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Applying Situational Teaching to Enhance Emergency Language Skills

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ABSTRACT
The main purpose of this study is to enhance the emergency language skills of Chinese university students. Firstly, after constructing an emergency language curriculum under the situational teaching method based on the literature and identifying the indicators of emergency language talents, the effectiveness of the curriculum was verified by conducting a teaching experiment in the Chinese language education international major of a Chinese undergraduate university. In order to assess the effectiveness of this course, this study used a quasi-experimental design to divide 105 participants from a Chinese university majoring in Chinese language international education into an experimental group and a control group, with the experimental group being taught using situational teaching methods and the control group being taught using traditional teaching, and finally comparing the two groups to analyse the results of language learning. The experimental and control groups were assessed using the CEFR self-assessment questionnaire as a pre-test and post-test instrument. The results of the study showed that the use of situational teaching methods for teaching emergency language courses can significantly improve emergency language skills compared to traditional teaching.

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Introduction

Language is an important tool for human society and plays a pivotal role in both economic and societal growth, which is strongly linked to national security and development (McEntee Atalianis & Vessey, 2020; Yao, 2022). Especially in developing nations, it is believed that equipping people with English competence contributes to national economic prosperity (Thumvichit & Laoriandee, 2024). The New Crown epidemic, as a public health emergency, has brought normal social processes to a near standstill and as a consequence, people's lives, including their linguistic lives have changed dramatically (Feldhege et al., 2021; Athip et al., 2021). In pandemics in particular, ensuring that all language communities are aware of crisis messaging, understand it, trust it, and act appropriately on it is vital (O'Brien & Cadwell, 2022), therefore, emergency languages have received unprecedented attention as part of language life (Li, 2020; Xiong, et al., 2023; Yao, 2022; Zheng, 2020). Disaster education can be integrated with other disciplines, one of which is language learning (Dreisbach & Mendoza-Dreisbach, 2021). However, China's emergency language skills issues such as insufficient theoretical research, remain, as it has yet to fully adapt to the needs of the country's development and

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the handling of emergencies. Therefore, a study of how to improve the current status of emergency language skills in the context of disaster education, has become a topic worthy of consideration (Subarno & Dewi, 2022).

Enhancing language emergency skills for emergencies is a systematic project incorporating a number of different aspects. Primarily, the creation of an emergency language talent team is critical for the country to clarify the emergency language organisational system (Xiong et al., 2023). It is essential to cultivate students' ability to prepare and respond to disasters (Sugiyanto et al., 2024), by conducting emergency language teaching in relevant fields through daily language teaching and to incorporate it into the university curriculum system. Thus, qualified emergency language service talents can be continuously cultivated (Deng & Shu, 2023). Incorporating situational teaching methods into emergency language courses is also considered an effective foreign language teaching method (Bala & Jain, 2023).

Brown et al. (1989) defined that situational teaching as knowledge learning is best way to learn knowledge in a context, that is, in situational teaching classrooms whereby teachers employ situational activities and tools to artificially simulate real social environments and mimic particular scenarios that is followed by instructional design (Binti Pengiran & Besar, 2018). This approach allows students to realise real-world world challenges and experience the subject matter, gain knowledge and transfer that knowledge from the classroom to the field of practice. In addition, situational learning has a significant impact on students' skills because of its naturally occurring nature, which develops meaningful learning and critical thinking in everyday life.

In terms of the educational environment, learners can achieve better results when they are placed in surroundings that meet their needs (Winkler, 2012). Situational teaching is widely utilised in the field of language teaching and learning, and some scholars have shown through research, that situational teaching has a positive effect on learning outcomes in language courses (Perin, 2011; Satriani et al., 2012; Settlage, 2011), further significantly affects people's abilities (Komalasari, 2009). In second language acquisition, meaningful communication requires learners to achieve it through training outside of the classroom environment (Wang et al., 2024). However, the character of emergency languages is the suddenness of time and the complexity of the environment, so students have relatively limited opportunities to complete emergency language courses in real environments. Emergency language courses under situational teaching methods refer to teaching training, conducted by teachers under preset conditions, in simulating emergency situations where emergency language occurs. This also applies to the application scope of situational teaching methods. However, traditional teaching methods that are task-based language teaching and exam orientated, are still common in China (Li & Thomas, 2023). Therefore, this study adopted a quasi-experimental design method to compare the effectiveness of language teaching courses with traditional emergency language courses in emergency situations where emergency language occurs. This approach was taken to discern the most effective teaching methods for emerging emergency language courses and achieve the goal of improving the emergency language abilities of college students. This study aimed to design an emergency language course that employs situational teaching methods to enhance the emergency language proficiency of Chinese undergraduate students. Based on this goal, this study proposes the following research questions:

