



Foreign language pre-service teachers' perceptions of concerns before and challenges experienced during the first teaching practicum

William Nketsia^{*}, Kay Carroll

School of Education, Western Sydney University, Building K, Room 2.28, Kingswood Campus, Second Ave, Kingswood NSW, 2747, Sydney, Australia

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Foreign language pre-service teachers
Concerns
Challenges
Teaching practicum
Australia

ABSTRACT

The growing call among the countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development to recruit, retrain, and recertify foreign and migrant teachers in order to diversify the teaching force to reflect the increasingly diverse student population justifies the need to explore the experiences of foreign language teachers during their first teaching practicum in Australian mainstream classrooms. Semi-structured interviews were held with six foreign language pre-service teachers pursuing the Master of Teaching (Secondary) programme. The purpose was to explore their teaching experiences, concerns prior to the first teaching practicum in Australian mainstream classrooms, and how they dealt with the challenges encountered. The findings indicate that although teaching a foreign language in community language schools provided the teachers with some practical teaching skills, values, and opportunities to practice the knowledge and theories acquired in their master's programme, they all had concerns before the teaching practicum and encountered some challenges while undertaking it. The study discusses the challenges that the participants encountered and how they addressed them. In addition, it highlights the need for universities to design retraining programmes that address the unique concerns of foreign language teachers and equip them with the requisite knowledge and skills to enable them to become effective teachers in their new context.

1. Introduction

Globalization has gained considerable momentum in the last decades not only in economic and trade relations across national borders but also in terms of increased migration and refugee resettlement. Moreover, the number of people migrating from low-to high-income countries has increased exponentially over the years, resulting in increased cultural and linguistic diversity in communities and education systems, especially in the countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) [1–3]. Most OECD member countries are regarded as developed high-income economies with very high Human Development Index scores. For instance, in Australia, migrant arrivals have increased steadily over the years, with 45% (10.6 million) of the population coming from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds [4]. The 2018 OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) results show that about 36% of teachers in Australia work in schools where more than 10% of the students are non-native speakers; furthermore, 41% teach in schools in which more than 10% of students are migrants or from a migrant background, and 62% teach in

^{*} Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: w.nketsia@westernsydney.edu.au (W. Nketsia), k.carroll@westernsydney.edu.au (K. Carroll).

schools in which at least one percent of the student population are refugees [1]. In New South Wales (NSW), for instance, the number of students from a language background other than English has increased steadily from 18.4% in 1991 to 24.4% in 2001, 29.6% in 2011, and 37.2% in 2021 [5]. The increasing diversity in schools and classrooms presents significant challenges for teachers in terms of adapting their teaching practices to address students' academic, social, emotional, and physical needs [1,6].

To address the growing challenges that teachers face in migrant-heavy classrooms, most initial teacher education programmes have integrated issues of diversity, identity perspectives, and pedagogical practices into their curriculum [2,7]. However, studies exploring the extent to which initial teacher education programmes prepare pre-service teachers to teach culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms have found limited focus on cultural and linguistic diversity and that pre-service teachers feel anxious about their lack of preparedness and confidence to teach such diverse classrooms [2,8].

Efforts are underway in OECD countries to diversify the teaching force to reflect the diverse backgrounds, cultures, and languages of the student population. Ensuring a more diversified teaching workforce is critical for the teaching profession in areas where the percentage of these students is highest, particularly where there are persistent teacher shortages [9]. The belief is that diversifying the teaching force with appropriate role models from diverse linguistic backgrounds is important to developing inclusive practices [10, 11]. Teachers from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds have different worldviews and mindsets that can be advantageous in terms of teaching and addressing the diverse needs of students from the same backgrounds. They have the predisposition to acknowledge and incorporate the cultural knowledge of their students into their teaching. Studies have shown that foreign language teachers have high expectations of minority students, an extensive set of qualities and strategies to work with minority parents to support their students, and are more empathic to these students' educational challenges [9,10,12].

Regrettably, studies have described the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the teaching force in many OECD countries as homogenous, with White female teachers accounting for more than 80% of the total [9,12,13]. In Germany, only 7.2% of the elementary and secondary school teaching staff are of diverse linguistic backgrounds [14], and in the United States, teachers of colour comprise only 20% of the public school teacher population [9]. In Australia, only 17% of the teaching force identifies as being born overseas [15], with approximately 10% from non-native English-speaking immigrant countries [1]. Meanwhile, the growing diversity of enrolment in schools has not coincided with increasing levels of diversity in student teacher enrolment in initial teacher education programmes [2]. The homogenous nature of the teaching force is educationally and morally problematic in terms of the potential to promote narrow worldviews regarding teaching in classrooms, which would not serve all students in a diverse schooling system. Consequently, the diversification of the teaching force vital.

In efforts to diversify the teaching force, many countries have developed innovative pathways for the retraining and recertification of individuals with foreign teaching qualifications [6,14,16]. They have specifically designed requalification teacher education programmes to equip foreign language speakers with the requisite skills and knowledge to continue their professions in host countries. For instance, Kayser et al. [14] described an 18-month Refugee Teachers Program at the University of Potsdam in Brandenburg, Germany, designed in 2016 to train and integrate foreign language speakers with teaching qualifications and experience into the teaching force. This was in response to the demand for foreign language teachers from minority backgrounds in Germany to address the growing diversity in classrooms due to the influx of people from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

Furthermore, in an attempt to recertify foreign-trained teachers in Canada, the Ontario government funded a special Bachelor of Education programme (The Alternative Teacher Accreditation Program for Teachers with International Experience) in the Faculty of Education at Queen's University to equip foreign language speakers with the skills and knowledge needed to recertify so that they could find jobs and practice their profession in Ontario elementary schools. The three-year degree programme consists of academic courses that equip the candidates with the theoretical and methodological understanding of Canadian teacher education as well as 70 days of a school-based teaching practicum [6]. The current study explores a similar initial teacher education programme that retrains foreign language teachers: the Master of Teaching (Secondary) at University X. These internationally educated foreign language teachers (with various qualifications) have studied, lived, and voluntarily taught foreign languages in community language schools in NSW, Australia, for many years. Studies have shown that about 87% of foreign language teachers in Australia are women, with the majority (59.5%) having been in Australia for more than 10 years. Most of them (87%) have tertiary-level qualifications, with 44.3% of the qualifications coming from the education field. A significant percentage (54.9%) have international teaching experience, and a majority (79%) would like to become accredited teachers [17]. Given the significant role of foreign language teachers in diversifying the teaching force, it is important to explore the experience they bring and their concerns before and challenges during their first teaching practicum in mainstream classrooms.

