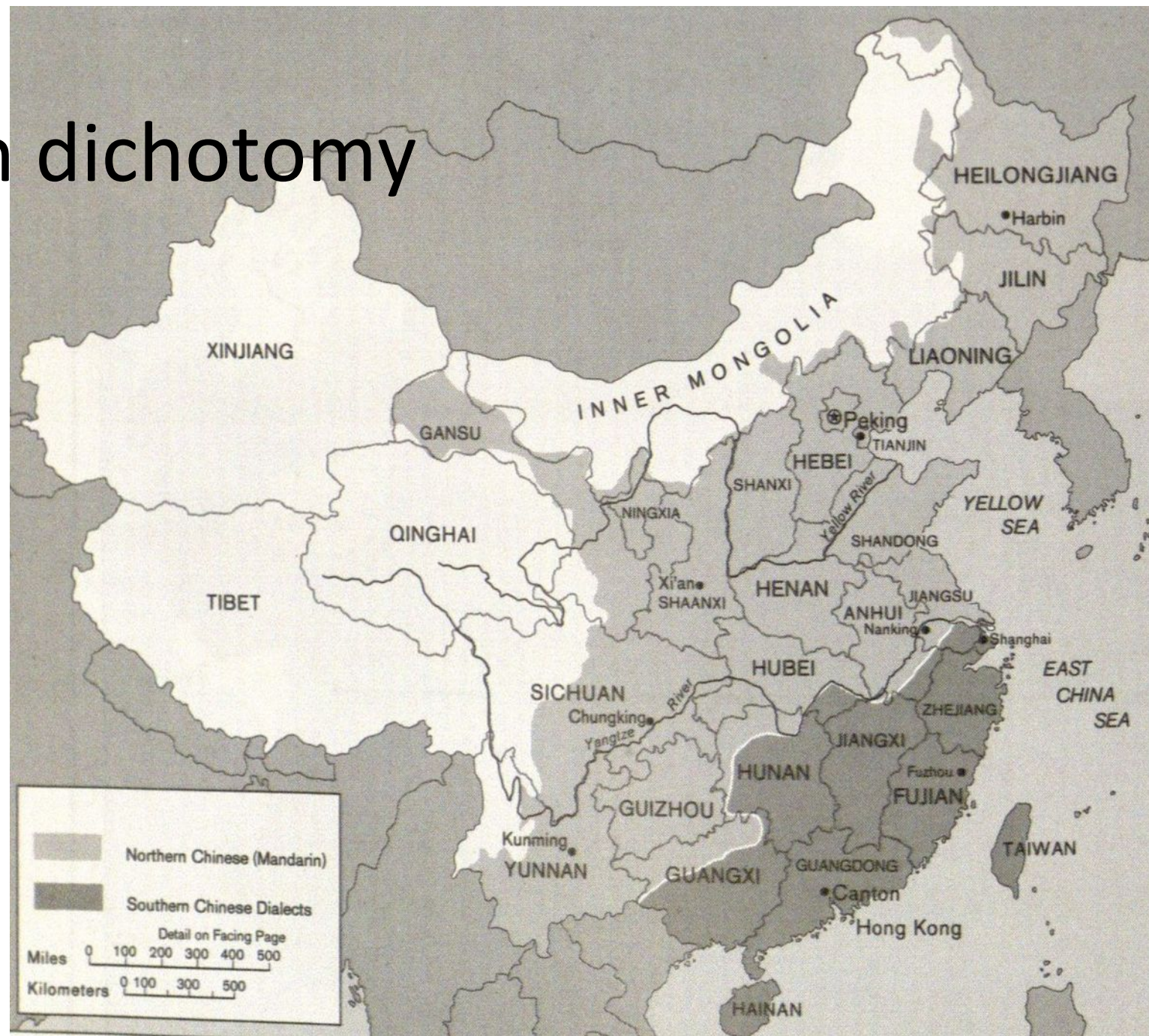# Mediatized Taiwan Mandarin: The role televised media in the formation of speaker stereotypes

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North and south dichotomy

- North- bolder, more fierce and uninhibited
- South- more gentle, soft, and polite

Background on Chinese

- On the Mainland, northern Mandarin varieties are more socially desirable and considered 'standard.'

