

An Empirical Study of Chinese Pre-service Teachers' Perceptions of the use of Authentic Tasks in the EFL Classroom in China

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Abstract: Authentic tasks present the real-life activities in the classroom, and provide students with opportunities for real-life communication. This research aims to investigate the perceptions of Chinese pre-service teachers on the implementation of authentic tasks in ELT classroom in China, and to investigate the influence of their previous experience as students on their perceptions.

Keywords: Authentic tasks; English language teaching; Pre-service teachers

1. Introduction

1.1 Research background

EFL teachers in China have been accustomed to the grammar-translation method (GTM). Although this teaching method can help students improve their academic levels to cope with English exams, it provides them with neither communicative skills nor problem-solving abilities. Also, English is rarely used in the everyday lives of most Chinese people, causing the lack of practice in and outside the classroom. Therefore, in recent years, researches have focused on teaching methods that can compensate for these shortcomings. Authentic tasks have attracted attention since it provides opportunities to communicate in English in the process of solving problems, which help students cultivate their abilities to interact with others and solve problems in English.

Current studies of teaching methods have focused on the opinions of in-service teachers, neglecting one particular group, pre-service teachers. Many pre-service teachers in China are students who have just graduated from undergraduate courses, and have an understanding of teaching methods from the perspectives of both teacher and student, which can be different from in-service teachers. Therefore, understanding their perceptions of authentic tasks can help to gain a complete picture.

1.2 Research aims

The aim of this research is twofold. Firstly, it aims to investigate the Chinese pre-service teachers' perceptions of the use of authentic tasks in the EFL classroom. Secondly, it aims to investigate the influence of prior experience as students on their perceptions. The participants in the research are Chinese EFL pre-service teachers who take teacher education programme after completing the undergraduate study. The following are the two research questions that this study will seek to answer:

RQ1: What are Chinese pre-service teachers' perceptions of the use of authentic tasks in the EFL classroom?

RQ2: How does their prior experience influence their perceptions?

2. Literature review

2.1 The concept of authentic tasks

The discussion on the best definition of the term "task" has been going on for years. The definition was divided into "target tasks" and "pedagogical tasks" based on where the tasks take place (Nunan, 2004). Target tasks were an individual's real-life activities outside the classroom, while pedagogical tasks refer to activities carried out in the classroom to comprehend or produce the target language. Increased attention should be paid to the development of task authenticity when developing pedagogical tasks to combine them with real-life activities and contexts. To build up the criteria for designing and judging authentic

tasks, Herrington, Oliver and Reeves (2003) investigated ten characteristics of authentic activities. Based on these criteria, authentic tasks for English language learning should expose the learners to meaningful real-life activities which are related to the comprehension and use of target language; they should offer opportunities for collaborative work and critical reflection; and, they should engage learners in the consideration and integration of knowledge from various perspectives and disciplines, which may then lead to different solutions and outcomes of the tasks.

2.2 Teachers' perceptions of authentic tasks in the EFL classroom

Many studies have discussed teachers' perceptions of using authentic tasks in the EFL classroom. Generally speaking, there were two main types of research purpose. Some researchers aimed to investigate teachers' understanding of tasks or Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which usually involved the comprehension of the concepts and effects of the tasks. Other researchers focused on the reasons why teachers implemented or avoided authentic tasks.

2.2.1 The concept of authentic tasks in the EFL classroom

Many studies focused on investigating teachers' understanding of tasks in general rather than authentic tasks in particular. Cheng and Samuel (2011) found that the secondary EFL teachers in Henan Province in China showed a high degree of understanding of the basic concept of using tasks in the classroom, while Liu et al. (2018) found that the participants who were teachers from different areas of China believed that their understanding of how to use tasks in teaching was considerably limited. Besides, these studies did not specifically focus on teachers' understanding of authentic tasks, which means that there was no assessment of the importance of authenticity. Therefore, it can be concluded that, in the Chinese context, research conducted to investigate teachers' understanding of the concept of authentic tasks is limited and more attention is paid by researchers to TBLT from a broad perspective.

