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A Review of Research on the Chinese Learning Needs of Young People in India

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Abstract: As of the end of 2018, there were a total of 135 Confucius Institutes and 115 Confucius Classrooms in 39 Asian countries, but there were only two Confucius Institutes in India, namely the Confucius Institute at Vellore University of Technology and the Confucius Institute at the University of Mumbai. Some scholars have conducted in-depth research on the current situation of Chinese teaching in some universities and Confucius Institutes offering Chinese majors in India, trying to disclose the current problems of Chinese teaching in India; some scholars have also comparatively analyzed the similarities and differences between Hindi and Chinese, aiming at declosing the difficulties such as pronunciation and grammar in the process of learning Chinese, and the teaching suggestions are made. However, there are very few studies on the Chinese learning needs of Indian young people. Learner needs analysis plays an important role in second language teaching. As the mainstay of India's future development, Indian young people's needs for learning Chinese are not only an important part of national Chinese teaching research, but also have a profound impact and implications for the development of Chinese education.

Keywords: Teaching Chinese in India; Demand Research; Indian Young People.

1. Research Trends on Domestic Chinese Learning Needs

(1) Overview of research of foreign language learning needs on domestic

From the 1990s, the theory of needs analysis was introduced to China, and China's foreign language academic community began to study the needs of second language teaching, mainly English teaching. In 2006, Ni Chuanbin summarized the characteristics of foreign language demand research in "Characteristics of Foreign Language Demand", which are coreness, hierarchy, separability, measurability, variability and multi-dimensionality. That is to say, the study of foreign language needs is the core of theoretical research on foreign language teaching, the core of the foreign language teaching process, and the guide for foreign language education administrative departments to formulate policies. The levels of foreign language needs are divided into low level (general psychological needs), medium level (personal cognitive needs and emotional needs) and high level (self-efficacy). Foreign language needs can be divided into different types according to different contents.

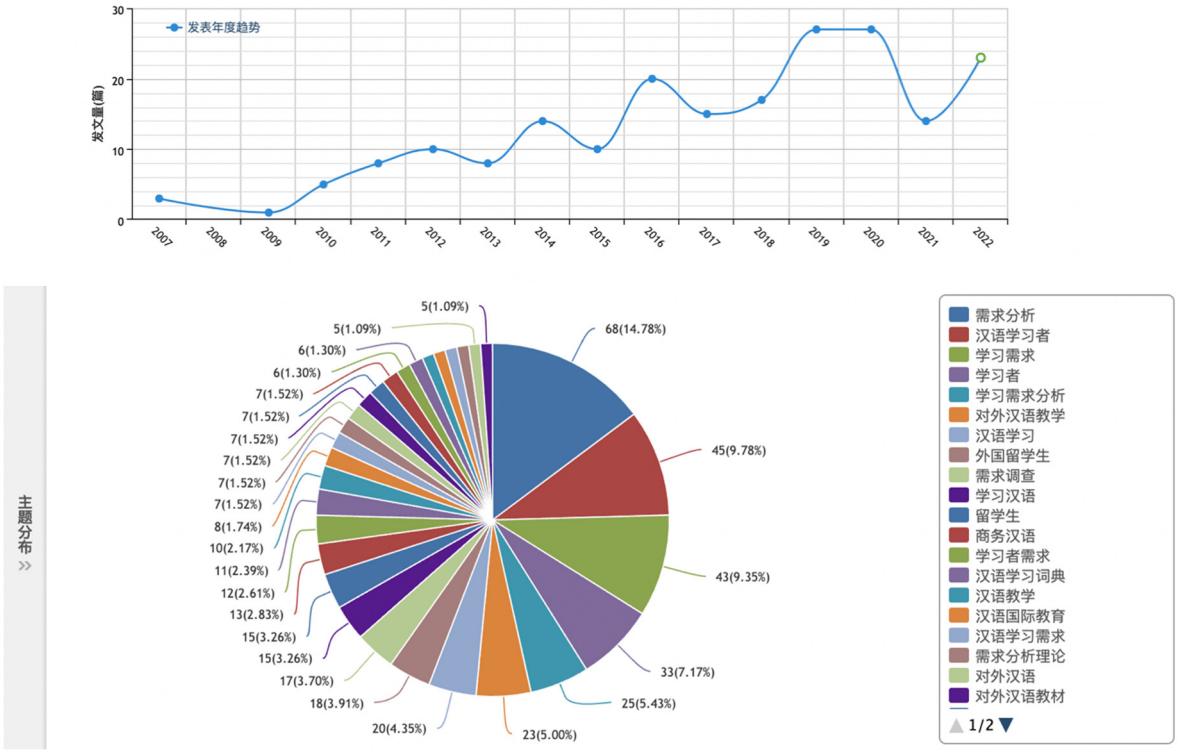


Fig 1. The number of publications and topic distribution in each year from 2007 to 2022

