A Data-Driven Critical Review of Second Language Acquisition in the Past 30 Years

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Abstract:
This study aims to provide a comprehensive and data-driven review of the knowledge domain of second language acquisition (SLA) and pedagogy in the past 30 years. Using knowledge domain visualization techniques, the study first provides a review of SLA at the disciplinary level. It then identifies the major research areas and current research frontiers in the SLA research landscape based on high-quality data retrieved from Web of Science (WoS) databases. The study provides useful references for future research and pedagogy in the field in which literature reviews employing scientometric methodology and driven by data, such as the present one, are rare, and thus, are much in need of supplement views produced by traditional literature reviews.

Keywords:
SLA; L2 acquisition; critical review; research themes; discipline; scientometric methodology