

Chinese College Talent Pool Construction for Emergency Language Service

Kun Zhu, Xiaolong Li

College of International Language and Cultures, Hohai University, Nanjing, People's Republic of China

Email address:

1226179259@qq.com (Kun Zhu), xlee@hhu.edu.cn (Xiaolong Li)

To cite this article:

Kun Zhu, Xiaolong Li. Chinese College Talent Pool Construction for Emergency Language Service. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*. Vol. 10, No. 2, 2022, pp. 149-156. doi: 10.11648/j.ijll.20221002.22

Received: March 28, 2022; **Accepted:** April 18, 2022; **Published:** April 26, 2022

Abstract: Under the background of economic globalization, foreign exchanges and cooperation become more and more frequent, and emergency language service talents are urgently needed to deal with all kinds of emergencies around the world, which leads to the discussion on the construction of emergency language talent pool. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of emergency language service system and talents training has been heightened to an unprecedented level. As an important part of language talents, college foreign language teachers have become the focus of talent pool construction. Therefore, this paper selected English teachers in Nanjing colleges and universities as the research objects. By conducting emergency language translation test questionnaires about medical emergency language, foreign trade emergency language, external publicity emergency language, and using SPSS 24.0 for data analysis, this paper concluded that most of the English teachers in Nanjing universities can reach the standard of emergency language service, but they lack the experience of emergency language research and practice. Based on this conclusion, this paper further presented that the lack of attention to emergency language and the high demand for emergency language service are two main reasons for the existing problems. At last, this paper put forward some suggestions on the construction of emergency language service talent pool, and pointed out the qualities of emergency language service talent.

Keywords: Emergency Language Service, Talent Pool Construction, College English Teacher

1. Introduction

Emergency language service refers to providing language services to overcome the language barrier, defuse the crisis caused by poor communication in emergencies that threaten the safety of life and property of the state or individuals, such as natural disasters, wars and medical assistance, etc. Foreign language, especially English is the main language in emergency service.

Lifei Wang et al. pointed out that emergency language service is to provide rapid rescue language products, language technologies or participate in language rescue operations to carry out preventive detection, rapid disposal, recovery and reconstruction of major natural disasters or public crises [1]. Emergency language services (ELS) must also include Emergency language translation, which we define as: In view of the major natural disasters or public crisis prevention detection, rapid disposal and recovery and reconstruction, providing language translation products, language translation

technology or rescue operations, including first aid translation of oral and written translation, research and development of translation software, dissemination of translated texts, formulation of translation policies and principles, cultivation of translation talents and construction of corpus, etc. Based on this definition, we can summarize ETS capabilities as the ability to provide ETS products in the event of a major natural disaster or public crisis.

In the face of emergencies in China, the language barrier is still a significant problem. Hong Liu and Bo Zhang, representatives from the foreign language industry, suggested in the proposal of 13th People's Congress that "the National Language Commission should take the lead in setting up an emergency language service team, with teachers and students from relevant universities participating, to build a unified platform at the national level and coordinate resources." One of the bases of perfecting the emergency language service system is to have permanent language service personnel resources, and emergency

language service providers are a special group that requires more than foreign language translation skills. College foreign language teachers are regarded as professional foreign language talents, which should play a vital part in providing emergency language service. The purpose of this study is to find out what are the problems of college foreign language teachers in providing emergency language services, and how to maximize their positive role in response to the existing problems.

1.1. Setting

At present, there are few theoretical and practical discussions on emergency language service in the academic world. Yanjiang Teng discussed the construction of emergency language service system in the United States, providing us with enlightenment to learn about other countries' experience and carry out emergency language service construction [2]. Recently, after the outbreak of COVID-19, scholars have called for attention to the planning and construction of emergency language services. For example, Lifei Wang proposed to make emergency language service planning, integrate resources, and strengthen the training of emergency language talents [3]. Yuming Li advocated accelerating the research on medical discourse and disaster prevention and control language to improve the national emergency language capacity [4]. Wang Hui suggests that language reserve should be made well and social emergency language ability should play a role in public emergencies [5]. Yan Li proposed the implementation of language rescue to meet the needs of multilingual and diversified information. Emergency language service is also one of the hot topics in international academic research in recent years [6]. Overseas scholars mainly discussed natural disasters, war refugees, emergencies, medical services in emergency centers and other issues. O'Brien advocates the use of machine translation to provide efficient language rescue work for ethnic groups [7]; Penn, Watermeyer & Natrass discussed how medical emergency centers help vulnerable language groups overcome communication barriers and provide medical assistance with on-site (or remote) language services [8]; Doroja-cadiante & Valdez investigated the impact of typhoon on the linguistic landscape of the disaster areas from the perspective of linguistic landscape [9]. Uekusa proposes the concept of "Disaster linguistics" in combination with disaster prevention, rescue and post-disaster comfort, and proposes to provide language services to various groups with language needs [10]. These studies have enriched our understanding of the essence, connotation and practice of emergency language service from different levels. At present, few scholars have discussed the research topics and paradigms of emergency language service. However, knowing the research topics, areas of concern, research priorities and paradigms in this field will help enhance its academic status and improve its ability of emergency language rescue and response.

