

# Ten Years Research on *China's Standards of English Language Ability in China (2012-2021)*

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## Abstract:

There are an abundance of study focusing on *China's Standards of English Language Ability (CSE)* during the past ten years (2012-2021). According to the number and chronological distribution of papers on CSE China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), there are three stages during the whole development of the scale at present. Adopting 82 papers on CSE of Chinese Social Science Citation Index (CSSCI) from CNKI as the data source, and analyzing the contents of these papers by applying the ROST Content Mining 6 software, it can be found that there are generally five research hot spots in the past decade according to the high-frequency words. That is, the first hot spot is the research on theory and construction of CSE; the second hot spot is the research on validity of CSE; the third hot spot is the research on application levels and objects of CSE; the fourth hot spot is the research on practice of CSE and the last one is the research on alignment or linking various English tests to CSE. Besides, the research on competence of listening, spoken English, reading, English writing and translation is new trend for CSE.

## Keywords:

China's Standards of English Language Ability(CSE), Content Analysis, Research Hot Spots

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## 1. Introduction

In the decade, there were many types of foreign language tests in China, with different standards and different functions. It is the time to establish the ability evaluation standards and test quality standards uniformly formulated by the country, that is, to establish the “国标 (national standard)”. On June 20, 2014, the launch meeting for China English Proficiency Scale and preparatory meeting for the committee of experts was successfully held in the Examination Center of the Ministry of Education. Later, in September 2014, the official guidelines “《关于深化考试招生制度改革的实施意见》 (Implementation on Deepening the Reform of the Examination and Enrollment System)” issued by the State Council of China proposed

to strengthen the “外语能力测评体系建设 (Construction of the foreign language proficiency assessment system)”. It is needed to point to that it is the first time to clarify the tasks and requirements for the reform of the system for foreign language education, foreign language teaching and foreign language examination at the national level. In October 2014, the system construction was launched, proposing to formulate a Chinese foreign language proficiency scale. In the meantime, it is a rule that the foreign language test standards is fitted with the reality of learning and teaching foreign languages. Therefore, there would be the test to standardize large-scale foreign language tests in China. Until February 2018, China’s Standards of English Language Ability (CSE) was officially released by the Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China and the State Language Affairs Commission and it was officially implemented on June 1, 2018 [1].

Indeed CSE is the first standard to assessment of English competence for English learners in China. Based on the empirical data on the competence of English learners in China, considering the demand of each grade and stage of learning English, it divides the English competence of English learners into three stages from low to high, namely “basic, improved and proficient”, with a total of nine levels. Guided by the application of the English language, the scale has constructed a multilevel index system, and described the competence characteristics of each level in a comprehensive, unambiguous and elaborated manner[1]. In January 2019, the research on the consistency of the results from linking the IELTS and the Apts to CSE was successfully completed. Subsequently, the related research continued to focus on consistency of the results from linking the TOEFL test scores to CSE and had been accomplished smoothly in December 2019. At the end of 2020, the series of books on China’s Standards of English Language Ability had also been published. According to the mentioned above, we can say that the research on CSE has become a hot spot in the past ten years.

This paper adopts the method of content analysis, system clustering of high-frequency keyword and bibliometrics to summarize the research status of CSE in the past ten years (2012-2021) in China. It is expected to demonstrate a knowledge map of the research hot spots on CSE in China to offer references and assistance for the practice and research of CSE in China in the near future.

## 2. Procedures of Materials and Methods

The paper collects and employs the literature as the source of data statistics from China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI). The most important reason is that the study on CSE is dominantly made by Chinese scholars and the relevant results of these studies are basically demonstrated through the CNKI.

