the three ways in which this step can be approached will be demonstrated along with ready-made language suggestions.
    - Referring to a website, course or publication:
      My other course (…title…) *is the perfect complement to the current one.*
      I am the author of (…book….).
      I run a website called (…website address...).
    - Offering details about the success of the product:
      My published book is available in (…number...) *languages.*

> *My best-seller book has sold* (…number…) *copies.*
>
> (…number…) *students have joined my previous courses.*

- QUALIFICATIONS (M1-S3): in this step, the qualifications of the tutor are mentioned. The majority of the interviewees mentioned that they would prefer to see the qualifications of the tutor included in the description. This step can be introduced in one (or more) of the following ways:
    - University Qualifications (e.g., BA, MA, PhD)

      I have a PhD in (…field…) *and a master's degree in* (…field…).

      I hold a (…academic degree…) *degree from* (…university…).
    - Non-academic institutions

      I qualified as a (…specialization…) *Certified from* (… institution …).

      I am a certified (…specialization…) *from* (… institution …).

- ADDRESSING NEEDS (M1-S4): by addressing the needs of the students, the tutor can show their expertise in their field. Therefore, including this step in the description may help in enhancing the credibility of the tutor and consequently the course. It also helps in making the students feel assured as their needs (worries, fears) are not only addressed, but also solutions are provided. These are some language structures that may help in introducing this step:

  When people start learning a new skill they often face (... difficulties…). *But in this course, I/we will help you* (… solution…).

  Many learners aspire to (…wishes…). *In this course we/I will help you achieve this by* (…solution…).

  *You probably do not have the proper training/knowledge to (…*goal*…). With our/my help you will be able* (…reach this goal…) *as we/I will* (…solution…).

  8.4.2.2 INTRODUCING THE OFFER (M2). The aim of this move is to furnish further details that are relevant to the MOOC itself like the topics that are going to be covered. This Move consists of three steps, namely, PROCEDURE DESCRIPTION, SYLLABUS and GAPS. This move is necessary to be included in any course description as it contains vital information (e.g., topics and structure) which would help the reader make a decision as for whether to enroll in the course or not.

- PROCEDURE DESCRIPTION (M2-S1): This step is crucial as it help the reader build an image of the learning procedure. Therefore, it should contain all the necessary details

which can help the potential students build a complete image of the MOOC. In order to achieve this, including the following details is recommended:

- o Structure:

  We will go through the entire process of (…task…) *This includes the following steps/procedure/parts/practices/levels/:.*

  This course will guide you through every step starting from (…first step…) *to* (…final step….). *I'll show you how you can* (… another step…). *After that, I will explain* (…concept….). *Ultimately* (…final step…).

  First, I'll walk you through (…first step….). *Second, I will show you* (…step 2…). *Afterwards, we are going to* (…step 3…). *Finally,* (…final step….).

- o Methods:

  This course follows a (…practical/theoretical…) *approach.*

  I teach through cases, so for every tool/technique/framework/model/case I provide an example.

  The course is a practical, step by step guide which is accompanied by examples/templates/cases/analyses/….

  In this course, we start by explaining the concepts. After that, the understanding is enhanced by exploring real-world examples. Finally, your new knowledge to the test by completing activities and quizzes.

  Motivation is very important in the learning process, so I/we have tried hard to make this course fun/relevant/entertaining/engaging/rewarding/….

- o Tools:

  There are *(…quizzes/exercises/summaries…)* at the end/beginning of every section/part/video.

  Quizzes/exercises/summaries/… are provided during the videos.

- o Duration of the course:

  This course contains over (…number…) *hours or video instruction.*

  We will spend around (…number…) *hours learning this skill.*

  This program will take (…number…) *hours/days/weeks/months/years till you can complete the course.*

- SYLLABUS (M2-S2): tutors are recommended to work towards including an organized, coherent and reader friendly syllabus. The importance of this part of the section cannot be emphasized enough. This was reflected by the opinions of the interviewees as many of them mentioned that the syllabus was the most important factor which helped them

decide whether to enroll in a course or not. They also mentioned that the syllabus reflects the credibility and professionality of the tutor. Tutors are recommended to include a full list of the topics that are going to be covered in the course. Moreover, an explanation of the topic itself accompanied with definitions, examples, applications (how the skill/knowledge can be applied to real-life situations) or a combination of these is also recommended. Tutors are advised to avoid using technical terms without explaining them, especially if the course is advertised for beginners as this may confuse them. Tutors should also avoid presenting the syllabus as a block of text without using organization devices such as bullet points or numbering (see Table 13 for an example). A recommended syllabus structure would look like:

- Topic: an example

  Example: CSS framework: this help build responsive websites.

