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The Development of Communicative Chinese Speaking Competency by using Situation-Based Learning for Chinese Language Teaching Students

Chinnawat Sripol[1]
chinnawat.sr@rmu.ac.th
Faculty of Education
Rajabhat Mahasarakham University
Thailand

Wang Weimin[2]
wangwm@jsnu.edu.cn
Shanxi University
China

Sanyakorn Srichoom[3]
sanyakorn.srichoom@gmail.com
East China Normal University
Thailand

Abstract: *The research explores the effectiveness of scenario-based learning (SBL) as a method for enhancing communicative competence in the Chinese language, addressing the shortcomings of traditional methods that inadequately prepare students for real-life communication and cultural understanding. SBL offers a practical and engaging alternative that promotes active and meaningful language use. This study aimed to 1) develop Chinese speaking competency using SBL for Chinese Language Teaching students, targeting the 75/75 standard; 2) evaluate the Effectiveness Index (E.I.) of SBL; and 3) compare students' speaking abilities before and after learning with SBL. The sample included 60 students from the Chinese Teaching Program, Faculty of Education, Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University, selected via cluster random sampling. Research tools comprised 12 SBL lesson plans and a communicative Chinese speaking competency test. Statistical analysis included mean, standard deviation, and dependent t-test. The results showed 1) SBL improved students' communicative speaking competency to 78.79/76.00, surpassing the 75/75 criteria; 2) the Effectiveness Index of SBL was 0.5569, indicating a 55.69% improvement in communication skills; 3) post-test scores were significantly higher than pre-test scores at a .05 significance level. These findings highlight SBL as an effective approach for improving Chinese language competency, promoting cultural understanding, and addressing real-life communication needs. It supports the integration of SBL in language instruction, particularly for teacher training programs, to foster active engagement and practical skill development, advancing modern language education.*

Keywords*: Situation-Based Learning, Role Play, Communicative Chinese Speaking Competency*

INTRODUCTION

Developing communicative speaking competency in Chinese is crucial for students aspiring to teach the language, given its tonal, character, and cultural complexities. Traditional teaching methods often rely on rote memorization, which may not adequately prepare learners for real-world communication. To address this, Situation-Based Learning (SBL) has emerged as a more effective approach, emphasizing active engagement through role-playing, simulations, and problem-solving in realistic scenarios. This method not only enhances oral proficiency but also fosters the use of appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation in context (Li, Y. et al., 2024). SBL's immersive and practical nature helps students develop the confidence and skills necessary for effective communication (Chen & Wang, 2019),

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making it a valuable strategy for preparing future Chinese language educators (Liu, 2018; Wang & Sun, 2021).

Situation-Based Learning (SBL) is an instructional method designed to simulate real-world scenarios, allowing students to practice using the language in various practical contexts. By engaging in activities like role-playing, simulations, and situational dialogues, learners are exposed to everyday language use, which fosters both linguistic and cultural competence. This method is particularly relevant in Chinese language instruction, where understanding the subtleties of tones, characters, and cultural norms is essential. SBL not only enhances students' ability to communicate fluently but also deepens their understanding of cultural nuances and social interactions that are integral to mastering the language (Liu, 2018). According to Li, Y. et al. (2024), the immersive nature of SBL encourages active engagement, which leads to better retention and application of language skills. Additionally, Chen and Wang (2019) highlight that SBL helps students develop the confidence needed to navigate diverse communicative situations, making it an effective approach for those preparing to teach Chinese as a second language.

Recent studies have highlighted the effectiveness of SBL in improving oral proficiency among Chinese language learners. For instance, Li, Y. et al. (2024) investigated the impact of SBL on students' speaking abilities, finding significant improvements in their use of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. The study emphasized that learners who engaged in SBL were better able to apply their language skills in appropriate contexts, thereby enhancing their overall communicative competence. This approach also fostered greater engagement and motivation among students, as it provided a more immersive learning experience compared to traditional classroom-based instruction (Li, Y. et al., 2024).