1.1. Research context

The Master of Teaching (Secondary) programme at X University is an accredited professional teaching qualification for students who have successfully completed an appropriate bachelor's degree. Before enrolling in the programme, foreign language teachers must pursue the English and Tertiary Preparation Program run by the Sydney Institute for Community Languages Education (SICLE) in collaboration with WSU. Furthermore, as part of their coursework in the Advanced Certificate in Community Language Teaching with SICLE, they are introduced to the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) languages syllabus and are required to write a unit of work as an assignment. The successful completion of the programme requires students to complete 160 credits, including units in the curriculum and pedagogical studies. They are also required to complete two teaching practicums, each scheduled for 30 days [18]. During the teaching practicum, the pre-service teachers are assigned school-based mentors who work in close collaboration with university advisors to provide them with the best possible professional experience. The current study explores foreign language pre-service teachers' perceptions of concerns before and challenges encountered during their first teaching practicum.

Community language schools in NSW help students learn and use their community language or learn a new language. They help young Australians connect to the heritage and culture of their community while building strong communities and respect for the many cultures represented in the country. Based on their foreign language teaching experience in community language schools, foreign language teachers are eligible for recognition of prior learning (RPL), which reduces the 30-day teaching practicum by 10–15 days [19]. All six participants in the current study who had completed their first teaching practicum applied for RPL. Five of them had their teaching practicum reduced by 15 days and the sixth by 13 days. However, their views on the brief nature of this practicum remained unclear.

1.1.1.1. Conceptual framework

This study explores the teaching experiences of foreign language pre-service teachers during their teaching practicum. Teaching practicums provide essential opportunities for pre-service teachers to engage in situated learning and peripheral participation in communities of practice (CoP). According to Lave and Wenger [20]; learning takes place as a function of the activity, context, and culture in which it occurs (i.e. situated learning). The critical components of situated learning are social interaction and collaboration, where learners become involved in a CoP in which beliefs and behaviour are learnt. A CoP describes a group of people who share a common concern, interest, or passion for a subject or area and regularly collaborate over an extended period, sharing ideas and strategies to determine solutions and build innovations. From the anthropological perspective of CoPs, the situated learning model [20] suggests that all learning should be understood as a process of social co-participation and engagement in a specific context or CoP and that learning is distributed among the participants of these communities. Thus, learning takes place in a CoP, and for newcomers and learners to master the knowledge and skills within this CoP, they must move towards full participation in its socio-cultural practices. As the novices or beginners move from the periphery of the community to full participation, they become more active and engaged within the culture and eventually assume the role of expert [20]. Lave and Wenger described this process from novice or beginner to full participation in the socio-cultural practices of a CoP as legitimate peripheral participation. In this study, we focus on foreign language pre-service teachers' learning experiences during the teaching practicum.

Furthermore, the situated learning model has antecedents in Vygotsky's [21] socio-cultural theory of learning, which posits that learning is constructed interactively, with assistance from others, and internalized by individuals over time and that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. According to this theory, context creates a variety of perspectives that learners can access through social interaction and negotiation of meaning to help them construct knowledge on their own. Therefore, for the pre-service teaching practicum, learning is situated in placement schools that provide reflective real-world contexts and complex authentic activities for a constructive learning process that occurs through collaboration, negotiation, and social interaction.

1.1.1.2. Literature review

During the teaching practicum, pre-service teachers are provided with the opportunity to learn about their school's culture, establish relationships with students and teachers, and develop their ability to communicate with school staff and students [2]. For foreign language teachers, the practicum provides considerable benefits in developing their confidence, particularly in communicating in the language of their host country [22]. However, studies examining immigrant or foreign-trained teachers during the teaching practicum component of their teacher education requalification programme have established that they encounter various challenges during the practicum such as inadequate language skills, lack of behaviour management skills, cultural differences, and inadequate curriculum content and teaching strategies [6,14,16,23,24].

Inadequate language skills have been identified as one of the most prevalent challenges encountered by foreign-trained teachers during the teaching practicum [10]. Past studies have shown that many of these teachers struggle to communicate verbally in their host country's language, especially speaking and listening [6,16,23,24]. Studies have observed that the issue is more about language proficiency and accent, including pronunciation, than mastery of the language (e.g. vocabulary and grammar) [10].

Another area in which language proficiency has been problematic for foreign-trained teachers during the teaching practicum is student behaviour management. Internationally educated teacher candidates reportedly feel more disadvantaged when responding to and managing student behaviour due to deficiencies regarding correct language use, their inability to pronounce words quickly and effectively in English [24,25], and cultural differences relating to the behaviour of students in the host country. For instance, in Spooner-Lane et al. [24], the participants observed that student behaviour management in Australian schools was extremely stressful due to the comparatively less respectful nature of students towards teachers. Foreign-trained teachers also find it difficult to adapt to the classroom management practices of different school systems as they have been students and teachers in strictly organized and controlled teacher-managed classrooms [6] where students sit still and quietly and are more respectful and studious [24].

In addition, foreign-trained teachers grapple with the various cultural understandings of teaching and learning in their host country. It has been argued that these teachers lack the cultural and historical knowledge required to teach the curriculum content of the host country, requiring them to spend more time learning this content [23]. Furthermore, most foreign language teachers come from countries where education is characterized by uniform, teacher-directed instruction, a centrally mandated curriculum, memorization, and standardized testing [6]. The distinct teaching beliefs resulting from their prior experiences as students and teachers in their native countries may conflict with those of their host country's associate teachers and school community, potentially affecting how they approach the teaching practicum [6,16].

