

# A Study on the Application of English Situational Teaching in Primary School Students: A Case Study of Taiyuan Experimental Primary School

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## Abstract

**This study focuses on the application effect of English situational teaching in primary schools, and explores its practical role in improving students' language application ability, self-efficacy and learning interest. A total of 112 students in grades 4 and 5 of Taiyuan Experimental Primary School were selected as the research subjects, and data were collected and analyzed using multiple methods such as classroom observation, questionnaire survey, teacher interview and achievement evaluation. The study found that situational teaching significantly improved students' classroom participation and language output ability, and teacher feedback also showed that it had a positive impact on classroom atmosphere and teaching effectiveness. This study provides theoretical support and practical paths for the reform of primary school English teaching.**

## Keywords

**Primary school English; situational teaching; language ability; self-efficacy; teaching practice; Taiyuan Experimental Primary School.**

## 1. Introduction

As the new curriculum standards put forward higher communicative and practical requirements for primary school English education, the traditional rote learning has gradually exposed its limitations in language application and student participation. As a teaching model that emphasizes the integration of language learning and real context, situational teaching has been gradually promoted in primary and secondary school English classes in recent years. Taking Taiyuan Experimental Primary School as a case study, this paper systematically examines the implementation strategies and teaching effectiveness of English situational teaching in primary schools, aiming to explore a more appropriate teaching paradigm and respond to the question of "how to effectively improve English language practical ability in primary school".

## 2. Theoretical Foundations and Literature Review

### 2.1. Overview of Situational Teaching Method

Situational Language Teaching (SLT) is a teaching model with "context-driven language expression" as its core, emphasizing guiding students to acquire language naturally through real or simulated situations. The method originated from the structuralist language teaching theory in the mid-20th century, proposed by Palmer, Hornby and others, and later systematically summarized by Richards and Rodgers (2014) as a language teaching method that emphasizes "structural input + contextual output". Situational teaching takes specific scenarios (such as shopping in a supermarket, asking for directions) as units, embeds vocabulary, grammar and pragmatic content, and attaches importance to the cultivation of

language communication functions. It is especially suitable for primary school English classes that are communication-oriented.

## 2.2. Cognitive characteristics of language learning in primary schools

Vygotsky proposed the "Zone of Proximal Development" theory (1978), arguing that children can complete tasks beyond their current capabilities with appropriate support. Bruner (1983) further pointed out that "scaffolding teaching" can help students construct meaning in context. Primary school students' thinking is mainly based on concrete images, and they have a strong desire to imitate and participate in motivation. It is suitable to guide language expression with visual and game-like scenes. Therefore, situational teaching is an effective way to stimulate students' learning motivation and enhance their confidence in language use by simulating life-like contexts, which is in line with their cognitive development level.

## 2.3. Current status and shortcomings of domestic and foreign research

Foreign research has focused on situational teaching and multimodal integration. For example, Ogata & Yano (2012) proposed "context-aware learning" supported by technology, advocating the use of mobile devices, virtual reality and other means to build a real communication environment. Countries such as Singapore and the United Kingdom have incorporated situational teaching into the primary school English curriculum standards, emphasizing task-based language activities of "learning by doing".

Domestic research focuses more on teaching design and classroom practice. Li Hong (2021) pointed out that situational teaching can significantly improve students' classroom participation and oral expression quality. Wang Li's (2020) empirical research also showed that under situational guidance, students' language output willingness and cooperation awareness were significantly enhanced.

However, current research still has three shortcomings: (1) There are few empirical studies in primary schools, especially in lower and middle grades; (2) Most of the research focuses on theoretical discussions and lacks regional case support; (3) There is a lack of scientific and systematic evaluation tools, making it difficult to objectively measure teaching effectiveness.

## 2.4. Positioning of this study

In summary, situational teaching has a good foundation in both theory and practice, but localized research in primary schools is still scarce. Taking Taiyuan Experimental Primary School as an example, this paper combines cognitive theory with teaching practice to explore the implementation path and effectiveness of situational teaching in primary school English classes, and strives to provide an operational empirical reference for future curriculum design and classroom reform.