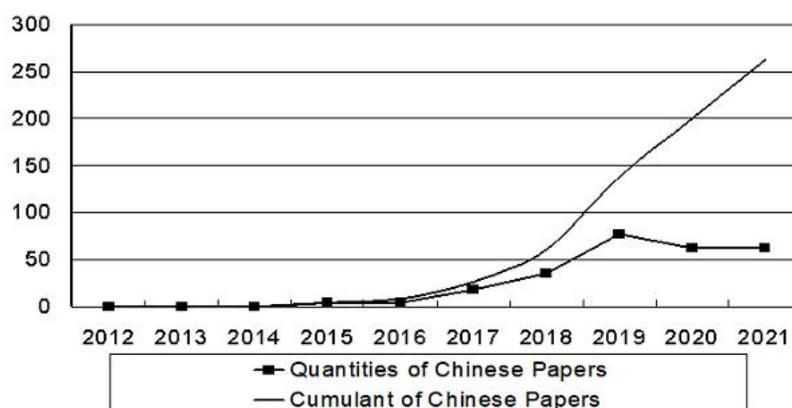
In the first place, search for papers within journals in CNKI database, with the Chinese language “中国英语能力等级量表” or its English abbreviation of “CSE” as the topic, searching the literature from January 2012 to December 2021, so the number of relevant papers on the topic is 4610. Then, the literature category is limited within the Philosophy and Humanities, and the number of related literature on this topic is 625. At last, the language of these literature is confined to Chinese language. After excluding invalid literature, and check the subject, key words and abstract of those literature, the literature of 262 Chinese papers are available for the study of this paper. Considering the number of published papers and the distribution of published journals, there are 82 papers published in Chinese Social Science Citation Index

(CSSCI) or the extended editions of CSSCI, selected to be the source papers or samples to do the further research in the paper. It is believed that through the 82 papers, the description and analysis of the current research status of CSE would be accomplished objectively. Based on above papers, the paper is to analyze the research status of CSE in China from two aspects of research content and research methods as well as to explore the research hot spots on CSE in China to offer references and assistance for the practice and research of CSE in China in the near future.

### 3. Statistics and Analysis of Literature

#### 3.1. Quantitative Analysis of Papers

From Figure 1, the number and chronological distribution of papers on CSE from 2012 to 2021, there was no substantive and targeted research in the early stage in China. The earliest research paper on “中国英语能力等级量表” or CSE was published in China in 2015, and then the research in this field began to increase year by year. By 2017, the amount of papers in this research direction of CSE showed a state of exponential growth.



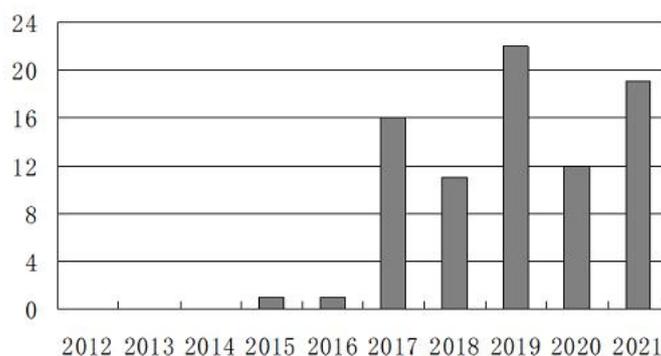
*Figure 1. The Number and Chronological Distribution of Papers on CSE From 2012 to 2021.*

Combined with Figure 2, the number and chronological distribution of CSSCI papers on CSE from 2012 to 2021, the research on CSE started relatively late, and its research process can be roughly divided into three stages:

The first stage is the period of pre-preparation for constructing the China’s language scale before 2014. There were studies referring to the achievements of the previous research on English language competence standards in the China’s academic community, and studies on the language scale were in the stage of introducing and adopting the research fruits from other countries. Hence, the research on the China’s language scale was relatively lagging behind, and the research in China on the language scale still only stayed on acceptance and popularization for the concept, so the research related to CSE was generally in the budding stage.

The second stage is from 2014 to 2018 which is the period for the argumentation and preparation for CSE. With the launch meeting of CSE in 2014, the development of CSE was officially started. From then on, a large number of empirical investigations had been applied to English teaching, English learning and evaluation at all stages of education in China. Meanwhile, the research on various aspects and stages of the scale had developed rapidly. At the same time, the CSE had begun to

make an unprecedented new breakthrough in the demonstration and application and its research had entered a vigorous development stage.