1. What is an emergency language course under situational teaching method?
2. Can the situational teaching method improve the emergency language skills of Chinese university students?
3. Is there a difference in the emergency language skills of college students between the situational teaching method emergency language course and the traditional teaching method emergency language course?

Situational Teaching

Brown et al. (1989) first proposed the definition of situational teaching. Lave and Wenger (1991) further elaborated on the theory of situational teaching, stating that learning is composed of the learning subject itself, activities and the world, while the learning environment provides a framework for specific learning activities to guide and support learners. Contu and Willmott (2003) argued that learning should be achieved through practice, that is, learning embedded in social and physical environments is more effective than non-situational learning. In situational teaching, however, students are more likely to receive more direct experiences and have a deeper understanding of their nature. Therefore, situational teaching is considered to help students connect their knowledge with its applications to daily life (Dewi & Primayana, 2019).

In essence, situational teaching requires teachers to combine teaching content with experiential learning activities (Ajani, 2023) and although second language acquisition requires a more realistic environment, most learners do not have the opportunity to learn in such a scenario. Hence, teachers are required to artificially create an environment for second language learning and communication (Zhang et al., 2018). Given the suddenness of time and the complexity of the environment in emergency language services, it is necessary for teachers to simulate emergency situations while conducting teaching training under controllable and preset conditions, in order to partially compensate for objective limitations (Li & Pan, 2021).

Emergency Language Skills

Due to the frequent occurrence of international public emergencies, the academic community has become increasingly aware of the importance of emergency language services and has begun to pay attention to the improvement of the concept of emergency language ability (O'Brien, 2019). O'Brien and Federici (2020) argue that language proficiency is the core of emergency language services, which demands the service provider's native language proficiency and a foreign language proficiency. Individual multilingual ability provides information services, responds to public opinion and discourse in conflicts during disasters, thus emphasising the necessity of developing individual multilingual ability for communication and problem-solving, while simultaneously building national language ability.

O'Brien (2019) proposed that the quality requirements for language translation talents in the context of disasters should focus on improving language translation abilities during disasters. A feasible solution to address this crisis, which is caused by multilingual barriers, is to effectively reduce disaster risks through cultivating more bilingual/multilingual users, teach students multiple languages and develop multi-directional communication programs during the education process (Uekusa & Mattewman, 2023). However, in COVID-19 language services, it's not difficult to notice that the role of interpreters in medical exchanges between members of multicultural communities or foreigners often goes beyond the scope of transmitting information in their respective languages (Álvaro Aranda & Lázaro Gutiérrez, 2022). Cross-cultural interaction of language is also important in language scenarios (Baker, 2021).

Therefore, the ability indicators for emergency language courses focus on three major modules: emergency language application ability, emergency professional knowledge ability, and emergency language communication ability. The ability to apply emergency language refers to the integration of different organizational cultures and language usage at the terminology level during communication in emergency situations (Laakso & Palomäki, 2013). Emergency professional knowledge ability refers to the fact that emergency language service work falls into the sphere of industry services and therefore requires a composite talent of "language + profession" (Bourrier, 2018). The essence of emergency language service is professional services. It is not only the trivial matter in daily life, but also incorporates an urgent problem to be solved in the present in the event of a public emergency (Zheng, 2020).

Emergency language communication ability refers to resolving conflicts that may arise from multiculturalism, reducing communication biases or misunderstandings and meeting the communication needs of all parties to the greatest extent possible. Intercultural competence is important for successful communication across cultures (Sobkowiak, 2016). Good interpersonal communication skills can reduce public panic, transmit positive energy and actively respond through crisis ethical management, in the event of an emergency (Hunt et al., 2019).