Most studies have focused on the concerns and challenges encountered during the teaching practicum by new immigrants and refugees with international teaching qualifications [6,23–25]. However, there are no data on foreign language pre-service teachers who have lived and taught foreign languages in community language schools in Australia for many years. Furthermore, it is not clear what these teachers bring with them from many years of teaching foreign languages in community language schools. We believe that

the availability of such empirical data on foreign language pre-service teachers' concerns before and challenges encountered during the teaching practicum will enable Australian universities to design appropriate retraining programmes that will specifically and effectively address their distinct concerns so as to improve their competence to become effective teachers in their new contexts. This is important considering the recent developments in teacher shortages that have heightened the need for Australia to recruit teachers internationally. Therefore, the main research questions were to determine the concerns that foreign language teachers had before their first teaching practicum in Australian mainstream classrooms, the challenges they encountered during this practicum, and how these challenges were addressed.

2. Methods

2.1. Study participants

Six pre-service female foreign language teachers who had completed their first teaching practice participated in this study. They were purposively recruited from the first cohorts of foreign language teachers in NSW who had begun the Master of Teaching (Secondary) programme at X University in 2019 to gain professional accreditation to teach in mainstream schools. The first cohort of foreign language pre-service teachers comprised 22 students, all female. At the time of the data collection, eleven had completed their first teaching practicum and were invited to take part in the study, but only six participated. Table 1 presents a summary of the study participants, four of whom were between the ages of 40 and 44 years, and two were between 45 and 49. Only one of them had a bachelor's degree, and the rest had master's degrees. The participants' foreign language teaching experience in community language schools ranged from four to eight years, with four of them teaching Chinese, one Lebanese, and one Armenian. The teaching experience from their home countries ranged from three to 10 years. They were studying to gain professional accreditation to teach various courses in mainstream high schools in NSW: business studies (3), commerce (2), English as an additional language or dialect (2), mathematics (1), computing (1), and design and technology (1). All the participants were assigned a pseudonym.

2.1.1. Instruments

To describe the foreign language pre-service teachers' community language school experiences and perceptions of their concerns before and challenges during their first teaching practicum, the study adopted a descriptive qualitative design. This is a flexible research approach used to provide accurate descriptions of participants' perceptions or experiences related to practice [26]. To address the gap in the literature, a semi-structured interview guide was developed based on the study objectives and a literature review [16, 24]. The interview guide covered the pre-service teachers' (a) teaching experience in community language schools, (b) concerns preceding the teaching practicum, (c) challenges during the teaching practicum and how they were addressed, and (d) views regarding the length of the practicum. The interview questions were validated by the expert judgment of four colleagues with expertise in the research topic, and their feedback was used to improve the final draft for the data collection. The researchers also established a rapport with the interviewees by asking them warm-up questions regarding their overall experience with the teaching practicum [27].

2.1.2. Data collection procedures

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of the University of Sydney (2018/698). Eleven foreign language pre-service teachers who had completed their first teaching practicum were invited to take part in the study, but only six participated. The participants were assured that their interview participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any stage. They were reminded at every stage of the interview process that they would not benefit directly from their participation in the study and that their identity would remain confidential throughout. The first author conducted the interviews between September and October 2021 and audio-recorded them via Zoom, each lasting between 45 min and 1 h. The interviews were transcribed verbatim using Pacific Transcription. The transcripts were sent to each participant for amendments and to consent to the use of the data, all of whom responded to confirm their satisfaction. The results of the study were later discussed with them during a series of workshops to ensure the credibility of the data collection [28].

Table 1
Participant characteristics.

Participant	Age	Country of origin	Qualifications	Key Learning Areas	Years in Australia	Teaching in Community Language Schools	Teaching experience overseas
Hana	40	China	Master's degree	Chinese, Business Studies, Commerce	15	8	4
Sakura	47	China	Master's degree	Chinese, EALD	10	4	3
Xia	48	Armenia	Master's degree	Armenian, Business Studies, Commerce	18	5	4
Kyomi	44	China	Master's degree	Chinese, EALD	15	6	5
Tora	43	Lebanon	Bachelor's degree	Lebanese, Computing, Design, and Technology	15	5	10
Yori	40	China	Master's degree	Chinese, Business Studies, Mathematics	15	6	5

2.1.3. Data analysis

A more deductive approach to thematic analysis was performed through five phases: reading the interview transcripts to become familiar with the data; identifying and generating initial codes; searching for themes among codes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes; and producing the final report [29]. The first author performed the initial coding and grouped them under a priori themes (foreign language teaching experiences from community language schools, concerns preceding the teaching practicum in mainstream schools, challenges encountered during the teaching practicum and how they were addressed, and views regarding the length of the practicum). The first draft of the results was then shared with the second author for suggestions. Upon agreement with the coding framework, the remaining interview data were analyzed and checked with the second author, followed by the writing of the storyline by extracting texts from the data.

3. Results

3.1. Teaching experience in community language schools

The participants were asked to describe what they had learnt from their foreign language teaching in community language schools and the impact on their first teaching practicum in mainstream schools. They shared that foreign language teaching in community language schools had provided them with useful practical skills to communicate and interact with students and colleagues in school settings. Some of the participants appreciated that the teaching had helped them develop confidence in communicating and interacting with students and parents. To them, such confidence would enable them to create positive student-teacher-parent relationships, which are critical for successful professional teaching. The following quotes reflect their views:

It has helped me deal with children and know how to establish teacher-student relationships. That's the most important skill I have developed while teaching in the community language school. (Xia, interview 3)

In the community language school, there are kids from different backgrounds. This helped me to know how to deal with other kids, no matter their age and background. It helped me to be more resilient, caring, gentle, and accepting of them. (Tora, interview 5)

The teaching experience in community language schools made me feel confident in terms of communicating with the local students ... the experience is great because one of the challenges of the teaching practicum is how to communicate with students. (Yori, interview 6)

Some of the participants revealed that teaching in community language schools had provided them with knowledge of the available curricula, syllabus, resources and valuable skills to plan and deliver lessons that engage all students at their levels while monitoring their learning progress. The following responses summarize the views of some participants:

Teaching at the community language school equipped me with new skills, e.g. how to use the syllabus to plan a unit of work and lessons. (Xia, interview 3)

It helped me a lot in lesson planning, e.g. I know where to search for my resources and how to organize the students to do activities. (Sakura, interview 2)

The community language school has helped me, especially with working with the curriculum and syllabus and planning lessons at the expected student level. (Tora, interview 5)

Some participants also noted that foreign language teaching had provided them with the right platform to experiment, practice, and make sense of some of the knowledge and theories they had learnt in their master's programme, as depicted in the comment below:

It's a good platform for experimentation. When I started teaching in a community language school, my classroom management was horrible, so I suffered for half a year. Eventually, I came up with some strategies. When I implemented them in my teaching practicum, they worked well, and the class was beautifully managed. (Xia, interview 3)

Community language schools are a good platform for experimentation. In every unit, we learnt theories, and I can put them into action every Saturday. So, whatever theories I learnt, I had the opportunity to implement them. (Xia, interview 3)

Thus, only one participant pointed to an improvement in her behaviour management skills through her teaching in community language schools. These above accounts indicate that foreign language teaching provided the participants with practical teaching skills and values and offered them opportunities to experiment with the theories they had learnt in their master's programme.