**Figure 2.** The Number and Chronological Distribution of CSSCI Papers on CSE From 2012 to 2021.

The third stage is the rapid development period of application research on CSE after 2018. At this stage, Chinese scholars focused on actively exploring the integration of CSE with international English tests, such as IELTS, TOEFL and Aptis and the specific application of English language learning in various educational stages, like the application of the multi-level index system from CSE to the actual teaching process in the classroom like listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation competence, etc. In 2019, the number of relevant research papers reached its peak from CSSCI journals in China. That means the applying CSE to English teaching, learning and testing had been generally recognized. The Chinese scholars expect that the scale can really play the role of “车同轨、量同衡(vehicles are on the same track and quantity is on the same scale)”, and by providing unified criteria of language proficiency for all stages in language education, China’s Standards of English is intended to offer a bridge to life-long learning, and a method for connecting different foreign language education sectors and appropriate assessments of multiple learning outcomes [2]. Later, the number of total Chinese papers in China was still on the rise, but the growth rate had slowed down slightly and the number of papers published from CSSCI journals shows a stable trend. They are a positive relation. Considering that the system of CSSCI is a significant index for academic evaluation in China, this indicates to a certain extent that the research on CSE at this stage is of high quality and sufficient potential. It can be seen that there are wide research interests that can be explored. After the rapid development stage, the academic circles in China will have increasing choices and higher requirements for the research perspective, research content and research methods of CSE, and the research of CSE is entering a golden stage of rapid development.

### 3.2. Distribution of Papers on CSE From CSSCI Journals in China

The analysis of journal source is mainly for 82 academic papers from CSSCI journals in China. The number of papers published in these journals is arranged in descending order (see Table 1) and counted the quantity of each journal one by one. It can be found that all the papers involve with 16 CSSCI journals, and the number of journals involved was relatively large. Among them, there are five CSSCI journals published more than seven papers on CSE in China. Specifically, they are the journals of “外语界 (*Foreign Language World*)”, “现代外语 (*Modern Foreign Languages*)”,

“中国外语 (*Foreign Languages in China*)”, “外语教学 (*Foreign Language Education*)” and “中国考试 (*Journal of China Examinations*)”.

**Table 1.** Distribution of Papers on CSE From CSSCI journals in China.

	CSSCI Journals in China	Quantities of Papers	Percentage
1	外语界 ( <i>Foreign Language World</i> )	28	34.1%
2	现代外语 ( <i>Modern Foreign Languages</i> )	11	13.4%
3	中国外语 ( <i>Foreign Languages in China</i> )	9	10.9%
4	外语教学 ( <i>Foreign Language Education</i> )	7	8.5%
5	中国考试 ( <i>Journal of China Examinations</i> )	7	8.5%
6	外语学刊 ( <i>Foreign Language Research</i> )	4	4.9%
7	外国语(上海外国语大学学报) ( <i>Journal of Foreign Languages</i> )	3	3.7%
8	外语电化教学 ( <i>Technology Enhanced Foreign Language Education</i> )	2	2.4%
9	外语教学与研究 ( <i>Foreign Language Teaching and Research</i> )	2	2.4%
10	西安外国语大学学报 ( <i>Journal of Xi'an International Studies University</i> )	2	2.4%
11	外语研究 ( <i>Foreign Languages Research</i> )	2	2.4%
12	解放军外国语学院学报 ( <i>Journal of PLA University of Foreign Languages</i> )	1	1.2%
13	中国大学教学 ( <i>China University Teaching</i> )	1	1.2%
14	东北师大学报(哲学社会科学版) ( <i>Journal of Northeast Normal University(Philosophy and Social Sciences)</i> )	1	1.2%
15	湖南师范大学教育科学学报 ( <i>Journal of Educational Science of Hunan Normal University</i> )	1	1.2%
16	江西师范大学学报(哲学社会科学版) ( <i>Journal of Jiangxi Normal University(Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)</i> )	1	1.2%
	Total	82	100%

It is can be counted that these academic papers published by the five CSSCI journals made up for about 80% of the total, especially in the journal “外语界 (*Foreign Language World*)”, which accounted for more than one-third of the total papers from CSSCI journals in China.

This demonstrates that the research on the CSE has received a lot of attention in the field of foreign language research in China, and the majority of the relevant research is relatively comprehensive and profound, while it also shows that the relevant research is relatively concentrated on language teaching, learning and testing without potential inter-discipline research and the scope of publication in journals is still relatively limited.

