Effective English Speaking and Writing Strategies of Chinese Working Staff

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Abstract

The purposes of this study were to 1) explore the effective English speaking and writing strategies of Chinese working staff and 2) compare those strategies of participants with different genders and ages. The participants were 96 working staff at Dongming Administrative Service Management Center, Dongming country, Shandong province, China. The four staff, two males and two females, were interviewed. The researchers employed questionnaires and a semi-structure interview to collect the data from those officers. The findings revealed that the 15 speaking and 15 writing strategies were their moderate effective strategies. Their top three speaking strategies were 1) watching English movies/videos, 2) telling the interlocutor to speak slowly, and 3) practicing questioning and answering; while their top three writing strategies were 1) learning writing correct grammar from teachers, 2) writing after models, and 3) spelling correctly. When comparing those strategies by gender and age using *t*-test to compare means, the participants with different genders and ages rated those strategies moderate effective, which was not different. The highest effective strategy of males was telling the interlocutor to speak slowly and the highest effective writing strategy was writing correct grammar learned from teachers. The females' highest effective speaking strategy was watching English movies/videos and the highest effective writing strategy was the same as males' strategy. The staff aged 25-40 rated playing English games the highest speaking strategy. The staff aged 41-60 rated telling the interlocutor to speak slowly the highest effective speaking strategy.

Keywords: Chinese working staff, effective English speaking strategies, effective writing strategies

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Introduction

English is the most important information carrier in today's society and the most common language in the world. English's greatest function is communication. English can be found everywhere: coffee shops, subway entrance, and road signs. It has been deeply embedded in our lives (Galloway & Numajiri, 2019).

In China, English for students is required for many levels such as primary school, middle school, and high school. China has focused on the importance of speaking English. In the aspect of English teaching, the teaching method has changed from teacher-centered to student-centered, from classroom-centered to life-based learning, and knowledge-centered development to comprehensive and critical thinking ability (Liu, Lin & Wiley, 2016).

With the importance of learning English as Chinese have been aware of, they desire to be able to communicate with English language. However, they still lack speaking and writing. They can neither speak fluently, nor write effectively. The wealthy parents have their children learned with native speakers. They want their children to be able to communicate in English and get good job in the future (Li, 2020).

Learning strategy is a way to help Chinese people improve their English speaking and writing. Chinese students have learned variety of English learning strategies such as spelling, free dialogue, situational performance, telling jokes, guessing riddles, telling stories, singing English songs, listening to radio, or watching movies (Wickham, 2023).

Speaking and writing are means of sending message from people to people across the world. English is one of international languages that people use in communication (Johnson, 2001). To be able to communicate in English by speaking and writing, learners must apply appropriate strategies since strategy refers to actions, behaviors, or methods the students apply intentionally to improve their second language skills (Oxford, 1992). The benefits of learning strategies were revealed in previous studies. For example, Larenas (2011) explored the speaking strategies knowledge to communicate in English of Grade 8 and 12 Chilean EFL students and concluded that knowing speaking strategies was a significant issue for improving students' speaking skill. Liu (2015) investigated the English writing strategies used by Chinese senior high school students and found that females applied higher English writing proficiency, had stronger motivations, and performed much better writing strategies.

The researcher is a Chinese and now is studying English Language Teaching master degree at Buriram Rajabhat University; would like to be a teacher who teaches English to Chinese students in the future. As mentioned earlier, being a teacher who has knowledge of learning strategies and can teach students to apply effective learning strategies is a qualification of a good teacher. The students' English learning will be improved after they employ the strategies. The researcher used to work in an office of Dongming Administrative Service Management Center, China. This office is a place for giving permission to people who would like to work on a piece of land. All staff used to learn English in school; and they all graduated a bachelor degree from a college or university. At this working place, they communicate in Chinese. The researcher would like the staff to recall the strategies they think effective when learning

speaking and writing English. Therefore, the researcher employed a questionnaire to ask them to rate the given speaking and writing strategies. This study may not much beneficial for the staff and their task at that office. However, it may be useful when they have to communicate with foreigners, want to improve their English speaking and writing by themselves, or want to change their job after they can communicate in English well. Moreover, the teachers in Chinese schools may employ these strategies when they teach English.