Other researchers have supported these findings, emphasizing the pedagogical advantages of SBL in teaching Chinese. Chen and Wang (2019) explored the role of contextual learning in enhancing communicative competence, concluding that situational activities improved students' ability to use language more naturally in conversation (Chen & Wang, 2019). Similarly, Liu (2018) made a strong case for the use of contextualized language instruction, arguing that SBL promotes a deeper, more practical understanding of the language. These studies suggest that integrating SBL into the curriculum can lead to more effective language acquisition, particularly in the development of speaking skills (Liu, 2018).

Moreover, Wang and Sun (2021) highlighted the importance of situational context and interactive activities in improving students' speaking abilities. Their research indicated that when learners are placed in simulated environments that mirror real-life scenarios, they are more likely to retain vocabulary and grammar structures, as well as develop the confidence needed to engage in spontaneous communication (Wang & Sun, 2021). This aligns with the findings of Yang and Liu (2020), who noted that incorporating cultural elements into SBL further enhances students' understanding of the language's practical applications, making them more adept at navigating social and professional situations in Chinese-speaking environments (Yang and Liu, 2020).

The practical applications of SBL extend beyond language proficiency. Zhou (2017) discussed the benefits of using role-playing and simulations in language

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teaching, noting that these methods not only improve oral proficiency but also help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The ability to think on one's feet and respond appropriately in various situations is an essential component of communicative competence, and SBL provides learners with ample opportunities to practice these skills in a controlled, supportive environment (Zhou, 2017).

In addition to role-playing, simulation exercises have been shown to be particularly effective in language learning. Guo and Li (2019) examined the impact of simulation exercises on oral proficiency, finding that students who participated in these activities demonstrated greater fluency and accuracy in their spoken Chinese. The researchers attributed this to the fact that simulations mimic real-world communication, forcing learners to apply their knowledge in a way that is both meaningful and practical (Guo and Li, 2019) . Similarly, Tang and Han (2018) emphasized the importance of real-world practice in language learning, noting that SBL encourages students to use the language in authentic contexts, thereby bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application(Tang and Han, 2018) .

The cumulative research on SBL underscores its value as an instructional method for developing communicative competence in Chinese. By providing students with opportunities to practice the language in real-life situations, SBL not only enhances oral proficiency but also fosters a deeper understanding of cultural and contextual factors that influence communication. This makes it a particularly effective approach for students pursuing careers in Chinese language teaching, as it equips them with the skills needed to both use and teach the language in a meaningful way. As more educators recognize the limitations of traditional language teaching methods, SBL offers a promising alternative that addresses the complexities of Chinese language learning while promoting active, engaged, and practical language use.

OBJECTIVE

1. To develop a situation-based learning activity to promote Chinese speaking ability for communication of Chinese language teaching students to be effective according to the criteria of 75/75

2. To study the effectiveness index (E.I.) of the situation-based learning activity to promote English speaking ability for communication of Chinese language teaching students

3. To compare Chinese speaking ability for communication between before and after learning by using the situation-based learning of Chinese language teaching students

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a pre-experimental research design. The experiment was conducted according to the One Group Pretest – Posttest Design. The experimental characteristics are:

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1. The population used in this research is Chinese language teaching students, Faculty of Education, Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University, Semester 2, Academic Year 2023, 2 groups, 60 people.

2. The sample group used in this research is Chinese language teaching students, Faculty of Education, Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University, Semester 2, Academic Year 2023, Group 2, 30 people, which were obtained by cluster random sampling.

There are 2 types of instruments used in this research as follows:

1. Chinese language learning activity plans using situations as a base to promote Chinese speaking ability for communication in Chinese language teaching students, 12 plans.

2. Chinese speaking ability test for communication, which is a practical test before and after learning. Each test requires students to act out 6 given situations. There is no script provided. Students choose 1 situation. Use the assessment criteria for speaking ability for communication using the Chinese language communication efficiency assessment criteria (rubric) 5 aspects, 4 levels of scoring: 1, 2, 3, 4 of (Office of the Basic Education Commission, 2021)

DATA COLLECTION

The researcher has brought the learning activities based on the situation to be tested with students in the Chinese language teaching program, a sample group, the second semester of the 2023 academic year, Faculty of Education, Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University, a total of 30 people. The data collection was carried out in the following order:

1. Explain the purpose and introduce the learning activities, including the mutual agreement for students in the Chinese language teaching program to understand the assessment criteria.