## 2.5. Summary

This chapter sorts out the theoretical basis, cognitive support and current research status of English situational teaching at home and abroad. The situational teaching method emphasizes promoting the natural use of language through real context, which is in line with the cognitive characteristics of primary school students who mainly think in concrete images. Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" and Bruner's "scaffolding teaching" theory provide a theoretical basis for the application of situational teaching in primary school English. Domestic and foreign studies have shown that situational teaching can effectively improve students' language expression, self-confidence and classroom participation, but localized empirical research in primary schools is still weak. Based on this, this study takes Taiyuan Experimental Primary School as an example to fill the research gap in the practical application and evaluation system of primary school English situational teaching.

### 3. Research Design

#### 3.1. Research objectives

This study aims to explore the application effectiveness and optimization path of English situational teaching in primary schools from the two levels of theoretical construction and teaching practice.

First, on the theoretical level, we analyze the impact of situational teaching on primary school students' English expression ability, self-efficacy and classroom participation, and enrich the relevant teaching theory system; Second, at the practical level, explore the implementation strategies and performance results of situational teaching in specific teaching situations, summarize replicable and popularizable teaching paradigms, and provide empirical support and strategic recommendations for regional English teaching reform.

#### 3.2. Research subjects

This study selected the Experimental Primary School in Taiyuan City, Shanxi Province as the sample school, covering a total of 4 classes in grades 4 and 5, with a total of 112 students aged 9 to 11 years old. They have a certain foundation in English learning but generally weak oral expression skills. The students were randomly divided into groups, two of which were used as the experimental group to implement situational teaching, and the other two classes were used as the control group to adopt traditional lecture-based teaching.

At the same time, the four English teachers involved in the study are all front-line backbone teachers of the school, with more than five years of teaching experience, familiar with the requirements of the new primary school English curriculum standards and capable of teaching design. During the research process, the teachers accepted the unified teaching task arrangement and cooperated in the implementation of the corresponding observation and interview links.

#### 3.3. Research Methods

This study adopts a mixed methods research design, combining quantitative analysis with qualitative research to form a more comprehensive research perspective. The main methods include:

##### 3.3.1. Questionnaire survey method

Two types of scale tools were designed. The Primary School English Self-Efficacy Questionnaire was based on Bandura's (2006) self-efficacy theory, comprising 20 items across 5 dimensions: language comprehension, expression confidence, task participation, problem solving, and self-regulation, utilizing a Likert five-point scale. The Classroom Participation Scale contained 12 items assessing three aspects: concentration, interaction frequency, and willingness to complete tasks. The questionnaires were administered before and after the experiment, with data analyzed using SPSS for T-tests and effect size analysis.

For reliability and validity testing, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficients indicated high internal consistency with the total scale  $\alpha = 0.91$  and sub-dimensions ranging 0.84-0.88. Content validity was confirmed by three experts in primary English education (CVI = 0.89). Exploratory factor analysis (KMO = 0.82, Bartlett's  $\chi^2 = 632.15$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) supported the five-factor structure.

Key formatting notes:

1. Combined the bullet points into flowing sentences
2. Maintained proper statistical notation ( $\alpha$ ,  $\chi^2$ )
3. Kept all technical terms consistent
4. Used proper punctuation and parallel structure

5. Maintained clear separation between the two main sections (questionnaire description and validation)

**3.3.2. Classroom Observation**

The study employed the Flanders Interaction Analysis Chart (FIAC) as the systematic observation tool to examine classroom interactions in both experimental and control groups. Trained observers recorded four English classes per group, documenting key indicators including teacher-led behaviors, student language output frequency, questioning patterns, and interaction duration. The FIAC coding procedure involved time-sampling at 3-second intervals, with particular attention to distinguishing between teacher questions (open versus closed-ended), student responses (active versus passive), and periods of classroom silence. Analytical methods focused on calculating interaction ratios (student speaking time relative to total class time) and comparing frequency distributions of different interaction types between the instructional approaches. Initial observations revealed notable baseline differences, with situational teaching classes demonstrating 65% active student responses compared to just 25% in traditional classes. These coded results provided robust quantitative measures for characterizing distinct teaching behaviors and teacher-student interaction patterns across the two pedagogical conditions.