Literature Review

Learning strategies refer to ways or methods that learners believe they can help them learn better or achieve their set goals. For the teachers, the strategies are plans or methods they will employ when teaching their students. They believe that those plans will help their students to meet the goals of learning objectives (Mangle & Mangle, 2009). Oxford (1991) posited that language learning strategies are learning methods that learners applied in learning to make learning easier, faster, or more effective. Oxford categorized English learning strategies into 6 categories: memory, cognition, compensation, metacognition, affection, and social; and she developed a questionnaire called SILL (Strategies, Inventory of Language Learning) to survey English learning strategies. The SILL questionnaire comprises of six categories of English learning strategies: memory, cognition, compensation, metacognition, affection, and social (Bessai, 2018; Goh & Foong, 1997).

1. The strategies under the memory category, or mnemonics, include mental processes applied in reorganizing information, making relations, and reviewing. For examples: linking between the own knowledge and the new ones, applying new words in learning English, frequently reviewing English lessons, etc.

2. The strategies under the cognitive category comprise how to make the English meanings clear such as reasoning and analyzing. The examples of sub strategies are saying or write new English words many times, practice saying the sounds, applying new words in speaking, writing, and other different ways, watching English language movies or TV, writing messages, notes, or letters in English, linking new words to familiar Chinese words, etc.

3. Compensation strategies help learners to use English for comprehension such as guessing meaning from context clues, or using synonyms. Examples of sub strategies are using gestures or body language, making up new English words, trying to predict what the interlocutor would say.

4. Metacognitive strategies refer to how the learners coordinate their own learning process like planning or evaluating their learning. The strategies under this category are setting the time table to practice English, looking for someone to speak English with, finding ways to be an effective English learner, etc.

5. Affective strategies are employed by English learners to decrease anxiety, afraid of, or self-encouragement. The strategies relating to these are awarding myself when doing well in English, encouraging myself to speak English, relaxing myself, etc.

6. Social strategies are based on the saying, language is a form of social activities, it is used for sending message to each other, or it is used for communication. The strategies under this type are telling the interlocutor to reduce the speaking speed, usually practice English with

other people, asking for help from native speakers or knowledgeable others, etc. Hayaraman and Worasurt (2020) interviewed EFL aviation students in Thailand and proposed four speaking strategies: role-playing, group discussion, storytelling, and group discussion.

1. Role-playing. This speaking strategy is one of the most effective speaking strategies gained from the study. Teacher gave the students situations and the students did dialogue with their friends. It enhanced students' confidence; students learned more vocabulary; and improved their English speaking.

2. Small Group Discussion. After teacher assigned a topic for students to discuss in groups, the students expressed their perspectives in English. The activity strengthened the students' pronunciation, speaking performance, and increased their confidence.

3. Storytelling. Both active and passive students can gain benefit of storytelling. Teacher may assign them to explain their personal experiences and link to the short story they read. This speaking activity enhances the students' confidences, improves their speaking, comprehending the read story.

4. Singing English Songs. The students pointed out that the songs that they listened to and sang along helped them in pronunciation. Students recalled the songs' relic and sang out loud. The students were happy when listen to songs and sing. The songs improve their speaking indirectly.

The researcher created a questionnaire by using Oxford's questionnaire as a guideline; and put the following strategies suggested by scholars and researchers in the questionnaire:

1. Speaking Strategies
1.1 Pronouncing Correctly

Chinese teachers believe that if students can pronounce English vowels and consonants correctly, they will be successful in learning English (Wickham, 2023). This strategy is practiced and trained at the early stage of learning to speak English.

1.2 Playing English Games

Playing English games to enhance speaking performance like Whispering or Tongue Twister is a good learning motivation and improves speaking short sentences. Zue (2018) found that game-based learning improves Chinese students' speaking English.

1.3 Memorizing a Lot of Vocabulary

Nation (2004) posited that vocabulary is a vital knowledge in learning English. Learners apply vocabulary in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Afma (2018) found that adequate amount of vocabulary helps learners to speak English well.

1.4 Using Body Language

People may use hands, head nodding, or face expression to help their interlocutors understand their speaking. It is a strategy for face-to-face communication.

1.5 Reading Aloud.

Reading aloud with rising and falling intonation helps learners improve
their speaking English. Chinese students are trained to read aloud and repeat the patterns. They believe that practice makes perfect.

1.6 Watching English Movies/Videos

This strategy is a good motivation in learning English. Even though, learning English is tough, watching movies or videos is learning in a relaxed atmosphere. Students can employ this strategy at their home or wherever they want (Ashrafuzzaman & Roy, 2019; Dazhi, 2016).

1,7 Listening and Singing English Songs

This strategy serves both entertainment and learning to speak some words or phrases from music. Teachers select appropriate songs for their students to sing. Students are happy in singing. The lyric of the songs and the music rhythm help learners to be able to say words or sentences.