2.2.2 The impact of authentic tasks in the EFL classroom

Communicative competence was an important element of the tasks; the impact of authentic tasks on communicative skills should be an important topic of investigation. For example, Ortiz and Cuéllar (2018) studied the performance of eight students at the beginner level in four authentic tasks. They found that, when students were assigned tasks that were interesting and meaningful to them in real life, the oral production of students would be facilitated. However, although there is some relevant research on the effect of authentic tasks in Asian contexts, there is a lack of specific research on teachers' perceptions of the impact of authentic tasks in the Chinese context.

2.2.3 The implementation of authentic tasks in the EFL classroom in China

Some relevant literature indicates the reasons why teachers adopt authentic tasks in the classroom. In a study carried out by Liu et al. (2018), teachers expressed their view that authentic tasks can provide opportunities for teachers to engage students in collaborative learning, and authentic tasks can improve students' communication skills. By providing real-life tasks in the target language in the classroom, students could practise not only linguistic competence but also communicative competence. Also, the tasks contributed to improving their problem-solving ability, to some extent, as they helped them solve problems that may occur in real life.

However, some studies showed that some teachers were reluctant to implement authentic tasks in Chinese EFL classrooms. These can be summarised into three perspectives.

The first perspective was that the possibility of introducing authentic tasks was limited by the teaching context. In public schools in China, ELT tends to be exam-oriented, so teachers focus on how to help students improve their exam scores. However, in private schools, students are not taught solely to enable them to pass their exams and, thus, teachers do consider using authentic tasks to encourage innovation in lesson design (Deng & Carless, 2009). In addition, the large number of students in a class was also mentioned as a serious limitation by teachers. Teachers feel that implementing authentic tasks under such circumstances would neither provide a good communication environment nor enable them to control the process of tasks.

The second constraint observed in the literature relates to the teachers themselves. Teachers believe that they were not provided with sufficient time and equipped with sufficient competence to implement authentic tasks in the EFL classroom (Liu et al., 2018). On the one hand, they felt that they were not taught effectively about how to design and implement authentic tasks in the classroom during their teacher education programme. In addition, during their actual teaching practice, they did not get sufficient opportunities to develop their teaching skills and more traditional methods were followed.

2.3 The impact of pre-service teachers' prior experience on their perceptions

On the one hand, many studies have shown that the pre-service teachers' learning experience as students would affect

their perceptions and lead to the formation of a stable cognition of their ways of teaching (Debreli, 2012). Also, Tang's (1998) research suggests that, although pre-service teachers may develop perceptions that are different from their previous experience, it is not clear how they distinguish between the two and integrate the experience that may have either a positive or a negative impact. On the other hand, the teacher education experience itself can influence pre-service teachers' perceptions. Teacher education could help counteract any negative effects of a previous learning experience on the perceptions of pre-service teachers. This was an expectation held by a number of teachers when they were still developing their ways of teaching under guidance (He & Yan, 2011).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research methodology

Mixed methods research should be considered when the integration of quantitative and qualitative data would provide a more sufficient understanding of the research questions than the sole use of quantitative or qualitative data. In this research, the researcher used quantitative data to generalise the participants' perceptions of the use of authentic tasks and their prior experience and then use qualitative data to offer comprehensive descriptions of their understanding to explain and complement the quantitative data. The mixed methods research was adopted to expand the scope of the findings and the results.

3.2 Data collection

At the data collection stage, while questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data.

3.2.1 Questionnaires

The purpose of the questionnaire survey was to obtain the views of the Chinese pre-service teachers on the use of authentic tasks. Following a simple random sampling procedure, 50 candidates that fit the criteria were selected to participate in the survey. The questionnaire was adapted from Cheng and Samuel (2011) and Pohan et al. (2019), in which the 5-point Likert scale was used to assess the participants' agreement with the statements included in the survey, ranging from "Strongly agree" and "Agree" to "Undecided", "Disagree" and "Strongly disagree", while some statements were replaced by those of the characteristics of authentic tasks in Herrington et al. (2003). The questionnaire was designed to measure two aspects, including 20 statements. Q1 to Q10 included statements about the concept of authentic tasks and the impact of applying them to the EFL classroom. Q11 to Q20 focused on the second aspect, with Q11 to Q17 including statements about the participants' previous English learning experience to find out the participants' attitudes to English learning and Q18 to Q20 involving statements regarding their experience of understanding and practising authentic tasks in the teacher training programme.