- China's economic reform since the 70's opened the country to the overseas Chinese communities and led to many important social and ideological changes.

- Cultural products from Hong Kong and Taiwan were popular at the time.

- Zhang 2005: Beijing yuppies use features from Hong Kong and Taiwanese Mandarin to index a hip, cosmopolitan identity

Mediatized Taiwan Mandarin

- Content (1970s-80s):
  - China: Patriotism, socialism, and modernization (Gold, 1993)
  - Taiwan: 'trivial' things in life, e.g. dreams, identity, and romance
- Overrepresentation of TM in televised media
- Performed Cuteness: styling and stylizing (2000s)
- Changing perception: from cosmopolitanism to femininity

Methodology

- Triangulation:
  - Corpus-based approach and Critical Discourse Analysis (Baker & Levon 2015)
  - Cross-checks for higher reliability and validity
- Qualitative survey & text-mining:
  - Qualitative survey: online, open-ended questions with 234 participants
  - Text-mining: 13,062 comments were scraped from a Chinese online forum about the discussion of Taiwanese Mandarin

Lexical Network

- Co-occurrence approach:
  - To identify relevant and interpretable units
- Analyzing and visualizing the intertwined relationships between textual or non-textual variables, e.g.
  - Shifting political rhetoric in the State of the Union discourse
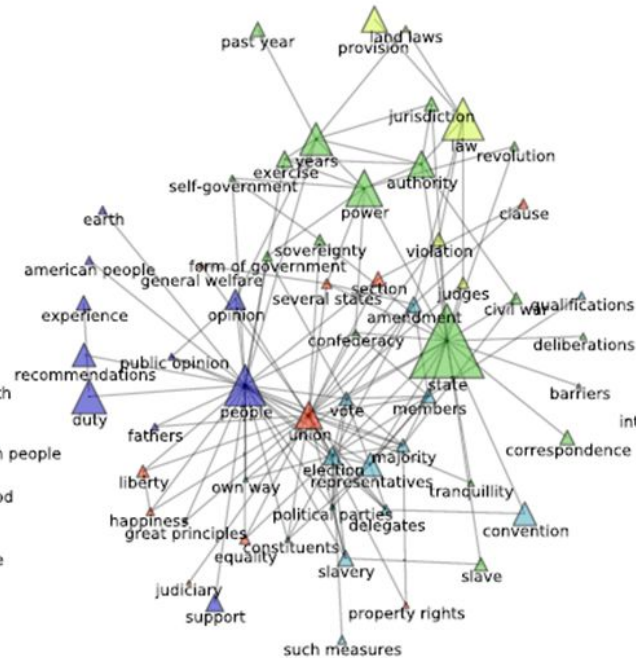 - Connections between faulty placements and where they received their PhD