1.8 Practicing Questioning and Answering

This strategy is matched with the Chinese students' learning styles since they like to practice and work hard to be successful (Wickham, 2023). Teacher sets situations such as interviewing, asking for directions, etc. and has students to take turn of questioning and answering.

1.9 Asking for Clarification.

This strategy is used when non-native speakers talk to people who speak English and they are not clear about what they said, for example, "What do you mean?" "Could you please repeat it?"

1.10 Expressing not Understanding

This strategy is also applied when non-native speakers do not understand what the interlocutor said. The speakers may shake their heads or show confusing.

1.11 Telling the Interlocutor to Speak Slowly

The ESL students found their interlocutor speak English with a fast speed, then they told them to slow down the speed to catch what they said. This strategy is applied in a face-to-face communication'

1.12. Role-Playing.

The teacher may set the situation at various places, like at a bank, post office, or train station, etc. then have students to take a role of a people at those places and make a dialogue. This strategy is one of effective speaking strategies because the students practice speaking as people do in the real situations.

1.13. Group discussion.
The students work in group and teachers assign them to brainstorm
for solving a problem by speaking English. Group discussion may be done in a reading class
after the students have read a topic.

1.14. Telling stories in English. After the learners read some stories, like a short passage or
a novel, teachers may have them retell those stories in English. Always apply this strategy will
be beneficial for speaking.

1.15. Using simple words
Students are encouraged to speak English by employing the simple words that they have
learned. Using simple words but the speakers can communicate fluently and what they said are
understandable is effective communication.

2. Writing Strategies
2.1 Spelling Correctly.

ESL Chinese students want to be good writers. Spelling correctly helps them to be effective
writers. The study of Bear, Gillern and Xu (2018) found that learning how to spell could predict
the effectiveness of writing ability. Spelling correctly made the students proud of themselves.
On the contrary, if the students fail in writing they will be shameful.

2.2 Reciting Newly Learned Words.

Recite newly learned words every day help ESL students remember vocabulary and they can
employ vocabulary in listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Afna, 2018). Learning a lot of
vocabulary contributes learners' good writing.

2.3 Looking up New Words in a Dictionary.

This is one of effective writing strategies because a dictionary provides pronunciation,
meanings, and examples of usage. EFL learners always use a dictionary to look up meanings
of words and help them in writing.

2.4 Memorizing Sentence Structures.

Chinese students and Chinese teachers found that grammar is a fundamental knowledge for
them. They cite the structures of grammar and use them correctly as their teachers teach them.
The students believe that if they remember grammar rules and apply grammar rules correctly,
their writing will be acceptable (Bao & Sun, 2010).

2.5 Knowing Correct Grammars.

ESL students learn correct grammar from teachers and from grammar books. Grammar books
provide patterns, rules, usages, and exercises. Teachers assign their students to do homework
every day.

2.6 Writing after Models.

This writing strategy was applied in a writing composition class. For beginners, teachers provide them with models or examples. It was a controlled writing. Later, teachers have them to do free writing.

2.7 Asking Teachers or Classmates.

Vygotsky (1978) posited that all learners can reach their highest potential if they learn from friends, person who know more, or teachers. Therefore, if a student does not know how to write correctly, s/he may ask her/ his friends who know more or ask the teacher. Chinese students generally do not apply this strategy because they always listen to teachers but never ask something they do not understand.

2.8 Practicing Describing People and Things.

This strategy is effective both for speaking skill and writing skill. After students learn words about people, things, and adjective, teacher may assign students to describe people or objects by writing.

2.9 Using Translator Devices.

Nowadays Chinese people use translator devices when they study English, study abroad, or travel. Bowker (2020) studied using translator devices in writing academic paper and found that the translator devices are essential tools for the Chinese graduate students in writing.

2.10 Writing English Sentences Every Day.

EFL students believe in learning hard and practice hard. Practice every day makes them improve in writing. Writing a diary is one of good writing strategies.

2.11 Making Outline before Writing.

This strategy is useful for essay writing class. Before writing an essay, teacher teaches students to create outline. After that the students put content into their outline.

2.12 Writing in Chinese and then Translating to English.

This strategy is based on Grammar-Translation Method, and the influence of mother-tongue language (Pratsyo, 2015). Chinese learners think in Chinese phrases or sentences and translate into English. Their mother-tongue language helps them to communicate what they want.

