

Visualization Analysis of China English Research Status Based on CiteSpace

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Abstract: Using CiteSpace 6.1.R6 visual analysis software, this article visualized and analyzed the literature on China English published in the CNKI database from 1991 to 2023. The findings show that the overall trend of Chinese literature publication on China English as the research topic has decreased constantly over the past seven years and necessitates a more robust inter-author and inter-agency collaboration. In terms of research content, with the advancement of research year by year, scholars have gradually recognized the identity of China English as a carrier of Chinese Cultural Output and its practicability in guiding the practice of Chinese-English translation and ESL teaching.

Keywords: China English; CiteSpace; Visualization Analysis

1. Introduction

With the deepening process of globalization, English, as an international lingua franca, has been used in more than 100 countries and regions worldwide. As the hegemony of British and American culture is increasingly challenged, the learning and use of English are no longer limited to the so-called “standard English” guidelines of “British English” and “American English”. Instead, it has become more diversified, localized, and compatible with the development trend of globalization. Among them, Braj Behari Kachru, an Indian-American linguist, put forward the concept of “World Englishes”^[1], the most influential linguistic world at that time.

China English is an integral part of the World English. The mainstream theories and classroom practices of English language teaching in China are generally based on “British English” and “American English” guidelines and norms. In the 1970s and 1980s, the “China English” concept was put forward by Ge Chuangui^[2] under the guidance and impetus of the “World English” theory. Since then, debates and discussions on “China English” have begun among scholars in China. Since the nineties, “China English” has received extensive attention from scholars at home and abroad^[3].

Although there has been considerable research on China English at home, the consolidation and analysis of these research results are currently lacking. Citespace, which is an information visualization software developed by Chen C.M., was selected for the quantitative analysis of the sample literatures in this paper^[4]. This paper aims to use the literature visualization software CiteSpace 6.1.R6 to conduct a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the Chinese literature published in the CNKI database from 1991 to 2023, in order to investigate the dynamics of research on “China English” from the past to the present and the research research priorities in the different periods.

2. Data source

In this paper, the data were collected on July 9, 2023. The CNKI literature search was conducted by entering “中国英语 (China English)” to conduct a subject search, setting the main subjects as “中国英语 (China English)” and “‘中国英语’ (‘China English’)”, and setting the search scope as the total library. A total of 1070 results were found.

After manual review, subjects such as “《中国英语能力等级量表》(Chinese English Proficiency Scale)”, “中国英语专业大学生 (Chinese college students majoring in English)”, “中国英语课堂教学 (Chinese English classroom teaching)”, “中国英语学习者 (Chinese English learners)”, and so on, which do not involve the concept of “China English”, were filtered out, and exported in the format of “Refworks” as samples for data visualization and analysis.

3. Analysis of the results

This study uses CiteSpace software to visualize and analyze the changes in research dynamics and research hotspots of “China English” in China from the past to the present. It extracts crucial information from them for further in-depth analysis.

3.1 Distribution of publications

To a certain extent, the number of published articles and their year-to-year change can reflect the change of attention and development trend of the related research field of “China English”. A total of 910 articles were included in this study. As shown in Figure 1, the number of publications in the research field of “China English” has gone through three stages: in 1991-2005, the number of publications was in a period of slow growth; in 2006-2015, the number of publications was in a period of rapid growth; and from 2016 to the present, the number of publications has continued to decline.