Rule et al. 2015

- Co-occurrence of keywords in State of the Union Discourse
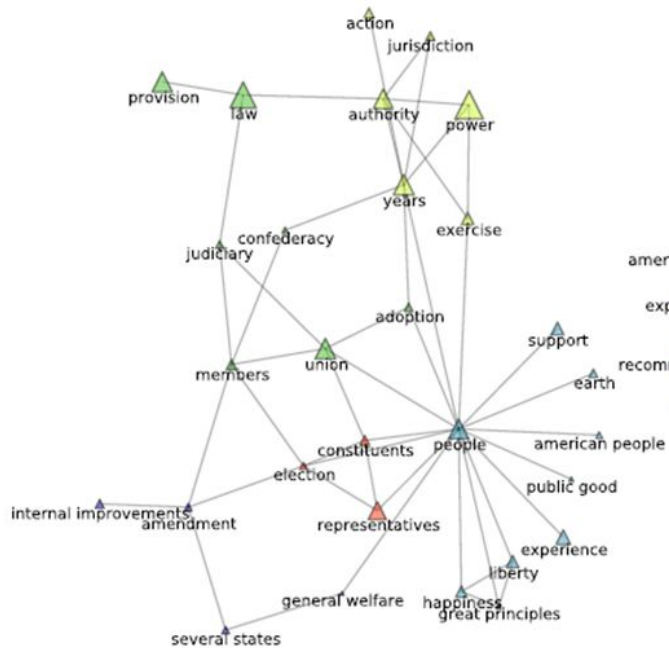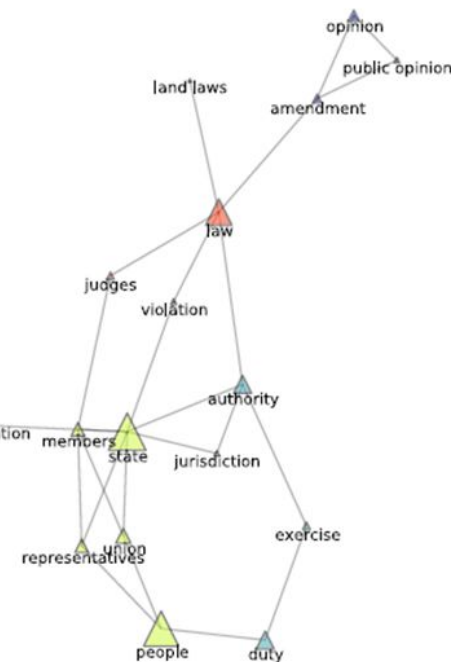

