

Trend Analysis of Chinese Corpora-Based English Adverbs Research

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Abstract—As the growing international influence of corpus linguistics, domestic scholars are increasingly enthusiastic to study English language application and features using corpora, giving prominent achievement. The existing researches mainly focus on corpus studies on adverbs taken as a whole, stance adverbs, degree adverbs, and conjunctive adverbs, etc. The object of studies on English adverbs is mainly the interlanguage by Chinese English learners. Comparative studies on the use of English adverbs are well worth a further discussion.

Keywords—Corpus, Learners, English Adverbs, Review

I. INTRODUCTION

As one of the crucial methods for textual cohesion and coherence, adverbs are used to express the author's subjective attitude and also to make a comment on part of or the whole of the sentence with in addition a distinct presentation of the semantic and logical relations of sentences, contributing to the receiving by the reader of the author's viewpoints and enhancing the persuasion of academic writing. The universality and importance of adverbs research have been widely concerned. The writer searched "Research on English adverbs" on the CNKI Journal and found 107 related results, from which we easily see the main points of studies on English adverbs are: stance adverbs, conjunctive adverbs, adversative adverbs, resultant adverbs, degree adverbs, modal adverbs, frequency adverbs, and directive adverbs. The methods of studies on English adverbs mainly lie in corpus survey on the use of adverbs by English learner, or research on the use of a certain class of English adverbs in certain type of text.

II. REVIEW OF CORPUS-BASED RESEARCH ON ENGLISH ADVERBS IN RECENT 20 YEARS

There are not many corpus-based researches on English adverbs. Taking the CNKI journal database as an example, not many results concerned have been found and they include the researches on Chinese adverbs acquired by native English-speaking learners. The writer sorted out the available literature, of which, 26 journal articles and 26 master's thesis both accounting for 48.1% respectively, showing that in universities and colleges the teachers' mastery of corpus guides the research direction of students' graduation thesis; and 1 China meeting and 1 doctoral thesis both accounting for 1.9% respectively. Distribution of disciplines: 54 papers by authors from Philosophy and Humanities & Social Sciences occupying 74%; 14 papers from Social Sciences for 19.2%; 2 from Economic and Scientific Management for 2.7%; 1 from the Basic Sciences holding for 1.4%; and 1 from Agricultural Science holding for 1.4%. Only 2 papers are related to fund support, namely the National Social Science Fund and the South China Agricultural University President Fund. This fully demonstrates that the corpus-based research on English language by far is relatively a scientific and comprehensive linguistic research viewing field, providing us scholars engaged in corpus linguistics opportunities of topics declaration. 5 papers on corpus-based studies of English adverbs from the Dalian Maritime University accounting for 9.1%, 4 papers from the Tianjin University of Science and Technology holding for 7.3%, 3 from the Shanghai Jiaotong University for 5.5%, and 2 from the Henan Normal University accounting for 5.5%, as shown in Figure 1. All of these papers are core journals with higher research quality level and relatively larger contributions to corpus linguistic research.