In addition, there are eleven CSSCI journals in academic discipline of foreign language and philology according to the classification of CSSCI journal index, followed by “外语界 (*Foreign Language World*)”, “现代外语 (*Modern Foreign Languages*)”, “中国外语 (*Foreign Languages in China*)”, “外语教学 (*Foreign Language Education*)”, “外语学刊 (*Foreign Language Research*)”, “外国语(上海外国语大学学报) (*Journal of Foreign Languages*)”, “外语电化教学 (*Technology Enhanced Foreign Language Education*)”, “外语教学与研究 (*Foreign Language Teaching and Research*)”, “西安外国语大学学报 (*Journal of Xi'an International*

*Studies University*)”, “*外语研究 (Foreign Languages Research)*”, “*解放军外国语学院学报 (Journal of PLA University of Foreign Languages)*”. And there are five CSSCI journals involved in academic discipline of pedagogy, followed by “*中国考试 (Journal of China Examinations)*”, “*中国大学教学 (China University Teaching)*”, “*东北师大学报 (哲学社会科学版) (Journal of Northeast Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences))*”, “*湖南师范大学教育科学学报 (Journal of Educational Science of Hunan Normal University)*”, “*江西师范大学学报 (哲学社会科学版) (Journal of Jiangxi Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition))*”. All of this indicate that the research on CSE mainly focuses on language learning, language teaching and foreign language examination with very little cross-disciplinary research, and not much multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research.

Therefore, it shows that the research on CSE has been dominated by linguistic research in the past ten years. Most of research focuses on the formulation of the scale, the elaboration of the principles and methods, the validation of the validity and the research on the consistency and alignment or linking the leading English tests to CSE. That is to say, the research of ten years focuses on the theoretical demonstration in terms of scientific and appropriate perspective and research on the linking various English tests to CSE, while there is not enough research on the implementation and application of CSE in specific teaching and testing. In the long term, on the one hand, the research on CSE should put efforts on its mission as the “national standard” in the future to accelerate the research process of the consistency between various language tests and language competence standards in China. On the other hand, after the completion of the linking various English tests to CSE, the application of CSE to language teaching at all stages is the general trend in China. It is appropriate to increase the importance and attention on CSE to push the research of English teaching and English learning by providing more opportunities and platforms for such research.

### **3.3. Content Analysis of Papers on CSE From CSSCI Journals in China**

From the 82 papers published in CSSCI journals in China, the aim is to focus on two aspects of the research contents through word frequency analysis. What are the hot spots on CSE for the past decade? And what are the research perspectives from the high-frequency words we can obtain?

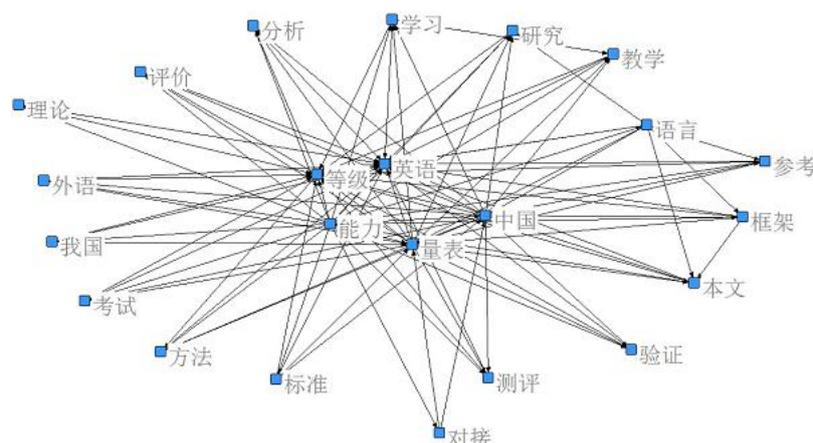
#### **3.3.1. Research Hot spots on CSE From CSSCI Journals in China**

For word frequency analysis, ROST Content Mining 6 software is used to extract the high-frequency words from the keywords and abstract of 82 papers. Firstly, the basic information of 82 papers is derived one by one from the CNKI in the form of TXT, including the information of the author, title, publication time, the journal title, the abstract and keywords. Thirdly, keep the abstract and key words of each paper as the research data source, standardize encoding format of the research text, and save it in ANSI format in the form of TXT, so as to meet the processing requirements of ROST Content Mining 6 software.