Method

This study is constructed four units based on emergency situations, and the validity of course construction content is reviewed by experts to form emergency language talent ability indicators and emergency language courses. On this basis, a quasi-experiment was conducted from December 2023 to March 2024, lasting for 10 weeks. The self-assessment questionnaire of CEFR was used as the evaluation tool for the pre-test and post-test questioning of the experimental group and the control group in the experiment. Finally, the experimental results were used to verify whether the situational teaching method does enhance the emergency language skills of Chinese university students.

The quasi-experimental design was applied. This study divided 105 Chinese college students, who underwent emergency language course experiments, into two groups: an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group received situational teaching, while the control group received traditional teaching methods. The independent variable was the emergency language course under the situational teaching method, and the dependent variable was the pre-test and post test scores to evaluate emergency language ability. Control variables included teaching methods, teaching time, and teaching content. The research framework is shown in Figure 1.

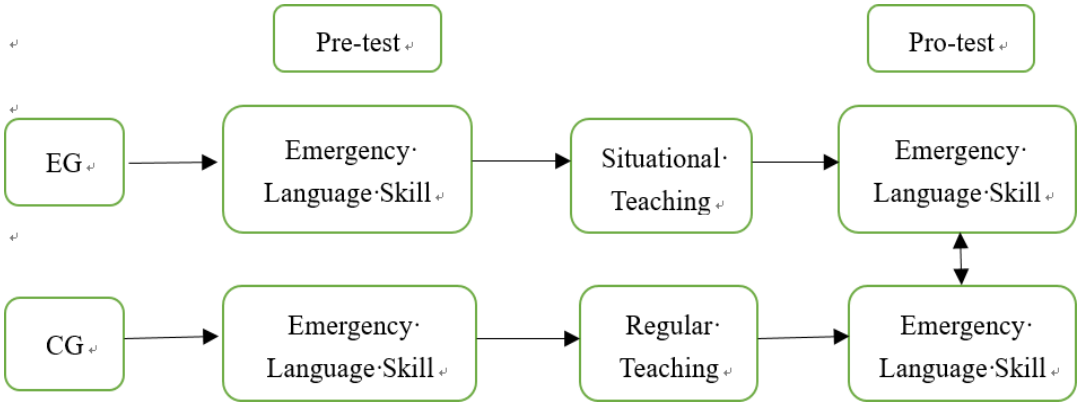

Figure 1. Research Framework

Participants

The study received exempt human subject research approval, which safeguards the rights and welfare of human research participants. The quasi-experiment of this study was conducted on an undergraduate campus in Yunnan, China, with a total of 105 students from Chinese language international education majors, participating. Chinese language international education practitioners are important disseminators of China anti-epidemic information and emergency policies (Cai, 2020). Their professional goals are directly related to the training objectives of this research course. The researchers clearly informed them of the experimental content and asked if they agreed to participate in the study.

The study involved 105 participants, all of whom agreed to sign informed consent forms. Among them, 55 people were assigned to the situational emergency language course intervention experimental group (EG), with the remaining 50 people assigned to the control group (CG) receiving traditional language teaching methods. The experimental group and control group were randomly assigned. Their average age is between 19 and

21 years old, all of whom are senior students majoring in Chinese international education. There are 28 males and 77 females, with a gender ratio of approximately 2.7:7.3.

Implementation of SLT Emergency Language Course

According to Harley's (1993) situational teaching model, tailored for emergency language ability cultivation, the situational teaching method in this study consists of three stages:

1. Creating a situation and introducing the main text:

The teacher creates a realistic scenario based on the teaching content, guiding students to discuss and understand emergency language concepts. This method helps students grasp the target language more effectively (Ozverr & Herrington, 2011).

2. Introduction of context, thinking and discussion:

Teachers pose questions or tasks related to the context, encouraging students to immerse themselves in emergency situations and think about real-life problems (Chiou, 2020). This enhances their cultural awareness and cross-cultural understanding (North & Piccardo, 2016).

3. Deepen the situation, consolidate what has been learned:

Through role-playing, group discussions, and cooperative learning, students practice communication in simulated situations. The teacher monitors progress, ensures participation, and reinforces understanding and application of emergency language knowledge (Glynn & Winter, 2004).