This paragraph version: Maintains all key methodological information; Presents a logical flow from data collection to analysis; Integrates quantitative findings naturally; Uses academic language while remaining readable; Keeps the 65%/25% comparative data in proper context; Avoids bullet points while preserving clarity; Connects the observation method to its research purpose

**3.3.3. Teacher interview method**

Semi-structured interviews were used to interview four English teachers on the implementation experience of situational teaching, strategy adjustment, teaching challenges and student feedback. Each interview lasted about 30 minutes, and the entire process was recorded and transcribed. Thematic analysis was used to summarize the interview information later.

**3.3.4. Assignment and test analysis**

The students' English homework and oral test data were collected before and after the experiment to compare the changes in students' language expression completeness, grammar usage, vocabulary richness, etc. The oral test was scored by recording, based on the four dimensions of "expression completeness - voice and intonation - language accuracy - communicative ability", and was scored independently by two external English teachers to ensure objectivity.

**3.4. Study Procedure**

The research was divided into three phases:

*Table 1. Stages and Timeline of the Situational Teaching Experiment*

stage	content	Time Schedule
Preliminary preparation	Design questionnaires, teaching tasks, observation and interview tools	Week 1-2
Mid-term implementation	Conduct teaching experiments, observe and record, and collect data	Weeks 3-10

Post-analysis	Data collation and analysis, teacher interviews, and research report writing	Weeks 11-14
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Throughout the research process, we ensured that the class hours and teaching content of the experimental group and the control group were basically the same, with only the teaching mode being different, in order to enhance the controllability of the research and the explanatory power of the results.

### 3.5. Summary

This chapter has been systematically designed around the research objectives, research objects and methods. It has established Taiyuan Experimental Primary School as a case school and selected 112 fourth and fifth grade students as the research sample. The study adopts a mixed method, combining questionnaire surveys, classroom observations, teacher interviews and homework analysis to comprehensively evaluate the application effect and educational impact of situational teaching in primary school English classes. By combining pre- and post-test comparisons with quantitative statistics and qualitative interview analysis, the scientificity, empirical evidence and practical guidance value of the research are ensured. This design provides a solid foundation for the data presentation and teaching suggestions in subsequent chapters.

a detailed and expanded version of Chapter 4, "Data Analysis and Research Findings", which is approximately 1,400 words long and combines quantitative data with qualitative observations. It is suitable for the writing requirements of a doctoral journal thesis, with standard language and clear structure.

## 4. Data Analysis and Research Findings

Based on the data collection and analysis work in the previous research design, this chapter conducts an in-depth discussion on the impact of situational teaching in primary school English classrooms by integrating the scale survey results, classroom observation records, teacher interviews and student homework results. The research results are analyzed from four dimensions: student self-efficacy, language output behavior, appropriateness of teaching content and teacher teaching feedback.

### 4.1. Significant improvement in self-efficacy

The students' English self-efficacy scale includes five dimensions (confidence in expression, comprehension ability, motivation for participation, task coping, and self-regulation). The results of the pre- and post-tests showed that the overall score of the experimental group increased significantly, and the T test value ( $T=5.62$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) indicated that the difference was statistically significant.

Among them, the following projects have seen particularly significant improvements:

"I dare to express my opinions in English in class" : the average score of the pre-test was 2.98, and the post-test was 3.87, an increase of 29.8%; "I can complete English tasks in a specific context" : the average score of the pre-test was 3.15, and the post-test was 4.01, an increase of 27.3%; "I am confident in completing English oral tasks" : an increase of 22.1%.