After segmenting the word group the TXT files of keywords and abstracts from the 82 papers by adopting ROST Content Mining 6 software, in the end, the top 60 high-frequency words and the words with word frequency above 20 or 20 are extracted (Table 2) and meanwhile the semantic network analysis of high-frequency words are displayed.

**Table 2.** High-frequency Words of Papers on CSE From CSSCI Journals in China

Number	High-frequency Words						
1	能力	16	外语	31	进行	46	大学
2	量表	17	学习	32	级别	47	方面
3	英语	18	本文	33	教育	48	具有
4	等级	19	验证	34	应用	49	发展
5	中国	20	评价	35	理论	50	课程
6	描述	21	测评	36	听力	51	对应
7	语言	22	我国	37	使用	52	建设
8	研究	23	分析	38	模型	53	水平
9	口译	24	结果	39	学生	54	提出
10	标准	25	提供	40	阅读	55	典型
11	写作	26	口语	41	学习者	56	以及
12	框架	27	参考	42	重要	57	基础
13	考试	28	策略	43	特征	58	构建
14	教学	29	基于	44	不同	59	认知
15	对接	30	方法	45	通过	60	体系



**Figure 3.** Semantic Network Analysis of High-frequency Words

From Table 2 and Figure 3, it is noted that each word “能力(competence)”, “量表(scale)”, “英语(English)”, “等级(level)” and “中国(China)” from the research topic “中国英语能力等级量表” appear quite frequently and is the core the the semantic network after the word segmentation. As the topic, they do not have the actual research value as high-frequency words for further research hot spots. The specific analysis on the research hot pots based on the high-frequency words (Table 2) and the semantic network analysis of high-frequency words (Figure 3) of papers on CSE from CSSCI journals in China are listed as follows:

Basically, the first hot spot we can conclude is the research on theory and construction of CSE. The corresponding high-frequency words are “标准(standard)”, “框架(framework)”, “评价(assessment)”, “理论(theory)”, “模型(model)”, “构建(construction)” and “体系(system)”, etc. There are many related papers, like “This present paper, based on the cognitive processes of writing, attempts to establish a writing strategy framework so as to provide a theoretical foundation and practical guidance for constructing the writing strategy descriptor pool of the China's Standards

of English [3].” “This paper delineates the fundamental theoretical considerations for the development of the CSE in terms of language competence, language use, language comprehension, language production, pragmatic competence, interpreting competence, translation competence, language use strategies, and language activities [4].” “By analyzing the innovative value of CSE in terms of scaling translation competence(TC) , this paper discusses the positive interactions between CSE and TC, and elaborates on the mutual nurturing and constructing relationship between them [5].” “This paper focuses on the construct of a BE speaking competence scale. It proposes a theoretical model composed of a descriptive scheme of descriptors and salient features of descriptors, with the aim of providing reference for developing a common BE scale in China [6].” “...this study aims to establish the evaluation dimensions and forms based on the descriptive framework of CSE, and developed a pragmatic competence measurement tool and evaluation standard based on the concept of “action oriented” teaching method and the communicative task description in the self-assessment standards. For the first time, mathematical modeling, as well as Delphi method, is used to construct the assessment model of College English pragmatic competence [7].”

These contents are closely related to theoretical research on CSE, the core of research at present, reflecting the attention and rigorous attitude toward the research from Chinese scholars.

Then, the second hot spot we can conclude is the research on validity of CSE. The corresponding high-frequency words are “验证(validation)”, “特征(feature)”, “典型(typical)”, “参考(reference)”, “一致性(consistency)”, etc. Here are many related papers, for example, “The findings of the study revealed that the descriptors have some typical features in use of words, collocation patterns and grammatical structures [8].” “...taking the interaction sub-scale as an example, the paper further explains the Interpreting Scale, aiming at providing reference for its application to teaching, learning and testing of interpreting [9].” “This study explores the generalizability and consistency of the results from linking the IELTS writing test to China’s Standards of English Language Ability(CSE) [10].” “Modified Angoff Method and Contrasting Groups Method are employed in standard setting. Also, evidence of procedural validity, internal validity, and external validity was discussed in detail [11].” “This article, based on the AUA validation model, intends to demonstrate CSE’s content validity, fairness validity, and procedural validity [12].” “In this study, the validity of the pragmatic competence scale has been verified from the perspective of learners’ self-assessment by adopting Multi-faceted Rasch Model based on the Assessment Use Argument [13].”