2.13 Writing and Reading the Written Sentences for Many Times

This strategy gets rid of mistakes since the students write and read their written paper many times to look for any errors. The students' writing improves after they often employ this strategy.

2.14 Learning Writing with Correct Grammar from Teachers
In the past EFL teachers teach students grammar and drill every day. They believe that grammar and vocabulary are foundation of English communication. This has been a traditional teaching strategy since the past up until now.

2.15 Using AI Software such as Grammarly or Chat GPT
This AI software are popular among people in many countries including countries in Asian continent (Raheem, Anjum, & Ghafar, 2023). These devices can translate ESL mother-tongue language to English, gives correct grammar writing, and paraphrasing.

Research Objectives

1. To explore effective English speaking and writing strategies of officers at Dongming Administrative Service Management Center, China.

2. To compare effective English speaking and writing strategies of officers with different genders, and ages at Dongming Administrative Service Management Center.

Research Questions

1. What are effective English speaking and writing strategies of officers at Dongming Administrative Service Management Center, China?

2. Are effective English speaking and writing strategies of officers with different genders, and ages at Dongming Administrative Service Management Center different?

Hypothesis of the Study

Effective English speaking and writing strategies of officers with different genders and ages at Dongming Administrative Service Management Center are different.

Methodology

1. Research Design

The design of this study was survey research. It was a mixed-method: quantitative and qualitative (Cresswell, 2014). The main part of the research was quantitative research. The qualitative part was interviewing, the researcher interviewed four staff to gain data from their point of views. The second part data confirmed the collected data from a questionnaire.

2. Population and Samples

The population of this research included 116 staff of the Dongming Administrative Service Management Center. All of them used to learn English in their schools. The samples were 92 staff of Dongming Administrative Service Management Center, recruited by simple random sampling. The sample size was specified by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Table. The table indicates that the sample size of 120 number of population is 92. The samples for interview were two males and two females who were not asked by the questionnaire. They were selected

because they can speak and write English well and used to teach English in a school. However, working in this office, all staff communicates in Chinese. Knowledge of English was beneficial for them when they communicate with foreigners or go abroad. They can learn English by themselves through movies, songs, or games. Therefore, language strategies were important for them.

3. Instrument(s) and Procedures

The research instruments employed in collecting the data concerning English speaking and writing strategies of Chinese people were a questionnaire and a semi-structure interview form. There were three parts in this questionnaire: The first part was personal information, i.e. gender, educational level, age. The second part was a 5-Likert rating scale: five was the highest effective and one was the least effective. There were 15 speaking and 15 writing strategies for the samples to rate. The researchers used Oxford (1992)'s SILL questionnaire as a guideline to develop the questionnaire, for examples, watching movies and videos, playing English games, asking teacher about writing, or writing and revising. The third part was the area of suggestions, this part provides the space for the participants to write more strategies or suggestions for the researcher. For making the questionnaire qualified, the researcher took the questionnaire, the interview form, and the *Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC)* evaluation form to the three experts for evaluating the congruence of the items and research objectives. The IOC mean value of the questionnaire was 0.67, and the mean of the interview form is 1.00. The researchers took the evaluation from the experts to be the reliability.

4. Data Collection

The researchers went to Dongming Administrative Service Management Center, Shandong province, China; gave the questionnaires to the samples and provide 30 minutes for the samples to answer. For the interview, the researchers invited the samples for a group interview and interviewed them in a room. Their answers were recorded.

5. Data Analysis

The researchers analyzed the data by a computer statistical software. For the information from the interview, the researchers did the content analysis by categorizing the data in groups. After that the researchers showed the result by descriptive analysis.

Results

Table 1 and 2 below answered the 1st question: What are effective speaking and writing strategies of Chinese working staff?

Table 1

The Effective Speaking Strategies of the Staff

Effective /Useful Strategies	M	SD	Rank	Meaning
Speaking Strategies				
1. Start with pronouncing English vowels and consonants correctly	3.46	0.70	8	Moderate Effective
2. Play English games	3.52	0.70	4	High effective
3. Memorize a lot of vocabulary	3.46	0.60	7	Moderate Effective
4. Use body language	3.45	0.73	9	Moderate effective
5. Read Aloud	3.40	0.70	11	Moderate effective
6. Watch English movies/videos	3.60	0.65	1	High Effective
7. Listen and sing English songs	3.43	0.62	10	Moderate Effective
8. Practice questioning and answering	3.52	0.64	3	High Effective
9. Ask for clarification	3.33	0.67	12	Moderate effective
10. Express not understanding	3.51	0.78	6	High Effective
11. Role-play	3.27	0.67	14	Moderate Effective
12. Group discussion	3.51	0.60	5	High Effective
13. Tell stories in English	3.21	0.64	15	Moderate Effective
14. Tell the interlocutor to speak slowly	3.53	0.72	2	High Effective
15. Use simple words	3.32	0.60	13	Moderate Effective
Grand total	3.43	0.67		Moderate Effective