Nanjing is the most powerful city in education development in China, ranking third in China as the key town of higher

education. According to the survey results of Nanjing Municipal Bureau of Statistics, there are 53 colleges and universities in Nanjing, among which 28 are undergraduate colleges and universities, including 2 colleges of "Project 985"¹ and 6 colleges of "Project 211"². The 28 universities have a total of 2,216 in-service English teachers, including English majors and non-English majors. The teaching direction is mainly divided into literature, linguistics, translation (including interpretation and translation), and business English, legal English, medical English, tourism English and other targeted English teaching. The survey found that only 16 percent of English teachers in the 28 universities had specialized in "emergency language" research and practice.

1.2. Methods

We undertook a cross-sectional, anonymous survey questionnaire of college English teachers. Data was collected between January 2020 and May 2021. After an explanation of the study and its purpose, if they agreed to participate, they would receive an email with an electronic version of the questionnaire and asked to complete it independently. Care was taken to reassure the participants that the survey was anonymous and answers would not be shared with their superiors. The survey took between 40 and 60 minutes to complete.

1.3. Subjects

Many college teachers take the initiative to provide language services in the COVID-19 epidemic, which is a new force not to be underestimated. Teachers in graduate school of translation and interpretation of Beijing foreign studies university translated first-hand cases and epidemic reports from all over the front lines for international medical experts, Fang Qian, a teacher from Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, provided on-site interpretation services for WHO experts during their visit to Wuhan, and Jin Ji, teacher from the School of Foreign Languages of Sichuan University, accompanied the Chinese medical team to Italy for assistance, etc. We sought to enroll all English teachers from the above 28 undergraduate universities for this survey. They all hold a master's degree or above in English.

1.4. Survey Development

Because there are no validated survey instruments on this topic available for use, we undertook our own survey development. We initially conducted informal interviews with a variety of college English teachers to assess their knowledge of emergency language and emergency language service. Three themes emerged: Medical emergency language, foreign

1 Project 985 refers to an important decision made by the Communist Party of China and The State Council of the People's Republic of China at the turn of the century to build a first-class university with the world's advanced level.

2 Project 211 was officially launched in November 1995 after the approval of The State Council for the construction of about 100 institutions of higher learning and a number of key disciplines for the 21st century.

trade emergency language, external publicity emergency language. From these themes, we developed a draft survey. The draft survey was then trialed on a subset of college English teachers to solicit feedback on both content and understandability. With the incorporation of this feedback, we crafted the final survey.

1.5. Measures and Outcomes

Respondents were asked to fill out three tests on medical emergency language, foreign trade emergency language, external publicity emergency language.

Before the three subject tests, we first investigated whether these college English teachers had carried out research and practice activities related to emergency language. If they answered yes, we would further investigate their research direction and specific practice projects, as well as the progress and achievements made so far. Also, we conducted a survey on whether they had conducted on-site interpretation activities. Some scholars think the emergency service talented person's raise language should be mainly carried out in a language student, such as public health, maritime, aviation, public security, military and diplomatic and other professional, emergency should be to understand a foreign language, especially English language service main medical and maritime professionals, rather than a foreign language professional. This statement has its rationality. Knowledge in many professional fields is indeed beyond the grasp of foreign language professionals in a short period of time. For example, many medical or legal interpretation are undertaken by interpreters with medical or legal backgrounds, but there is not necessarily enough talent in these specialties to meet emergency language translation. Foreign language competence, especially foreign language communication competence, cannot be rapidly improved in a short time compared with emergency subject knowledge competence, because emergency subject knowledge competence can be compensated to some extent by tool competence, but bilingual communication competence, especially in the field of interpretation, is often difficult to be compensated.