In stages 1 and 2, teachers create a dynamic, life-like environment to meet language curriculum objectives (Zhang et al., 2018). At stage 3, students apply their language and communication skills, continuously training in emergency language use (Galante, 2022).

Intervention

The intervention was implemented over a period of 10 weeks. The EG was taught according to the situational teaching method of presenting situations, entering certain scenarios, group collaboration and presenting results. The CG mainly trained in the teaching method of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, in accordance with the 3P traditional teaching method of presentation, practice and production. This study divided the emergency situations into four situational teaching units: sudden natural disasters, sudden accident disasters, sudden public health incidents and sudden social security incidents. Based on the theory of situational teaching method, an emergency language course is established. At the core of the situational teaching method is that teachers design scenarios and enable students to experience and simulate situations.

Therefore, in this course, teaching methods were divided into simulated learning and experiential learning, with teaching activities primarily focusing on role-playing and group discussions. The pre-test and post-test design represents the most common experimental research design, which is arranged before and after teaching, when constructing situational teaching methods courses. The establishment of emergency language courses using situational teaching methods is shown in figure 2.

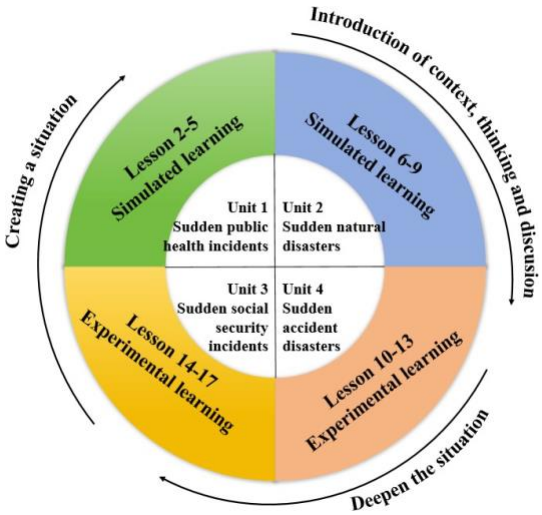

Figure 2. Construction of emergency language course using situational teaching method

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) Common Language Self-assessment Ability Scale (Foley, 2019) was used for adjustment according to the emergency language ability indicators. This study adjusted the CEFR framework based on specific usage areas and revised the assessment scale to include emergency situations to measure language learners' emergency language proficiency, making it more compatible with the curriculum (Muhammad et al., 2021; Zou & Zhang, 2017). At the same time, the 5-point Likert Scale was used to establish standard reference validity (Little, 2011).

The research scale is designed based on the application ability of CEFR A2 and B1 and consists of three dimensions: emergency language application ability, emergency language knowledge ability, and emergency language communication ability. Each dimension has 7 questions. After completion, 5 experts were invited for review. In this study, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to calculate the consistency of raters, whereby the content validity index of each item was calculated. After conducting reliability analysis on SPSS software, the content validity of the review results of this study showed that the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the 5 experts had the lowest review score of .867, and the overall indicator of expert validity was .965, which was not lower than 0.8. This indicates that the content validity is good (Ye, 2017), demonstrating that the questionnaire question is valid, and the scale has good expert validity.

The experimental results were expected to be at the next stage of development. Therefore, this study used B1 as the evaluation level to observe the results of the students' emergency language proficiency both before and after the emergency language course experiment.

Data Collection and Analysis

In this study, both groups of students were measured by professionals in the same field, using the same measurement tool and in an identical measurement environment. To examine the emergency language proficiency of two groups of students, both the pre-test and post-test were conducted using emergency language self-assessment scales as experimental measurement tools.

This teaching experiment began on December 2023 and ended February 2024, with a total duration of ten weeks, with a total of 105 students participating in the pre-test and post-test questionnaires. The data was collected using the B1 level self-assessment scale for emergency language ability indicators. The collected data was first validated using independent sample *t*-test methods to verify whether there was homogeneity between the EG and the CG (Somani & Rizvi, 2018) groups and whether they met the conditions for teaching experiments; Subsequently, paired sample *t*-tests were used to test whether there was a significant difference in emergency language proficiency between students in

the EG and CG, after intervening compared to before the experiment. Finally, ANCOVA was used for statistical analysis to observe whether there were significant differences in the post-test results between the EG, after the experiment involving the situational teaching method.