It is proposed that the analysis of foreign language needs can be divided into "strong" foreign language needs and

"weak" foreign language needs. As a variable, foreign language demand will also lead to changes in learners' psychology and behavior, so it is also a variable that can be measured using questionnaires, interviews, etc. The variability of foreign language needs is reflected in the fact that foreign language needs have different connotations at different stages, will also change with the passage of time and policy changes, and the needs of different individuals are not the same. The multidimensionality of foreign language needs means that the providers of information on foreign language needs are multidimensional.

(2) Overview of research of Chinese learning needs on domestic

However, research on the demand for Chinese as a second language started relatively late. In 2005, Professor Li Yuming first proposed that the issue of foreigners' Chinese learning needs deserves attention and research. In 2007, Ni Chuanbin conducted an empirical study on the learning needs of foreign students in terms of admission, classroom learning, and assessment through questionnaire surveys. This was the first empirical article on the Chinese learning needs. Since then, scholars have successively conducted relevant empirical research on the Chinese learning needs of international students. The research that showed a long-term increase was after 2011, which was the active period of second language needs research. After that, the trend in the number of published research articles will be fluctuating around 5 – 10 articles, the number of publications reached 30 around 2019-2020. Affected by the COVID-19 epidemic in 2021, the decrease in international students coming to China may be the reason for the decrease in the number of papers published during this period. A total of 180 articles were obtained by searching for the keyword "Research on Chinese Learning Needs" on CNKI. The number of publications and topic distribution in each year from 2007 to 2022 is shown in the figure 1.

Combining the above topic distribution map and specific paper content, it can be concluded that the research on Chinese learning needs in recent years has the following characteristics:

a. The research objects are biased towards learners and their learning process, such as research on the needs of learners, classroom teaching, teaching materials, platforms, etc. These research articles account for more than 20% of the total articles .

For example, Sun Congshuo (2015), Wang Yiluan (2019) , and Guo Ruifen (2019) respectively used interview methods and questionnaires to analyze the spoken language learning needs of Korean high school students, the Chinese learning needs of middle school students in Suphan Province, Thailand, and the Chinese learning needs of the elderly in New York. Most of the objects of analysis were learners and the contents of the questionnaire included requirements for teaching methods, classroom environment and other aspects. Secondly, there are also a few papers that investigate and study learners in Confucius Institutes, but most of the authors' research focuses on the comparative analysis of actual teaching situations, such as learning motivations, classroom teaching, needs for teaching materials and tools, target scenarios, etc. based on existing accessible learners, such as government-sponsored teachers or volunteers in schools or students in Confucius Institutes. There is almost no investigation of other groups or potential learners. Although the survey respondents cover different age groups and different positions, they are all Chinese language learners, and the survey target group is relatively single.

As mentioned by Zhou Tingbei (2016) and Li Yan (2016), empirical articles and information sources involving research on Chinese learning needs basically only involve the level of learners' personal needs. Long (2005) found that there are five information sources for needs analysis: published and unpublished literature (including specific job responsibilities and standards in various industries, etc.), learners, teachers and applied linguists, experts (domain experts) and triangulated sources. He believes that demand analysis should use comprehensive information sources, that is conduct multi-party inspections and collect data through multiple channels. As foreign scholars have said, diversified information sources are a prerequisite to ensure the scientificity and validity of needs analysis, while the information sources for Chinese learning needs research are relatively single, including industry job responsibilities standards, linguists, industry experts, comprehensive There is an extreme lack of information on types and sources, which affects the scientific validity of demand analysis to a certain extent. Therefore, actively expanding information sources and collecting data and information from multiple channels is the future direction of research on Chinese learning needs.

b. Research on Chinese language needs is mostly reflected in the comparative analysis of target needs and current learning situations, which belongs to the middle-level needs of foreign language needs proposed by Ni Chuanbin (2006), and the highest goal of many learners is to learn Chinese to find a good job.

For example, when Shen Xiaozhi (2020) conducted a survey of junior high school students and high school students in the Confucius Classroom in Bangkok, Thailand, she found that their highest target level was to be able to use Chinese as a working language in the four aspects of listening, speaking, reading and writing. This is more obvious for high school students. It can be seen that high school students have higher goal levels and greater demands for social and work communication.