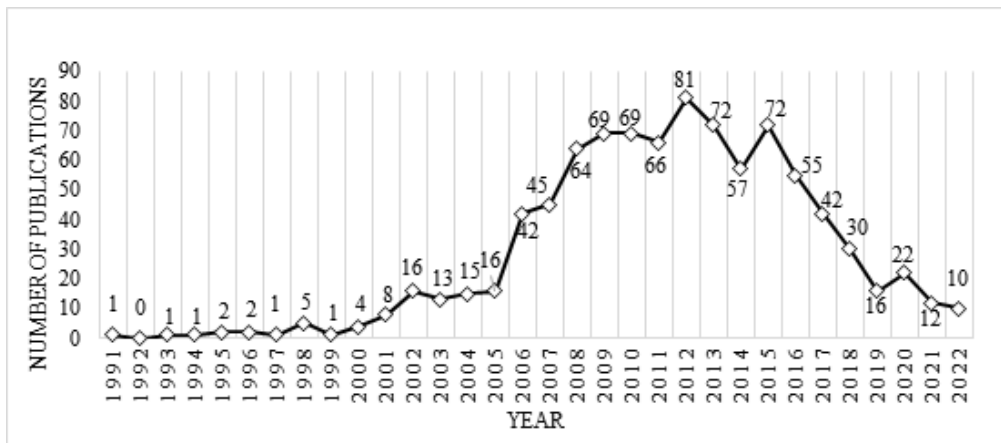


Figure 1. Distribution of publications

3.2 Mapping and analysis on authors

Based on the authors’ collaborative network (Figure 2), it can be seen that the Network Graph forms 518 nodes and 95 connecting lines with a density of 0.0007, which indicates that out of the 910 papers included, the authors totalled 518, which is a large number overall, but with very few collaborative linkages. This graph shows that this field of research is relatively decentralized, a stable core author group has not been formed in this research field^[5], which also suggests that most of the published results in this field are based on personal opinions shaped by experience and reasoning.

Among the 518 authors, Cao Dongbo (曹东波) is the author with the highest number of publications in the field, with nine publications. Table 1 shows the top 10 authors with the most publications in the “China English” research field in China.

Table 1. The top 10 authors with the highest number of publications

No.	Author	Number of publications
1	曹东波 Cao Dongbo	9
2	孔莎 Kong Sha	7
3	李少华 Li Shaohua	5
4	高琳琳 Gao Linlin	4
5	孙太群 Sun Taiqun	4
6	徐瑾 Xu Jin	4
7	涂秀青 Tu xiuqing	4
8	刘祥清 Liu Xiangqing	3
9	李文中 Li Wenzhong	3
10	丁晓丽 Ding Xiaoli	3



Figure 2. The Authors' Collaborative Network

3.3 Mapping and analysis on institutions

Figure 3 shows the results of the visualization and analysis of the cooperation network of publishing institutions about “China English” in China. The results show that the cooperation network of the publishing institutions forms a total of 429 nodes and 31 connecting lines, with a density of 0.0003, which indicates that the cooperation between institutions in this field is relatively weak. Table 2 lists the top 10 publishing institutions in the research field of “China English” in China.

Table 2. The top 10 publishing institutions with the highest number of publications

No.	Institution	Number of publications
1	宁夏大学外国语学院 School of Foreign Languages and Cultures, Ningxia University	17
2	沈阳工程学院公共外语教学部 School of foreign languages, Shenyang Insti- tute of Engineering	13
3	宁夏大学 Ningxia University	11
4	山东师范大学 Shandong Normal University	9
5	三峡大学外国语学院 College of foreign languages of CTGU	8
6	河南师范大学外国语学院 Faculty of international studies, Henan Nor- mal University	8
7	四川理工学院外语学院 The faculty of foreign languages of Sichuan University of Science & Engineering	7
8	云南师范大学 Yunnan Normal University	7
9	江西财经大学外国语学院 School of foreign languages, Jiangxi Univer- sity of Finance and Economics	6
10	南华大学外国语学院 School of Languages and Literature USC	6

