

Sociology of literature: Taiwan post-war literature as a case study

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Introduction

The turbulent early post-war era offered new conceptualizations of Taiwanese culture after 50 years of Japanese rule. Inspired by the theory of the *literary field* by Pierre Bourdieu, the project aims at a reconstruction of the structures created by multifaceted relationships among various agents on the early post-war Taiwan literary scene (1945–49).

Based on a selection of 47 early post-war periodicals, the project is to provide a novel, holistic analysis of the post-war literary scene by incorporating linguistic evidence and social network analysis into our existing analysis of publication patterns.

On the basis of publishing patterns, our pilot study detected five distinct clusters, which are defined according to their proximity to the field of power and their literary style. It showed that the early post-war literary scene exhibited features of an autonomous field, but also a wider variety of agents and different types of agencies.

Aims and Methods

1. Identification of agent clusters based on publishing patterns

- Selection of 563 contributors who published in more than one periodical
- Principal component analysis (PCA) was adopted to investigate the underlying construct that motivated the emergence of the groupings among the contributors.

2. Identification of agent clusters based on their ideological inclinations

Task 1: To identify keywords which are unique to the post-war period through quantitative and qualitative corpus-linguistic methods

Method:

- To create the Taiwan Early Post-war Corpus TEPC
- To compare word frequencies in TEPC to those in a general corpus
- To apply Distinctive Collexeme Analysis and further extend it to the extraction of keywords from two comparative corpora.

Aims and Methods (cont.)

Task 2: To investigate how these keywords were used by the agents. Analytical criteria may include characteristic keyword frequency, collocation patterns, phraseology, and metaphors for each agent.

Method:

- Distributional statistics such as co-occurrence collocation
- Scollocation patterns (i.e. words significantly co-occurring with the keyword)
- Collostruction patterns (i.e. constructions/patterns with significant co-occurrence rates) identified through a range of statistically rigorous association measures

Task 3: To investigate how keywords differ semantically between ideological clusters of agents; to find out whether use of the same keywords reflect substantive disagreements of opinion or whether they signify adherence to particular intellectual factions in a sociological rather than ideological sense, as we suspect.

Method:

- Analysis of collocation and collostruction patterns, i.e., of the keyword's behavioral profiles will be conducted for each agent cluster based on our multivariate analysis in Task (2)
- Collapsing the examples of the agents from the same cluster to observe general tendencies in the cluster
- To identify how keywords are represented syntactically (in collocation and collostruction patterns) and conceptually (through conceptual metaphors) in each agent cluster

3. Identification of agent clusters based on their shared external biographical features

Task: Linguistically defined clusters of agents may be indicative of social relationships created by similar experiences and a shared educational or regional background.

Method:

- Data for prosopographical analysis will be collected and stored in a relational database.
- Network analysis
- Cluster analysis

Results of the pilot study

1. Identification of agent clusters based on publishing patterns

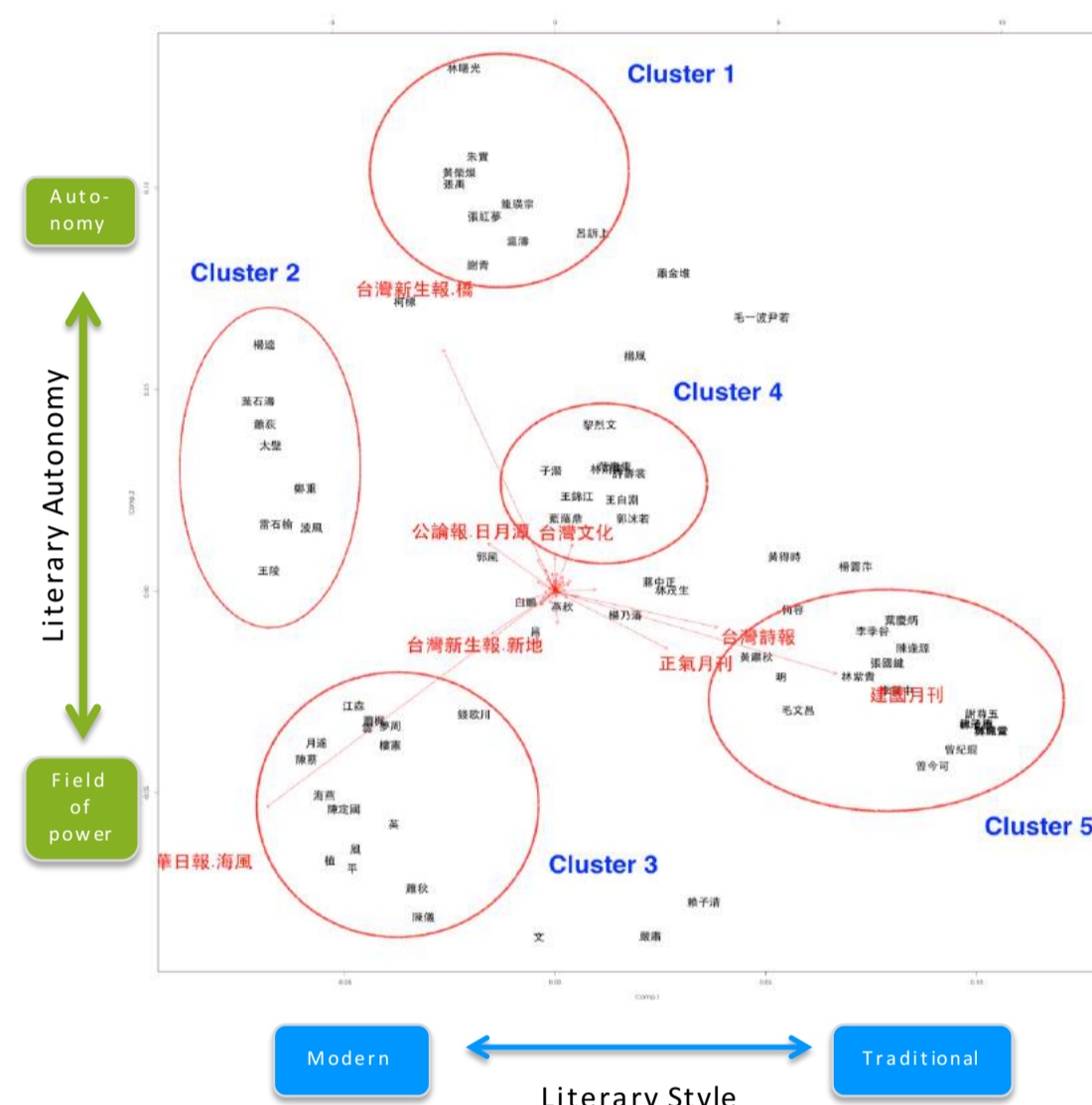


Fig. 1: Distributions of the main positions of agents in the early post-war literary field

We identified five clusters of agents which represent the main positions in the literary field:

- Cluster 1: Position approximating the autonomy of the literary field
- Cluster 2: Position with the highest symbolic capital
- Cluster 3: Interim Position between the literary field and the field of power
- Cluster 4: Transitional position
- Cluster 5: Position of conservatives

(Dluhošová-Chen 2015, 2016 in print)

Conclusion and Prospects

The project has three aims to be achieved in two stages:

(1) To analyze agents based on publishing patterns
The results of the pilot study will be validated by an analysis based on publishing patterns with frequencies.

(2) To analyze agents based on their linguistic and social aspects
This stage is to be started from January 2017

Expected outcomes:

- TEPC corpus
- Biographical database
- Series of articles mapping the ideological and extra-textual features which determined the dynamics of the Taiwanese early post-war literary field.

Literature cited

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