2. Let students take the speaking ability test for communication before studying (Pre-test) by specifying to act according to the specified situation, choose 1 situation from 6 situations, full score 20 points. Students create and act out roles according to the content, compose dialogues, and create situations by themselves with the teacher providing advice and correcting the correctness. There is 5 minutes to practice, practice and collect scores.

3. Proceed with teaching according to the steps of organizing learning by using 12 scenarios as a base, 1 hour per plan, totaling 12 hours. After teaching all 12 plans, students take a test to measure their Chinese speaking ability for communication after studying. The researcher pairs the students and lets them choose 1 topic from all 6 situations by drawing lots, using the same method as the pre-study Chinese speaking ability test for communication. The full score is 20 to compare the scores (Post-test).

There are 3 evaluators who are not the researcher: 2 Chinese language teachers, the head teacher of the foreign language group.

4. When the activities are complete, have Chinese language teaching students take the post-test.

5. Analyze the data from the pre-study and post-study assessments.

DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of data collected by the researcher analyzed the data as follows: Find the efficiency of the situation-based learning activity plan to promote Chinese speaking ability for communication of Chinese language teaching students.

1. Process efficiency and the efficiency of the results (E1/ E2) set the criteria of 75/75 as follows:

2. Analyze the Effectiveness Index (E.I) of the learning management plan using situation-based learning activities.

3. Comparative analysis of the ability to speak Chinese for communication before and after learning by situation-based activities of Chinese language teaching students using t-test statistics (dependent sample).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis of the efficiency of the learning activity plan using the situation as a base to promote the ability to speak Chinese for communication of Chinese language teaching students. The efficiency of the process and the efficiency of the results (E1/E2) set the criteria of 75/75 as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 shows the results of the analysis of the efficiency of the learning activity plan of Chinese language teaching students that are efficient according to the criteria of 75/75.

N	Process efficiency (E1)				Outcome efficiency (E2)			
	Activity full score	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	(E1)	Activity full score	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	(E2)
30	240	189.10	5.51	78.79	20	15.20	1.54	76.00

From Table 1, the plan for organizing learning activities using situations as a base to promote the ability to speak Chinese for communication of Chinese language teaching students with an efficiency of 78.79/76.00, which is higher than the criteria of 75/75.

The result of the analysis of the Effectiveness Index (E.I) of learning using situations as a base

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Table 2 shows the Effectiveness Index (E.I) of learning using situation-based learning activities.

Number of students	**Full Score**	**Score Total**		**Index Value Efficiency E.I.**
		Pre-test	Post-test	0.5569
30	20	275	456	

From Table 2, from the test of Chinese speaking ability for communication before and after studying, the full score is 20 points, the total score of the pre-test is 275, the total score of the post-test is 456, when calculated using the efficiency index formula, it is equal to 0.5569, meaning that students who study using the situation as a base have more ability to speak Chinese, can communicate more.

The results of the comparative analysis of Chinese speaking ability for communication between before and after studying using the situation as a base of 30 students in the Chinese Language Teaching Program, using the t-test (dependent sample) statistic.

Table 3 shows the results of the comparative analysis of Chinese speaking ability for communication between before and after studying of students in the Chinese Language Teaching Program, using the t-test (dependent sample) statistic.

Ability to speak Chinese for communication	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	t	P-Value
Before	9.93	0.98	16.96	0.001*
After	15.20	1.54		

*Statistically significant at the .01 level.

From Table 3, the pre-test scores of the Chinese Language Teaching Program students had a mean of 9.93 and a standard deviation of 0.98. The post-test scores had a mean of 15.20 and a standard deviation of 1.54. When comparing the pre-test and post-test scores, it was found that the post-test scores of the students were higher than the pre-test scores, with statistical significance at the .05 level.