If they answered yes, we will make further statistics on the frequency and duration of interpretation activities.

In the first part, medical emergency language investigation. We first tested COVID-19 words that attracted much attention at home and abroad, which covers the ideas and measures, people's livelihood, medical vocabulary, proprietary vocabulary, cooperation resistance to epidemic, the five categories. In addition, we investigated the English vocabulary of emergency medicine, such as pressure control ventilation, blood-brain barrier, intracranial pressure, sequence inertial system failure and so on.

The second part is about the investigation of the foreign trade emergency language. The content is mainly international trade terms, including price terms, trade insurance terms, terms of trade methods and trade partners and so on. We also inspects the translation of some laws and regulations related to international trade.

The third part is about the investigation of external publicity

emergency language. When a global emergency occurs, a country should release information to the international community in a timely manner to explain the situation and control the direction of public opinion. Emergency language service providers should help relevant organizations to formulate Chinese and foreign terms, propaganda slogans, news reports and other content, to avoid language discrimination and language violence. The questionnaire mainly tests the translation of words with Chinese characteristics and high-frequency words that appear in various government documents and media reports.

2. Analysis

First of all, through the investigation method of the quantitative research, this study obtains the situation of college English teachers' mastery of emergency language. SPSS 24.0 software was used for statistical analysis, count data (n, %), test, $P < 0.05$, the difference was statistically significant. Descriptive statistics were used for analysis. Continuous variables were summarized as medians with interquartile ranges (IQRs). Chi Squared and Fisher's exact, and Kruskal Wallis tests were used where appropriate to compare between groups.

3. Results

Of the 2216 total college English teachers, 1875 were approached and 1540 agreed to participate, which represents a 82.1% response rate (978/1875).

4. Relative Experience

Respondents reported low rates of emergency language service experience. Over all, 16% (157/978) had carried out researches and practices related to emergency language. But most of the respondents had interpreting experience. 72% (709/978) had conducted on-site interpretation activities (see table 1). For those who had interpreting experience, the length of interpreting received was 43h (0.5–40, IQR3). According to the data, college English teachers have rich interpreting experience, but lack of research and practice experience in emergency language service.

Table 1. Relative research and practice and interpretation experience.

Variable	All subjects	P value
Had carried out research and practice related to emergency language		
No	821 (84)	
Yes	157 (16)	<0.0001
Had conducted on-site interpretation activities		
No	269 (28)	
Yes	709 (72)	0.1097

5. Emergency Language Ability

In the first part of the test, the respondents had a good command of COVID-19-related words, with 97% correct answers out. In contrast, their mastery of specialized words in

emergency medicine was low, with only 48% accuracy. Among them, the accuracy rate of professional words for some diseases with the lowest score, such as *atrioventricular block AVB*, *sinus tachycardia*, *subarachnoid hemorrhage* was 31%, 36% and 43% respectively. In conclusion, the accuracy rate of medical emergency language test was generally reached 72%.

In the second part of the international trade emergency language survey, the respondents showed a high degree of mastery. In the 40 test questions, the overall correct rate reached 88%. Translation of international trade law scored relatively poorly with 70% accuracy.

In the last part of the external publicity translation, in order to more accurately understand the respondents translation quality, we take the official government documents and

official media of standard of right and wrong judgment for the respondents, the data showed that the accuracy of this part of 82%. In the low scoring questions, the reason for the error was that literal translation was not properly combined with free translation.

Table 2. The comparison of the three groups of questionnaire test results (n, %).

Group	Question number	Right number	Accuracy
Medical	19,560	14,181	72.5%
Foreign trade	19,560	17,115	87.5%
External publicity	19,560	16,137	82.5%
χ^2	-	-	5.4153
p	-	-	0.0199

