

A Review of Interlanguage Domestic Studies Over the Past Ten Years Based on the CNKI Database: Introduction, Hot Spots and Frontiers

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Abstract

Interlanguage theory, put forward initially in 1950s, has been playing a crucial role in language teaching and research, and interpreting psychological factors from the linguistic perspective. According to the key literature and common literature concerning the Interlanguage theory, this paper analyses the general trend, hot spots and dimensions from 2011 to 2021 based on CNKI. The study found that even though several findings have been achieved during this period, more cross-discipline efforts should be made for future development. Finally, this paper will predict further research orientations and provide suggestions to future study.

Keywords

Interlanguage theory; Hot spots and frontier; Visual analysis; CNKI.

1. Introduction

Decades of L2 acquisition research have witnessed dozens of theories, models and hypotheses, which, constitute a fast-growing domain with little progress and low disciplinary status, and its theory construction in initial stage (Dai Manchun.2010). In order to better understand the difficulty mechanism in L2 acquisition, the interlanguage theory was first proposed by Selinker in 1972. Since then, the interlanguage theory has played an important role in the study of L2 acquisition, which attracts great attention both from home and broad: it systematically expounds the cognitive nature of second language learners, provides a new perspective for the study of second language acquisition, and acts as a huge breakthrough in the field of second language acquisition (Xiao Guixiang.2015). Therefore, the study of interlanguage possesses important practical significance.

During the first stage of the theory development, the frame was summarized that it consisted of five basic elements: language transfer, training transfer, foreign language study strategy, foreign language communication strategy and over-generalization of the target language, contributing a deeper comprehension of the mechanism of L2 acquisition. Since the interlanguage studies is complementary to the second language analysis, many scholars applied the interlanguage theory into the analysis of the second language teaching or even third language writing, oration and grammar and well explained the course the errors form.

During the second stage of the theory development, myriads of reviews depicted the trend of interlanguage theory development, characterized by case studies and longitudinal empirical studies, emphasizing the importance of evidence collection and research time, overcoming the shortcomings of previous studies on interlanguage rigidity. However, few of them laid enough emphasis on the latest ten years, reflecting a lack of timeliness. Therefore, this paper presents the status quo by unveiling the research direction, main key words and hot spots in a visualized way.

2. Methodology and Intention

2.1. Methodology

This paper was pre-processed to choose the relevant articles about the application of the interlanguage study from the database of CNKI published from 2011 to 2021 as the research sample. Then the scope was narrowed down within the CSSCI articles so as to clearly manifest the hot spots. SPSS and Excel were used as auxiliary measurement tools, with which present a distinct image for researchers to learn about the previous study topics and the research frontiers.

2.2. Intention

This paper focuses on the literature of the latest 10 years, attempting to have a timely review about the application of the interlanguage theory. Tracking and reviewing the evolution of knowledge and trends allows us to understand the past, analyze the present and anticipate the future (Li Hua, Meng Shuhan and Tong Helong. 2021). The researches of trend and keywords were conducted in a graphic and visualized way so as to simplify the overall studies and directly highlight the hot spots of this theory.

3. Characteristics of the Previous Literature

Based on bibliometrics analysis, this paper makes an in-depth explanation of the dynamic trends and hot spots in the field of interlanguage theory studies.

3.1. Trend of Interlanguage Theory Studies

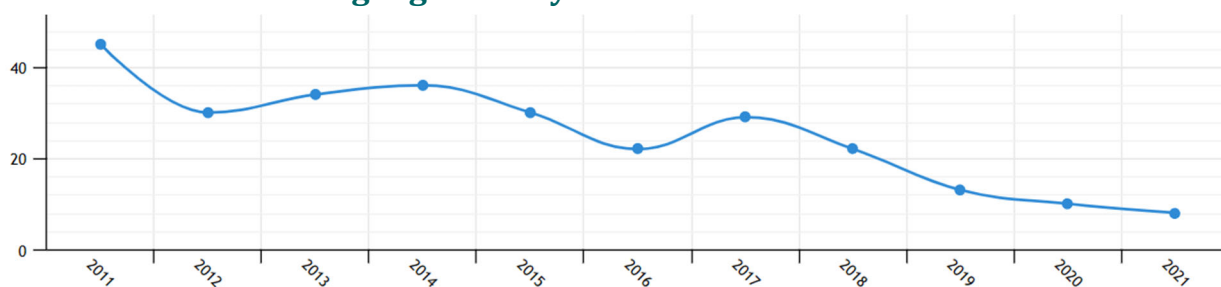


Figure 1. The Annual Trend of Key Publication on Interlanguage from 2011 to 2021

According to the CSSCI database of CNKI from 2011 to 2021 (Figure.1), the number of key articles published reaches its peak in 2011 and touched the bottom in 2021, which illustrates a declining trend of correlated research. Though it experienced a slight fluctuation during 2016 to 2018, the general tendency has been going downwards.

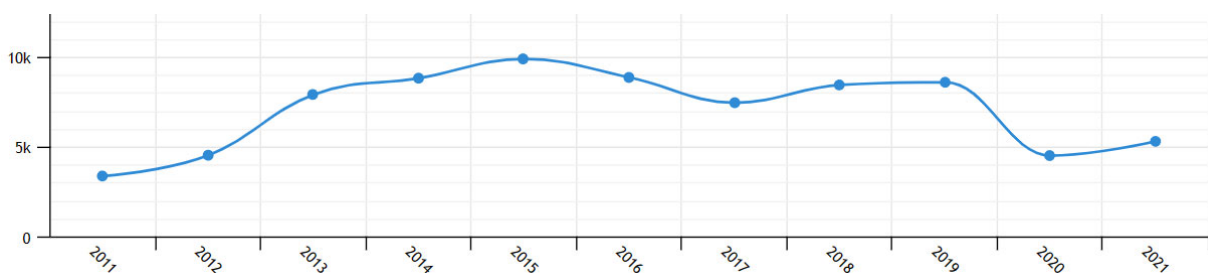


Figure 2. The Annual Trend of Publication on Interlanguage from 2011 to 2021

To determine whether the prospect of the interlanguage studies is bleak or not, the common articles publication trend (Figure 2) was surveyed. Different to the key articles publication

trend shown in Figure 1, it revealed a more fluctuated line, with the highest, nine thousand of articles, in 2015 and a rising trend starting from 2020.