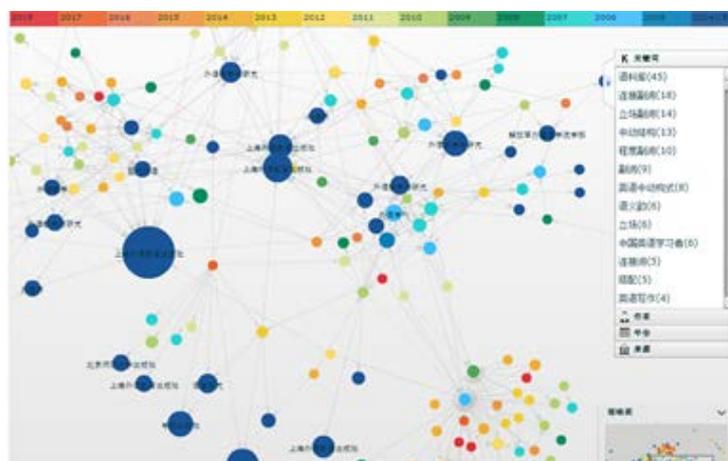


Figure 1

III. RESEARCH TOPICS

These journal articles were classified and counted in both the content and topic in relation to "English adverbs, corpus". Approximately, 9 papers showed discussions mainly by taking English adverbs as a whole, about 54 papers showed English adverbs studies based on corpus approach, 14 papers analyzed stance adverbs such as Corpus Survey on the Use of Stance Adverbs in English Major Students' Writing (Chen Jiansheng, Zhang Yan 2010); 13 papers analyzed adverbs in middle construction, for instance, Corpus-Based Cognitive Study on Adverbs in English Middle Construction (Zhang Zhouzhou, 2013); Corpus-Based Study on Adverbs in English Middle Construction (Zhang Ce, 2014); 13 papers analyzed degree adverbs, such as Corpus-Based Study on Degree Adverbs in English Business News (Wang Shilu, 2016); 10 studied conjunctive adverbs, e.g. Corpus survey on the Use of Conjunctive Adverbs by English Learners in Spoken English (Liu Guobing, 2008), and Corpus-Based Study on the use of conjunctive adverbs (Deng Fei, 2010). Corpus sources include Chinese Learner English Corpus, Chinese EFL Learner English Corpus, e.g. Take Actually, Really and In Fact as Examples— A Study on the Characteristics of Phraseology of Degree Adverbs by Chinese English Learners (Zhu Liyang, 2015); academic paper writing exercises for college English majors, e.g. Corpus Studies on the Use of Conjunctive Adverbs in Argumentative Writing of Chinese English Majors Students (Li Qiaolang, 2007); CET Band 4 & 6 writing for non-English major; English abstract of academic paper; feature and error analysis of use of adverbs in the Introduction part of Professional English academic papers. Only 2 corpus-based studies used the ESP corpora, of which one relates to Maritime treaty and the other concerns Medical research paper, as shown in Figure2.

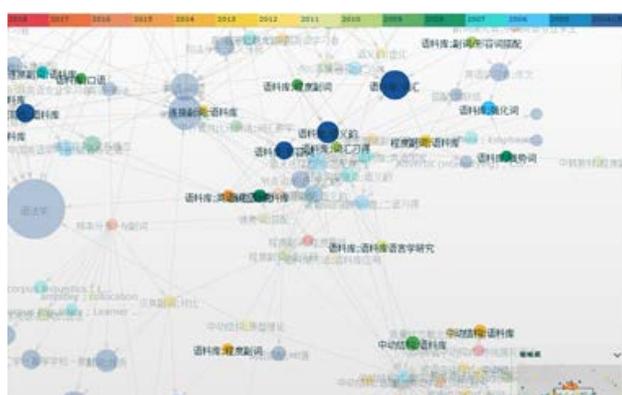


Figure 2

A. Earlier Published Corpus Studies on Conjunctive Adverbs

It is observed from the publication years and trends of papers that those earliest researches concentrated on conjunctive adverbs. Liu Guobing from the Henan Normal University discussed the features of the use of conjunctive adverbs by Chinese English learners in spoken English through the comparison between learner spoken corpora and Native language spoken corpus, and objectively described the non-nativeness of such use. Li Fei from the Nanjing Agricultural University in her master's thesis *Corpus-Based Study on the Use of Conjunctive Adverbs in English Major Undergraduates' Graduation Thesis* made a contrastive analysis between the use of conjunctive adverbs in graduation thesis of undergraduates of English language and literature major, Nanjing Agricultural University and the use of conjunctive adverbs in papers concerning linguistics, practical linguistics, literature, and translation and others by native English speakers, and discussed the different applied characteristics in both quality and quantity, with the purpose of getting preliminary understanding of the difference between them to provide some reference to the study and teaching in English major.

B. Popular Corpus Studies on Conjunctive Adverbs in Recent Years

Chen Jiansheng and Zhang Yan, their journal article *Corpus Survey on the Use of Stance Adverbs in English Major Students' Writing* studied the part of writing in TEM-4 and -8 test paper for English major undergraduate and classified and compared the stance adverbs in these two corpora, including apparent adverbs, deterministic adverbs, possible adverbs, irregular frequency adverbs, irregular degree adverbs, emotional adverbs, evaluative adverbs, and language styled stance adverbs. They analyzed the current situation and deficiency of the use of stance adverbs by English major students. Then they arrived at conclusions: little difference is there between the total frequency of Chinese English major learners and native English speakers. Cognitive stance adverbs were over-much used. The attitude and language styled stance adverbs and varieties of used adverbs by us was much less than that by the native English speakers.

C. Detailed Professional ESP corpus-based studies on English adverbs

Qi Hui of the Dalian Maritime University, in her paper *Maritime Treaties English Corpus-Based Study on High Frequency Adverbs*, compared the use of adverbs in her self-built Maritime treaty corpus and in general English corpus, showing the syntactic role that adverbs play in the Maritime treaty corpus and the match of four high frequency adverbs under different colligations. Xue Yingli from the Xian Medical College, in her paper *Comparative Study on Stance Adverbs in English Abstract of Medical Academic Paper*, discussed the pragmatic features of stance adverbs in the English abstract of Chinese & foreign medical journal articles with high impact factor, and compared and analyzed the difference of the way by which the Chinese and Non-Chinese writer use stance adverbs to construct academic standpoint.