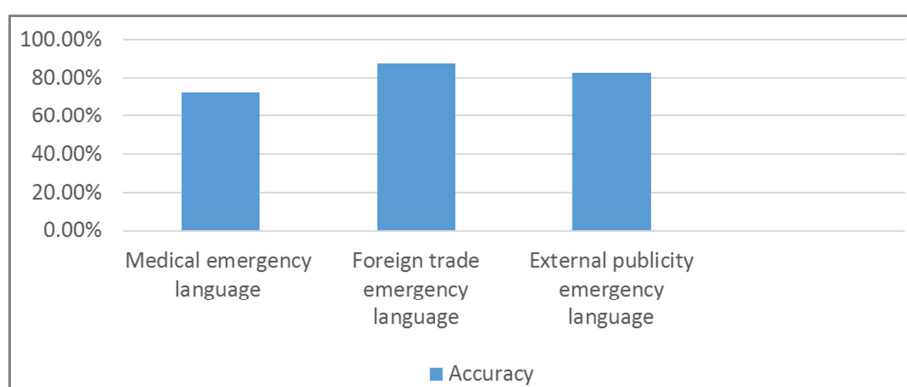


Figure 1. The comparison of the three groups of questionnaire test results (n, %).

6. Discussion

Emergency language services can meet the needs of discourse communication in emergency contexts, break the language barrier in emergencies, and ultimately help control emergency situations and stabilize social order. Through the provision of emergency language services, on the one hand, it can popularize the event to the outside world, resist the spread of negative words and rumors, and strengthen the management of public opinion; On the other hand, it can timely and effectively convey national positions and programs and maintain national image and ideological security.

After September 11 attacks, the US government realized the serious deficiency of national language capacity and its harm, and made great efforts to build national language capacity through initiatives, especially the establishment of different types of language talent pool. The construction and development of American national language capacity reflects the current national security language policy of the United States [11]. One of them is National Language Service Corps (NLSC) in the United States National Security Education Program (NSEP). The NLSC is a volunteer organization composed of folk language talents and centrally managed by the government. The State Language Commission listed the construction of the National Language Volunteer talent pool as a major bidding project in 2013. On April 24, 2014, the

group held its opening in Beijing foreign studies university. The experts at the meeting discussed all kinds of possible problems in the expected progress of the project, including the types of the construction, the talent selection criteria, the service objects, the service content and how to integrate resources. On February 10, 2020, Professor Yuming Li of Beijing Language and Culture University (BLCU) launched the initiative of setting up a language service team to fight the epidemic, and invited the Commercial Press of Wuhan University of BLCU and Central China Normal University. After discussion, researchers from Capital Normal University and other units jointly developed a series of products called "Hubei Dialect Assistant" (later named "Hubei Dialect Expert for Fighting Against Epidemic").

Through the analysis of the survey results, it is concluded that most of the English teachers in Nanjing university can reach the standard of emergency language service, but they lack the experience of emergency language research and practice. College English teachers generally have a high level of emergency language translation in medical emergency, foreign trade emergency, external publicity emergency, but they cannot accurately translate some professional words such as medical English, legal English and so on.

In view of the above problems, this paper summarizes the reasons from the following two aspects: on the one hand, there is little attention paid to the ability of emergency language service workers in China. The main reason is that in the past,

emergency language service mainly occurred between the same language or different dialect groups, so the concept of emergency foreign language was seldom considered.

On the other hand, emergency language service requires interdisciplinary capabilities. It not only for daily communication, but also for operational communication in emergency situations such as medicine, trade, maritime affairs and diplomacy. Most college English teachers majored in British and American literature, linguistics and translation, with strong language literacy. But it cannot meet the needs of fields such as medicine and economics, with the exception of literary studies and foreign language education. Involved in the outbreak of COVID-19, for example, many foreign language professionals do not have such preparation at ordinary times, so they often learn and use them as they go. They search for the standard documents of medical materials donated from overseas and seek the assistance of professionals with medical background. At the end of term translation, professional medical staff still need to carry out quality control.

Although the demand for emergency language service is generated in emergencies, its long-term mechanism and reserve talent training depend on regular training. In order to solve the above problems, it is urgent to build a complete and effective national emergency language service talent training system.

Firstly, we should assess requirements of the number of emergency language services and scenario terminology. For example, international conference interpretation service, customs clearance language service, product translation, emergency news release and media communication, communication with international personnel, etc.

Secondly, government agencies at all levels should set up corresponding emergency language service management posts, or assign special personnel to take charge of emergency language service management, communication and coordination. These positions should be open to college English teachers by recruitment or secondment. In addition, emergency management offices or organizational personnel departments determine training targets and training objects according to specific needs of language services, organizing institutions of higher learning and scientific research institutes to carry out emergency language service training and regular drills, just like Japan's earthquake emergency drills.