Table 1 showed that the grand total of 15 speaking strategies. It was $M = 3.43$, $S.D. = 0.67$. They were moderate effective speaking strategies. The top three effective speaking strategies were 1) watching English movies/ videos ($M = 3.60$, $S.D. = 0.65$), 2) telling the interlocutor to speak slowly ($M = 3.53$, $S.D. = 0.72$), and 3) practicing questioning and answering ($M = 3.52$, $S.D. = 0.64$).

Table 2

The Effective Writing Strategies of the Staff

Effective /Useful Strategies	*M*	*SD*	Rank	Meaning
Writing Strategies				
1. Spell correctly	3.47	0.69	3	Moderate Effective
2. Recite newly learned words	3.38	0.69	8	Moderate Effective
3. Look up new words in a dictionary	3.40	0.66	7	Moderate Effective
4. Memorize sentence structures	3.41	0.67	5	Moderate Effective
5. Know correct grammars	3.29	0.66	14	Moderate Effective
6. Write after models	3.53	0.62	2	High Effective
7. Ask teachers or classmates	3.21	0.64	15	Moderate Effective
8. Practice describing people and things	3.35	0.69	12	Moderate Effective
9. Use translator devices	3.46	0.74	4	Moderate Effective
10. Write English sentences every day	3.38	0.64	9	Moderate Effective
11. Make outline before writing	3.41	0.61	6	Moderate Effective
12. Write in Chinese and then translate to English	3.38	0.68	10	Moderate Effective
13. Write and read the written sentences again and again	3.35	0.69	11	Moderate Effective
14. Learn writing with correct grammar from teachers	3.64	0.57	1	High Effective
15. Use AI software such as Grammarly or Chat GPT	3.29	0.66	13	Moderate Effective
Grand total	3.40	0.66		Moderate Effective
Grand total of speaking (Table 1) and writing strategies (Table 2)	3.42	0.66		Moderate Effective

Table 2 revealed the grand total of 15 writing strategies. It was *M* = 3.40, *S.D.* = 0.66. They were moderate effective writing strategies. The top three effective writing strategies were 1) learning writing with correct grammar from teachers (*M* = 3.64, *S.D.* = 0.57), 2) writing after models (*M* = 3.53, *S.D.* = 0.62), and 3) spelling correctly (*M* = 3.47, *S.D.* = 0.69. Finally, the grand total of all speaking and writing strategies was *M* = 3.42, *S.D.* = 0.66. The participants rated all strategies at moderately effective level.

Table 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 below showed the means of speaking and writing strategies of males, females, staffed aged 25-40, and staffed aged 41-60. This data answered the 2nd research question: Are effective speaking and writing strategies of Chinese working staff with different genders and ages different?

Table 3

The Effective Speaking Strategies of Males

Effective /Useful Strategies	M	SD	Rank	Meaning
1. Tell the interlocutor to speak slowly	3.64	0.76	1	High Effective
2. Practice questioning and answering	3.60	0.66	2	High Effective
3. Express not understanding	3.60	0.83	3	High Effective
4. Group discussion	3.55	0.63	4	High Effective
5. Watch English movies/videos	3.55	0.74	5	High Effective
6. Memorize a lot of vocabulary	3.52	0.63	6	High Effective
7. Listen and sing English Songs	3.52	0.67	7	High Effective
9-15 strategies are moderate effective strategies				
Grand total	3.46	0.71		Moderate Effective

Table 3 showed the grand total of males' 15 speaking strategies. It was *M* = 3.46, *S.D.* = 0.71. They were moderate effective speaking strategies. This table showed only high effective strategies. The top three effective speaking strategies were 1) telling the interlocutor to speak slowly (*M* = 3.64, *S.D.* = 0.76), 2) practicing questioning and answering (*M*= 3.60, *S.D.* = 0.66), and 3) expressing not understanding (*M* = 3.36, *S.D.* = 0.83).