The disparities between the trend of key articles and that of common articles from 2011 to 2015 may be attributed to the fundamental research conducted in 2011 and published in key journals for these advanced articles provided the domestic scholars with a brand new stage for the study of L2 analysis, such as Jin Honggang (2011) discussed ten methodological principles for language education and laid emphasis on some of the typical errors of interlanguage rigidity; Xiao Xiqiang (2011) researched the theory, methods and directions of interlanguage, and therefore provided an orientation for later study; Yang Lianrui et al(2011) reported the data collection and principles concerning the study of interlanguage pragmatics and suggested three universal approaches. The early introduction of the theory served as a platform and therefore contributed to a explosive increase of the common publication in 2015.

3.2. Key Words of Interlanguage Theory Studies

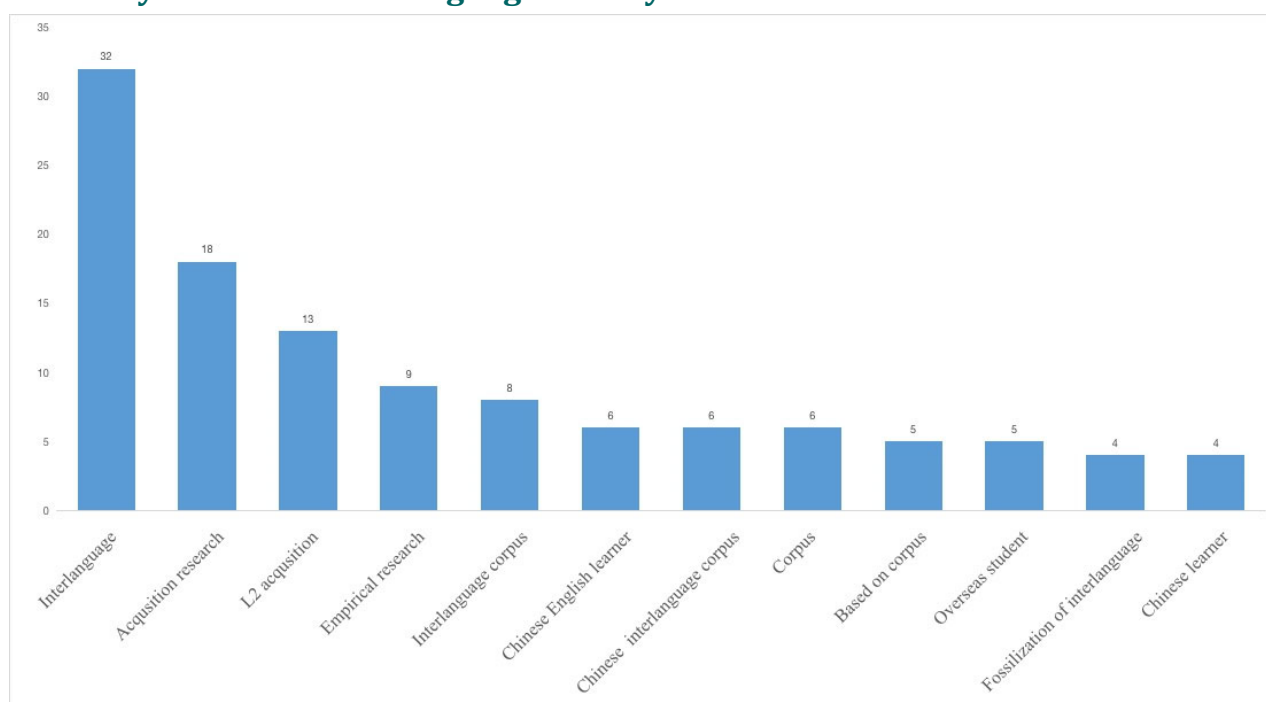


Figure 3. Keywords under Interlanguage Key Literature Rank from 2011 to 2021

It is presented that the L2 acquisition, relative corpus, rigidity phenomenon are most heated keywords for the key literature centering on the interlanguage theory from 2011 to 2021, after the repeated keywords such as “interlanguage study” were left out. Many scholars studied the L2 acquisition from the perspective of interlanguage studies and put forward advice in teaching, such as Sheng Lin (2012), Jing Zhuo(2013), Wu Mingjun(2014) and Niu Weichang, Lin Jun(2019).

4. Conclusion

This study provides an overall quantitative overview of the publication trend and latest topics in the application of the interlanguage studies based on the CNKI database. It is found that in 2011 many advanced scholars has introduced the theory and basic research methods, therefore in 2015 it leads to a boost of common articles to follow the lead. Besides, the correlation between the study of interlanguage theory and L2 acquisition, relative corpus and rigidity phenomenon should be paid excess attention in accordance with the key words rank. Moreover, due to the inter-discipline of interlanguage pragmatics, it is advisable to refer to the research

methods of linguistics, psychology, pedagogy and other related disciplines in corpus collection and method design (Yang Lianrui et al) to contribute to the further study.

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