- Topic: a definition

  Example: SPSS: A statistical software for data management and advanced analytics.

- Topic: definition and application in a real-life situation

  Example: Theories of international relations: This enables you to strengthen your arguments and spot the weaknesses of other's arguments.

- GAPS (M2-S3): the aim here is to show the superiority of the advertised course over other ones through comparison. The following aspects of comparison and language structures can be taken into consideration.

  o Recency:

    Unlike other courses here, this course is updated on a regular basis.
    Many courses in (…platform…) *are released once and never updated. On contrary, this course is updated regularly.*

  o Quantity of the content

    This course is different from the other ones you'll find on (…platform…) *as it contains more video content.*
    This course will cover topics that are missing from other courses.

  o Tutor's experience

    The instructor of this course has (…number…) *years of experience in* (…field…) *which is more than most of the course's instructors.*

> *The tutor of this course has more experience in* (…field…) *than many other instructors in* (…platform…).

8.4.2.3 HIGHLIGHTING BENEFITS (M3). This move consists of two steps, namely, OF THE COURSE and OF THE SKILL. In this move, the tutor is expected to list the benefits that the potential students would receive if they decided to enroll in the advertised course, as well as the benefits of learning the skill itself. The results of the interview study show that exaggeration in describing the benefits of the course or the skill negatively influence the interviewees while using realistic language was reported to have a favorable impact. Therefore, the writers of MOOC descriptions are advised to refrain from using exaggerating descriptions of the benefits of their courses such as, "*you will be a millionaire after taking this cour*se" or "*You will be able to win any argument after taking this course*". Instead, authors are advised to follow a more realistic approach, such as "*If applied, the skills that you learn from this course will enable you to increase your salary*" or "*This course provides the tools that help you in structuring your arguments professionally*". The methods in which the communicative purpose of this move is achieved are listed below along with suggestions for the language use.

- OF THE COURSE (M3-S1)
    - Promising improved professional practice:
      At the end of this course, you will be able to confidently (…benefit…)*.*
      After taking this course you will be able to (…benefit…)*.*
    - Promising a better job:
      You can use the skills you build in this course to get a better job or to increase your hourly pay rate.
      This course includes the set of skills that you need to secure a better job.
    - Promising higher income:
      To get higher income, you need to get the necessary skills and that is what you will get from this course.
      With the right skills, which you will learn in this course, you can increase your income.

- OF THE SKILL (M3-S2)
    - Highlighting the market demand:
      Companies/institutions usually rely on (…people with the advertised skills, e.g., engineers, teachers, planners…) *to* (…achieve a particular goal…)*.*

There is high demand in the market for (…e.g., financial analysts…)*.*

Learning (…skills…) *is likely to give you the advantage of having secured and enjoyable job.*

8.4.2.4 INCENTIVIZING (M4)**.** In order to motivate the readers to enroll in the advertised course, tutors are advised offer further incentives. In what follows a set of possible options are listed along with ready-made language structures.

- o Money-back guarantee

  This course is a risk-free experience where you can get your money back if you are not satisfied.

  You are guarded by a (…number…) *days money-back guarantee.*

  This course offers you the chance to be reimbursed if your expectations were not met.

- o Personal support

  I'll be here for you every step of the way. If you have any questions about the course, content or anything related to this topic, you can always post a question in the course or send me a direct message.

  I/my team/we will be ready to answer your questions within (…number…) *hours/days.*

- o Recency

  This course is constantly updated to be current with the latest developments of (…field…)*.*

  I regularly update this course to reflect the latest changes to (…field…)*.*

8.4.2.5 SOLICITING ACTION (M5)**.** The communicative purpose of this move is to encourage the readers to enroll in the course. When this move was repeatedly used in one course description, it negatively affected the interviewees. Therefore, it is advised that this move be used with caution. Suggested language structures are as follows:

Go ahead and click on the enroll button.