Thirdly, the training of emergency language talents should be implemented in colleges and universities, especially in college foreign language teaching. The training mechanism of English majors should shift from language skill learning to language skill application, and the major of "emergency language service" should be set according to national and social needs. More importantly, emergency language service modules should be set up in public English teaching in featured colleges and universities, such as aviation, health, maritime affairs, public security, military, diplomacy, etc., or relevant curriculum content should be integrated into the existing listening, speaking, reading and writing courses. Therefore, English teachers in colleges and universities should

strengthen communication with teachers of other professional disciplines, supplement their missing professional knowledge and improve their emergency language service ability through cooperative learning seminars. To solve the problem of weak faculty in colleges and universities, we should strengthen the construction of faculty. In addition to professional ability training for existing foreign language teachers, it is also necessary to reduce teachers' work unrelated to teaching, improve teachers' salary and pay attention to the cultivation of teachers' innovation consciousness.

In terms of specific curriculum, emergency language service courses should include: (1) basic knowledge courses in related fields (such as basic medical knowledge and basic maritime knowledge); (2) Special-purpose language courses (such as language expressions in various language classes and typical scenarios); (3) Emergency psycholinguistics and emergency cross-cultural communication courses. Colleges and universities should pay attention to emergency language communication ability, developing basic emergency language service awareness and application ability as well as writing, translation, management and coordination ability. It is particularly important to emphasize the cultivation of volunteer spirit. The society needs not only those who master various emergency language service skills, but also those who have the spirit of selfless dedication and are willing to serve the society with their language expertise anytime and anywhere.

The National Social Science Foundation, the Humanities and Social Science Foundation of the Ministry of Education, and the Planning projects of the National Language Commission should set up relevant project guidelines and financial support for emergency language research, and guide the vast number of experts, scholars and teachers to participate in the project application. All kinds of language research institutions should support research on emergency language services and find solutions to specific problems in each emergency. In particular, importance should be attached to clarifying the role and status of emergency language services in the construction of laws and regulations, so that emergency language services have laws and regulations to follow. College teachers should be encouraged to carry out research on emergency language competence on the basis of existing research results. This kind of research should not only be for the purpose of publishing papers, but mainly for targeted and effective applied research. The achievement evaluation is based on practical application, and the outstanding schemes, applied technologies and practical methods with good practicability and efficiency should be rewarded, and the application for national patents should be recommended, and the units and individuals with outstanding contributions will be commended and rewarded, too.

The construction of the emergency language service talent database involves many aspects, including talent selection and management, as well as talent evaluation and feedback.

There are several qualities that emergency language service personnel should have:

- 1) Good political and ideological quality.

An emergency language service personnel must have a firm political stand and good political quality, and always take national interests as the highest criterion. Refuse any language service work that harms national interests and national image, strictly abide by national laws and regulations, and keep a clear head at all times.

2) Solid Basic skills of emergency language translation.

In the process of cultivating emergency language translation talents, colleges and universities should not only pay attention to solid bilingual translation skills, but also pay attention to the cultivation of emergency language translation ability. For the training of emergency language translation talents, it is necessary to understand the political, economic, cultural, history, literature, technology and education between the two countries, and then learn the relevant knowledge of emergency language. The rich language foundation will make the emergency language translation work more accurate and skilled.

3) Flexible emergency language application ability.

In major emergencies, good listening and discrimination ability, fluent oral English, super memory, quick note skills, accurate interpretation of emergency language are all the basic abilities that emergency language translators should have. Translators also have strong cross-cultural communication skills, the ability to maintain clear thinking and excellent language organization in emergencies, mastering the skills and laws of language transformation, and quickly realize the translation of the two languages. It is also particularly important to use Internet IT technology skillfully and to quickly access relevant translation data with the help of big data platforms.

4) Develop a strong sense of responsibility.

Different from ordinary translation work, emergency language translation is mainly applied to all kinds of major public emergencies in the society, and has stricter requirements on translators, who must complete the translation work in the shortest time. Translators must have a strong sense of responsibility and must be cautious and highly focused. One word difference or one moment of negligence will have a great impact on the whole emergency. To cope with the coexistence and complementary of various cultures under the trend of economic globalization, translators should deal with the differences between cultures more carefully and be responsible for the country and society.

5) Special quality of emergency language translation.