3.2.2 Semi-structured interviews

The purpose of the semi-structured interviews was to gain detailed information on the participants' responses to the statements in the questionnaire related to the participants' prior experience. Eight interviewees were chosen out of the 20 participants who had agreed to participate in the later individual interviews. A simple random sampling method was used to select 8 people (see Table 1 below). Interview questions were developed on the basis of the statements concerning the second aspect being investigated by the questionnaire.

Table 1 Participants of the interviews

Number	Gender	Undergraduate major
Interviewee A	Male	English
Interviewee B	Female	English
Interviewee C	Female	English Teacher Education
Interviewee D	Female	Biomedical English
Interviewee E	Female	English
Interviewee F	Female	English
Interviewee G	Female	English
Interviewee H	Male	English

Semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to have good control of the topics during the interview to avoid too much unnecessary information. Also, the researcher would have more opportunities to have access to details which were not addressed in the previous part, and thus develop the awareness of some opinions that would contribute to the research. The semi-structured interview questions are listed as follows.

(1) Have your English teachers ever used authentic tasks in class? If so, what kind of authentic tasks did they use? If not, how did they teach English in class?

(2) How did the teachers' English teaching methods influence you?

(3) Did the application of authentic tasks influence your perceptions and acceptance of authentic tasks?

(4) Did you know "authentic tasks" before studying in the programme?

(5) How did you learn about the use of authentic tasks while studying in the programme?

(6) When participating in the microteaching and writing the course assignments, what did you think about authentic tasks?

(7) Do you think the authentic tasks can be implemented in the Chinese context?

3.3 Data analysis

At the data analysis stage, two different methods were adopted. To analyse quantitative data, descriptive analysis was used to describe the overall characteristics and core trends of the data. On the other hand, thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data. The researcher generated initial codes during organising the data and combined different codes to generate broader themes.

4. Results

4.1 Results from the questionnaires

The questionnaires conducted ahead of the interviews were used to discover the participants' understanding of authentic tasks and their implementation. The participants needed to complete two types of questions in the questionnaire. The first type focused on their views on the concept and impact of the use of authentic tasks, while the second type focused on their past experience, divided into their experience of learning English learning at school and their development of the knowledge of authentic tasks during their studies in the programme. The participants were also asked if they were willing to take part in follow-up detailed interviews.

4.1.1 The concept and impact of using authentic tasks

The first type of questions was numbered Q1 to Q10 in the questionnaire (see Table 2 below). At least 80% of the participants strongly agreed or agreed with the expressions presented in Q1 to Q9. They agreed that the authentic task was designed for communicative purposes with a focus on meaning and was relevant to real world activities. Also, they agreed that authentic tasks can provide students with opportunities for collaborative learning and reflection, and that they allow students to use various approaches to solve problems from multiple perspectives. However, when it came to reacting to the statement put to them in Q10, on the seamless integration of authentic tasks and assessment, 22% of the participants responded that they were uncertain, which response contrasted with the affirmative attitude resulting in relation to the previous 9 questions. The result could reflect their lack of trust in authentic assessment. In general, most participants appeared to have a good understanding of the concept of authentic tasks and the impact of using them. This provided the answer to the first research question which aimed to identify Chinese pre-service teachers' views of authentic tasks.

Table 2 Pre-service teachers' understanding of authentic tasks

Questions (Q)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
An authentic task is communicative goal directed.	21(42%)	21(42%)	6(12%)	2(4%)	0(0%)
An authentic task focuses on meaning.	17(34%)	23(46%)	9(18%)	1(2%)	0(0%)
An authentic task emphasises the need of interaction and engages students in communication.	23(46%)	24(48%)	3(6%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
An authentic task has real world relevance, and the tasks are designed to be connected with real world practice.	23(46%)	21(42%)	6(12%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
Authentic tasks allow competing solutions and diverse results.	21(42%)	28(56%)	0(0%)	1(2%)	0(0%)
Authentic tasks provide the opportunity to collaborate.	20(40%)	28(56%)	1(2%)	1(2%)	0(0%)
Authentic tasks provide the opportunity to reflect.	20(40%)	25(50%)	4(8%)	1(2%)	0(0%)
Authentic tasks provide the opportunity to examine problems from different perspectives, using a variety of resources.	21(42%)	27(54%)	1(2%)	1(2%)	0(0%)
Authentic tasks stimulate students' interests.	12(24%)	30(60%)	7(14%)	0(0%)	1(2%)
Authentic tasks are seamlessly integrated with assessment.	9(18%)	27(54%)	11(22%)	3(6%)	0(0%)