CONCLUSION

Situation-Based Learning offers a dynamic and effective approach for developing communicative Chinese speaking competency among language teaching students. By simulating real-life scenarios, students gain practical experience and cultural insights, preparing them for authentic communication in Chinese. Through careful

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implementation and assessment, SBL can significantly enhance the language learning experience, leading to greater fluency and confidence in speaking Chinese.

DISCUSSION

From the research results this time, the research results are discussed as follows, the results of this study demonstrate that the learning activities based on Situation-Based Learning (SBL) effectively promote the communicative speaking abilities of Chinese language teaching students, as evidenced by the efficiency score of 78.79/76.00, which exceeds the established criteria of 75/75. This finding aligns with previous research that highlights the impact of SBL on improving oral proficiency in language learners. The higher-than-expected efficiency rate suggests that SBL not only meets but surpasses traditional benchmarks in language education, confirming its value as a method for enhancing students' practical language skills. The efficiency score of 78.79 for process reflects the students' ability to engage in real-life communication scenarios, applying learned vocabulary, grammar, and cultural knowledge effectively. This supports the argument that situational contexts allow students to practice language use in ways that are more meaningful and relevant, leading to better retention and application of knowledge. The outcome score of 76.00 further reinforces the success of this method in achieving the desired learning outcomes, demonstrating that students can effectively use Chinese in communicative contexts following the implementation of SBL activities. One of the key strengths of SBL is its immersive nature. By engaging students in activities like role-playing, situational dialogues, and simulations, the approach encourages active participation and collaboration, which likely contributes to the improved efficiency scores. This finding is consistent with research by Li, Y. et al. (2024), which found that SBL activities significantly enhanced students' oral proficiency, vocabulary usage, and pronunciation. Furthermore, the higher efficiency scores suggest that the students not only improved in their speaking abilities but also gained confidence in using the language in real-world situations (Li, Y. et al., 2024). The success of SBL in promoting communicative competence is also attributable to its emphasis on contextual learning. According to Wang and Sun (2021), placing language learners in situational contexts helps them understand how to use language appropriately in different social and cultural scenarios (Wang & Sun, 2021). The data from this study, with efficiency scores exceeding the criteria, corroborate this notion, indicating that students are better equipped to navigate various communicative situations in Chinese. underscore the effectiveness of SBL in fostering communicative speaking abilities among Chinese language teaching students. These results, combined with previous research, support the notion that situational learning contexts provide students with practical, hands-on experience that enhances their language proficiency. Moving forward, integrating SBL into Chinese language curricula could help further improve student outcomes, particularly in terms of oral proficiency and real-life language use.

The results from the test of Chinese speaking ability for communication before and after using Situation-Based Learning (SBL) show a significant improvement in students’ performance. The total score for the pre-test was 275, while the post-test score increased to 456, out of a possible 20 points per student. When calculated using the efficiency index formula, the result of 0.5569 indicates a notable enhancement in students' ability to speak Chinese and communicate more effectively after being