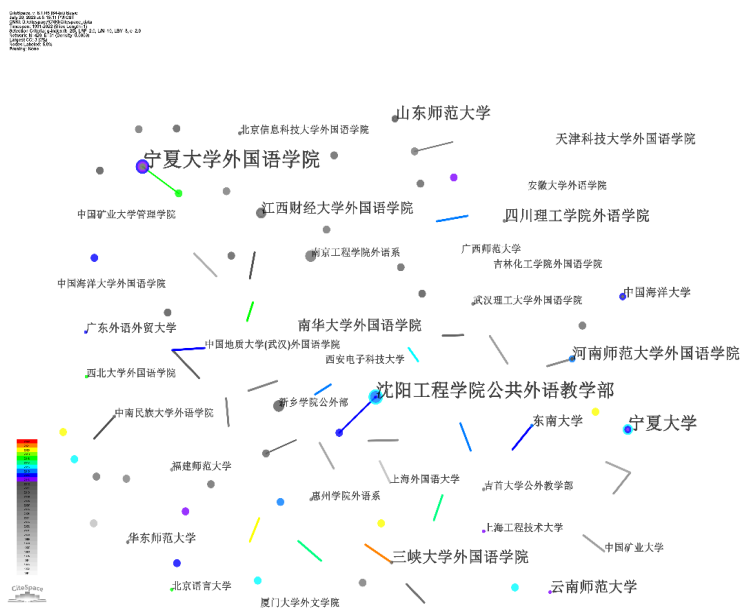


Figure 3. The Institutions' Collaborative Network

3.4 Keyword co-occurrence analysis

Keywords are the highly refined and summarized information in the literature. Figure 4 shows the keyword co-occurrence network with 636 nodes, 1754 connecting lines, and a density of 0.0087. Upon counting, 636 keywords were counted in these 910 literatures, and 15 keywords were recorded with a frequency ≥ 20 times (see Table 3).

Table 3. High-frequency keywords

No.	Keyword	Frequency	centrality	
1	中国英语	China English	828	1.69
2	中式英语	Chinglish	111	0.05
3	英语教学	ELT	62	0.01
4	中国式英语	Chinese English	62	0.03
5	跨文化交际	cross-cultural communication	61	0.01
6	英语变体	varieties of English	54	0.02
7	“中国英语”	“China English”	54	0.15
8	中国文化	Chinese Culture	48	0.03
9	本土化	localization	38	0.01
10	世界英语	World Englishes	32	0.01
11	大学英语教学	English Teaching at College	28	0.04
12	翻译	translation	27	0.02
13	文化	culture	25	0.00
14	变体	varieties	23	0.01
15	特征	characteristic	20	0.01

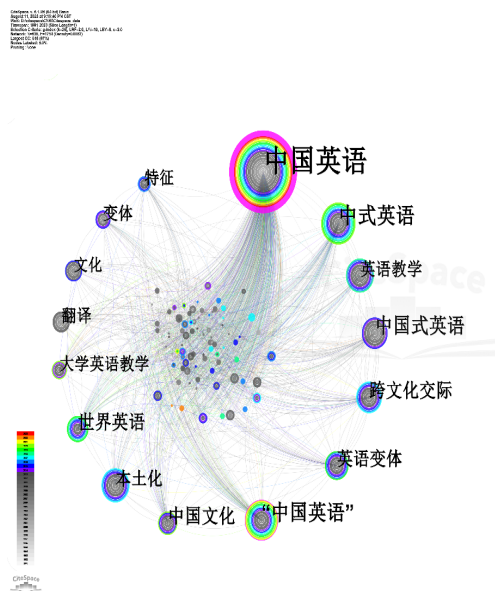


Figure 4. Co-occurrence of keywords

3.5 Cluster analysis

The keyword cluster analysis can uncover the current status and research trends of “China English” in China. The clustering effectiveness can be judged by the two significant metrics—Modularity (Q) and Silhouette (S). $Q > 0.3$ proves that the delineated categories are significant, $S > 0.5$ indicates that the clustering is reasonable, and $S > 0.7$ indicates that the clustering efficiency is high. The Keyword Clustering Atlas shows that $Q = 0.8291 > 0.3$ and $S = 0.9769 > 0.7$, indicating that this clustering structure is significant and the results are convincing.