Results

The teaching experiment of this study collected data using the B1 level self-assessment scale for emergency language ability indicators. The data was analysed using independent sample *t*-test, paired sample *t*-test, and ANCOVA for statistical analysis.

Independent Sample T-test: Ability Homogeneity Test

Before conducting teaching experiments, it is necessary to verify whether the EG and CG of the emergency language course have homogeneity (Cresswel, 2012). This study used an independent sample *t*-test, whereby if the *p*-value is greater than. 05, it indicates that the two groups have homogeneity (Glass & Hopkins, 1996) and teaching experiments can be conducted.

One week before the start of the experiment, the EG and the CG were also pre-tested, and data was collected using the B1 level emergency language proficiency self-assessment questionnaire. An independent sample *t*-test was conducted to test whether the two groups have homogeneity in the three modules. The data results are shown in Table 1

Tabel 1. Homogeneity testing of the self-assessment questionnaire for emergency language level B1 proficiency indicators

Module	Group	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*p*
Emergency language application ability	EG	55	21.449	3.208	1.544	.217
	CG	50	22.309	3.716		
Emergency language knowledge ability	EG	55	21.245	3.443	.644	.424
	CG	50	21.873	4.401		
Emergency language communication ability	EG	55	21.102	3.737	.072	.790
	CG	50	21.491	3.711		

Note. This study compiles.

As shown in Table 1, in the emergency language application module of the self-assessment questionnaire, through independent sample *t*-test, the mean values of the CG and EG were 21.449 and 22.309, with an *F*-value of 1.544 and a *p*-value of. 217 (>. 05), indicating that there is no statistically significant difference between the EG and the CG in the emergency language application module of emergency language proficiency.

In the emergency language knowledge module of the self-assessment questionnaire, through independent sample *t*-test, the mean values of the CG and the EG were 21.245 and 21.873, with an *F*-value of. 644 and a *p*-value of. 424 (>. 05), indicating that there is no statistically significant difference between the EG and the CG in the emergency language knowledge module of the emergency language level.

In the emergency language communication module of the self-assessment questionnaire, through independent sample *t*-test, the mean values of the CG and the EG were 21.102 and 21.491, with an *F*-value of. 072 and a *p*-value of. 790 (>. 05), indicating that there is no statistically significant difference between the EG and the CG in the emergency language communication module of emergency language proficiency.

To summarise, it can be seen that the EG and CG students have homogeneity in the content of the three modules of the emergency language B1 level ability self-assessment questionnaire and can be used for teaching experiments.

Paired Sample t-test

After conducting a 10-week experiment, this study conducted a post-test on the EG and CG students in the classroom. At this time, the EG students had already undergone 10 weeks of situational emergency language course learning, while the CG had undergone 10 weeks of traditional emergency language course learning. Consequently, this study employed the emergency language B1 level ability self-assessment questionnaire as the research tool, collected post-test data and used paired sample *t*-test methods to analyse the effectiveness of the two groups in emergency language ability after the experimental intervention (Ross & Wilson, 2017). The specific data results are shown in Table 2.

Tabel 2. Paired sample *t*-test analysis of the B1 level self-assessment questionnaire for emergency language proficiency indicators

Module	Group	Pre-test		Post-test		D-value		*t*	*p*
		M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*		
Emergency language application ability	EG	3.190	.535	3.722	.349	.532	.277	14.122	.000
	CG	3.051	.453	3.417	.368	.366	.199	12.702	.000
Emergency language knowledge ability	EG	3.148	.595	3.690	.392	.542	.353	11.305	.000
	CG	3.027	.494	3.392	.394	.366	.279	9.077	.000
Emergency language communication ability	EG	3.071	.535	3.598	.387	.526	.297	13.010	.000
	CG	3.000	.529	3.357	.402	.357	.210	11.757	.000

Note. This study compiles.