3.2. Concerns before the teaching practicum in mainstream classrooms and the challenges encountered

The participants reported their major pre-practicum concerns and the challenges they encountered during their first practicum. Their views are presented under the themes English language skills, behaviour management, curriculum content knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge.

3.2.1. English language skills

The participants were asked to discuss their pre-practicum concerns. All six of them indicated that they were quite apprehensive about their English language skills because they were coming from non-English language backgrounds. One of them said, "I had some

concerns about my English language skills because this is not my native language. Other than that, I was fine” (Sakura, interview 2). Another participant noted, “Well, I was a bit uncomfortable before going to professional experience ... As you know, English is not my native language, and I believe that if you are a teacher in an Australian school, it is important to master English” (Xia, interview 3).

They saw English language proficiency as critical to effective and efficient communication and their relationships with students and colleagues; however, as non-native speakers of English, they worried about being able to express themselves or effectively deliver lessons in English and, likewise, understand the native speakers in their schools. Xia (interview 3) commented as follows:

It is important to master the language not only to deliver content but, most importantly, to establish an effective communication relationship with students, especially high schoolers. It was the language barrier I was afraid of because the students might talk or ask questions using slang I might not understand.

Xia’s sentiments were echoed by Kyomi (interview 4). However, some participants who were anxious about their English language skills before the teaching practicum ended up feeling confident. One noted that “... when I actually went there [teaching practicum], I didn’t really experience it [challenges with the English language] that much” (Kyomi, interview 4). Another participant added, “... I did perform a lot better during the practicum” (Yori, interview 6). Sakura (interview 2), who was worried about whether she could provide students with clear and explicit instructions, indicated that although there were some challenges, they were easily addressed with support from her mentor. These narratives indicate that although the participants were concerned about their English language skills, they were fairly competent after all.

3.2.2. Behaviour management

Five participants admitted that they were concerned about not being able to successfully manage students’ behaviour in high school. They were worried and unsure about how they could manage, react to, and address inappropriate behaviour from teenage students. For example, one participant said, “Yeah ... I was concerned about managing teenage students, and I knew that there would be ... a lot of students in one classroom” (Sakura, interview 2). Another participant added, “I think that my concern was with classroom management, so I wanted to learn more about that ...” (Kyomi, interview 4).

The participants confirmed that behaviour management presented significant challenges during their first teaching practicum. The following quotations chronicle some vivid experiences:

The challenge was classroom behaviour management—probably the biggest challenge that anyone could face. If there was misbehaviour happening, how am I supposed to deal with it? How am I supposed to get around it? So, it can be a bit intimidating. (Tora, interview 5)

I think the behaviour management strategy was another major challenge for me during the first practicum. I think that behaviour management is an issue for every teacher. (Yori, interview 6)

Another participant (Hana, interview 1) indicated that most of the feedback from the mentor involved her firmness regarding managing classroom behaviour. She acknowledged that knowledge of school policies and rules regarding behaviour was critical for successful behaviour management in schools and classrooms. Hana further discussed some of the challenging behaviours encountered and the helplessness she felt in addressing them:

Some students were just lying down on the floor; then, they were throwing tantrums in the classroom. That was unbelievable. Like there was no learning. One just put his head down during the lesson and did not complete any work, and you couldn’t get him to open his laptop ... I didn’t know what to do with him. He doesn’t listen to me ... seems like there are some cases that even the principal cannot do anything.

Managing and addressing behaviour problems among teenage students in the classroom presented a serious challenge to many of the foreign language pre-service teachers, especially regarding students who were unmotivated and failed to participate in classroom activities. Some participants described the strategies they adopted to address some of the behaviour management challenges they encountered. For example, Tora (interview 5) used her skills as a firm parent in the following way:

I said, “Put these phones away”. The students responded, “No, miss, you can’t do that. We’re allowed to have our phones with us”. I said, “Pack them away; I don’t want to see them”. [Laughter] That was probably another issue. That was causing a bit of a behaviour issue, but it was controllable. You had to deal with it because I know from my kids not to escalate things; just leave it the way it is.

Tora also indicated that she adopted the behaviour management style of a mentor teacher:

It was a behaviour issue in the Year 11 class. This student was a little bit of a shock to me because every time he got upset about something, he would swear. Then the mentor teacher would say to him, “Stop!” I just called out his name and gave him a few seconds. I knew how to manage him because I’d seen how the mentor teacher was managing him. I didn’t make a big issue of it. If something small happened, I’d either ignore it, or if it was building up, I’d go up to the students and tell them to pay attention.

During the teaching practicum, I just observed my mentor when she was teaching and took down notes, including the language, sentences, and phrases she used to manage the classroom behaviour. She is very good at managing our classroom, and she demonstrated and taught me a lot about behaviour management strategies like the use of gestures, explicit teaching, and the need to make classroom rules and expectations and instructions very clear to students so that they will know what to do. This helped me to manage my classroom (Yori, interview 6).

3.2.3. Curriculum content knowledge

Another major challenge was curriculum content knowledge, which was recounted by four participants. Although the teachers were expected to have completed some curriculum units in their respective key learning areas before their first practicum, they complained that they were unfamiliar with the curriculum, syllabus, and textbooks for the subject they taught. As Hana (interview 1) remarked, “I was teaching a new subject, so I didn’t know the content ... Yeah, that was the biggest challenge for me”. Tora (interview 4) added, “So I didn’t know what English as an additional language or dialect was about, so I didn’t prepare much. Then, eventually, when I went there, I found that it was one of the challenges”.