Take this course to (…goal…)*.*

Enroll in this (…course title…) *course today.*

I hope to see you as a student in the course when we next meet.

Start your journey today learning about (…skill…)*.*

Join over (…number…) *students in this course!*

Invest in your future. Enroll today.

Go ahead and click the enroll button, and I'll see you in lesson 1!

8.4.2.6 DEFINING THE AUDIENCE (M6). Here, the aim is to define the candidates who would benefit the most from the advertised course by mentioning the groups to which these candidates belong, for example, age or profession groups. The current study reveals that the more categories the reader belongs to, the more persuasive the MOOC description become for them. Therefore, it is advised to carefully analyze the categories to which the potential students may belong. This move can be introduced with statements such as "*Who this course is for*" "*Who would benefit from attending this course*" or "*This course is good for you if*". After that, a list of the features of the ideal candidates can be provided. Here are some of the categories that can be used along with language suggestions.

- o Age

  Anyone above the age of (…number…) *can attend this course.*

  Only those who are above (…number…) *can take this course.*

  You are above/below (…age…).

- o Profession

  If you are (…profession…) *then this is course is good for you.*

  If you are an employee and would like to start your own business.

  If you are a (…profession…) *who is looking for improving their* (…skill/knowledge…).

- o Level of difficulty

  No advanced knowledge is required for this course.

  No previous knowledge on any of the listed topics is required.

  This course requires basic knowledge of (…field/topic…).

  This course requires at least (…level…) *in* (…field…).

  This course is perfect for absolute beginners with no previous experience.

  Anyone who is interested in learning/knowing/studying/ (…skill/knowledge…).

8.4.2.7 PROOF (M7)**.** Tutors can use this move to back their claims with proof. PROOF consists of four optional steps, which are, REVIEW, FACTS, PERSONAL STORY, and STATISTICS. In what follows, suggestions on how these steps can be introduced are provided.

- REVIEWS (M7-S1): they can be picked from the reviews section in the platform. Even though it is not possible to equip the writers of MOOC descriptions with language suggestions for this move (as they are written by previous students)), some suggestions may be provided as for choosing the appropriate reviews to include in the description. It is recommended to choose the reviews that include useful information for the potential

students such as how the course helped them achieve their goals, how the skills that they have learned were applicable in their life or a detailed opinion about the course. It is also recommended to refrain from including the Reviews which only praise the course or the tutor as such reviews had negative effects on the interviewees of the present study.

- FACTS (M7-S2): this step include the facts that support their claims. The reason why most of the interviewees were not influenced by this step may be the lack of reference to trusted source. Therefore, whenever the tutor wishes to introduce a fact to support their claims, they are recommended to include a verifiable reference. Some of the language structures that can be used to introduce this step are:

  You may not know but (…fact…) (reference).

  According to (…source…), (…fact…).

  It has been reported by the (…source…) *that* (…fact…).

- PERSONAL STORY (M7-S3): tutors also have the option to add a personal story in which they can explain how their knowledge (the one they are offering to teach) contributed to their success in their personal or professional life. No language structures can be suggested for this step as the language structure depends on the content, length and purpose of the personal story.

- STATISTICS (M7-S4): this is where the tutors use statistics to support their arguments. Like facts, it is recommended to use statistics from trusted sources and mention these sources all the time. Some language structures that can be used to introduce this step are:

  According to (…source…) (…statistics…).

  As reported by a study conducted in (…date…) *by* (…source…).

The general recommendations presented above provided general guidelines concerning the layout and length of the description, tone and triggered feelings in the description, as well as the order of the moves in the descriptions. Moreover, more specific guidance was provided for each move and step accompanied by ready-made language structures that can be used by the authors. These recommendations are hoped to help the writers of course descriptions in general, and the writers of MOOC description in particular in authoring effective descriptions.