From the data, it can be seen that in the emergency language application module, the CG showed a significant increase (*t*=12.702, *p*=. 000) in mean and standard deviation (*M*=3.051, *SD*=.453) compared to the post-test (*M*=3.417, *SD*=.368). This result indicates that after the experimental intervention, the CG students significantly improved their emergency language application ability. Compared with the post-test (*M*=3.722, *SD*=.349), the pre-test mean and standard deviation (*M*=3.190, *SD*=.535) of the EG showed a significant increase in mean (*t*=14.122, *p*=.000), thus indicating that after the experimental intervention, the EG students displayed a significant improvement in their emergency language application ability. Comparing the two sets of values, the average difference between the pre-test and post- test in the EG was greater than that in the CG, indicating that the EG students exhibited a more significant improvement in emergency language application ability when compared to the CG students.

In the emergency language knowledge ability module, the CG presented a significant increase (*t*=9.077, *p*=.000) in mean and standard deviation (*M*=3.027, *SD*=.494) compared to the post-test (*M*=3.392, *SD*=.394), which indicates a significant improvement in emergency language knowledge ability among the CG students after the experiment. The EG also showed a significant increase (*t*=11.305, *p*=.000) in mean and standard deviation (*M*=3.148, *SD*=.595) compared to the post-test (*M*=3.690, *SD*=.392), indicating that after the experimental intervention, EG students exhibited a significant improvement in emergency language knowledge ability. Comparing two sets of values, in the emergency language knowledge ability module, the average difference between the pre-test and post-test in the EG was greater than that in the CG. The improvement level of the EG students was also more significant compared to the CG students.

In the emergency language communication ability module, the CG showed a significant increase (*t*=11.757, *p*=.000) in mean and standard deviation (*M*=3.000,

SD=.529) compared to the post-test (*M*=3.357, *SD*=. 402), thus indicating a significant improvement in emergency language communication ability among the CG students after the experiment. The EG also showed a significant increase (*t*=13.010, *p*=.000) in mean and standard deviation (*M*=3.071, *SD*=.535) compared to the post-test (M=3.598, SD=. 387), indicating that after the experimental intervention, the EG students displayed a significant improvement in their emergency language communication ability. When comparing the two sets of values, it can be seen that in terms of emergency language communication ability, the EG students showed a more significant improvement, compared to the CG students.

These results would indicate that after 10 weeks of the teaching experiment, the emergency language application ability, knowledge ability and communication ability of the EG and the CG students showed significant improvement when compared to before the experiment. According to the paired sample *t*-test results, it can be seen that EG students significantly improved their emergency language abilities in the three major modules, compared to the CG students.

ANCOVA

This study collected data using the B1 emergency language self-assessment questionnaire as the evaluation tool and conducted an ANCOVA test to verify whether the three modules of the two groups of emergency language ability indicators showed significant improvement after the experimental intervention. The first step in conducting the ANCOVA test is to administer a homogeneity test. After the ANCOVA homogeneity test, it was found that the regression coefficients in the emergency language application ability module do not have homogeneity, which does not meet the prerequisite for ANCOVA analysis. Therefore, the independent sample *t*-test was adjusted to analyse the difference in scores between the EG and CG groups, after the emergency language application module. The results showed a significant difference (*p*=.000) in the post-test mean values between the EG (*M*=26.043, *SD*=2.426) and the CG (*M*=26.043, *SD*=2.426), and that the EG was significantly higher than the CG (*t*=4.294). Please refer to Table 3 for details.

Tabel 3. The emergency language application module post-test

Group	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
EG	55	26.043	2.426	4.294	.000
CG	50	23.941	2.553		

Note. This study compiles.

In the emergency language knowledge module and emergency language communication module, the regression coefficients have homogeneity, which meets the prerequisite of ANCOVA analysis and can be used for linear covariate analysis. The ANCOVA test results are shown in Table 4.

Tabel 4. ANCOVA test results

Module	Source	*SS*	*Df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Emergency language knowledge	Pre-test	512.189	1	512.189	203.888	.000
	Group	60.783	1	60.783	24.196	.000
	Error	253.723	101	2.512	-	-
	Total	65023.000	105	-	-	-
Emergency language communication	Pre-test	602.471	1	602.471	363.980	.000
	Group	45.723	1	45.723	27.623	.000
	Error	167.179	101	1.655	-	-
	Total	62774.000	105	-	-	-

Note. This study compiles.