Gong Cuiyun (2018) used the Hutchinson & Waters (1987) needs analysis model to analyze the Chinese learning needs of freshmen at the Confucius Institute at the University of Karachi, Pakistan, she found that 33 of the 201 respondents declared the purpose of learning Chinese is to communicate well with Chinese people, and secondly because they were interested in Chinese culture and want to work in a Chinese-funded enterprise.

Wang Fenghui (2017) used questionnaire and interview methods to investigate international students from Asian and African countries who were studying or graduated from Shenyang Normal University and found that the motivation of these learners was mainly to get more learning opportunities in China or their own country. (61.36%), and 31.82% of international students learn Chinese because they like Chinese language and want to understand Chinese culture. When analyzing their specific learning situations, it was found that these students faced the biggest difficulties in seeing a doctor and buying medicine, buying phone cards, and withdrawing money from the bank when they first came to China. It can be seen that students' learning needs change along with changes in learning level. When students meet their most basic survival needs, they will turn to higher-level learning needs, such as getting a good job by learning Chinese or out of interest in Chinese culture.

Starting from Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, the highest need that can be reached in many needs studies is to find a good job through Chinese, which is only the second level of needs-security needs. Although as their understanding of Chinese and China continues to deepen, more students will also develop higher-level needs-respect or self- efficacy, but such research of needs are in the minority. Secondly, there is no progressive logical relationship between the demand studies conducted by many scholars, that is, they do not pay attention to the variability of learners' foreign language needs. The same learner has different needs for foreign languages at different stages of learning and at different stages of policy and international economic and trade exchanges. The study of Chinese language needs is the core of theoretical research on Chinese language teaching, the core of the teaching process, and the guide for educational administration departments to formulate policies. The studies of how to make learning Chinese and being able to speak Chinese become a driving force for students to make their life values come true, that combine needs research with other disciplines such as psychology and explore the changes in the needs of Chinese learners with different backgrounds is the key that can make Chinese teaching go further in the long term.

c. Most of the subjects of the study on Chinese learning needs come from countries and regions that have opened Confucius Classrooms and Confucius Institutes, or countries or regions that have frequent economic and trade exchanges with China, and are mainly in Confucius Institutes or places with publicly-sponsored teachers and volunteers. The groups are relatively fixed and there is little research on the needs of other countries or regions or other types of people.

The research objects of known Chinese language learners are mainly divided into two categories based on the place of study: overseas students and International students in China. Whether it is Chinese language teaching through channels such as overseas Confucius Institutes or domestic Chinese short-term classes and Chinese major classes for international students, the research on the Chinese learning needs of these subjects is limited by their Chinese learning, the results of the demand research mostly point to middle and low-level needs. That is to meet the individual's future survival needs and self-cognition and emotional needs. And because there is currently a large demands in overseas Chinese teachers, the teaching level of local Chinese teachers or volunteer teachers needs to be improved. The impact on overseas students in this situation is that although many students have studied Chinese for a long time, their proficiency rarely reaches advanced levels. Most of them are at the junior and intermediate levels, so there will also be a high student attrition rate. For example, Huang Yalin (2020) conducted a survey of Chinese learners at Confucius Institute teaching sites in three regions of Cameroon through questionnaires, interviews, etc., and found that the local Chinese teaching levels are unevenly distributed, with most of them teaching Chinese at the elementary and intermediate levels. There are few advanced Chinese teaching and the loss of Chinese learners is high. Although the number of Chinese learners is increasing, the teaching quality has stagnated. It can be seen that research on Chinese learning needs should pay more attention to high-level Chinese learning needs and most importantly, should focus on other non-Chinese learner’s motivation of learning Chinese to widen the learning group.

Secondly, a search of the keyword "Chinese learning demand research" on CNKI found that among 89 related master's theses, only 6 demand research targets potential Chinese learning needs other than Confucius Institute students or international students in China. Among them, Guo Ruifen (2019) conducted a study using the elderly in New York as the survey object, extending the age level of those who want to learn Chinese. Wang Xiaoming (2019) published "Design of Hotel Chinese Conversation Teaching Materials Based on Needs Analysis", Zhang Xiwen (2018) published "Survey Analysis and Curriculum Plan Design of Chinese Learning Needs of Thai 7-11 Convenience Store Clerks", etc., reflecting Chinese language learning along the One Belt One Road Initiative has mostly been associated with vocational skills education in recent years,. Because in the context of the One Belt One Road Initiative, comprehensive talents who combine language with other skills such as logistics, finance, management, law, etc. are the talents that enterprises and countries need. In addition, there are few Chinese studies on other geographical regions such as Northern Europe and other economic regions such as the BRICS countries, with a total of 157 articles , including 82 articles on Russia , 23 articles on South Africa, 7 articles on Brazil, and 4 articles on India. The most studied areas are the Confucian cultural circle and the countries and regions along the One Belt One Road. (Li Baogui 2022)