From the preparation, the whole procedure of formulating the CSE to the application of CSE, all of these research demonstrate the validity of CSE, that is, the feasibility of the scale, the specific content and target. As a new things, focusing on its validity is scientific and rational development process for researching.

Furthermore, the third hot spot we can conclude is the research on application levels and objects of CSE. The corresponding high-frequency words are “我国 (China)” “语言(language)” “外语 (foreign language)” “学生 (students)” “学习者 (learners)” “大学 (college)”, etc. These words reflect the application of the scale mainly on the study of foreign languages, especially English language in China, and it refers to the basic language study carried out among college students and equivalent learners. As unified standards for English proficiency covering all the country’s educational levels, the 9-

level structure of China's Standards of English Language Ability (CSELA), corresponding with the Chinese students' different levels of English proficiency, is instructional and pertinent to college English teaching [14].

The papers are "... the present study examines how CET 4 test-takers in China understand the descriptors of reading proficiency at the levels from B1 to C1 in the CEFR ( Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) [15]." "...this study aimed to explore the effectiveness of improving critical thinking skills of college students in curriculum-based political and virtuous awareness education in English reading class [16]." "The purpose of this paper is to guide English teaching and assessment from the theoretical and practical levels and to achieve the curriculum goal of cultivating communicative competence, so as to improve the foreign language literacy of Chinese talents [7]." "As empirical evidence, indicators of syntactic complexity and accuracy were investigated based on Chinese learners' corpus to identify syntactic complexity features for specific proficiency levels and errors that significantly changed across levels [17]." All of these indicate that the CSE has begun to be employed in colleges, especially in the teaching and testing of College English like College English Test band 4(CET4).

Additionally, the fourth hot spot we can conclude is the research on practice of CSE. The corresponding high-frequency words are "分析(examine)", "策略(strategies)", "方法(method)", "应用(application; apply)", "使用(impose on; using)", "任务(task)", etc. There are some papers on the practice like "Results show that the students are mostly positive about the quality of the listening ability descriptors, and they are able to evaluate their listening ability by using the descriptors [18]." "This paper examines the requirements prescribed by the descriptors of Level 5 and Level 6 of CSELA, and points out that CSELA facilitates the standardization of college English teaching, and the use-oriented standards of language ability are aligned with the notions put forward by the Guidelines on College English Teaching [19]." "...this study explores elements with apparent age indication, namely the age factor, in descriptors of language proficiency for common reference levels and investigates the influence these elements may impose on the application of China's Standards of English ( CSE) in elementary school English education [20]." "This paper proposes general steps of applying China's Standards of English (CSE) to FA in elementary and secondary schools, and with cases of CSE Writing Scale applications to peer assessment and learning contracts, discusses the paradigms and pathways of CSE applications to English FA [21]."

Last but not the least, the hot spot we can conclude is the research on alignment or linking various English tests to CSE. The corresponding high-frequency words are "对接(align; relating)", "对应(alignment)", etc. There are papers like "Drawing in particular on research related to the CEFR, this paper discusses several important issues related to the alignment of assessments to language proficiency frameworks and concludes with recommendations for alignment in the context of implementing new, localized language proficiency frameworks [22]." "This study attempts to relate CET-SET 4 to the speaking scales of China's Standards of English (CSE) [23]." "Based on the Linking Use Argument framework, this study investigates the anticipated impact of aligning international English examinations like IELTS, TOEFL and Aptis to China's Standards of English Language Ability using a survey among project managers and standard-setting workshop panelists [24]." "This study probes into the level alignment of the CSE(China's Standards of English Language Ability)

writing scales with the CEFR(Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) writing scales through a questionnaire survey [25].” “This study explores the level alignment of China’s Standards of English Language Ability(CSE) with Common European Framework of References for Languages(CEFR) in terms of listening skill [26].” “The present study attempts to align an in-house English proficiency test to China’s Standards of English Language Ability (CSE) using the analytical judgment method [27].” By providing a unified standard of language proficiency for all stages in language education, CSE is intended to offer a bridge to between foreign language learning, teaching and assessment.