4.1.2 The attitudes towards English learning in the EFL classroom

The second type of questions was represented by Q11 to Q20 in the questionnaire and included two parts. Q11 to Q17 surveyed participants' previous learning experience in the EFL classroom (see Table 3 below). In Q11, 38% of the respondents stated that their teachers used authentic tasks to teach English, but 26% disagreed. In response to Q12, 64% had the opportunity to communicate in English in the classroom. When it came to the characteristics of individual English learning, 52% of the participants indicated that they preferred independent learning to collaborative learning and 58% said that they themselves used reflection as a learning tool, which revealed that they were accustomed to independent learning. Also, although nearly 40% agreed that their teacher would encourage them to think from multiple perspectives and identify their strengths and weaknesses, there were still some participants who responded neutrally or negatively to the statements put in Q15 and Q16. In Q17, 64% of the participants found learning of the English language very interesting. It was decided to focus on gathering more information on this issue to obtain a more accurate answer during the follow-up interviews.

Table 3 Pre-service teachers' experience of English learning in the EFL classroom

Questions (Q)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My teacher used the authentic task to teach English in class.	5(10%)	14(28%)	18(36%)	11(22%)	2(4%)
I had the opportunity to interact with others in English in class.	12(24%)	20(40%)	10(20%)	7(14%)	1(2%)
I preferred individual learning rather than collaborative learning.	5(10%)	21(42%)	17(34%)	6(12%)	1(2%)
I reflected upon my strengths and weaknesses in English learning.	8(16%)	21(42%)	15(30%)	4(8%)	2(4%)
My teacher encouraged me to think about problems from different perspectives.	7(14%)	17(34%)	18(36%)	6(12%)	2(4%)
My teacher discovered my strengths and weaknesses in time.	0(0%)	18(36%)	20(40%)	11(22%)	1(2%)
In my opinion, learning English was very interesting.	9(18%)	23(46%)	14(28%)	3(6%)	1(2%)

Q18 to Q20 focused on whether the participants practised teaching with authentic tasks and whether they learned from completing authentic tasks during their teacher education in the programme (see Table 4 below). From the results, it can be seen that almost all of the participants said that they had a better understanding of authentic tasks following their teacher education and that they also had the opportunity to use and experience the tasks. Moreover, 96% thought that the authentic task contributed to learning English. However, since the responses they gave in the questionnaires could not capture their level of understanding of authentic tasks prior to embarking on the programme, there was a lack of specific information on their previous knowledge and the teacher education they had received.

Table 4 Pre-service teachers' experience of teacher education

Questions (Q)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
During the programme, I gained a deeper understanding of authentic tasks.	9(18%)	37(74%)	2(4%)	2(4%)	0(0%)
During the programme, I have the opportunity to use or experience authentic tasks.	22(44%)	25(50%)	3(6%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
I think authentic tasks can motivate English learning.	20(40%)	28(56%)	1(2%)	1(2%)	0(0%)

To sum up, the results of the questionnaires can be divided into three categories. Firstly, the participants claimed that they had a good understanding of authentic tasks, although they had different opinions on how to integrate them with assessment. Secondly, the questions related to previous learning experience showed that there were differences between the learning of English and teaching methods, so further information was needed to learn about their experience and the impact on their perceptions. Finally, although most of the participants believed that they understood authentic tasks better following the programme, more information was needed to explore possible changes of view.

4.2 Results from the interviews

Once the results of the questionnaires were obtained, semi-structured interviews were conducted for selected participants to ask for more details, focusing on the relationship between prior experience and teachers' views on authentic tasks. Two major themes guided the teachers' interpretation of authentic tasks, including their previous experience of learning English and their teacher education, which were based on the previous questionnaire survey. Sub-themes were created under each major theme to categorise specific points reflecting their experiences.

4.2.1 Previous English learning experience

The interviewees' descriptions of their past learning experiences can be summarised into three sub-themes, namely "teach-

ing methods”, “learning strategies” and “context”.