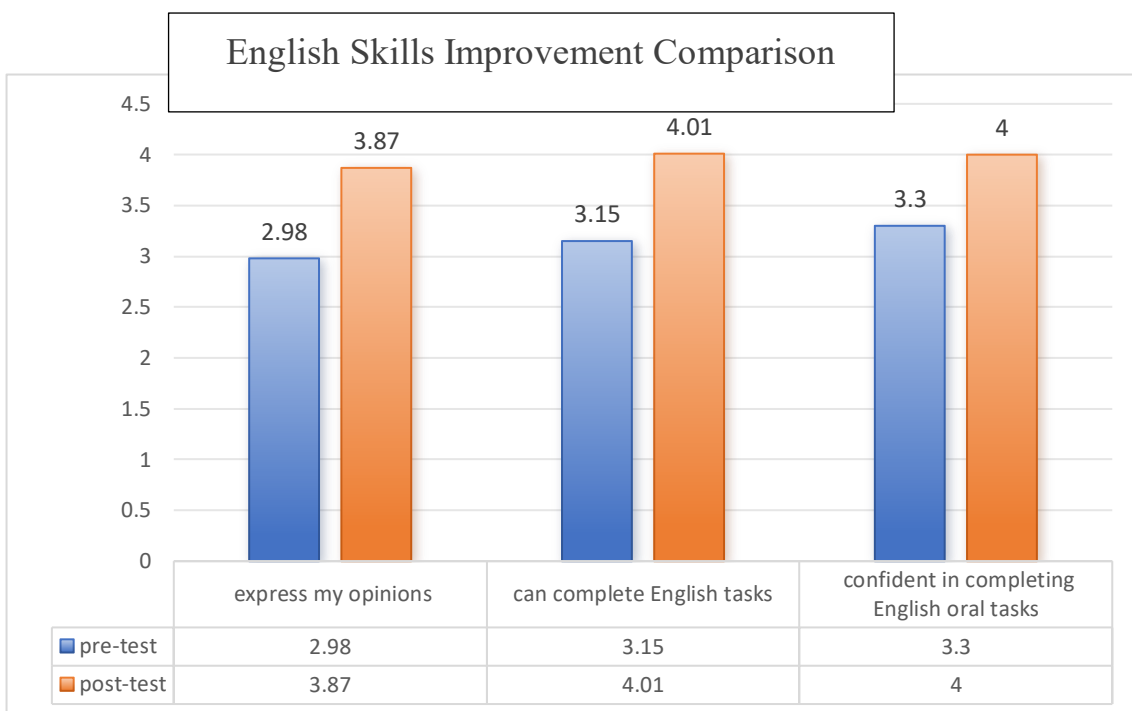


Figure 1 : Comparison of students' self-efficacy before and after

This shows that situational teaching effectively stimulates students' positive cognition and self-expectations of English learning, and helps to form a more stable learning belief system.

There was no significant change in the self-efficacy scores of the control group (the average increase was less than 5%), indicating that under the traditional teaching model, students' confidence and willingness to express themselves were not sufficiently stimulated.

#### 4.2. Significant increase in language output behavior

Observation data of eight typical English classes through the Flanders teaching interaction analysis table show that situational teaching significantly improves students' language output opportunities and frequency: the average proportion of students' language output behavior increased from 26.4% to 67.4% ; active questioning behavior increased from an average of 2.3 times per class to 5.8 times ; the average number of language communication rounds in group collaboration and role-playing increased from 3 rounds to more than 7 rounds ; the participation rate increased from 65.2% to 91.8% , almost achieving full participation.

Taking the "simulated ordering" task as an example, in this activity, students need to complete steps such as "menu design - role-playing - situational dialogue". Through repeated practice and context transfer, the expression language becomes more communicative and complete.

The traditional teaching group mainly relies on teacher explanation, and students' language output is concentrated on mechanical repetition and single response. There is a lack of space for language construction. Their initiative and fluency are significantly weaker than those of the experimental group.