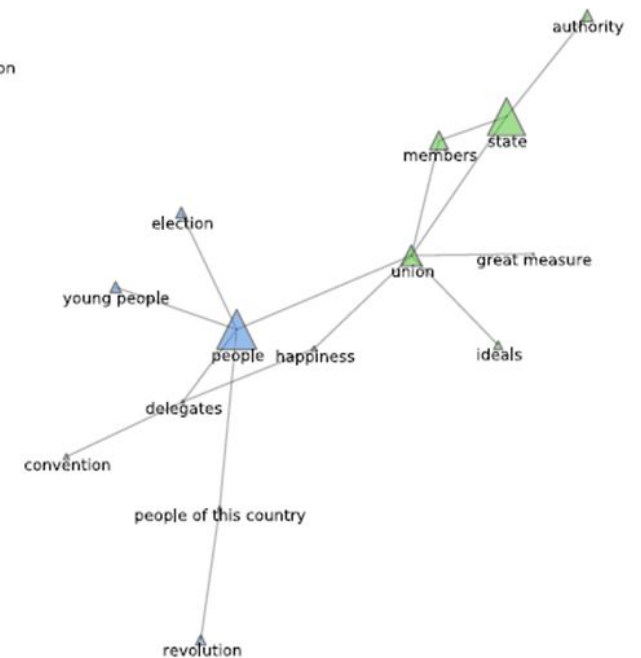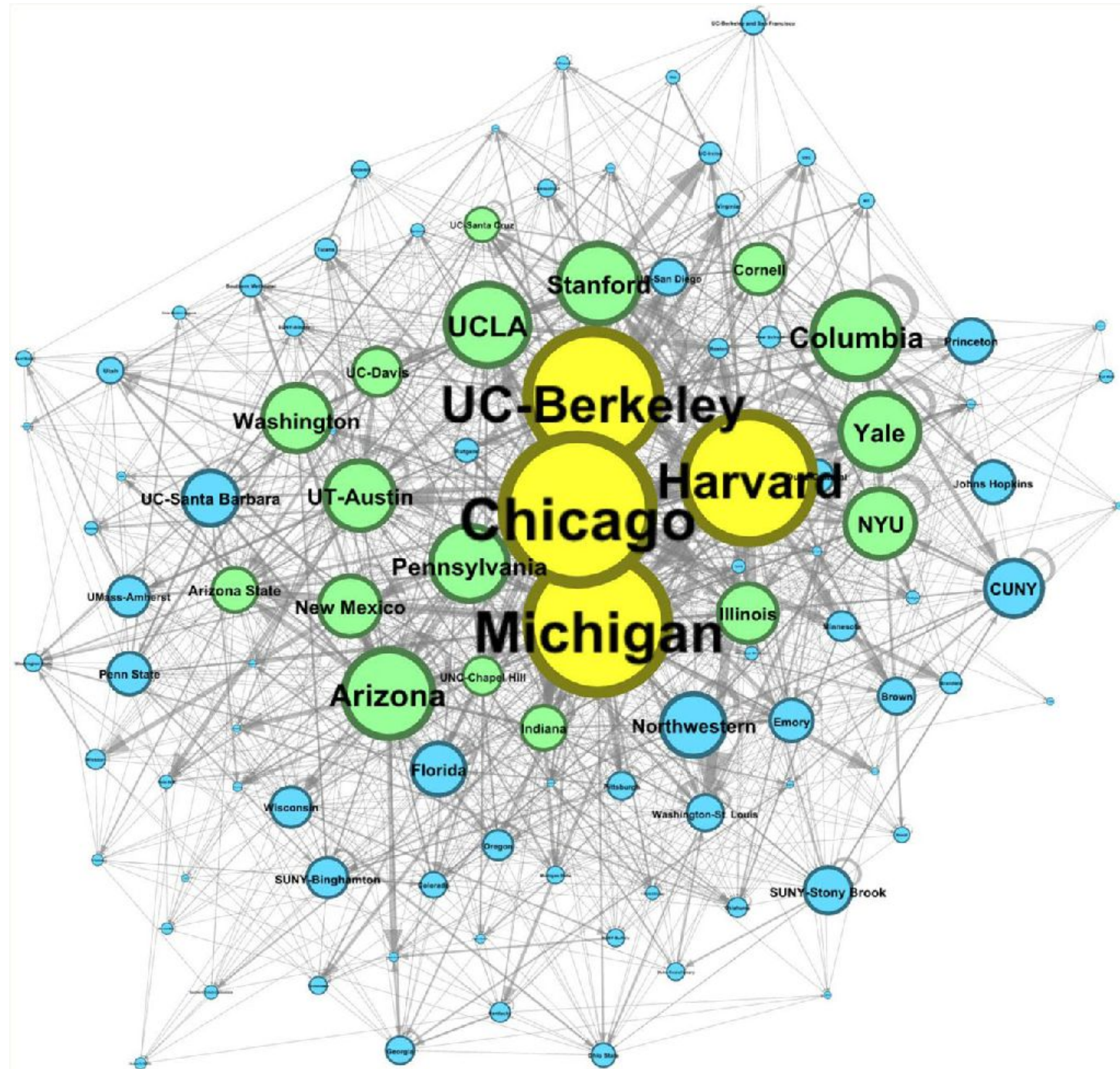1790-1834   1855-1894   1915-1954   1975-2014