From this, we can see that the research on Chinese learning needs can not only provide reference for the direction of talent training, but the objects of Chinese learning needs research cannot be blindly limited to currently known learners. Instead, we must use a multi-dimensional perspective and more rigorous investigation methods to conduct research and analysis, discover potential multi-level needs, help promote the Chinese language internationally, and truly allow the Chinese language to develop in a positive direction and have inexhaustible development. Source of motivation.

2. Research Trends in Chinese Language Learning in India

(1) Trends in Chinese Studies in India

Searching by the key words “Chinese learning in India”, 85 journals and dissertations were obtained. After removing other interfering keywords (Indonesia, Indonesia, etc.), a total of 56 research documents related to Chinese learning in India were obtained. According to the passage of publication time, it can be seen that research on Indian Chinese began to increase mainly in 2009 and reached its peak in 2019. Then it began to plummet. The main reason may be the conflict in the Galwan Valley in 2020, which indirectly led to the stagnation of cultural exchanges between China and India. Coupled with the global pandemic of the new crown pneumonia epidemic, the international student projects between China and India have also been forced to stop, so the relevant research focusing on Indian Chinese learners fell back to the level of published articles ten years ago in 2021. And among the 56 related documents, most of them are dissertations, and only 10 are journal articles related to Chinese learning in India. It can be seen that at present, the total number of publications on Chinese studies in India is not only small, but also authoritative research by doctors and scholars and experts is even less. As regional and country studies enter a stage of concreteness and refinement, Chinese studies on India and South Asia shows a huge gaps that urgently need to be filled.

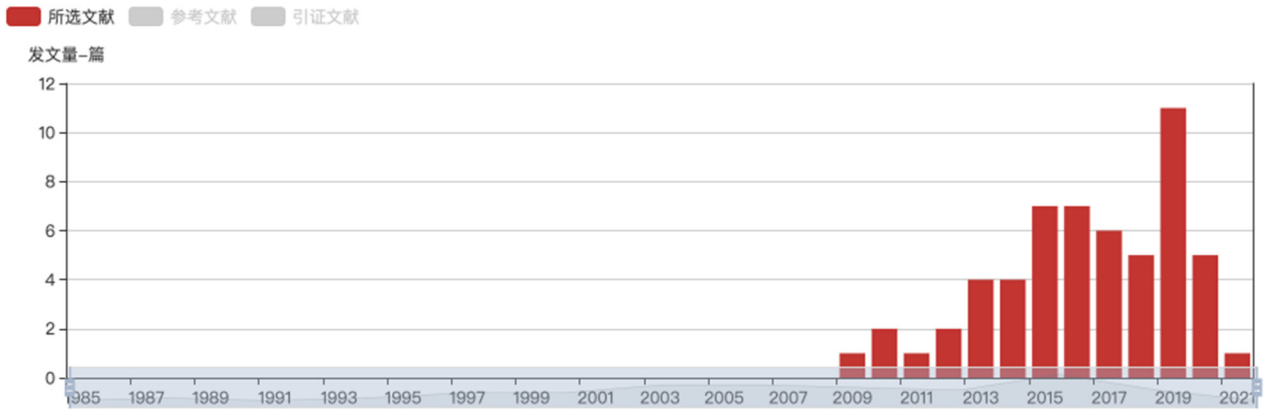


Fig 2. The occurrence and use frequency of 56 research articles related to Chinese learning in India from 1985 to 2021

(2) Overview of Indian Chinese Studies

a. Based on the location of the objects of Chinese language research in India, it can also be divided into local teaching research in India and research on international students in China. Among them, there are many studies on the three education issues such as students, teachers, and teaching materials in Indian universities, which belong to the micro level of international Chinese teaching research. There are relatively few studies on the Confucius Institutes in India, which may be because the Confucius Institutes in India have a special school-running model and few volunteers are sent out to teach, so the relevant situation is unknown. Since Chinese is not included in the teaching system of primary and junior high schools in India, there is also a large gap in the research on Chinese in there.