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exposed to SBL activities. This efficiency index (0.5569) illustrates that more than half of the learning progress can be attributed to the SBL approach. It highlights how situational contexts can provide learners with practical experience in language use, allowing them to apply the vocabulary, grammar, and communicative strategies learned in real-life scenarios. The improvement in post-test scores confirms that SBL helps students move beyond rote memorization and engage with the language in a meaningful, functional manner. The use of real-world contexts in language learning through SBL creates opportunities for learners to practice speaking in situations they are likely to encounter in everyday life. According to research by Li, Y. et al. (2024), situational learning allows learners to apply language more naturally and effectively, improving their communicative competence. This aligns with the findings of this study, where students showed a clear increase in their ability to speak Chinese after participating in situation-based activities. The increase in the total score from pre- to post-test also suggests that SBL promotes not only language retention but also the development of confidence in speaking. As students engage in role-playing, dialogues, and simulations, they become more comfortable using the language spontaneously, which is reflected in their improved performance (Li, Y. et al., 2024). This mirrors the conclusions of Guo and Li (2019), who found that simulation exercises significantly improved oral proficiency among Chinese language learners. Moreover, the efficiency index value points to the effectiveness of SBL in accelerating learning outcomes in a relatively short time. Given that the total score increase and efficiency index surpass the baseline of traditional language teaching methods, it is clear that SBL offers a more engaging and immersive way to develop communicative skills in Chinese (Guo and Li, 2019). As Wang and Sun (2021) emphasize, situational contexts and interactive activities provide learners with a deeper understanding of how to navigate social and linguistic nuances in the target language. The findings from this study are consistent with the body of research that supports SBL as an effective approach for language acquisition. The significant improvement in speaking ability, as indicated by the post-test scores and the efficiency index, suggests that incorporating SBL into Chinese language teaching curricula could greatly enhance students' communicative competencies. By allowing students to practice speaking in realistic settings, SBL fosters not only linguistic proficiency but also confidence, cultural understanding, and the ability to use the language appropriately in various contexts (Wang & Sun, 2021).

The results of this study reveal a statistically significant improvement in the Chinese speaking abilities of students in the Chinese Language Teaching Program following the implementation of Situation-Based Learning (SBL). The pre-test scores had a mean of 9.93, while the post-test scores increased to a mean of 15.20. The difference in mean scores, coupled with a statistical significance at the .05 level, indicates that the SBL method effectively enhanced students' communicative speaking competencies in Chinese. The increase in the mean scores suggests that SBL facilitated a notable improvement in students' ability to apply language skills in real-life communication contexts. The higher mean score in the post-test compared to the pre-test indicates that after exposure to SBL activities, students were able to use vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation more effectively. This mirrors the findings of Wang and Sun (2021), who reported that contextual learning and interactive activities positively impacted students' language proficiency, particularly in speaking. The larger the post-test scores compared to the pre-test may reflect individual differences in how students responded to the SBL approach. While the overall improvement was

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significant, some students may have progressed more rapidly than others. This variability is often observed in language learning, where learners' backgrounds, motivation, and prior knowledge can influence their rate of improvement. However, the significant increase in the overall mean score confirms that SBL effectively benefited the entire group by providing opportunities for real-world language practice (Wang & Sun, 2021). The statistical significance of the difference in pre- and post-test scores at the .05 level strengthens the conclusion that SBL has a meaningful impact on language acquisition. As noted by Li, Y. et al. (2024), the use of situational contexts helps learners internalize language structures and use them more naturally in communication. This statistical evidence suggests that SBL is not only an effective instructional method but also a reliable one, capable of producing consistent improvements in students' communicative abilities (Li, Y. et al., 2024). Furthermore, the results align with existing research that supports the use of SBL for improving oral proficiency. According to Guo and Li (2019), simulation exercises and real-life scenarios foster practical language use, leading to significant gains in learners' speaking abilities. The significant increase in post-test scores, combined with the statistical validation, provides further evidence that SBL is an effective pedagogical tool for enhancing speaking skills in Chinese. In summary, the substantial improvement in mean post-test scores and the statistical significance of the results confirm that SBL is a powerful method for improving students' communicative speaking competencies in Chinese (Guo and Li, 2019) . The approach enables students to practice language in authentic, real-world contexts, which leads to meaningful improvements in their ability to communicate effectively. These findings support the integration of SBL into Chinese language curricula, where it can serve as a key strategy for developing both linguistic and communicative proficiency.

This study concludes that Situation-Based Learning (SBL) significantly enhances the oral proficiency of Chinese language learners. The research findings indicate that students who engaged in SBL activities showed marked improvement in their speaking skills, including better use of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Moreover, SBL proved to be an effective method for increasing student engagement and motivation by providing realistic and practical language use scenarios. The immersive nature of SBL allows learners to practice and apply their language skills in contexts that closely mimic real-life situations, leading to more meaningful and lasting learning experiences. These results underscore the importance of incorporating SBL into Chinese language curricula to foster communicative competence and better prepare students for authentic communication in the target language.

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