The results of the ANCOVA test showed that in the emergency language knowledge

ability module, the sum of squares of the analysed data between the two groups was 60.783 with the degree of freedom at 1, F=24.196, p=.000, indicating a significant difference between the CG and the EG in the post-test of emergency language knowledge ability, thus demonstrating that the teaching effect was significantly different. In the emergency language communication ability module, the sum of squares of the analysed data between the groups was 45.723, with a degree of freedom of 1, F=27.623, p=.000, indicating a significant difference between the CG and the EG in the post-test of emergency language communication ability, as well as a significant difference in teaching effectiveness.

Continuing to conduct ANCOVA descriptive statistics and adjusted mean analysis on the EG and CG of the two modules, the results showed significant differences between the two groups in the emergency language knowledge module and emergency language communication module. When comparing the mean values, it was found that the number of EG was greater than that of the CG. This result indicates that the EG of situational teaching has a more significant improvement in emergency language knowledge and communication abilities than the CG of traditional teaching methods.

To address the first research question, this study designed teaching units based on the theory of situational teaching (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and devised the teaching activities and tasks in the unit in accordance with the authenticity, communicative and interesting strategy characteristics of the situational teaching method. In emergency language courses under the implementation of situational teaching methods, teachers used questioning, intuitive presentation or experiential methods to introduce different scenarios (Kim & Hannafin, 2011), thus aiding students to experience the effects of the situation firsthand and increasing their mastery of language knowledge (Parmaxi, 2023). Students are placed under the assumption of a certain emergency situation and engage in thinking about real-life problems (Chiou, 2020), making it easier for them to obtain knowledge points of the target language in real-life situations (Ozverir & Herrington, 2011), which is in line with the characteristics of the emergency language curriculum. Given the sudden increased pressure on the emergency language services and the complexity of the environment, emergency language courses need to be taught in combination with theory and practice. That is, teachers should conduct teaching training in a controlled environment and preset conditions under simulated scenarios, which not only compensates for objective limitations but also expands teaching channels. This will help cultivate emergency language talents and promote students to master language skills.

In response to the second research question, this study used the B1 level self-assessment questionnaire for emergency language ability indicators as the research tool. Data was collected in the pre-test and post-test of teaching experiments, and data analysis was used to verify whether the situational teaching method is suitable for emergency language courses and whether it can improve the emergency language ability of Chinese university students, including the results of emergency language application ability, emergency language knowledge ability and emergency language communication ability. At this point, the second research question of this study has been empirically demonstrated, in that the situational teaching method does have a significant impact on emergency language courses and is an effective strategy for emergency language courses. Adopting a situational teaching method for emergency language courses can improve the emergency language ability of Chinese university students. After the experimental intervention, students who used the situational teaching method for course teaching exhibited significantly smoother, more active and more confident communication when faced with the emergency language topic content in both Chinese and English, indicating that situational teaching methods significantly improved the fluency of language use for learners in language learning (Mannion & Griffin, 2018).

At the same time, setting appropriate emergency contexts can connect learning content with relevant life situations, ensuring that students use emergency knowledge. In this manner, situational teaching helps students establish connections with the

environment when building knowledge to improve learning achievement. Although previous literature has shown that the situational teaching method is an effective strategy for language courses (Perin, 2011; Settlage, 2011; Smith & Loewen, 2018), there is currently a lack of case studies in the design of emergency language courses (Teng, 2020). However, this study found that in the construction of emergency language courses, language teaching is adopted as the method, while situational teaching methods are embedded in the design of course implementation methods. Teachers use pictures, videos, or virtual laboratories to introduce situations, while situational teaching strategies are integrated into situational classrooms. Role playing, group discussions, division of labour and cooperation are also applied to complete situational tasks, which helps students build emergency language knowledge, master emergency language and improve their ability to respond to emergencies, overall.

In response to the third question of this study, it was found that the teaching effectiveness of emergency language courses using situational teaching is significantly better than that of traditional emergency language courses. Davis (2010) proposed that most language teachers have become accustomed to traditional teaching methods and experiences, always following fixed teaching procedures in the traditional teaching process, following the steps of the 3P traditional teaching method of presentation, practice and production. However, traditional language teaching classrooms cannot provide students with a good language environment, so it is difficult for students to foresee language learning outcomes. After a period of time, they will gradually lose interest in language learning (Liang et al., 2021), which will have a negative effect on improving their skills.