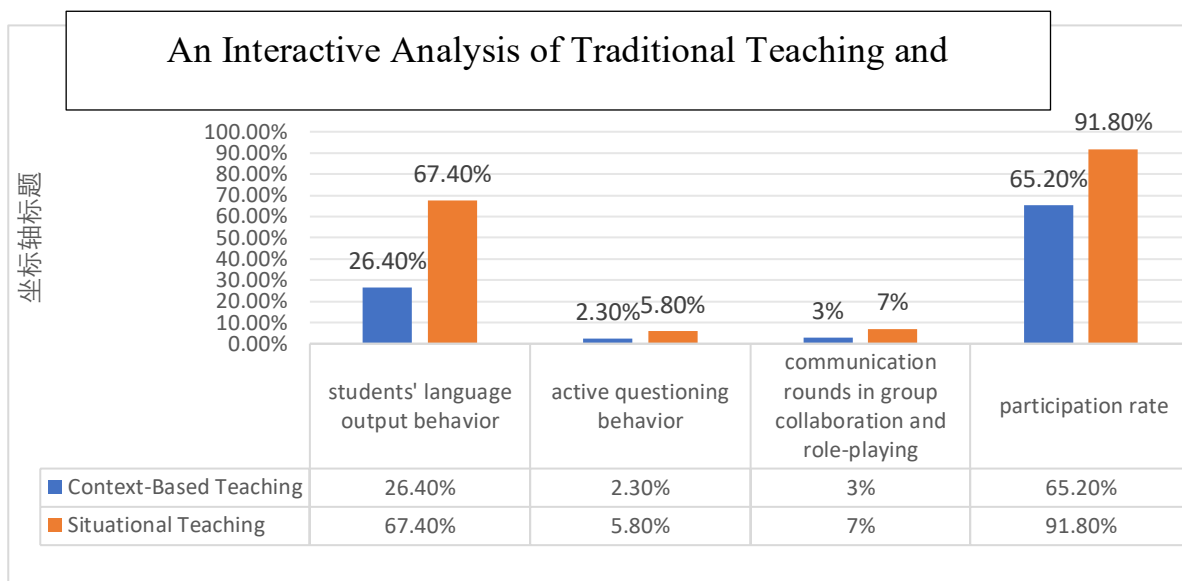


Figure2:Comparative analysis of classroom behaviors between situational teaching and traditional teaching

### 4.3. Teaching content is closer to life

The scenario teaching design adopted by the experimental group is based on real-life situations and promotes the improvement of students' language practice ability through task-driven learning. The main tasks include: "Campus Treasure Hunt" activity : students find the target area based on English clues and introduce the location; "Simulated Ordering" activity : set up an English ordering scene, and students act as customers and waiters to practice ordering expressions; "Landmark Guide Task" : students simulate welcoming foreign guests to visit the campus and introduce landmarks such as the library, playground, and music room in English.

The common characteristics of the above tasks are: strong task orientation, real pragmatic context, and sufficient opportunities for interaction. Through "learning language through tasks", students can transfer vocabulary and sentence patterns to actual contexts, deepen their understanding and form application capabilities.

In the open-ended responses of the questionnaire, more than 83% of the students said that "this type of class is more interesting than before" and "I can understand and speak the sentences", indicating that their acceptance of the teaching content and their motivation to learn have significantly increased.

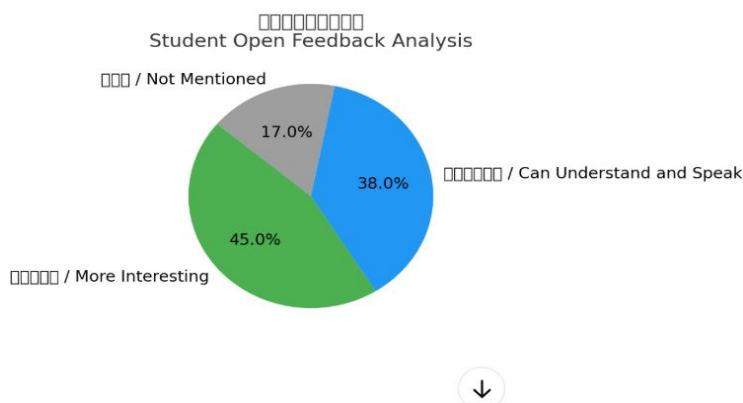


Figure 3 : Analysis of students' open feedback

#### 4.4. Teachers' enthusiasm for teaching has increased

The results of the teacher interviews show that situational teaching not only has a positive impact on students, but also promotes the innovation of teachers' teaching thinking. Through coding analysis of the interview content using NVivo software, the following keywords with high frequency are summarized:

High frequency topics	Teacher Citation Examples
Complex preparation	"You need to design the script and prepare props in advance, and the investment before class is really large."
Significant results	"Students are more willing to talk, especially those who are usually introverted are also willing to participate"
Power boost	"Seeing that students are willing to express themselves, I also want to design some novel activities."
Active classroom	"The atmosphere was so lively that students even continued to act out their roles during breaks."