The results in Figure 5 show that the Keyword Clustering Atlas includes 21 clustering labels, which are: #0 China English (中国英语), #1 localization (本土化), #2 culture(文化), #3 World Englishes (世界英语), #4 Chinglish (中式英语), #5 Culture Identity (文化身份), #6 Chinese Culture (中国文化), #7 acceptability (可接受性), #8 characteristic (特征), #9 China (中国), #10 development trend (发展趋势), #11 varieties of English (英语变体), #12 Alienation (异化), #13 translation (翻译)、#14 Development prospects (发展前景), #15 Interlanguage (中介语), #16 national varieties (国别变体), #17 objectivity(客观性), #18 lexical features (词汇特征), #19 Cultural Awareness (文化意识), #20 compare (比较).

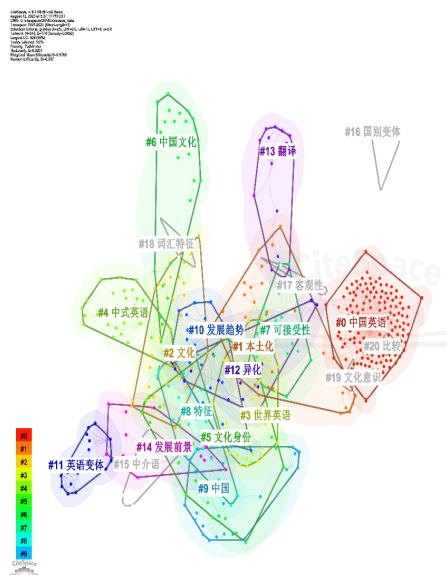


Figure 5. Keyword Co-occurrence Network

3.6 Citation burst

Citation burst can display emergent keywords, emergence intensity and starting and ending years, clearly showing the keywords with the most prolonged duration and the high-interest hotspots in the research field during a specific period. This paper selects the top 20 keywords to show the keyword emergence of related research in China (see Figure 6).

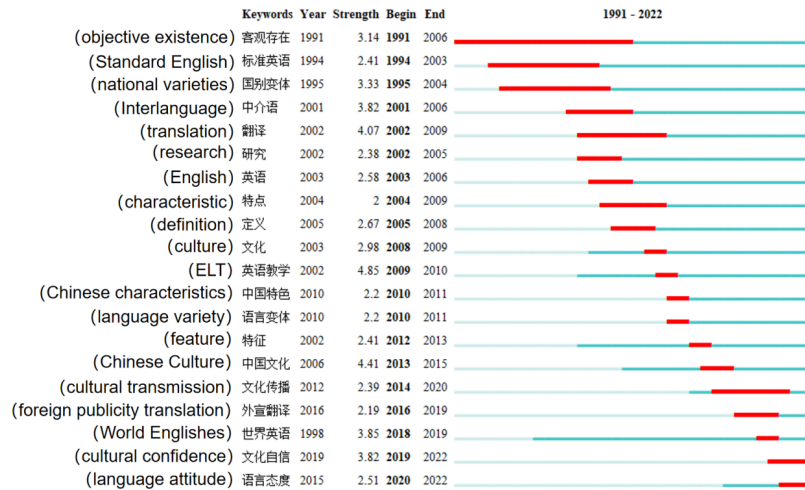


Figure 6. Top 20 Keywords with the Strongest Citation Bursts

4. Findings

This paper visualized and analyzed the works of literature in the field of “China English” from the CNKI database by 2023 and found that the main academic branches in this field can be classified into the following four categories: 1) the study on the existence and characteristics of Chinese English from the perspective of English variant theory; 2) the study of China English from the perspective of cultural and mindset differences; 3) the study of China English from the perspective of English instruction; 4) the study of China English from the perspective of translation.

In the 20th century, domestic scholars began to pay attention to China English within the framework of World Englishes, which led to a heated debate about its existence, nature, and characteristics. Entering the 21st century, voices in favour of the existence of “China English” had become more dominant in the debate. As research continued to advance and deepen, empirical research flourished. Corpus-based studies or corpus-driven studies were widely accepted and gradually became popular. In recent years, in the study of “China English”, scholars have gradually recognized the identity of China English as a carrier of Chinese Cultural Output. China English has shown a unique functional charm in the face of China’s rapidly growing demand for building Chinese cultural identity, establishing cultural confidence, telling Chinese stories, and spreading Chinese culture.

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