

A Study of American TV Series Lines on Improving College Students' English-Speaking Skills

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Abstract: Amid the modernization of education, enhancing the English-speaking abilities of college students has become an essential priority. American dramas are chosen as learning tools for their vivid images and easy-to-understand features. The close-to-life lines in American dramas meet the requirements for college students to improve their speaking ability, which is close to the native language expression and accurate and fluent. Therefore, the author chose this topic. This study adopts a quantitative research method to collect data through a questionnaire survey and uses SPSS AU for descriptive statistical analysis. The questionnaire data analysis reveals that the frequency of American drama viewing among the surveyed college students fluctuates around three times per week, with relatively short viewing durations, none of which exceed one hour per session. It is concluded that more than half of them choose to watch American dramas because their classroom teachers recommend them. The lines of American dramas that are close to life are more suitable for improving college students' English speaking ability, such as *The Big Bang Theory*, *Friends*, *Modern Family*, and so on. Through this study, Teachers and parents can improve the learning efficiency of college students and make them more confident in English communication, which not only improves the comprehensive quality of college students' English but also helps them prepare for their future speeches on the international stage.

Keywords: English Speaking Skills, American TV series, University student.

1. Introduction

With the comprehensive development of various sectors in China, cultivating students' English-speaking ability at the university level has become a central focus of higher English education. It is also a fundamental requirement for China's higher education system in the context of globalized development. Nowadays, more and more people choose to watch American dramas to practice spoken English, paying special attention to the lines. The popularity of American dramas among Chinese college students is steadily rising. English speaking ability refers to using the English language in daily communication. A person's input and output of English are stable, but the specific behavioral performance will be affected by psychological or surrounding environmental factors and unstable [1]. American dramas have become widely popular among college students. The dialogue in various scenarios closely aligns with real-life situations, making it highly relevant for students seeking to

improve their speaking ability. The lines from these dramas can often be directly applied to everyday communication.

American dramas are complex and varied, and not every content and line are suitable for learning and improving. At present, many college students cannot choose American dramas suitable for their situation and close to Native American communication. Instead, they get half the result with twice the effort. There is a lack of complete and precise statistical analysis of American dramas and lines for improvement.

This study aims to enhance the efficiency of oral English learning by leveraging the advantages of American dramas as a learning tool. It helps align college students' spoken English with authentic native expressions. Additionally, it addresses the common issues of fear and misunderstanding in speaking, ultimately improving students' oral English proficiency.

All the participants in the questionnaire used American dramas as a learning tool to improve their English-speaking skills.

- (1) what is your current grade level?
- (2) how often do you watch American dramas?
- (3) what factors influence you to choose American dramas?
- (4) What are some examples of lines from American TV shows often used daily?
- (5) What are the characteristics of lines that can help you improve your speaking skills?

This study explores the characteristics of American dramas and dialogue selected from the learners' perspective, aiming to assist college students in efficiently choosing appropriate shows. Consequently, it seeks to minimize unnecessary time expenditures and better align oral expression with native English language usage. It improves the disadvantages of college students' listening and speaking, improves the comprehensive English level, including speaking ability, and further cultivates international talents.

Through the questionnaire survey method, the data of college students were collected and then analyzed using SPSS AU descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and conclusions drawn. It aims to find the American dramas and lines that can improve college students' English-speaking ability, to find out what factors in the body of American dramas are chosen by college students, and to study what aspects and characteristics of American drama lines can improve college students' English-speaking ability.

2. Method

The research questions were translated into Chinese for the responses to make it easier for the subjects to complete.

- (1) The research subjects are full-time undergraduate college students, freshmen to seniors enrolled in college, and there is no restriction on the majors of the research subjects.
- (2) Quantitative research methods, such as questionnaires.
- (3) Use SPSS AU descriptive statistical analysis

The scale refers to the Chinese English Proficiency Scale (CSE) - Speaking Proficiency Scale. Launched by the Examination Center of the Ministry of Education, it is divided into nine levels. The gauge is whether college students' spoken English is closer to native expression, more accurate, and more fluent [2-4].

- (4) One hundred questionnaires were collected (Twenty unsatisfactory questionnaires have been deleted.), distributed and filled out from September 2 to September 8, using the Questionnaire Star program to distribute and receive information.

3. Results

3.1. Sample Distribution

Table 1: The frequency distribution of the college students as a sample

Name	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
1. What is your current grade level	1.0	14	14.00	14.00
	2.0	27	27.00	41.00
	3.0	40	40.00	81.00
	4.0	19	19.00	100.00
2. How often do you watch American dramas?	1.0	31	31.00	31.00
	2.0	19	19.00	50.00
	3.0	20	20.00	70.00
	4.0	30	30.00	100.00
consider		100	100.0	100.0

Table 1 presents a representative sample, with the survey covering undergraduate students across all academic stages, from freshman to senior year. Notably, 40 percent of the respondents selected the third year of college (3.0), ensuring a balanced and unbiased distribution. This questionnaire assumes that the respondents use American dramas as a learning tool to improve their English speaking skills, and this table shows that it is consistent with the assumption, and nearly fifty percent of the samples watch American dramas more than three times a week.

3.2. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Table 2: A descriptive statistical analysis of the variables

Name	Sample size	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation	Median
Characteristics of lines to improve speaking skills	100	0.250	0.750	0.485	0.213	0.500
Influencing factors for choosing American dramas	100	0.250	0.750	0.472	0.210	0.500

Table 2 has no outliers, and the mean values are close to 0.5. Their classroom teachers recommended more than fifty percent of the samples to choose American dramas, and sixty percent of the samples said that American dramas with lines that are close to their daily lives can improve their English speaking skills.