The participants acknowledged that they would have been better prepared had they possessed advanced knowledge of the key learning area, year level, and curriculum content that they would eventually teach. Two participants shared as follows:

With the syllabus, there’s no way that you can prepare before you start teaching the practicum ... because you don’t know what class you are going to teach ... If you knew that you were going to teach Year 9 or 10, then at least you could prepare (Hana, interview 1)

Well, another thing is probably getting to know the content more before you walk into the classroom—to be well prepared for your students. (Tora, interview 5)

However, some participants felt confident during the teaching practicum as they were teaching in their native languages and, therefore, were very familiar with the content:

I was quite confident about the content knowledge because Chinese is my native language. I had no problem with that. (Sakura, interview 2)

I have had previous experience in teaching Armenian in a community language school, and I tutored it to HSC students for their examinations, so I already had the content knowledge. With Armenian, I was pretty confident. (Xia, interview 3)

3.2.4. Pedagogical knowledge

Pedagogical content knowledge was also a major concern among some of the participants. Yori (interview 6) stated that using evidence-based instructional approaches (e.g. differentiated instruction) to deliver lessons in a manner that engaged all students in the classroom was one of her biggest challenges: “The differentiation strategy ... another major challenge for me during the first teaching practicum ... I just learnt some but not deep enough”. Kyomi (interview 4) added, “The teaching approach was quite challenging. I wasn’t really prepared that much because I’m still expanding my knowledge”.

Another participant described her struggle to adopt different instructional approaches to engage all students with diverse learning styles and needs:

I had a big class of around 30 students—a group of active students who were always engaged, while others were passive. But the danger was when you paid more attention to the most passive students or those with different learning styles and needs; then some become bored, and they start getting distracted. (Xia, interview 3)

Other challenges discussed included communicating with colleagues, lesson planning, and establishing relationships with students. Commenting on communicating with mentors and colleagues, one participant said the following:

I was not sure how to communicate with my other colleagues apart from the mentor. It just felt like you were a stranger there. Even though they tried to be nice and welcoming, I didn’t know what they were talking about ... like you can’t have in-depth conversations with other teachers because they just want to let out their frustration or share their life stories with each other. I felt so strange asking them questions about how to manage student behaviour. (Hana, interview 1)

In terms of lesson planning, one participant (Hana, interview 1) described it as challenging:

So, the lesson planning was very challenging because I was overwhelmed by the content; how much should I include in one lesson? When you do the planning, you start to discover more that you can teach, but you can only fit in so much, and it’s hard to decide what to leave out and what to include. Even the content in the textbook is a lot.

Nevertheless, the issue of discrimination was not part of the practicum experience. They revealed that they had lived in Australia for a long time and had interacted with people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds; therefore, they were not worried about discrimination. The following comment summarizes their views:

I’ve been working in Australia for a long time. I’ve been dealing with different kinds of people. So, I am an open-minded person; I didn’t really feel scared of being discriminated against or something in school. (Kyomi, interview 4)

Some of them described their placement school as very multicultural, intimating that they did not experience discrimination:

In the school where I was teaching ... my local council has over 50 ethnic groups, and I have experience dealing with different people. So I wasn’t really concerned about the cultural differences. (Hana, interview 1)

I didn’t witness discrimination because I think the school is quite multicultural. They’ve got a big language department ... with five or six teachers in there. So, every teacher teaches different languages, and there was a very good atmosphere. (Sakura, interview 2)

3.2.5. Views on the length of the teaching practicum

All six participants were granted RPL, with significant reductions in their first 30-day teaching practicum. The interview data indicate that the shortened teaching practicum was inadequate. The participants acknowledged that coming from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, they needed to spend more time in schools. For instance, Kyomi (interview 4) maintained, “*Yeah, it’s a bit too short ... I applied for 15 days for foreign language teaching in a community language school, but after I went there, I wished it was longer. I think, definitely, for a professional experience, the longer, the better. ... that’s a very important fact*”. Hana (interview 1) added, “*I needed more time to observe more teachers and different student grades because, in every grade, they look so different*”, a sentiment echoed by Tora (interview 5). Although the participants qualified and applied for a reduction in the length of the practicum due to their foreign language teaching experience in community language schools, the above testimonies show that they needed more experience in mainstream schools.

Moreover, they discussed how the shorter practicum period affected them. Some of them noted that because of planning and teaching, they did not have enough time for observation or to build connections with students and familiarize themselves with the curriculum content and school routines. These sentiments are exemplified below:

I was so overwhelmed by planning that I didn’t have enough time for observations. ... in the first few days, they asked, “are you ready to teach?” I said I prefer to observe more. It would be better if I’d built a better connection with the students and become familiar with the content and routine ... I felt like the time with the students was too short. (Hana, interview 1)

I personally think that I should’ve done the whole six weeks ... building relationships with high school students; I feel that you need more time, especially because it is a bit difficult, including for students, to break the ice, especially when someone new is coming in. (Tora, interview 5)

Another participant indicated that she needed more time in school to make progress towards putting her knowledge and skills into practice. She noted, “*I feel that the practicum is too short; I didn’t have enough time to make more progress ... get my skills into practice*” (Sakura, interview 2). According to them, they would have liked to stay in the school for a longer period of time to make progress in terms of building connections with students and understanding the curriculum content and routines of the placement schools. They became aware of the time it took to build connections and relationships with students and learn strategies and implement them during placement.

4. Discussion

Most participants perceived that they had acquired relevant practical teaching skills and values from the many years of foreign language teaching in community language schools, including skills related to interacting and communicating with students and staff, using curricula, syllabi, and resources to plan lessons, and opportunities to experiment and practice some of the knowledge and theories learnt in university. Although they all had anxiety about their non-native English skills, most of them found that they were competent in English, which was advantageous for the teaching practicum. This finding contradicts that of previous studies where English proficiency and accent were shown to be problematic for foreign-trained teachers in their instruction and communication with students and fellow teachers during the practicum [6,24][6]. This study result may be explained by the participants’ long stay in Australia and further studies in Australian universities and SICLE, which might have provided them with meaningful contexts and opportunities to improve their English skills and communication. Contexts that encourage people to purposefully use language for authentic communication have been found to be effective in developing language and confidence communicating [22,30]. One of the participants stressed the need to practice English before instruction, suggesting that teacher retraining programmes should include adequate opportunities for foreign language pre-service teachers to practice the spoken language. Providing consistent professional learning opportunities that promote interaction, dialogue, and engagement among foreign-trained teachers could boost these teachers self-confidence to effectively use the language (e.g. Wilbur [31]).