8.5 Limitations, Novelties and Future Research

Due to the limited size of the corpus, it is difficult to generalize the outcomes of the study. Therefore, for future research, conducting a similar study on a larger corpus is recommended. Furthermore, an investigation that compares MDs of different MOOC

platforms is expected to yield interesting outcomes for the field of genre analysis and ESP as well. Such research might be able to identify the differences and similarities between the moves and their linguistic presentations which are employed by the tutors. It would also be possible to see the differences and similarities between the MOOC descriptions which are written by the tutors themselves (e.g., Udemy platform) and those which are authored by specialists hired by the platform.

The present study is expected to contribute new findings to several fields of inquiry, including the existing body of research on ESP by contributing to teacher training programs through providing guidelines (based on the analysis) for writing and raising awareness of the features of efficient online course descriptions. Such teacher training programs may help the tutors (or aspiring tutors) of MOOCs writing effective MOOC descriptions. This dissertation is also expected to contribute to the field of persuasion (with a special focus on MOOC descriptions) by providing insights about the persuasive effects of the different moves and steps of MOOC descriptions. Furthermore, it adds to the existing literature on the theory of discourse and genre analysis by proposing a theory- and data-based model for the study of MOOC descriptions that based on the outcomes of this research may be claimed to be transferable to other contexts of online course descriptions.

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Appendix A. Sample MOOC Advertisement

Appendix B. Top-down Corpus-based Analysis of Discourse Organization

Required step in the analysis	Realization in this approach
1. Communicative/Functional Categories	Develop the analytical framework: determine set of possible functional types of discourse units, that is, the major communicative functions that discourse units can serve in corpus
2. Segmentation	Segment each text into discourse units (applying the analytical framework from Step 1)
3. Classification	Identify the functional type of each discourse unit in each text of the corpus (applying the analytical framework from Step 1)
4. Linguistic analysis of each unit	Analyze the lexical/grammatical characteristics of each discourse unit in each text of the corpus
5. Linguistic description of discourse categories	Describe the typical linguistic characteristics of each functional category, based on analysis of all discourse units of a particular functional type in the corpus
6. Text structure	Analyze complete texts as sequences of discourse units shifting among the different functional types
7. Discourse organizational tendencies	Describe the general patterns of discourse organization across all texts in the corpus

Note. Adapted from *Discourse on the move: Using corpus analysis to describe discourse structure* (1st ed., p. 13) by D. Biber, U. Connor & T.A. Upton, 2007, John Benjamins. Copyright 2007 by John Benjamins B.V.

Appendix C. Sample MOOC Description: Education

Description

Start teaching English online and earn a lucrative source of income as a freelance teacher!

Do you want to teach English online, but don't know how to start?

Do you want to know how to find students and what to teach them?

This complete course is the best way to find out and start teaching online straight away.

By the end of this course you will have the knowledge and confidence to go out and find highly motivated, high-paying students who want to improve their English language skills. You will also know how to create great lessons that help students learn and make them want to come back for more.

What do students say?

"This is really high value content ... you basically learn everything you need to set up and start your online career. The production values are great too; good sound and nice visuals." **Dr David Murphy**

"Course contained what I needed to know. Lots of good tips and the important basics of being an online English teacher." **Simon Zammit**

"I am an ESL teacher with a MA in TESOL .... this was a useful course in helping me to think about making the transition to online teaching, how to identify my own niche, and develop my own courses for students. Great course!" **Suzanne Davis**

"The course is full of great practical tips on how to get set up, how to get students and what to teach them ... Overall, I fully recommend this fantastic course. It is essential for anyone who really wants to get ahead with teaching English online." **Stephen Howard**

"I highly recommend this course. Thank you so much for your effort to share your experience and knowledge about online teaching. Now, I can start to help my students even more." **Catherine Voacolo**

Who's it for?

The course is suitable for both **experienced teachers** and for **people who have never taught before**. This course includes hours of **video presentations and screencasts** as well as downloadable **cheat sheets and worksheets** to use with your students. It also includes a **showcase of the best websites and online materials** for use in your lessons.

What makes me qualified to teach you?

I've been teaching for **20 years** and have taught English online **since 2008.** I've also taught English at the **British Council**. I am a fully qualified teacher with a **CELTA (Pass A)** and a **Masters degree** in education. I teach students from all over the world and I currently specialise in helping students prepare for the IELTS test.