Kawa et al. 2018

- Connections between faulty placements and where they received their PhD

Qualitative data

- *'Slightly different, something wrong with the rhotic sound'*
- *'normal, very polite'*
- *'babyish (嗲), they have bizarre grammar'*
- *'Innocent and cute (萌萌哒)! Very recognizable, and I am often drawn to that accent when I'm talking to Taiwanese people. It takes a lot more effort compared to the Beijing accent because Beijing people slur their speech whenever possible.'*
- *'Very interesting. I have some friends from Taiwan and Hong Kong so I have a slight Gangtai accent. I think it sounds gentle and friendly.'*
- *'It has its own character.'*
- *'kind of babyish, but sounds good'*
- *'It has its own character. Some people might think it's pretentious, but it's only their regional features and we should respect that.'*
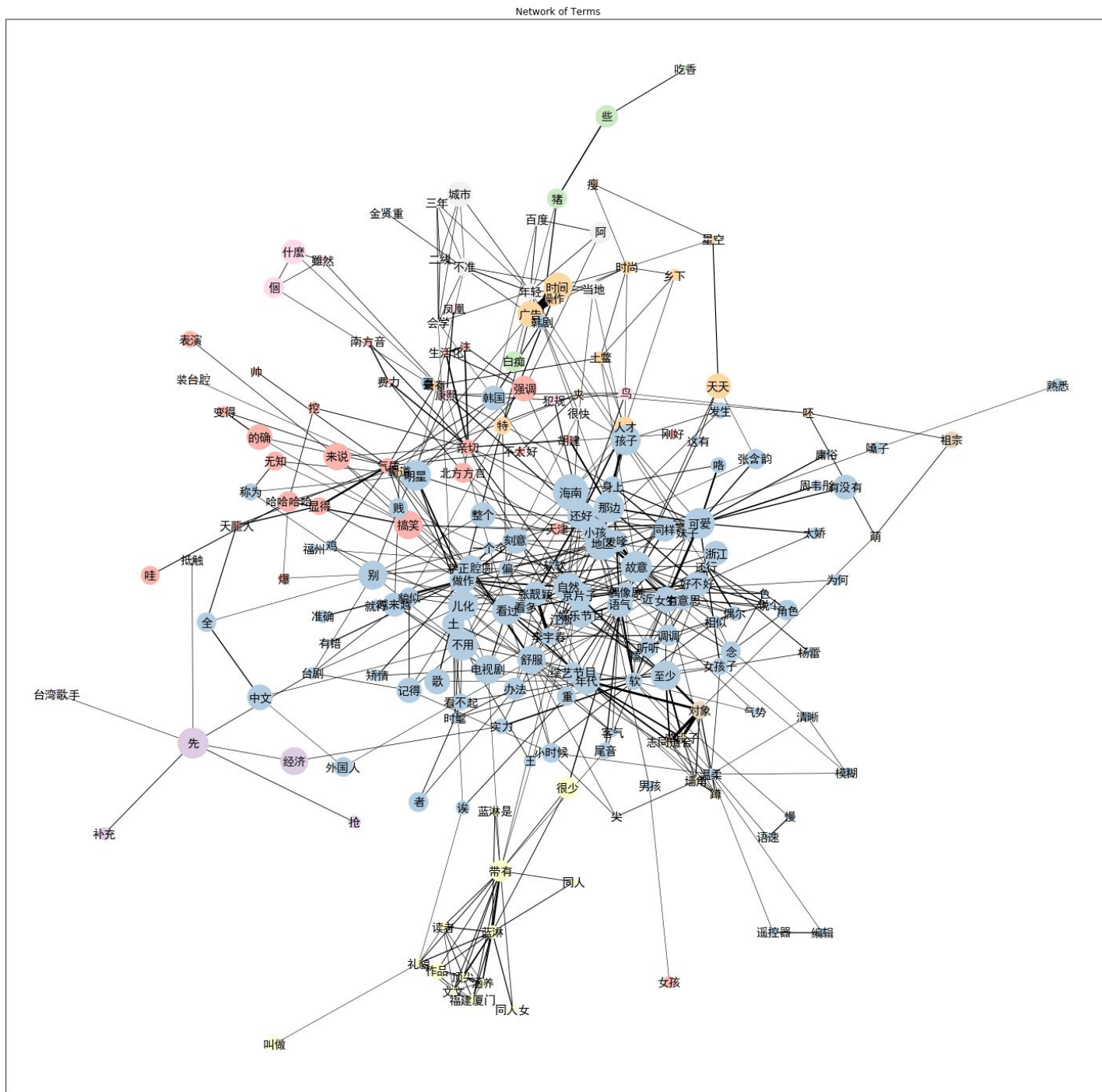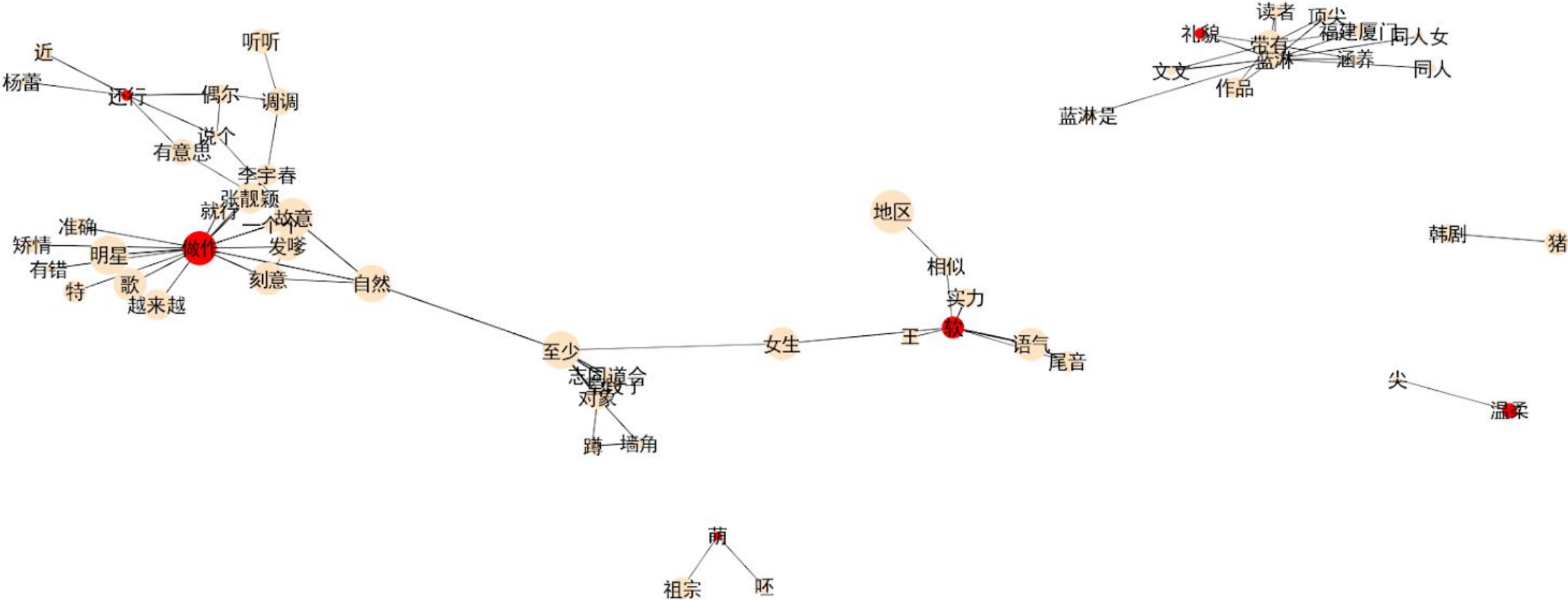
Peng 2018
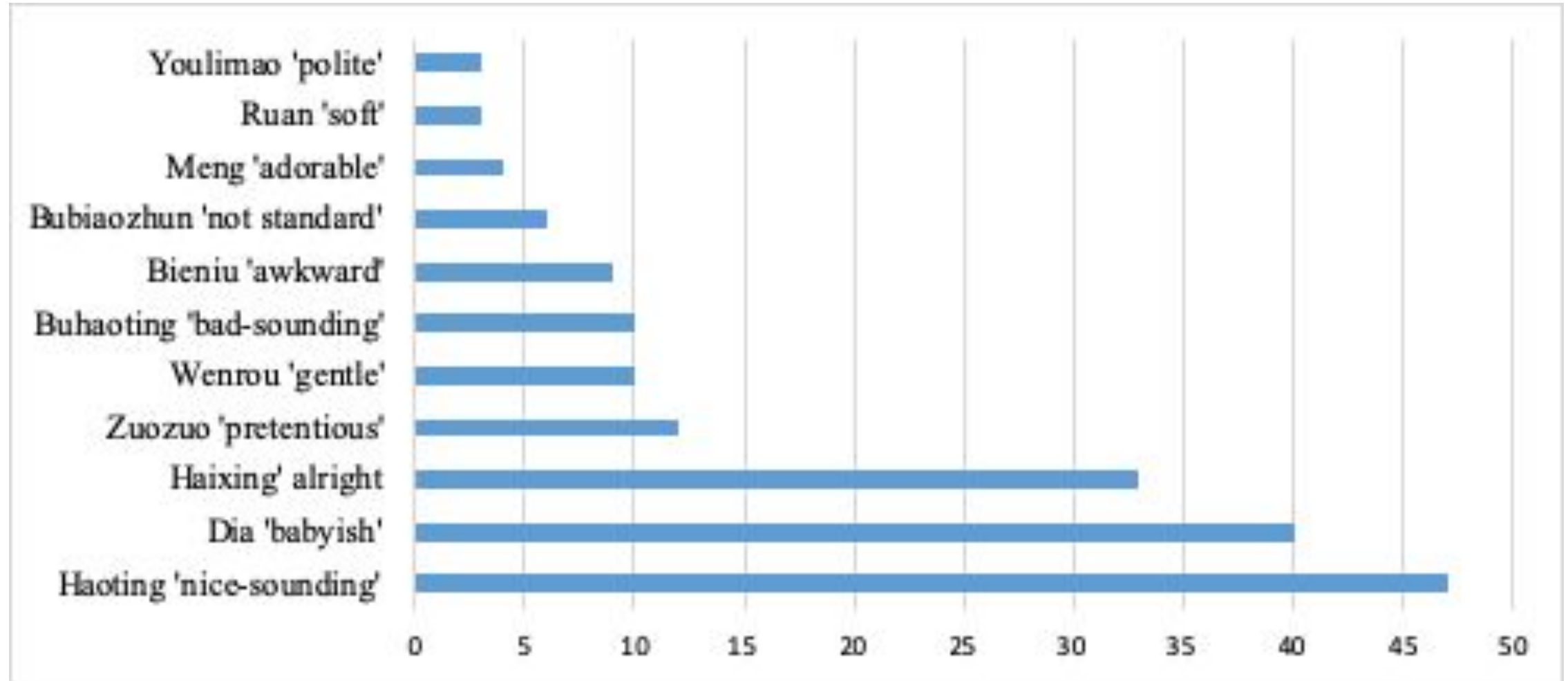
Procedure