Another area that almost all the participants were concerned about before the teaching practicum was how they could effectively address student behaviour. Indeed, most of them found behaviour management challenging during their teaching practicum as they could not respond effectively to behavioural issues in the classroom, especially from students who appeared unmotivated and did not participate in class activities. This finding is consistent with that of previous studies as most pre-service teachers coming from diverse cultural backgrounds find managing student behaviour challenging [6,16]. One participant maintained that teachers must have sound knowledge of school policies, rules, and routines for effective classroom behaviour management, including establishing school rules and following them firmly and consistently. However, the participants generally found it difficult to adjust to different school systems, rules, and routines. The implication here is the possibility that pre-service teachers are acquainted with sound knowledge of the cultures, policies, rules, and routines of placement schools long before their actual placements, enabling them to enforce the school rules and routines. Moreover, some of the pre-service teachers described the behaviour of some students as “unbelievable”. They were shocked to see students “getting upset and swearing”, “lying on the floor”, “throwing tantrums in the classroom”, and “not completing any class work”. These behaviours and attitudes towards learning are arguably incompatible with the behavioural expectations of foreign language teachers from strictly organized and controlled teacher-managed classrooms [6]. These results provide further support for retraining programmes for foreign language teachers to include seminars and workshops that will enable them to understand host-country students and how to engage them in learning.

Meanwhile, two participants (Tora and Yori) indicated that they had adopted the behaviour management style of the mentor teacher in addressing challenging student behaviour. Tora and Yori were gradually being transformed into better practitioners by

observing and taking notes on how their mentor was managing classroom behaviour. Thus, they moved from the periphery of the CoP to its centre, adopting the style of the expert practitioner [32]. This study confirms that some pre-service teachers imitated the same system, rules, and routines used by their mentor teachers in the classroom [6]. According to Lave [33], in a CoP, newcomers develop a changing understanding of practice over time and grow into old-timers with knowledge and skills gained through observation. Accordingly, this characterizes learning as legitimate peripheral participation in CoPs. To acquire a great deal of knowledge and skills on how to organize a class and create a conducive atmosphere for learning during the teaching practicum, the study findings suggest that pre-service teachers must be taught to be receptive to suggestions and follow the rules sanctioned by their mentors. Tora also used her maternal experience to address some of the challenges regarding behaviour management. As a parent and with first-hand knowledge and experience, she used her firmness as a mother to request that students put their phones away. This finding is consistent with the observation of [6] that many student teachers can transfer knowledge and skills learnt as parents to classroom settings. Apart from being mature students, foreign language teachers are also mothers and fathers with responsibilities and experience. Arguably, therefore, they should possess a repertoire of teaching and parenting skills that would prove useful for their teaching career.

Although the participants had completed some courses to acquaint themselves with teaching methodologies and curriculum units in their key teaching areas before the practicum, some of them recounted that knowledge of the curriculum content and the adoption of effective teaching strategies to deliver content to students with diverse learning styles and needs posed challenges during their teaching practicum. For example, Hana indicated that she was given a new subject to teach, while Tora noted that she was given English as an additional language or dialect and did not know what it was about. They maintained that teaching these unfamiliar subjects posed greater challenges to them and that they should have been informed of their key learning areas, year level, and curriculum content long before their teaching practicum in order to prepare thoroughly. One explanation for this could be that it had been years since they had completed their undergraduate studies and, therefore, needed more time to revise the curriculum content and the requisite teaching strategies. There is a consensus among various groups of foreign language teachers that effective foreign language teaching requires the use of a variety of teaching strategies (e.g. cooperative learning strategies and differentiated instruction) to address diverse student needs and interests in foreign language classrooms [30]. However, half of the participants indicated that they struggled with implementing an effective pedagogy, such as differentiated instruction, to address the diverse learning styles and needs of students. These results substantiate previous findings indicating that foreign language student teachers require additional preparation time due to their lack of familiarity with the teaching approaches and curriculum of their host country [16,23]. The participants were perhaps more accustomed to more rigid, uniform, and teacher-centred approaches, contrary to the dominant child-centred teaching approaches (e.g. differentiated instruction) in Australia.

Effective communication and the establishment of positive relationships with students and colleagues have been deemed vital components of a successful teaching practicum [6] and critical qualities in promoting situated learning within a CoP [20]; however, previous studies have shown them to be challenging for foreign-trained teachers [2,23]. In the current study, a majority of the participants had no problems communicating and establishing relationships with students and colleagues, suggesting that most of them had been teaching foreign languages in Australian community language schools for many years and might have developed the relevant skills for establishing relationships and communicating with students and colleagues. According to the socio-cultural theory of learning [21], social interaction and the negotiation of meaning help learners construct knowledge on their own. This means that foreign language teachers, through teaching in community language schools, have developed skills that are necessary for effective professional development during the teaching practicum. However, it seems that some of them would have benefited from further knowledge and skills to engage in collaborative cultures to improve their professional performance. Hana, for example, indicated that she could not engage with colleagues regarding student behaviour management. According to Lave and Wenger [20]; the situated learning model views learning as a process of social co-participation and engagement in a specific context or CoP and that learning is distributed among the participants of these communities. Therefore, foreign language teachers should be made aware that informal workplace learning opportunities such as collaboration and direct interaction with colleagues are vital in transforming their teaching practices and can lead to increased professional development during the teaching practicum [34,35].

Unlike previous studies reporting that teachers from non-English speaking backgrounds experience racism from students and staff in schools and generally feel alienated and isolated within the school culture and environment because of their accent, language, race, and ethnicity [10], the study participants did not perceive experiences of discrimination. They have lived in Australia for many years and developed the skills to interact with people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They found the placement schools exceptionally multicultural, with most students and colleagues coming from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This potentially explains why they may not have experienced discrimination. They described the schools as “accepting of each other”, “welcoming”, and having a “good atmosphere”. These results further confirm the increased cultural and linguistic diversity in NSW schools, strengthening the clarion call for a more diversified teaching workforce. These favorable comments about schools in New South Wales are essential attributes in attracting many foreign language teachers (2000+) currently teaching foreign languages in community language schools [17], and will aid in addressing the teacher shortages facing Australia’s mainstream schools.