4.2.1.1 Teaching methods

Some interviewees gave examples to illustrate the authentic tasks that they experienced in the EFL classroom in the past. Although they did think that most of their English classes were teacher-centred and textbook-based, they agreed that some authentic tasks were used in class. However, one interviewee pointed out the disadvantages of using authentic tasks in the EFL classroom, especially in a student-centred class. Although the tasks met the students’ needs and interests and thus motivated them at the beginning, relying solely on authentic tasks in class would have negative effects in the long run. Also, most participants reported that authentic tasks were mainly used by teachers during the undergraduate stage. Generally, from primary school to secondary school, teachers would teach using textbooks in English classes and the activities they used lacked authenticity.

4.2.1.2 Learning strategies

Also, interviewees talked about some characteristics of their learning strategies, in which independent learning and collaborative learning were frequently mentioned. Most emphasised their experience of independent learning, which was also a topic reflected in the statements presented in the questionnaires. Some reported that they had been accustomed to independent learning. For example, one interviewee mentioned that the teacher-centred and textbook-based classes contributed to independent learning and thus he had been influenced by this learning method for years and did not find it necessary to change. Another interviewee said that only independent learning outcomes can estimate her level of proficiency because they do not reflect others’ work. However, others emphasised the importance of collaborative learning. For example, an interviewee stated that she would expand knowledge and think about more perspectives to solve problems when she has to negotiate with others. Collaborative learning can contribute to cooperative skills.

4.2.1.3 Context

The interviewees all mentioned the impact of the Chinese context on learning English. Since the class size was large, only one teacher could not control the learning process of each group or each individual and often failed to offer guidelines to students. Moreover, the interviewees stated that exam-oriented education had a certain influence on their way of thinking about questions, leading to both teachers and students sticking to a single perspective and seeking standard answers. Pressure from parents and the school administration was also mentioned, since a student’s grades were considered to be the criteria for judging their academic proficiency and the effectiveness of their teacher’s pedagogy.

4.2.2 Teacher education experience

Although all the interviewees followed English-related majors at the undergraduate level, the focus of their majors tended to be different. Most of them did not learn knowledge related to English education except for Interviewee C who studied English Teacher Education. Almost all of the interviewees stated that they did not know anything about authentic tasks or task until they followed the pre-service teacher education programme. One interviewee talked about the difficulty of changing ideas. Because of the popularity of GTM to teach English in China, Chinese students tended to pay more attention to the teaching of form instead of meaning, which contrasted with teaching with authentic tasks. Also, since there can be great difference between the level of pre-service teachers and actual students, some interviewees mentioned that students’ needs should be taken into consideration in order to find appropriate teaching methods. However, all of them agreed that the tasks can be used appropriately as an auxiliary method since they found that authentic tasks would contribute to students’ communicative competence and motivation.

5. Discussion

5.1 What are Chinese pre-service teachers’ perceptions of authentic tasks in the EFL classroom?

In terms of the level of awareness, the participants had a comprehensive understanding of the use of authentic tasks. Considering the concepts of authentic tasks, they agreed with the focus on genuine purpose and real communication and they showed that they had acquired a great deal of knowledge about defining the authentic task by accurately responding to the statements in the questionnaires as well as giving relevant examples of the practice of authentic tasks in the interviews.

In terms of the impact of using authentic tasks, the participants exhibited a positive attitude towards combining the use of authentic tasks with English teaching methods and learning strategies in the Chinese context and believed that authentic tasks would motivate the learning of English. However, they were worried about the potential constraints imposed by their context. While they noted that limited resources, such as having only one teacher in a class with a large number of students and pressure

from the administration of the school and the parents, they also emphasised the fact that national exams limited the students' purpose of learning as they paid more attention to academic skills than communicative skills.

5.2 How does their experience influence their perceptions?

5.2.1 Prior experience of English learning

According to the participants' responses to the statements in the questionnaires and their descriptions of experience related to prior experience of English learning, three kinds of experience were categorised as influencing their perceptions: the teaching methods that their teachers used, the learning strategies that they used as students and the context where they learned English.