4. Discussion

This research is about the study of American drama lines to improve undergraduates' English-speaking ability using a quantitative questionnaire. It is concluded that undergraduate college students do not spend enough time watching American dramas to learn to speak and choose American dramas recommended by classroom teachers to learn more efficiently. Recommended *Big Bang Theory*, *Friends*, *Modern Family*, *Good Doctor*, and *Sheldon Jr* in the line study. The lines of American dramas whose contents are close to daily life were fruitfully endorsed by the survey sample to be used for speaking practice.

Possible limitations of this study include insufficient classification of sample types, which could be investigated by majors, such as undergraduate English majors versus non-English majors. This study can further investigate the influence of American dramas as a communication medium on intercultural transmission on college students' learning. Moreover, a study can be conducted on a group of college students who have not improved their English speaking skills through American dramas and why they do not choose American dramas. What means do they choose to improve their speaking ability? From there, the similarities and differences between American dramas and the means they choose can be further explored.

The results of the study were that 51 percent of the sample watched American dramas less than three times a week, 31 percent of the time was less than one hour, and 20 percent of the time was more than one hour. 49 percent of the sample watched American dramas more often than three times a week, of which 19 percent were for more than one hour and 30 percent were for less than one hour. 58 percent of the samples chose American dramas because they were recommended by their classroom teachers, 41 percent because they were recommended by their friends, 50 percent because they were recommended by short videos on the Internet, and 40 percent because they were interested in American dramas. The most frequently recommended American dramas were *The Big Bang Theory*, *Friends*, *Modern Family*, *Good Doctor*, and *Sheldon Jr.* 60 percent of the sample thought that the content of the lines close to daily life improves speaking skills, 50 percent followed the trend of popular choices, 43 percent felt that the lines have the characteristics of the situation close to the local native expression, and 41 percent because of their interest in the lines [5].

Following the questionnaire survey, which included a sample of undergraduates from freshmen to seniors, more than half of the respondents reported watching American dramas with relatively low frequency. The quality of the viewing time is not high, probably because watching American dramas is a more auxiliary means of learning outside the classroom to improve English speaking skills. Most will choose to watch American dramas to learn in their leisure time.

More than half chose American dramas recommended by their classroom teachers as more beneficial to improving their English speaking skills, and exactly half chose American dramas recommended by short videos on the Internet. Because classroom teachers are more authoritative and professional in English learning, college students are more likely to get useful recommendations for American dramas. Moreover, because nowadays is a society with advanced networks, college students generally have prolonged contact with online platforms and receive a lot of information. College students will find suitable American dramas to learn from such information.

Sample choices are *The Big Bang Theory*, *Friends*, *Modern Family*, *Good Doctor*, and *Sheldon Jr.* The contents of the lines in these American dramas are close to life and even interspersed with native expressions of the native language. For example, "Freak out" appears quite frequently in the lines of *Friends*, which means to shock someone, to disturb someone's life, etc. Monica says in the play, "Welcome to the real world! It sucks, you're gonna love it!" where 'suck' means very bad, very rotten, which is a very common expression in native languages [6]. As well as *Big Bang Theory* in the background of "home culture" as the characters and plot caused the audience to strongly identify with the focus on their own private space, in the comfort of the social circle of life. College students can learn how to communicate with their close friends [7].

The lines most likely to improve English speaking skills are characterized by content close to daily life, which also aligns with the characteristics of American dramas suggested by the sample recommendations. College students can quickly relate to the lines of American dramas in their daily communication and extract the lines with corresponding characteristics so as to improve the fluency of oral communication and express their meanings more accurately [8,9]. Additionally, half of the respondents followed the popular trend of selecting widely viewed American dramas, which are presumed to be more effective for improving spoken English skills. The contents of the lines of

American dramas with high ratings are usually close to life, which forms a benign closed loop for college students to improve their English speaking ability [10].

5. Conclusion

This research is about studying American drama lines to improve undergraduates' English-speaking ability using a quantitative questionnaire. In conclusion, the time undergraduate students dedicate to watching American dramas to improve their speaking skills is insufficient in terms of quality. It is recommended that classroom instructors suggest specific American dramas to enhance learning efficiency and reduce unnecessary time expenditures. Recommended *Big Bang Theory*, *Friends*, *Modern Family*, *Good Doctor*, and *Sheldon Jr.* in the line learning. The content close to the daily life of the American drama lines fruitfully endorsed by the survey sample used to practice speaking, while the choice of popular trends is also one of the important factors.

This makes up for the lack of previous studies on the viewers, not only focusing on one American drama but also integrating most of the American dramas watched to study their line special. This study is specifically aimed at helping college students improve their English speaking abilities, which, in turn, fosters greater self-confidence in initiating conversations and communicating with others. American dramas, as an engaging and vivid medium, are more likely to spark interest in learning, allowing students to select dramas that suit their needs. This approach not only enhances their speaking skills but also contributes to their overall English proficiency, helping them become more globally competent individuals. The sample size of the current study is still small and not classified enough; in the future, it can be finely divided according to English majors and non-English majors. The small items in studying online popular trends can be further studied. In the future, they can be divided into different online platforms to investigate the characteristics of the recommended American dramas and their popularity.

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