Table 4

The Effective Writing Strategies of Males

Effective /Useful Strategies	M	SD	Rank	Meaning
1. Learn writing with correct grammar from teachers	3.62	0.58	1	High Effective
2. Write after models	3.57	0.63	2	High Effective
3. Memorize sentence structures	3.57	0.70	3	High Effective
4. Write in Chinese and then translate to English	3.57	0.74	4	High Effective
5-15 are moderate writing strategies				
Grand total	3.44	0.68		Moderate Effective
Grand total of speaking (Table 3) and writing strategies (Table 4)	3.45	0.70		Moderate Effective

Table 4 presented the grand total of 15 writing strategies. It was *M* = 3.44, *S.D.* = 0.68. They were moderate effective writing strategies. This table showed only high effective strategies. The top three effective writing strategies were 1) learning writing with correct grammar from teachers (*M* = 3.62, *S.D.* = 0.58), 2) writing after models (*M* = 3.57, *S.D.* = 0.63), and 3) memorizing sentence structures (*M* = 3.57, *S.D.* = 0.70). Finally, the grand total of all speaking and writing strategies was *M* = 3.45, *S.D.* = 0.70. They were moderate effective strategies.

Table 5

The Effective Speaking Strategies of Females

Effective /Useful Strategies	M	SD	Rank	Meaning
1. Watch English movies/videos	3.64	0.56	1	High Effective
2. Play English games	3.54	0.65	2	High effective
3. Group discussion	3.48	0.58	3	Moderate Effective
3-15 strategies are moderate effective strategies				
Grand total	3.41	0.63		Moderate Effective

Table 5 showed the grand total of females' 15 speaking strategies. It was $M = 3.41$, $S.D. = 0.63$. They were moderate effective speaking strategies. The top three effective speaking strategies were 1) watching English movies/videos ($M = 3.64$, $S.D. = 0.56$), 2) playing English games ($M = 3.54$, $S.D. = 0.65$), and 3) group discussion ($M = 3.48$, $S.D. = 0.58$).

Table 6

The Effective Writing Strategies of Females

Effective /Useful Strategies	M	SD	Rank	Meaning
1. Learn writing with correct grammar from teachers	3.66	0.56	1	High Effective
2. Write after models	3.50	0.61	2	Moderate Effective
3. Spell correctly	3.48	0.61	3	Moderate Effective
2-15 strategies are moderate effective strategies				
Grand total	3.36	0.63		Moderate Effective
Grand total of speaking (Table 5) and writing strategies (Table 6)	3.39	0.63		Moderate Effective

The grand total of 15 writing strategies was $M = 3.36$, $S.D. = 0.63$. They were moderate effective writing strategies. The top three effective writing strategies were 1) learning writing with correct grammar from teachers ($M = 3.66$, $S.D. = 0.56$), 2) writing after models ($M = 3.50$, $S.D. = 0.61$, and 3) spelling correctly ($M = 3.48$, $S.D. = 0.61$). Finally, the grand total of all speaking and writing strategies was $M = 3.39$, $S.D. = 0.63$. They were moderate effective strategies.

According to Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6, the researcher found that males and females gave the same average level of all writing and speaking strategies. However, their effective top three speaking and writing strategies were different. The researchers compared the means of males and females with *t*-test and found that they were not different. The *t* value for 1-tailed was .072 and 2-tailed was .601.

Table 7

The Effective Speaking Strategies of Staff Aged 25-40

Effective /Useful Strategies	*M*	*SD*	Rank	Meaning
1. Play English games	3.65	0.71	1	High effective
2. Watch English movies/videos	3.63	0.64	2	High Effective
3. Practice questioning and answering	3.52	0.59	3	High Effective
4-15 are moderate strategies				
Grand Total	3.43	0.67		Moderate Effective

Table 7 showed that the grand total of 25-40 years old staff's speaking strategies was *M* = 3.43, *S.D.* = 0.67. They were moderate effective speaking strategies. The top three effective speaking strategies were 1) playing English games (*M* = 3.65, *S.D.* = 0.71), 2) watching English movies and videos (*M* = 3.63, *S.D.* = 0.64), and 3) practicing questioning and answering (*M* = 3.52, *S.D.* = 0.59).