The situational teaching method uses various teaching resources to create and restore authentic language scenes that are consistent with the teaching content, making it easy for students to integrate into the scene and acquire direct experience (Dickinson et al., 2019). This language teaching method can stimulate students' interest in learning, improve their comprehensive language use ability, ultimately achieve the goal of language teaching and improve the quality of language courses, which have a positive impact on language course performance (Perin, 2011; Satriani et al., 2012; Settlage, 2011). This study creatively explored the combination of practice and theory in emergency language courses, confirmed the research hypothesis through practice, that situational teaching when compared to traditional teaching can indeed stimulate students' learning interest, improve their comprehensive language application ability and ultimately improve the teaching quality of emergency language courses.

Conclusion

This study constructed an emergency language course using situational teaching methods. Firstly, the course content was determined and included teaching objectives, teaching units, teaching methods and activities. Then, through expert review, the final teaching content was established and finalised. In this study, the learning of emergency language courses is regarded as a situational practice. Teachers create emergency situations for each of the units that are combined with students' life experiences. This approach encourages students to learn language and acquire language knowledge through teaching activities. Situational tasks were then completed through situational learning strategies, thereby mastering emergency language application and related professional knowledge, cultivating emergency literacy and ethics through cross-cultural communication. The design and development of emergency language courses in Chinese universities are still in the early stages but there is still a need for continuous thinking, practice and innovation in teaching methods (Li, 2020). This study proposes a situational framework for developing language ability, which can serve as a teaching design model that combines language ability with situational teaching, providing reference value for future language course design theory.

The establishment of a higher education curriculum includes testing the effectiveness of the curriculum (Lutf et al., 2022). Therefore, this study conducted a 10-week teaching experiment using a quasi-experimental design method based on the content of the curriculum. 105 students from a Chinese language international education university in Kunming were divided into a CG and an EG using convenient sampling. Traditional teaching methods and situational teaching methods were used to teach emergency language courses to both groups, in order to verify the effectiveness of situational teaching in improving the emergency language abilities of college students. The experiment used the common language ability scale in CEFR as an evaluation tool, combined with the emergency situation adjustment scale and tested its reliability and validity. Finally, pre-test and post-test data were obtained. The data analysis results showed that after 10 weeks of teaching intervention, students in the control group and experimental group both improved their emergency language ability level. Therefore, the teaching effectiveness of the experimental group using situational teaching method is better than that of the control group using traditional teaching method. Disaster education is an important and urgent education. From this, it can be seen that applying situational teaching methods to emerging emergency language courses is an exploration and practice of teaching methods, providing a teaching paradigm for courses, such as emergency language courses that emphasise both theory and practice.

Implication

This study adopts Harley's (1993) situational teaching model to develop a theoretical framework for emergency language courses. By integrating real-life emergency situations (natural disasters, accident disasters, public health events, and social security events) into course content, the study aligns teaching tasks with practical scenarios. It combines Glynn and Winter's (2004) situational teaching strategies, including inquiry learning, problem orientation, collaboration, project-based learning, and authentic assessment, to create realistic classroom situations. The study proposes a new framework for language proficiency, merging situational teaching with language skills, providing insights for future curriculum design. It highlights the importance of language services in disasters and emphasizes the role of translation in emergency situations, integrating this into higher education and research. The content and design of emergency language courses were reviewed by experts to focus on the four main types of emergencies, targeting vulnerable groups.

The study innovatively combines situational teaching methods with emergency language courses to create a new model of "emergency language knowledge theory + practical teaching." The research emphasizes three primary modules of emergency language proficiency: translation and application, crisis communication skills, and supplementary emergency language knowledge. This aligns with the interdisciplinary nature of emergency language courses and provides a reference for developing curriculum systems under the "International Language Services" discipline. A 10-week teaching experiment compared two different teaching modes, demonstrating the scientific significance of curriculum construction and talent cultivation. This study offers a practical reference for developing language-related talents and enhancing language abilities in universities.

Limitation

There are some limitations to this study. The small sample size may impact the external validity and generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the course was conducted over only 10 weeks, using a self-evaluation scale as the primary measurement tool. The study did not include a follow-up to assess the retention of emergency language skills, making it difficult to determine whether participants could effectively apply these skills in real-world situations.

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