My Promise to You

I'm a full-time online English teacher. I'll be here for you every step of the way. If you have any questions about the course content or anything related to this topic, you can always post a question in the course or send me a direct message.

This course will cover everything you need to know to start teaching English online, including:

- How to **find students** using social media, online marketplaces and more
- How to **decide what to teach**
- How to find out what your students really need and want
- How to carve out a premium rate **niche English course** that will attract high rates of pay
- What **rates to charge** and how to get **paid**
- The **essential tools** you'll need to teach online
- Links to high quality **materials and resources** online
- How to do offer courses in **exam preparation**, such as IELTS, TOEFL and TOEIC
- How to teach the core language skills of writing, speaking, listening and reading
- and much more!

BONUS 1: Free eBook. As a bonus, you'll be able to download an eBook, The Online English Teacher written by myself and Mat Sutherley, a senior teacher at the British Council.

BONUS 2: Course Facebook Group. There is also a Facebook Group for particpants on this course. This will allow you to to communicate with other people on the course, share ideas and get some inspiration from others. Join the course to get free access to this group.

This course - the result of years of personal experience teaching English, both online and as a teacher at the British Council, together with the latest research into English

language learning - will give you all of the skills, knowledge and confidence you need as an online English teacher.

So go ahead and click on the enrol button. You'll soon be teaching English online and working as your own boss. I'll see you in Lesson 1!

Best Wishes!

Charlie

Who this course is for:

· You want to earn an income teaching online

· You might be an experienced English teacher, but you want to know how to adapt your skills to the online world

· You might be new to teaching, and you want to know the essential tools and knowledge to teach like a pro

· You might have done some online teaching, but you want to improve

Appendix D. Sample MOOC Description: Computer Science

Description

Gain the ability to do **ethical hacking** and **penetration testing** by taking this course!
Get answers from an experienced IT expert to every single question you have
related to the learning you do in this course including installing Kali Linux, using
VirtualBox, basics of Linux, Tor, Proxychains, VPN, Macchanger, Nmap, cracking
wifi, aircrack, DoS attacks, SLL strip, known vulnerabilities, SQL injections, cracking
Linux passwords, and more topics that are added every month!

If you are like me, you are reading more now because you want to know for sure
whether this course is worth taking before you invest your money and time in it. More
than10,000 people have already completed the process of deciding to take this
course and I hope sharing a few of their experiences can prove useful for you here.
Here are what three recent students had to say in the reviews in their own words.

Awesome Course by Penny Garcia.

· I am 11 videos in and LOVING this course right now. The instructor is very
thorough. I would certainly recommend this course to others as I am just
starting out in pen testing and hacking and feel that this is what I have been
looking for. Thank you so much for putting the time and effort into such an
amazing course.

Best course ever.. by Mahmoud Selman.

· Thank you guys for such a great course. It's the best one ever on Udemy and
worth every penny. You have covered everything inside it. Students be aware!
What you are going to learn here in this course is going to blow your mind!!
and you got to use what you learn wisely otherwise if you misuse this info you
can get from 5 to 10 years in jail. Keep it White hat.

Very helpful instructor by Deepak Muralidharan.

· Ermin Kreponic has been very helpful in solving many hiccups pertaining to
this course. Especially considering the time difference between us. Much
appreciated his help.

What you can see from reading these three reviews is that students love the
technical support Ermin provides through answering questions about all of the
subjects presented in the course. The lectures themselves are helpful and will inspire
you to try actually doing what you see Ermin do. Then when you try to learn and
have problems, you experience the greatest value of the course which is access to

the instructor for help. You can ask anything related to the course and Ermin will give you a thoughtful answer which will consistently help you solve the problems you are having in learning ethical hacking and penetration testing.

Thank you very much for reading so much of the description for this course! The fact that you have spent some of your very valuable time here already reading this course leads me to believe that you will enjoy being a student in the course a lot! Find the "take this course" or "start free preview" button up on the page to give the course a try today!

If you want to learn more about what the course contains, here is a short list of questions to help you decide if you should take it followed by a deep list of the course lectures below. What you see is just the beginning of what the course includes because Ermin is making new lectures every month for you! You will get to see screen capture live tutorials showing you everything you need to do to get started with ethical hacking and penetration testing including information about all of the topics below!