Table 8

The Effective Writing Strategies of Staff Aged 25-40

Effective /Useful Strategies	*M*	*SD*	Rank	Meaning
1. Learn writing with correct grammar from teachers	3.60	0.58	1	High Effective
2. Write after models	3.57	0.58	2	High Effective
3. Use translator devices	3.50	0.72	3	Moderate Effective
3-15 are moderate strategies				
Grand total	3.37	0.65		Moderate Effective
Grad total of speaking (Table 7) and writing strategies (Table 8)	3.40	0.66		Moderate Effective

The grand total of 15 writing strategies was *M* = 3.37, *S.D.* = 0.65. They were moderate effective writing strategies. The top three effective writing strategies were 1) learning writing with correct grammar from teachers (*M* = 3.60, *S.D.* = 0.58), 2) writing after model (*M* = 3.57, *S.D.* = 0.58), and 3) using translator device (*M* = 3.50, *S.D.* = 0.72. Finally, the grand total of all speaking and writing strategies was *M* = 3.40, *S.D.* = 0.66. They were moderate effective strategies.

Table 9

The Effective Speaking Strategies of Staff Aged 41-60

Effective /Useful Strategies	M	SD	Rank	Meaning
1. Tell the interlocutor to speak slowly	3.65	0.64	1	Highly Effective
2. Express not understanding	3.59	0.78	2	High Effective
3. Watch English movies/videos	3.57	0.65	3	High Effective
4. Start with pronouncing English vowels and consonants correctly	3.52	0.62	4	High Effective
5. Group discussion	3.52	0.62	5	High Effective
6. Practice questioning and answering 7-15 are moderate strategies	3.52	0.69	6	High Effective
Grand Total	3.43	0.66		Moderate Effective

Table 9 showed that the grand total of 41-60 years old staffs' speaking strategies was $M = 3.43$, $S.D. = 0.66$. They were moderate effective speaking strategies. The top three effective speaking strategies were 1) telling the interlocutor to speak slowly ($M = 3.65$, $S.D. = 0.64$), 2) expressing not understanding ($M = 3.59$, $S.D. = 0.78$), and 3) watching English movies and videos ($M = 3.57$, $S.D. = 0.65$). This table showed only highly effective strategies.

Table 10

The Effective Writing Strategies of Staff Aged 41-60

Effective /Useful Strategies	M	SD	Rank	Meaning
1. Learn writing with correct grammar from teachers	3.67	0.60	1	High Effective
2. Spell correctly	3.52	0.59	2	High Effective
3. Make outline before writing	3.52	0.59	3	High Effective
4. Memorize sentence structures 5-15 are moderate strategies	3.52	0.72	4	High Effective
Grand total	3.42	0.67		Moderate Effective
Grand total of speaking (Table 9) and writing strategies (Table 10)	3.43	0.66		Moderate Effective

The grand total of 15 writing strategies was ($M = 3.42$, $S.D. = 0.67$). They were moderate effective writing strategies. The top three effective writing strategies were 1) learning writing with correct grammar from teachers ($M = 3.67$, $S.D. = 0.60$), 2) making outline before writing ($M = 3.52$, $S.D. = 0.59$), and 3) spelling correctly ($M = 3.52$, $S.D. = 0.59$). Finally, the grand total of all speaking and writing strategies was ($M = 3.43$, $S.D. = 0.66$). They were moderate effective strategies.

Table 7, 8, 9 and 10 reveals that the two groups of staff (25-40, 41-60) did not rate the given strategies differently. However, their top 3 effective strategies were different.

Interview Results

The researchers did a semi-structured interview to two males and two females who can communicate in English well. The interview showed that their top three effective speaking and writing strategies were not the same. The top three speaking strategies of males were 1) listening, reading, watching movies, and speaking a lot, 2) practicing speaking frequently and 3) making learners surrounded in English as much as they can. They explained that practice makes perfect.

Moreover, the top three writing strategies of males were 1) more reading and practice a lot of writing, 2) asking persons who know more to correct learner's writing, and 3) do not write any incorrect words. They explained that reading a lot of English can improve learners' writing.

For females, the researchers found their top three speaking strategies were 1) know a lot of vocabulary and use them in speaking activities, 2) speaking with good grammar, and 3) do not afraid of mistakes, have self-confidence. They explained that knowing a lot of vocabulary and good grammar were the basic guarantee of speaking English.

The top three writing strategies of females were 1) reading a lot and often practice writing till it forms the habit, 2) writing and reading to find some errors, and 3) knowing good grammar could help perfect writing. They believed practice writing with various vocabularies and correct grammar was an effective strategy.