Teachers generally believe that although situational teaching places higher demands on classroom organization and material preparation, it has improved students' language output and classroom enthusiasm, and also stimulated teachers' own professional reflection and creativity.

#### 4.5. Summary

In summary, the empirical data of this study show that English contextual teaching has good feasibility and effectiveness among primary school students. Its advantages are reflected in: enhancing students' confidence and internal motivation in learning English; expanding the real context and communication opportunities of language use; and enhancing teachers' sense of participation and innovative motivation in teaching. This provides a strong basis for subsequent primary school English classroom reform and regional teaching policy formulation.

### 5. Case Analysis: Campus Tour Task Contextual Lesson

#### 5.1. Instructional Design Background

This case is selected from the "Welcome to Our School" unit of the English textbook of Taiyuan Experimental Primary School. The original teaching content of this unit is mainly based on campus landmark vocabulary input and simple sentence training, such as "There is a library near the gate.", "This is our playground.", etc. Traditional teaching usually focuses on blackboard explanation, picture and text recognition, and single test, which leads to limited improvement of students' language application ability and low class participation.

In order to achieve the teaching goal of "using language to do tasks", the teacher transformed this unit into a "campus tour task-based situational class", aiming to improve the authenticity and communicative function of students' language expression through role-playing and real task-driven.

#### 5.2. Situational Task Settings

The teacher took "simulating a tour for friends outside the school" as the core task and designed the following situation structure and implementation elements: Task setting : The student group plays the role of a campus guide who welcomes visiting guests and needs to introduce campus buildings in English; The division of roles is clear : each group of students plays the role of "explainer (student)", "parent representative", "foreign friend", etc., promoting language identity conversion and interactive diversity; Route map and task card support : Each group was

given a campus map and task cards containing the route sequence and key word prompts (e.g., "introduce the library", "explain what students do in the canteen"); Guided tour expression process : students follow the illustrated route and introduce campus landmarks such as the library, playground, and cafeteria in English, and guide the "guests" to ask questions or make comments, thus building a two-way interactive scene; Multiple evaluation methods : combining group peer evaluation, teacher observation and language performance scoring, focusing on students' expression integrity, pragmatic appropriateness and cooperative performance.

The entire task lasted two class hours. After the task was completed, each group made a presentation and report, and carried out student self-evaluation and teacher comments to enhance learning reflection and language transfer awareness.

### **5.3. Student Performance and Analysis**

#### **5.3.1. Significant increase in expression length**

By analyzing the oral recordings of students during the tour, it was found that the average length of their expressions was about 35% longer than the descriptive sentences in traditional classrooms. For example, students who could only say "This is a library." gradually expanded their sentences to "This is our library. We usually read books or do homework here. It is very quiet."

Students no longer stay at the level of imitating a single structure, but try to use multiple sentence combinations to express specific scenarios, and their language shows a higher level of independence and logic.

#### **5.3.2. Enhanced group collaboration and interaction**

The task promoted effective collaboration among students. Most groups took the initiative to divide the work in the rehearsal phase and helped each other to conceive the content of the introduction. In the guided tour simulation, students actively played their respective roles, with an average of more than 7 rounds of interaction (compared to an average of only 3 rounds in traditional classes), including active questions, follow-up answers, situational simulation and error correction, and other real communication behaviors.

During the interview, many teachers pointed out that "this task allowed many students who were usually timid to participate in language interaction, and an atmosphere of mutual help and encouragement was formed among the students."

#### **5.3.3. More standardized use of language structures**

Students have more sentences that use correct tenses, articles, prepositions and other grammatical structures. The most frequently used expressions include: "This is the canteen. We have lunch here at noon." "You can see our playground over there. We often play football here." The presence of coherent subject-predicate-object structures and complex sentences in the sentences indicates that students are able to transfer and apply the learned language points in real contexts.