### 3.3.2. Research Perspective on CSE From CSSCI Journals in China

For English language learners in China, there are generally five parts to learn English language, like listening comprehension, spoken English, reading comprehension, English writing, and translation. The cultivation of comprehensive competences for English language bases on the improvement on various aspects of language skills which mentioned above. Meanwhile, from Table 2, it is also can be seen that words like “口译(interpreting)” “写作(writing)” “口语(spoken English)” “听力(listening comprehension)” “阅读(reading comprehension)” are high-frequency words. It is practical to classify these papers into five sectors from the view of research.

**Table 3.** Research Perspective on CSE From CSSCI Journals in China.

Research Content			Quantity of Papers	
Research Perspective	Listening Competence		6 (7.3%)	
	Spoken English		7 (8.5%)	
	Reading Competence		6 (7.3%)	
	Writing Competence		11 (13.4%)	
	Translation Competence	Interpreting	7 (8.5%)	12.2%
		Translating	3 (3.7%)	
	Pragmatic Competence		3 (3.7%)	
	Comprehensive Research		39 (47.6%)	

Therefore, there is an abundance of study referring to these skills from Figure 3 which can be seen that Chinese scholars hurl their passion into their study and focus on the study of one or two English language skills. In the past decade, within CSSCI from Figure 3, it can be noted that there are six papers on skills of listening comprehension, making up 7.3%, seven papers on spoken English with 8.5% and seven papers on skills of reading comprehension, taking up 7.3%. From that, Chinese scholars have carried out research on competence of English listening, speaking, reading and other English language skills in view of CSE , but there are a few. But seemingly, they tend to dedicate more energy and time to English writing and translation skills. It is clear that there are eleven papers on English writing, making up 13.4% while ten papers on translation competence including interpreting and translating, totally accounting for 12.2%. In contrast, most of the papers on CSE might be prone to be universal, general and comprehensive from a macroscopic perspective instead of limiting on some kind of specific English language skills to explore and research, which can be nearly half of the total research, namely 47.6%.

Besides the five common parts of learning English, the view of pragmatic competence is new and fresh with three papers to explore. Han Baocheng and Huang Yongliang (2018) [28] defined pragmatic ability as the capacity of interpreting and

expressing the language user's intention in line with the theoretical framework of China's Standards of English (CSE). Later, Ma Ying and Chen Xuyuan (2021) [7] constructed the assessment model of College English pragmatic competence by mathematical modeling as well as Delphi method. Sun Li and Fu Xiaohan (2021) [13] verified the validity of the pragmatic competence scale from the perspective of learners' self-assessment by adopting Multi-faceted Rasch Model based on the Assessment Use Argument. It is expected that the further exploration for pragmatic competence has been increasing.

#### **4. Conclusions**

There are an abundance of study focusing on CSE during the past ten years. According to the number and chronological distribution of papers on CSE China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), there are three stages during the development of the scale. Specifically, the first stage is the period of pre-preparation for constructing the China's language scale before 2014. The second stage is from 2014 to 2018 which is the period for the argumentation and preparation for CSE because of the release of CSE in 2014 in China. And the third stage is the rapid development period of application research on CSE after 2018.

Through analyzing the 82 papers on CSE from CSSCI journals in China, we can conclude that the general five research hot spots in the past decade, that is, the first hot spot is the research on theory and construction of CSE; the second hot spot is the research on validity of CSE; the third hot spot is the research on application levels and objects of CSE; the fourth hot spot is the research on practice of CSE and the last one is the research on alignment or linking various English tests to CSE. From research perspective, the research is mainly on competence to CSE based on the five parts of learning English language. It is pointed that there is new trend for pragmatic competence and a vast majority of studies relate to comprehensive research.

Although the impressive amount of papers on CSE, it shows that the research on CSE has been dominated by linguistic research in the past ten years, like language learning, language teaching and foreign language examination. Therefore, it is expected there would be further research on linguistics and pedagogy and would be prone to emerge cross-disciplinary research, and multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research in the near future.

This paper focuses on the research of CSE from CSSCI journals, discussing the present status of CSE in the Chinese academic field without considering the achievements from other countries. Meanwhile, it is a research of literature on CSE from CNKI data source in China without including the other data source in China or other countries.

#### **Conflicts of Interest**

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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