IV. ANALYSIS OF SHARED LITERATURES

非英文文献	英文文献
【刘国兵, 英语学习者口语中连接副词使用情况的语料库调查, 河南工业大学学报(社会科学版), 2008	【罗一, 研究生英语论文中连接副词使用调查, 解放军外国语学院学报, 2003
【杨威, 基于语料库的中国非英语专业大学生连接副词的使用分析, 桂林学院学报, 2010	【赵蔚彤, 中国学生英语作文中逻辑连接词使用量化对比分析, 外语教学, 2002
【汪琴, 母语、二语学习者学术写作中连接副词使用特征研究——基于同属同源语料库的调查, 语言教育, 2014	【黄朝位, 英语写作中连接副词的语料库调查, 安徽工业大学学报(社会科学版), 2007
【王静, 基于语料库的连接副词跨域研究, 广东海洋大学学报, 2012	【杨威, 基于语料库的中国非英语专业大学生连接副词的使用分析, 桂林学院学报, 2010
【黄朝位, 英语写作中连接副词的语料库调查, 安徽工业大学学报(社会科学版), 2007	【黄朝位, 非英语专业学习者英语中连接副词使用的语料库研究, 金陵科技学院学报(社会科学版), 2011
【徐祥, 基于语料库的中国英语专业学习者程度副词使用研究, 教育(教育经济研究), 2009	【万建雄, 中国英语学习者强化词使用的语料库调查, 西安外国语学院学报, 2009
【余中秋, 基于语料库的中国英语专业学生学位论文中副词强化词使用研究, 大学英语(学术版), 2015	
【罗艺高, 英语程度副词跨学科研究综述, 外国语文, 2013	

Figure 3

References of four literatures: Corpus Survey on the Use of Conjunctive Adverbs in English Learners' Spoken Language (Liu Guobing, 2008), Corpus-Based Analysis of the Use of Conjunctive Adverbs by Chinese Non-English Major Undergraduate (Yang Wei, 2010), Survey Based on Homologous Corpora - A Study on the Characteristics of Usage of Conjunctive Adverbs in the Native and Second Language Learners' Writing (Wang Qin, 2014), and Corpus-Based Cross-Register Study on Conjunctive Adverbs (Wang Jing, 2012), mentioned the article by Luo Yi: Survey on the Use of Conjunctive Adverbs in Postgraduate' English Thesis, published in 2003 in the Journal of PLA University of Foreign Language. Since the corpus study of conjunctive adverbs by Liu Guobing in 2008, researches of English conjunctive adverbs with the corpus technology have showed themselves in the academic circles one by one and peaked in 2014, for instance, Corpus Survey on the Use of Conjunctive Adverbs in English Writing (Huang Chaojun, 2012); Corpus-Based study on the Use of Enhancement Degree Adverbs of Chinese English learner (Xu Feng, 2009).

V. RESEARCH TRENDS

Of the 107 collected papers, the 54 corpus-based studies of English adverbs have their published year distribution as shown in Figure4: 6 in 2012, 8 in 2013, 11 in 2014, 8 in 2015, 8 in 2016, 7 in 2017, and 6 in 2018.

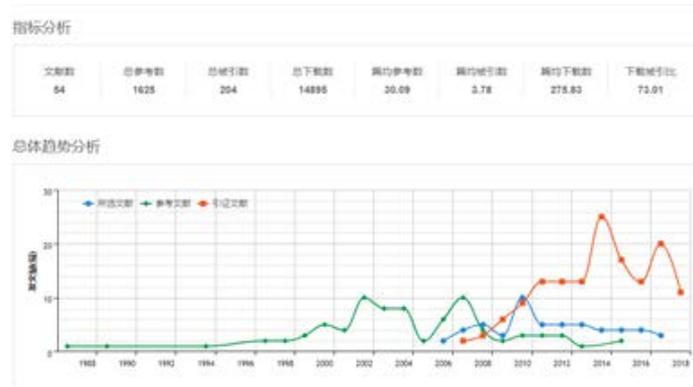


Figure 4

It can be seen that, as a whole, Corpus-based studies on English adverbs depend on literatures of corpus linguistics and corpus application researches. Until the development of corpus linguistics was known very well by the teachers in universities and colleges that the corpora were used for English adverbs research, in which they were used initially as a whole and then gradually separated into stance adverbs, modal adverbs, conjunctive adverbs, resultant adverbs, adversative adverbs, degree adverbs, etc. From the initial error research of misuse and overuse to current features analysis, such as Study on the Characteristics of Learner's Use of Resultant Adverbs in English Academic Paper (Lou Baocui, 2017), studies of academic paper corpus and learner corpus ought to be different and their proficiency in English determine the method the researcher should use in corpus analysis.

VI. PROSPECT OF CORPUS-BASED RESEARCH ON ENGLISH ADVERBS

Through the organization and research of corpus-based research on English adverbs, we can see that the studies on the use or characteristics of the use of English adverbs by Chinese English learners are more mature and detailed, for which the main reasons lie in the feasibility of free learner corpus and self-built Chinese learners English corpus. Corpus-based comparative studies on the English and Chinese adverbs, however, are less, mainly for the infeasible of free parallel corpus, the technologic

complexity of self-built parallel corpus, the alignment of English and Chinese sentences, and the frequent supplement of manual work to software.

In terms of the current trends, various miniaturized, specialized and highly targeted special-purpose corpora based on all kinds of sound large-scale corpora will be a great tendency, as the continuous development of computer and network technologies and corpus analysis technology. The technical bottlenecks of corpus-based study on English adverbs will be broken through in the foreseeable future.

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