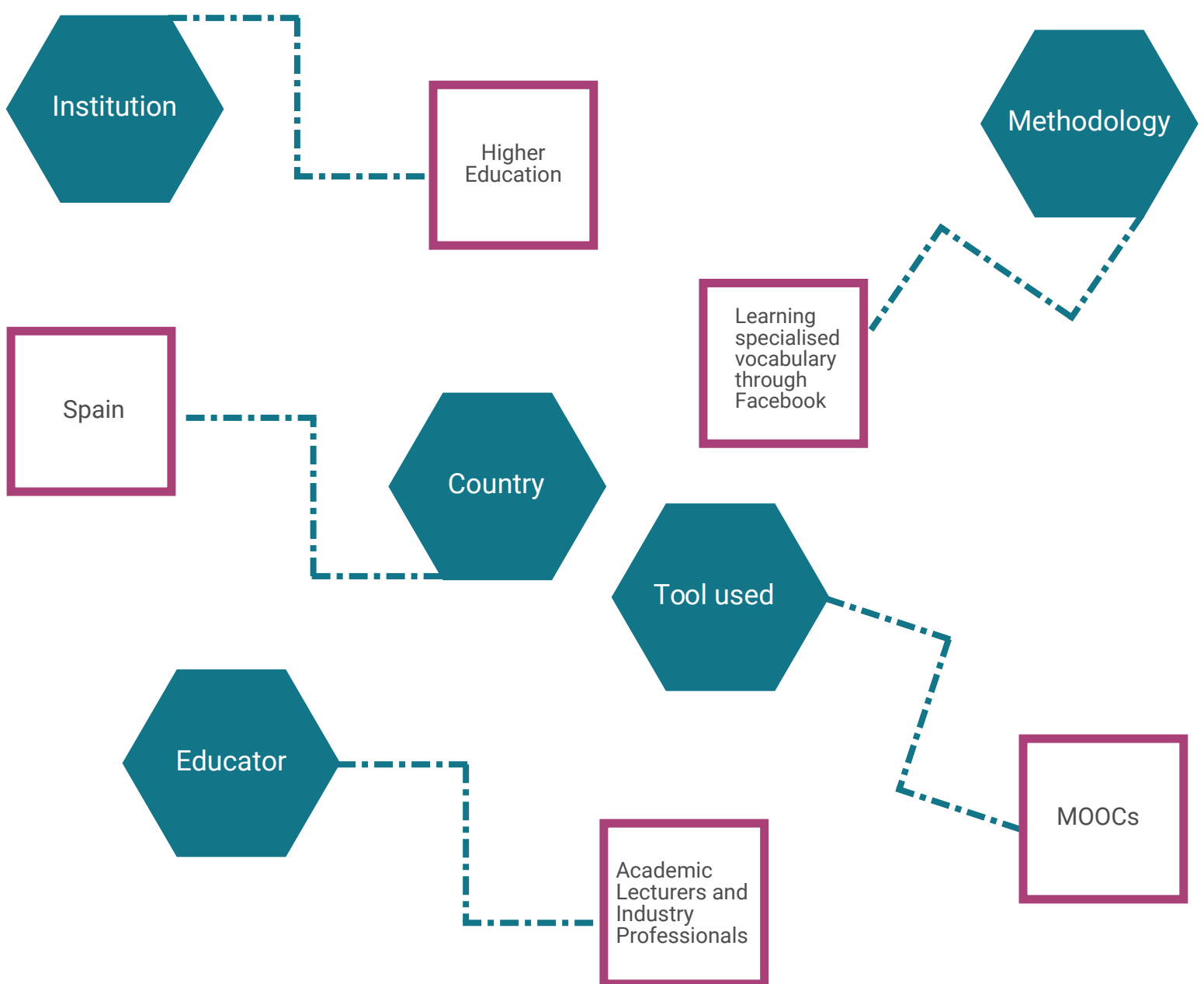


LEARNING SPECIALISED VOCABULARY THROUGH FACEBOOK IN A MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSE (MOOC)



This paper explores how the incorporation of a social network such as Facebook can enhance the acquisition of specialised vocabulary in the context of a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC). Such initiative took place in the second edition of the MOOC Professional English, the first ever English for Specific Purposes (ESP) MOOC to be launched in Spain as one of the courses offered by Aprendo, the UNED online platform. The main aim of the experiment was to ascertain how this social network, which has proved to foster motivation and engagement in language learning contexts, could enhance the students' learning experience and promote vocabulary acquisition in an ESP MOOC context. A Facebook group was created. A mixed-method approach was adopted for the datacollection. The results point towards a positive impact of the Facebook network in the motivation of students to learn specialised vocabulary and an improvement in their progress in the MOOC, likewise fighting the main two problems that MOOCs currently are said to have: high drop-out rates and lack of student engagement



Main challenge, Key Success and Enabling Factors

- Language learning is not one of the most prolific disciplines in MOOC development, and it has also faced controversy.
- Nevertheless, there are some excellent examples of successful LMOOCs:
- Bryant (2013) developed two parallel online courses using his language exchange website, The Mixer (<http://www.languageexchanges.org/>);
- Since the LMOOC focus of this research deals with ESP, it was important to draw the distinction between core and non-core vocabulary (McCarthy, 1990) and make clear to the participants the significant role of vocabulary in ESP teaching and learning.

Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

- The majority of students perceive that their previous knowledge of specialised vocabulary was basic;
- The vast majority felt that they had widened their knowledge of Professional English terminology by participating in the FG;
- The participation in the FG has had a very encouraging impact on students' completion rate;
- Social networking can be a powerful tool to reinforce online interaction and engagement in MOOCs.



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