- · How to install VirtualBox.
- · What to do to create the virtual environment.
- · Installing VirtualBox in a Windows 8.1 environment.
- · Basic Linux terminal.
- · Staying anonymous with tor.
- · Virtual Private Networks (VPN).

You get lifetime access to this course which already has 20+ hours of HD video tutorials sharing everything you need to be a penetration testing expert and ethical hacker! If you are still not sure, here are three questions you can use to make the final decision!

1. Do you want to learn how to penetrate networks, exploit systems, break into computers, and compromise routers?
2. Do you want to use the valuable skills to work for companies that want you to use these skills to test their network security and show them to enhance it?
3. How would you feel if you could apply these skills to what you already know to greatly advance your career as a network specialist, network administrator, or freelancer online?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, I would guess based on my experience teaching 50,000+ students on Udemy that you might enjoy this course. If

for any reason I am wrong, you have 30 days to ask Udemy for a refund. With 98% of students enjoying this course enough to not ask for a refund and 50+ students posting good reviews, I can guess the odds of you enjoying this course are very high!Thank you very much for reading all of this! Ermin and I hope to see you as a student in the course when we next meet!

Who this course is for:

· You can begin this course with any level of knowledge and quickly start advancing your skills as an information technology and security expert anywhere in the world!

· If you are working to advance your career on LinkedIn or as a freelancer online, you can use the skills you build in this course to get a better job and to increase your hourly pay rate.

· If you are hoping to be a better network administrator, you can use this course to learn how to secure networks and protect assets.

Appendix E. Sample MOOC Description: Business

Description

Updated for March 2019!

"If you're trying to prepare for an eventual career in finance, but are still looking to round out your knowledge of the subject, The Complete Financial Analyst Course might be a perfect fit for you.", Business Insider

"A Financial Analyst Career is one of the top-paying entry-level jobs on the market."

"Even in the toughest job markets, the best candidates find great positions.", Forbes

You simply have to find a way to acquire practical skills that will give you an edge over the other candidates.

But how can you do that?

You haven't had the proper training, and you have never seen how analysts in large firms do their work ...

Stop worrying, please! We are here to help.

The Complete Financial Analyst Course is the most comprehensive, dynamic, and practical course you will find online.

I*t covers several topics, which are fundamental for every aspiring Financial Analyst:*

- · Microsoft Excel for Beginner and Intermediate Users: Become Proficient with the world's #1 productivity software
- · Accounting, Financial Statements, and Financial Ratios: Making Sense of Debits and Credits, Profit and Loss statements, Balance Sheets, Liquidity, Solvency, Profitability, and Growth Financial Ratios
- · Finance Basics: Interest Rates, Financial Math Calculations, Loan Calculations, Time Value of Money, Present and Future Value of Cash Flows
- · Business Analysis: Understanding what drives a Business, Key Items to be Analyzed and their Meaning, the Importance of Industry Cycles, Important Drivers for the Business of Startup, Growth, Mature and Declining Companies, Important Drivers for an Industry
- · Capital Budgeting: Decide whether a company's project is feasible from a financial perspective and be able to compare between different investment opportunities

- Microsoft PowerPoint for Beginner and Intermediate Users: The #1 tool for visual representation of your work, a necessary skill for every Financial Analyst

As you can see, this is a complete bundle that ensures you will receive the right training for each critical aspect.

Here comes the fun part!

We have a challenge for you! After covering each major roadblock, you will be asked to solve a challenge. You will:

- Calculate a company's sales in Excel
- Register its bookkeeping entries for 2015 and produce useful financial statements + calculate financial ratios
- Calculate a complete loan schedule for the company's debt
- Analyze the company's business performance
- Create a PowerPoint presentation based on the results
- Receive personalized feedback
- Receive a gift
- Participate in our monthly Amazon Gift Card Lottery(!)

Sounds interesting, right?

At the end of the challenge, you will send us the work you've done, and we will reply with personalized feedback. This makes for an interactive student experience that optimizes what you will learn from the course.

What makes this course different from the rest of the Finance courses out there?