Another important finding was that all the participants who were teaching their native language as a foreign language felt confident during the teaching practicum, especially in terms of content familiarity. This study confirms that foreign language pre-service teachers’ strong language skills and high level of fluency are important in successful and effective foreign language teaching [31]. The finding further infers that more attention and support should be provided to recruiting and retraining foreign language teachers to address acute teacher shortages in Australia.

In terms of the length of the teaching practicum, the findings indicate that the participants did not have enough time for observation due to the brevity of the practicum. During the initial stages of the practicum, the participants were expected to embark on what [36]

described as the “way in”—a period of observation in which novice teachers watch experienced teachers (mentor teachers) and gather information about students, teaching strategies, content, and class/school management. According to Lave and Wenger [20]; as the beginners observe and participate in peripheral ways with limited teaching responsibility, they can refine and perfect the acquired knowledge to enable them to move from the periphery of the community to full participation, that is, become more active and engaged within the culture and eventually assume the role of expert. However, because the participants were granted RPL, they had less time for observation before engaging in actual teaching. They acknowledged that because they were coming from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, they needed more time for classroom/school observations because of the time it takes to make progress towards building a connection with students and colleagues, understanding the curriculum content, routines, policies, and teaching strategies, and trying them out during placement. This is consistent with Lave’s [33] argument that more observation is required for newcomers to grow into old-timers with knowledge and skills. These results accord with previous findings indicating that pre-service teachers rely more on their apprenticeship of observation to shape their teaching practices [31]. Therefore, a longer teaching practicum could be considered for foreign language teachers to enable additional observation. An extended teaching practicum and observation period would allow novice teachers to glean the best teaching practices from high-quality mentor teachers.

5. Conclusion and implications

Despite the duration of foreign language pre-service teachers in Australia, their further studies in Australian universities, extended foreign language teaching experience, and maturity as parents, they still encountered some of the challenges that foreign-trained and internationally educated teachers typically encounter during their first teaching practicum in host countries. Nevertheless, they found that their English language skills were not as poor as they had perceived, and they had acquired skills to deal with people from diverse backgrounds. Moreover, most of them had no issues communicating with colleagues, lesson planning, and establishing relationships with students. However, behaviour management was challenging for many of them. The most obvious finding to emerge from this study is that all the participants who were teaching their native language as a foreign language during the teaching practicum felt confident, especially because of content familiarity. The study findings suggest that foreign language teachers present a viable option for Australia to diversify its teaching force and address the current acute teacher shortages. These teachers have acquired relevant teaching skills from their teaching in community language schools and possess linguistic proficiency that will make them successful foreign language teachers and specialists in other key subject areas such as business studies, mathematics, design and technology, computing, commerce, and English as an additional language or dialect. However, there is an urgent need for policymakers to provide financial support for recruitment and retraining programmes for foreign language teachers. The government must provide incentives for volunteer foreign language teachers who would like to become accredited to teach in mainstream schools. The university recruitment and retraining of foreign language teachers need to be driven by the concerns and challenges expressed herein. Therefore, we recommend more time for observation and practice during the practicum. Retraining programmes should arrange for foreign language pre-service teachers to have a guided observation of a range of classes in different schools before embarking on their actual teaching practicum. Using the socio-cultural developmental approach [21], foreign language pre-service teachers should undertake their guided observation in pairs, write observation notes on critical areas such as classroom management, English language, curriculum, and pedagogy, make joint presentations to university supervisors, followed by critical discussions and feedback. This will give them more opportunities to develop contextualized knowledge and skills in these areas. Moreover, mentor teachers should be prepared to support foreign language pre-service teachers to address their unique concerns and challenges during the practicum. Furthermore, additional opportunities to practice English speaking will instil confidence in foreign language teachers and promote effective communication and relationships with students and teaching colleagues.

5.1. Study limitations

The study results should be interpreted with caution because of the following limitations. First, the foreign language teachers were recruited among those enrolled in the Master of Teaching (Secondary) programme who had completed their first teaching practicum. Thus, their perspectives may differ from those of other foreign language pre-service teachers from other cultural and linguistic backgrounds enrolled in other programmes and those yet to undertake their professional experience. We recommend that future studies employ quantitative methods to recruit larger samples to expand this study and provide a more in-depth understanding of foreign language teachers’ concerns and challenges during the teaching practicum. Nevertheless, this study has provided insights into the experiences of foreign language pre-service teachers during the teaching practicum in mainstream schools in Australia. The findings could inform reforms in retraining programmes and mentor preparation to address the needs, concerns, and challenges of foreign language teachers during the teaching practicum, especially in an era in which there is an overwhelming demand for the diversification of the teaching force in Australia.

Author contribution statement

William Nketsia: Conceived and designed the experiments; Performed the experiments; Analyzed and interpreted the data; Contributed reagents, materials, analysis tools or data; Wrote the paper.

Kay Carroll: Analyzed and interpreted the data; Contributed reagents, materials, analysis tools or data; Wrote the paper.

Data availability statement

Data will be made available on request.

Additional information

No additional information is available for this paper.

Declaration of competing interest

This article was a result of a collaborative project between The University of Sydney and Western Sydney University researchers: Emily Bai, Maya Cranitch, Ken Cruickshank, Catherine Mottee, Tina Sharpe.