Discussion

The researchers would like to know what the effective English speaking strategies of the Chinese working staff were, and found these following effective strategies: 1) learning to speak English through watching movies and videos, 2) telling the interlocutor to speak slowly when they can't catch the words, 3) practicing questioning and speaking, 4) expressing not understanding, 5) playing English games, and 6) group discussion. The participants pointed out that watching English movies and videos improve their speaking ability because movies entertain them. They watch, hear, and see the actions, imitate the actors/actresses' speaking. Watching movies frequently helped them remember words or phrases. It was a relaxed learning atmosphere. They were able to watch the movies at their home or wherever they liked (English Engine, 2019). In line with English Engine (2019). the study of Ashrafuzzaman and Roy (2019) found that having their participants watch English movies regularly improved the samples' listening, pronunciation, speaking, and understanding natives' accents (Juan & Abidin, 2013; Qiu, 2017; Wang & Fan, 2015).

The second strategy, telling their interlocutors to slow down their spoken speech, was used when they were unable to catch the words. After they had the speakers slow down but they still not understand, they would express not understanding through their face or shaking their head.

Generally, Chinese learners or students who learned English as a foreign language found that native speakers speak so fast. They had no ideas what they said. Therefore, they wanted the natives to speak slowly. They would catch word by word and try to construct the meanings. Beside the native speed, the pronunciation of some sounds and consonants like /l/, /r/, /v/, /w/, or /th/, etc. were problem sounds of Chinese and these sounds were hard for them to see the differences and pronounce those sounds (Wickham, 2023). Chinese students studied hard, they put their attempt in practice, most of them were high responsibility, believed in their teachers. Because of those Chinese students' characteristics, their next effective speaking strategies were practice English questioning and speaking. The interviewees who were good at English posited that practice, practice, and practice made perfect. Practice every day like it was one of learners' habits.

Moreover, playing English games was another effective speaking strategy. Games attracted students' intention, generated interesting English classes, and brought enjoyment (Anyaegbu, Ting & Li, 2012; Mongillo, 2008). Generally, Chinese high school students studied hard in a serious atmosphere since they had to pass the English proficiency test which was the requirement of the government (Zhu, 218). Group discussion was also one of the Chinese participants' effective speaking strategies. They worked together and helped each other to discuss or talk some things. Most of Chinese students were shy, did not want to look stupid, were afraid of mistakes, and did not want to lose face (Wickham, 2023). Group discussion could safe their face.

On the other hands, their high effective writing strategies were 1) learning writing with correct grammar from teachers, 2) writing after modals, 3) spelling correctly, 4) using translator devices, and 5) making outline before writing. Chinese students and Chinese teachers found that grammar was a fundamental knowledge for them. They cited the structures of grammar and used them correctly as their teachers taught them. The students believed that if they remembered grammar rules and applied grammar rules correctly, their writing would be acceptable (Bao & Sun, 2010). Spelling correctly has been trained intensely in China. Spelling correctly was a basis for good writers (Bear, Gillern & Xu, 2018).

In an essay writing class, teachers provided them models to follow. It was a controlled writing, then the teachers had them do free writing later. Making an outline was a must for writing a composition (Hu & Chen, 2007; Ridhuan & Abdullah, 2009).

Using translator devices among Chinese students happened currently and now the devices were popular. They used them when they studied English, write an academic paper in English or when they were travelling (Bowker, 2020).

The interviewees suggested effective writing strategies like reading a lot, especially grammar text, learning a lot of vocabulary, and applying vocabulary and grammar to practice writing frequently. They believed in practice and repetition (Wickham, 2023).

Conclusion

The Chinese working staffs liked to learn speaking English through watching movies or videos. When they had a chance to talk to native foreigners but could not understand the conversation, they would tell the speakers they did not understand and told them to speak slowly. They believed that if they wanted to write well they had to read a lot of grammar books to learn grammar usages, know a lot of vocabulary, and employ them in writing. When they studied English, they liked to work in group to help each other, the smart helped the weak. Most Chinese students were shy, did not want to look stupid, were afraid of mistakes, and did not want to lose face. Group discussion could safe their face.

Recommendations

1. Implications

This study is beneficial for teachers who teach English to Chinese students. The teachers should select the effective strategies and apply to the English classes. One thing that teachers should keep in mind is the teachers must be aware of Chinese cultures. Most of Chinese students are shy. They will do as the teachers tell them. Teachers must not embarrass them. They don't want to lose their face. The workers at work places can select appropriate strategies for learning English by themselves. Being able to communicate in English provides good opportunity for them to get good job, communicate with foreigners, and speak to people around the world when they travel.

2. Further Studies

Researchers should do experimental research to see the results of the proposed strategy. For example, "The effects of movies and games on enhancing Chinese students' communication ability", or "Employing English kid songs to improve Chinese students' listening efficiency".

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