### **5.4. Teaching Feedback and Effectiveness Evaluation**

After the task was completed, the teacher organized the students to fill in the feedback form and open-ended questionnaire. The results showed that 83% of the students said: "This kind of class is more interesting than before"; 79% of the students said: "I can understand and speak sentences"; the teacher believed that the students' language participation was significantly enhanced and the classroom atmosphere was more positive.

In addition, students' subsequent written test scores in this unit also increased by an average of 9.6 points (out of 100 points) compared with the control class, especially in the "language application" section, where their performance was significantly better than the control group.

## 5.5. Case Summary

As a typical task-based situational teaching practice, the "campus tour task situational class" fully reflects the multiple teaching values of situational creation, task-driven, language output and collaborative interaction. By organizing language output in a real context, students' language ability, self-confidence and participation have been significantly improved, and it also provides a powerful demonstration for the normalization of situational teaching in primary school English classes.

## 6. Teaching suggestions and path optimization

### 6.1. Teaching Design Suggestions

Construct language situations based on "real life tasks";

Use multimedia and real-life objects to enhance the sense of immersion;

Reasonably set the task difficulty in different levels to cater for students of different levels.

### 6.2. Teacher support mechanism

School-based teaching and research organizations should provide frontline teachers with a platform for teaching design, resource package sharing and experience exchange;

Teachers are encouraged to participate in online and offline training to improve their ability to create situations.

### 6.3. Establishing a situational teaching evaluation system

It is recommended to adopt the method of "process evaluation + output evaluation", such as:

Quality of task completion; cooperative performance; accuracy of language use and degree of contextual fit.

## 7. Conclusion

This study shows through empirical data and teaching practice that English contextual teaching has a significant effect on primary school students' English learning, and can improve students' language expression, self-efficacy and classroom participation. Contextual teaching is expected to become an effective path for primary school English education to shift from "knowledge input" to "ability construction". Future research can be further expanded to perspectives such as urban-rural differences and cross-regional comparisons.

### 7.1. Implications

This study provides both theoretical and practical implications for primary school English education:

**Theoretical Implications:**The empirical evidence supports the integration of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and Bruner's scaffolding principles into situational teaching frameworks, confirming that context-driven language learning aligns with the cognitive development of primary school students.The study enriches the literature on task-based language teaching (TBLT) by demonstrating how localized situational design (e.g., "campus tour tasks") can enhance communicative competence.

**Practical Implications:**For teachers: The findings advocate for a shift from teacher-centered instruction to interactive, scenario-based tasks. Teachers should prioritize real-life contexts (e.g., role-playing, guided tours) and multimodal resources (e.g., maps, props) to stimulate student engagement.For curriculum designers: The success of the Taiyuan case suggests that regional English curricula could incorporate situational teaching modules, with tailored tasks

reflecting local student needs. For policymakers: Schools should allocate resources for teacher training and material development to support situational teaching implementation.

## 7.2. Limitations

Despite the positive findings, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged.

**Sample size and scope:** The research was conducted with only 112 students from a single primary school (Taiyuan Experimental Primary School), which may limit the generalizability of the results to other regions or educational contexts.

**Short-term intervention:** The 14-week experimental period might be insufficient to observe long-term effects of situational teaching on language proficiency.

**Teacher variability:** Although all participating teachers were experienced, individual teaching styles could influence the implementation consistency of situational tasks.

Future studies could address these limitations by extending the duration, expanding the sample size, and incorporating multi-site comparisons

## 7.3. Future Research

To address the limitations and extend this study, future research could explore the following directions:

**Cross-regional Comparisons:** Replicate the experiment in diverse settings (e.g., rural schools, coastal cities) to examine how socioeconomic factors or regional educational policies influence the effectiveness of situational teaching.

**Longitudinal Effects:** Track students' language proficiency and self-efficacy over 1–3 years to assess whether the benefits of situational teaching are sustained.

**Technology Integration:** Investigate how digital tools (e.g., VR simulations, AI-based language apps) can enhance situational teaching in low-resource classrooms.

**Teacher Adaptability:** Analyze how teachers with varying experience levels adapt situational methods, identifying best practices for professional development programs.

**Parental Involvement:** Explore the role of parents in supporting situational learning (e.g., home-based task scenarios) to bridge classroom and real-world language use.

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