- High quality of production: HD video and animations (this isn't a collection of boring lectures!)
- Knowledgeable instructor (experience in companies like Pwc and Coca-Cola)
- Complete training: We will cover all major topics and skills you need to become a top-class Financial Analyst
- Extensive Case Studies: To help you reinforce everything you've learned
- Course Challenge: Solve our Course Challenge and make this course an interactive experience
- Excellent support: If you don't understand a concept or you simply want to drop us a line, you'll receive an answer within 1 business day

- Dynamic: We don't want to waste your time! The instructor keeps up a very good pace throughout the whole course

Why should you consider a career as a Financial Analyst?

- Salary. A Financial Analyst job usually leads to a very well-paid career
- Promotions. Financial Analysts acquire valuable technical skills, which makes them the leading candidates for senior roles within a corporation
- Secure Future. There is high demand for Financial Analysts on the job market, and you won't have to be concerned about finding a job
- Growth. This isn't a boring job. Every day, you will face different challenges that will test your existing skills

Please don't forget that the course comes with Udemy's 30-day unconditional, money-back-in-full guarantee. And why not give such a guarantee, when we are convinced the course will provide a ton of value for you?

Just go ahead and subscribe to this course! If you don't acquire these skills now, you will miss an opportunity to separate yourself from the others. Don't risk your future success! Let's start learning together now!

Who this course is for:

- People who want a successful career in Finance
- Anyone who wants to learn the practical skills of Financial Analysis

People who are ambitious and want to learn faster than their peers

Appendix F. Semi-structured Interview Schedule

Ethical Form

Participants will be introduced with information on the study and the consent form. Upon the voluntary and active consent to the interview, participants will sign the individual consent form. In the consent form, participants will be asked to give permission for the recording of the interview or for the taking of notes by the researcher. The identity of the participants will be protected throughout the research, and findings of the research will be presented in such a way that it will be difficult to identify separate individuals. Participation will be anonymous, and participants will be able to withdraw from participation in the study at any stage.

Introduction

This is an interview about your experience with online courses. As the researcher, I will guide you through the interview so that we finish it all in just over 30 minutes. This interview is for research purposes only, and its main goal is simply to learn about your experiences with online courses. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Instead, I would like you to simply tell me about some of the most important things that have happened in your experience with online courses. Everything you say is voluntary, anonymous, and confidential. I hope that you will enjoy the interview. Do you have any questions?

Icebreakers.

1. Where do you come from?

2. What do you study?

Follow-up: In which university?

Follow-up: Your specialization?

3. For the sake of this study, I need to know your age.

4. Can you tell me more about your specialization?

5. Have you ever taken an online course? If yes: what, when, and why?

If not: Have you ever thought about taking an online course? If yes: what, when, and why?

6. Are you planning to take any online courses in the near future? If yes: what, when, and why?

Main questions

Now I need you to read these three course descriptions and tell me which one you would choose to enroll in; please take your time.

1. Thank you; now, could you please tell me why you chose this one?

2. What are the aims of these descriptions?

2. Were there special parts of the description that specifically influenced your choice in a positive way or in a negative way? In what way?

3. You did not mention the testimonials of other buyers; did that influence your choice in any way, positively or negatively? In what way?

4. In the description, there is a section where the tutor writes about their own credentials; did that have any positive or negative influence on your choice? In what way?

5. What about the promises (learning outcomes) that are given in the description, for example: "in this course, you will be able /learn to ......" did that positively or negatively influence your choice in any way? In what way?

6. What about the offered incentives? Did these have a positive or negative influence over your choice? In what way?

7. How could you tell whether the course that you have chosen to take is good for you in terms of the level of difficulty? Did that also affect your choice? In what way?

8. Did you feel at any time while reading the description that you had a feeling of excitement? Can you tell me what triggered this feeling? Did the text trigger any other feelings in you? What are they? What made you feel them?

9. Were there any quotes from famous people in the text? Did these quotes encourage you to choose this course? Why do you think so?

10. If you were to design a MOOC and write a description, what would you emphasize in the description? Why?

11. Would you like to add anything?

These same questions are then repeated for the other two descriptions that the interviewee gave a lower ranking to in order to understand why they preferred them less.