With respect of teaching methods, the participants stated that from primary school to secondary school their English teachers frequently taught using textbooks and that the classroom was teacher-centred, where students learn knowledge passively and lacked opportunities for communication and interaction. However, at the undergraduate stage, their English teachers tended to be more willing to use authentic tasks to create an active classroom atmosphere and provide opportunities for students to communicate as well as increase students' enthusiasm in the class. Authentic tasks can contribute to English language learning and should be considered as an effective way of teaching English in class but may not be welcomed at all stages.

With regard to learning strategies, the participants talked about collaborative learning and independent learning in terms of the outcomes that authentic tasks would bring. While independent learning can lead to an individual assessment of the level of achievement of the learning outcomes and can help the learner avoid unpleasant interactive experiences, collaborative learning can enable students to exchange ideas and negotiate meaning, while jointly improving their English proficiency. Therefore, appropriate teaching tasks can promote language learning.

The participants also mentioned the constraints in the Chinese context. Given a large number of students, the fact that there is generally only one teacher in each class, and the limited classroom space, the teacher cannot keep track of each student's learning progress and the difficulties they encounter. The Chinese examination system also places a great deal of emphasis on giving standard answers so that the teachers do not encourage students to approach a problem from multiple perspectives and tend to focus on the students' learning outcomes rather than the process.

5.2.2 Prior experience of teacher education

Participants stated that they were little or not at all exposed to the theory of authentic tasks before they undertook teacher education programme and, thus, it was their studies during the programme that influenced their perceptions of authentic tasks and constructed their knowledge of the concept and its impact on English language teaching. However, there were still some factors that hindered the participants from doing this. Since they had become accustomed to GTM and teacher-centred class in the Chinese context, it was difficult for them to change fixed ideas on teaching when they simulated the implementation of authentic tasks. Also, they were worried about the feasibility of implementing authentic tasks in China and believed that the needs of students should be considered in order to identify suitable teaching methods. To summarise, the teacher education that they received in the programme developed their understanding of ELT and helped them to consider integrating authentic tasks into their teaching.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary of the research

This research investigated Chinese pre-service teachers' perceptions of the use of authentic tasks in the EFL classroom and the influence of prior experience on their perceptions. The participants were Chinese EFL pre-service teachers. Two research questions were identified as follows:

RQ1: What are Chinese pre-service teachers' perceptions of the use of authentic tasks in the EFL classroom?

RQ2: How does their prior experience influence their perceptions?

To answer the two questions, a mixed methods approach was used to collect and analyse data. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to collect statistical data containing participants' responses to pre-set statements and textual data relating to their understanding of the concepts relating to the use of authentic tasks and their experience. The research revealed that the participants had a good understanding of the concept of authentic tasks as well as the impact of using authentic tasks in English teaching and learning. It also revealed that the participants' prior experience influenced their perceptions on the use of authentic tasks. The participants expressed their opinions on the feasibility of implementing authentic tasks in the Chinese context by considering different aspects based on their experience.

6.2 Pedagogical implications

On the one hand, there are less courses about pedagogies in English major at the undergraduate level in China. The students who look forward to teaching English in the future may lack opportunities to know about instructive theories and studies of teaching methods. Therefore, at the undergraduate level, especially for students majoring in English Teacher Education, it would be beneficial to open pedagogy courses for those students who are interested in the teaching methods, so that they can be exposed to relevant theories and research, and think about the implementation and adaptation of English teaching methods.

In addition, in recent years, the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (MOE) has emphasised in the English Teaching Curriculum Standards that improving students' English communicative skills should be one of the important goals of English education. The authentic task can provide opportunities for communication and interaction in English, create suitable real-life contexts, and meet the needs of students for collaborative learning. Therefore, improving English teachers' understanding of authentic tasks and implementing the tasks in teaching would contribute to the achievement of the goals. Taking into account the constraints of the teaching environment, relevant research on English teaching should be conducted in China to find a way of combining the implementation of authentic tasks with the exam-oriented education and extending the use of authentic tasks to primary and secondary schools, rather than confined to universities.

6.3 Suggestions for future research

In future research, it is advisable that sufficient time should be allocated for the researcher to collect stories of participants' prior experience, to gain a clearer picture of specific contexts, how each learning stage differs and find other potential factors that may influence their perceptions. In addition, the future teaching work experience of pre-service teachers should be investigated in a follow-up survey. This could also help contribute to the information collected through surveys in the field of English teacher education and training.

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