References

- [1] S. Thomson, K. Hillman, The Teaching and Learning International Survey 2018, in: Australian Report Volume 1: Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners, 2019. <https://research.acer.edu.au/talis/6/>.
- [2] R. Moloney, D. Saltmarsh, "Knowing your students" in the culturally and linguistically diverse classroom, *Aust. J. Teach. Educ.* 41 (2016) 78–93, <https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2016v41n4.5>.
- [3] Organisation for Economic Co-operation, World Migration in Figures, OECD Paris, 2013. <https://www.oecd.org/els/mig/World-Migration-in-Figures.pdf>.
- [4] Australian Bureau of Statistics, Annual Report of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Government Publishing Service, 2017. <https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/1001.02017-18?OpenDocument>.
- [5] NSW Department of Education, Language Diversity in NSW: 2021 Factsheet, 2021. https://data.cese.nsw.gov.au/data/dataset/c6f47a14-ed07-3857-95b5-7596bb3c4314/resource/ec1eecca2-1d39-406c-bbf0-56270aaf657a/download/lbote-factsheet-2021-final_13-dec_vr_aa.pdf.
- [6] J. Myles, L. Cheng, H. Wang, Teaching in elementary school: perceptions of foreign-trained teacher candidates on their teaching practicum, *Teach. Teach. Educ.* 22 (2006) 233–245, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2005.09.001>.
- [7] N. Forghani-Arani, L. Cerna, M. Bannon, in: The Lives of teachers in diverse classrooms, OECD Education Working Papers, No. 198, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1787/8c26fee5-en>.
- [8] R. Moloney, A. Giles, Plurilingual pre-service teachers in a multicultural society: insightful, invaluable, invisible, *Aust. Rev. Appl. Ling.* 38 (2015) 123–138, <https://doi.org/10.1075/ara1.38.3.03mol>.
- [9] D.J. Carter Andrews, E. Castro, C.L. Cho, E. Petchauer, G. Richmond, R. Floden, Changing the narrative on diversifying the teaching workforce: a look at historical and contemporary factors that inform recruitment and retention of teachers of color, *J. Teach. Educ.* 70 (2019) 6–12, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487118812418>.
- [10] L. Marom, Mapping the field: examining the recertification of internationally educated teachers, *Can. J. Educ./Revue Canadienne de L'éducation.* 40 (2017) 157–190. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/90014775>.
- [11] Organisation for Economic Co-operation, Educating Teachers for Diversity: Meeting the Challenge, OECD Paris, 2010, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264079731-en>.
- [12] J.K. Adair, Creating positive contexts of reception: the value of immigrant teachers in US early childhood education programs, *Educ. Pol. Anal. Arch.* 24 (2016) n1. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1088172>.
- [13] T.K. Chapman, A critical race theory analysis of past and present institutional processes and policies in teacher education, *Studying Diversity in Teacher Education* (2011) 237–256.
- [14] D. Niesta Kayser, M. Vock, A.A. Wojciechowicz, Example of best practice: refugee teachers at the University of Potsdam. A requalification program for newly arrived teachers in Germany, *Intercult. Educ.* 32 (2021) 108–118, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2021.1851513>.
- [15] Education Services Australia. Australian Teacher Workforce Data: National Teacher Workforce Characteristics Report December 2021, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Limited, 2021.
- [16] M. Campbell, D. Tangen, R. Spooner-Lane, A program for preparing ethnic minority student teachers for practicum, *Int. J. Pract. Exp. Prof. Educ.* 9 (2006) 1–10. <http://eprints.qut.edu.au>.
- [17] K. Cruickshank, M. Ellsmore, P. Brownlee, *The Skills in Question: A Report on the Professional Learning Strengths and Needs of Teachers in the NSW Community Language Schools*, 2018.
- [18] *School Based Professional Experience Handbook. Professional Experience Handbook: School Based Placements - Master of Teaching (Birth - 12 Years), Master of Teaching (Primary) and Master of Teaching (Secondary)*, Western Sydney University, 2021.
- [19] Western Sydney University. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for previous or current teaching employment experience, Western Sydney University, 2018.
- [20] J. Lave, E. Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*, Cambridge University Press, 1991, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815355>.
- [21] L.S. Vygotsky, *Mind in society: the development of higher psychological processes*, Harvard University Press, 1978.
- [22] M.K. Kabilan, A phenomenological study of an international teaching practicum: pre-service teachers' experiences of professional development, *Teach. Teach. Educ.* 36 (2013) 198–209, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2013.07.013>.
- [23] C. Chassels, Participation of internationally educated professionals in an initial teacher education bachelor of education degree program: challenges and supports, *Can. J. Educ. Adm. Pol.* 100 (2010) 1–39. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ883752.pdf>.
- [24] R. Spooner-Lane, D. Tangen, M. Campbell, The complexities of supporting Asian international pre-service teachers as they undertake practicum, *Asia-Pacific J. Teach. Educ.* 37 (2009) 79–94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13598660802530776>.
- [25] S.N. Dlamini, D. Martinovic, In pursuit of being Canadian: examining the challenges of culturally relevant education in teacher education programs, *Race Ethn. Educ.* 10 (2007) 155–175, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613320701330684>.
- [26] E.R. Babbie, *The Basics of Social Research*, seventh ed., Cengage Learning, 2016.
- [27] L. Cohen, L. Manion, K. Morrison. *Research methods in education*, sixth ed., Routledge Falmer, 2007.
- [28] J.W. Creswell, D.L. Miller, Determining validity in qualitative inquiry, *Theory Into Pract.* 39 (2000) 124–130, <https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip3903.2>.
- [29] V. Braun, V. Clarke, Using thematic analysis in psychology, *Qual. Res. Psychol.* 3 (2006) 77–101, <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp0630a>.
- [30] S.P. Kissau, B. Algozzine, M. Yon, Similar but different: the beliefs of foreign language teachers, *Foreign Lang. Ann.* 45 (2012) 580–598. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2013.12001.x>.
- [31] M.L. Wilbur, How foreign language teachers get taught: methods of teaching the methods course, *Foreign Lang. Ann.* 40 (2007) 79–101, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2007.tb02855.x>.
- [32] G. Kearsley. The theory into practice database, 2011. <http://tip.psychology.org>.
- [33] J. Lave, *Situating learning in communities of practice*, in: *Perspectives on socially shared cognition 2*, 1991, pp. 63–82.

- [34] X. Huang, C. Wang, Factors affecting teachers' informal workplace learning: the effects of school climate and psychological capital, *Teach. Teach. Educ.* 103 (2021), 103363. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0742051X21000871>.
- [35] A. Boon Grosemans, C. Verclairen, F. Dochy, Informal Learning of Primary School Teachers: Considering the Role of Teaching Experience and School Culture, *Teaching and Teacher*, 2015. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0742051X14001681>.
- [36] E. Wenger, *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity* (Learning in Doing: Social, Cognitive and Computational Perspectives), Cambridge University Press, 1998, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511803932>.