For example, Gu Jun and Yang Wenwu (2011) published an article titled "Thoughts on the Development Status, Problems and Countermeasures of Chinese Language Teaching in India" in South Asian Studies Quarterly, which sorted out the historical development process and current development environment of Chinese language in India, and summarized A list of colleges and universities offering Chinese majors was compiled, such as East Asian College of Nehru University, International College of Indian International University, etc. However, the lack of Confucius Institutes, primary and secondary schools and private Chinese teaching institutions was a problem faced at that time. In fact, the shortage of Chinese education resources faced by India today is still the same as it was ten years ago. Finally, the author puts forward countermeasures and suggestions for strengthening Chinese teaching in India, which still have great reference significance and value for the current situation of Chinese teaching in India. In 2012, Indian student Assi's master's degree thesis systematically elaborated on the sources of teachers, teaching resources and teaching conditions of Chinese-speaking universities and institutions in India, summarized the problems faced by Chinese language teaching in India and proposed possible solutions. Pankaj (2013) used questionnaires, interviews and other methods for the first time to investigate the current situation of Chinese language teaching in Indian universities. He believed that Indian universities are the backbone of Chinese language teaching in India. Research on the development of Chinese language in Indian universities can not only improve Indian universities. Chinese teaching effect, and also plays an important role in the development of Chinese teaching in India.

In addition to Chinese language studies in Indian universities, the research on Confucius Institutes and other Chinese private institutions was the first time that Li Zhekai (2018) gave a relatively systematic explanation in his doctoral thesis: Confucius Institute is currently officially launched in India. There are only two institutes, the Confucius Institute at Vellore Technological University, which was launched in 2009, and the Confucius Institute at the University of Mumbai, which was launched in 2013. These two Confucius Institutes offer Chinese compulsory courses, elective courses, long-term Chinese classes, short-term classes, business classes and other courses to meet the local needs for Chinese language learning. Until the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world, volunteer teachers were still teaching at the Confucius Institute at Vellore University of Technology. However, in recent years, due to the impact of the epidemic and China-India relationship, both Confucius Institutes currently have no Chinese volunteer teachers, and the Confucius Institute at the University of Mumbai has also terminated its joint school-running agreement with Tianjin University of Technology. Research by the Confucius Institute in India and other institutions is currently in a blank state. Therefore, research on India's Chinese learning needs is urgent. It is an important step to restart Chinese teaching in India and promote the development of Chinese education in India.

b. Most of the research on Indian students in China focuses on the three-teaching problems and misunderstandings of students studying in the Bachelor of Clinical Medicine (MBSS) program and Indian postgraduate students studying Chinese in China. This type of research targets international students in China, and they all have Chinese language learning needs. Therefore, there are a total of 39 articles in this type of literature, which conduct in-depth research on Indian students' second language acquisition errors, phonetic errors, vocabulary and grammar, etc. They also study the application issues of communicative methods, body language and other teaching methods in the classroom. It objectively shows readers the problems that students in India and South Asia will encounter when learning Chinese, and gives corresponding solutions and teaching method suggestions, providing theoretical reference and practical reference for future readers to implement specific teaching.

(3) Review of research on Chinese learning needs in India

To sum up, due to various reasons, no scholars have currently analyzed the Chinese learning needs of people in Indian universities, middle schools, primary schools and other levels and institutions, and India's current Chinese teaching resources are basically concentrated in higher education schools. It is difficult to popularize and meet the Chinese

learning needs of other people from all walks of life. Therefore, it is urgent to conduct a multi-dimensional, multi-level, and multi-method research in India. This will help to explore India's potential Chinese learning needs, explore the restart model of Chinese teaching in India in the post-epidemic era, and even enhance the possibility of Chinese language entering national education. It is of great significance to improve the spread of Chinese in South Asia.

In recent years, strengthening research on regional and national Chinese language communication has become an effective way to deepen the basic theoretical research on Chinese international communication, to build a regional and country research paradigm, to serve overseas diverse Chinese learning needs, and effectively to enhance the effectiveness of Chinese international communication. As a major country in South Asia, India has not only few current studies, but also does not involve macro-research in the field of international Chinese studies - regional and national Chinese communication research. Therefore, combining communication, sociology, political science and other disciplines to conduct demand research and analysis on India not only provides a path for exploring the sustainable spread of Chinese in India and South Asia, but also enhances our country's international communication capabilities and promotes the expression of Chinese story China's voice in the way of globalization, regional expression, and differentiated.

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