The training of emergency language translation talents should also pay attention to some special qualities, such as good physical and psychological quality. Social emergencies are mainly characterized by public, sudden and harm, and require emergency translators to have a healthy body and go to the scene in the first time in the emergency rescue work. For example, translator who suffering from syncope will not be competent for the emergency rescue work of the medical team. In addition, emergency translators are also required to have strong psychological quality, and be able to respond calmly in the face of danger, while translators with weak psychological quality and poor pressure resistance are not competent for the

work of emergency translation. Therefore, an excellent emergency language interpreter must strive to overcome his own weaknesses and become a person with both a strong body and a strong spirit.

According to the needs, college English teachers are divided into two levels: core talents and potential talents. Core talents refers to talents who can have significant influence on Chinese language policy, solve major language problems, have alternative language experts, or master certain language ability and provide translation services and emergency language services; potential talents who have high comprehensive quality, strong development potential and may make great contributions to emergency language services in our future. According to the process of voluntary application, institution recommendation and organization assessment, it will be comprehensively evaluated by the talent pool management and admit the best examinee. For those who have strong professional ability and have made certain achievements in the field of expertise, the admission and professional conditions can be appropriately relaxed to meet the basic conditions.

The talent pool management should be normalized. Emergency language service personnel are a team that can not be ignored when dealing with public emergencies. The selected personnel shall be uniformly managed and called by the organization. Database members usually work in their respective posts, and when emergencies occur, they will be transferred according to the situation. Due to the suddenness and urgency of emergency services, it is necessary to ensure the smooth contact of the personnel and timely contact.

The talent pool should also be managed dynamically. Carry out regular assessment, remove personnel who have not provided emergency language services for a long time or refuse to fulfill their obligations for a certain times due to personal reasons, and supplement relevant personnel into the pool in time to keep the personnel flow updated.

Conducting personnel element management is necessary, too. Files should be established, including not only the basic information of personnel gender and age, but also the educational information, training information, evaluation information and other information related to emergency language services. Establishing a "one person, one file" system, dispatching personnel, while taking full into account their advantages, working time, while taking into account personal professional strengths.

The talent pool should evaluate the effect of emergency language service, so as to better understand the composition of members and improve the construction. A combination of quantitative and qualitative assessment can be used. Quantitative evaluation is mainly used to evaluate certain factors that are measurable, which can intuitively show the required information. Qualitative evaluation is a deep exploration of some difficult to measure information. The results of emergency language services should also be evaluated. After they completes the emergency language service, their performance in the emergency service is evaluated in various ways.

Timely feedback on the evaluation results is a powerful measure to ensure the stable operation of the emergency language service talent database. The recognition of people with excellent performance can not only increase their sense of achievement and identity of the talent pool, but also play a supervision and warning role for those who perform poorly, so as to promote the development of the talent pool.

7. Limitation

As in any research study, limitations exist. This data represents self-report and thus actual practice may differ from the answers provided. The results also represent the 28 universities and colleges. This study takes place Nanjing, China, which is urban and likely to have a higher proportion of college English teachers with emergency language skills. This may limit generalization of our conclusions to some extent. In addition, this survey only includes tests of emergency language translation knowledge in three aspects: medicine, trade and diplomacy. The scope is not comprehensive, and the number of questions in each aspect are limited. The rationality of the difficulty degree needs to be evaluated and verified, too. Further more, this survey only stayed on the written test, and did not investigate the respondents' actual interpretation ability, adaptability, psychological quality, service awareness professional ethics, and so on.

8. Conclusion

As an important part of emergency management and language service, emergency language service plays an indispensable role in national security, social stability, production and life, disaster prevention and relief, and crisis management. The epidemic has made us clearly realize that it is necessary to speed up the development and construction of an emergency language service system, attach importance to the academic research of emergency language services, develop emergency language service application products, adjust the direction of language service personnel training, and make contributions to China's emergency management.

Worldwide, the frequent occurrence of emergencies, the language of all emergency service talented person's demand increase, many teachers in colleges and universities in the process of dealing with emergencies to fully demonstrate their feelings of home countries, foreign language translation skills, the ability of intercultural communication and social services, more embodies the college teachers in the important position of emergency language service talent pool building. Emergency language service system as soon as possible should be built in our country, to improve teachers' professional quality in colleges and universities, the training work emergency language service database construction in our country, puts forward the severe challenges, in the face of today's higher requirement of social development, the government, universities and the society should play their respective advantages and function, improve the quality of emergency language training.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflicts of interest: The authors have no conflict of interest to disclose.

Supported by the Fundamental Research Funds for the Central Universities: B210202172.

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