- Step 1 Fed the model with unseeded data

- Step 2 Fed the model with seeded data

- Step 3 Fed the model with a wider spectrum of contextually relevant qualifiers

Step 1

- The initial result was uninterpretable.
- Most of the words appear to be irrelevant.
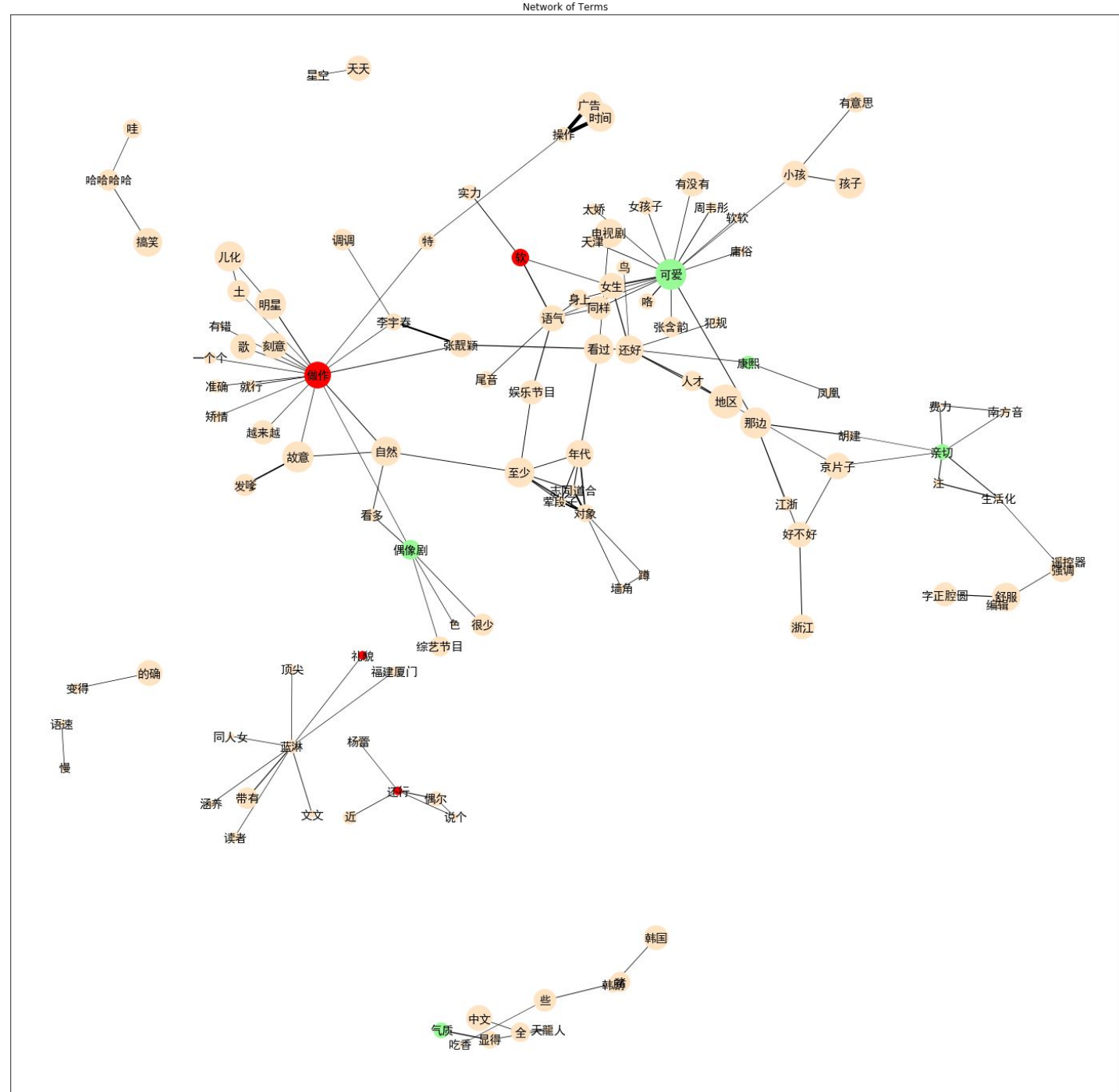

Network of Terms

Step 2

Step 3

Network of Terms

Comparison of the results

- Qualitative survey:
  - Smaller sample size
  - Known demographics
  - How TM speakers are perceived
- Text-mining:
  - Larger small size
  - Unknown demographics
  - How TV celebrities are perceived when affecting a Taiwanese accent.
- Overall: largely consistent

Changing attitudes towards TM

- TM is changing:
  - In 1970's, TM was considered 'standard.'
  - Today: stylized in media (e.g. sentence-final particles, soft voice)
- New alignment of attitudes
  - Zhang (2005): hip, cosmopolitan identity
  - TM today: babyish and feigned cuteness (burriko performance)
- Positive attitudes towards TM seem to have declined significantly among the millennials on the mainland.

Burikko Performance

- In Japanese, 'burik' means 'to pose, pretend, or act.' The suffix 'ko' means 'child' or 'girl', and 'burikko' means 'fake child' or 'phony girl' (Miller 2004)

- Feigned cuteness or innocence

- Taiwan—having been a dependent territory of Japan from 1895 and 1945—has been profoundly influenced by Japanese culture.

- Media representations: young Taiwanese actresses stylize their speech to be perceived as cute and innocent.

Soft Masculinity

- Jung 2010: soft masculinity

- Hybrid or versatile masculinity—soft but manly at the same time

- Images of men wearing make-up are permeating Korean mass media and are widely consumed across Asia via the influence of K-pop.

- Changing models of masculinity:
  - Salarymen was the norm in the 80s: suits, luxury watches and a traditional strong male look

Chinese masculinity

- Constructed in relation to western hegemonic masculinity
  - Non-conformity
  - Heterosexuality
  - Physical appearance of strength
- Media representations of Chinese masculinities are mostly characterized by "filiality, brotherhood, and loyalty"
- Emerging force against the traditional nationalist sentiments, e.g. 'Little Fresh Meat'
- Expanding the spectrum: wartime heroes to metrosexual urbanites

Sociolinguistic change

- Changing relationships between language and society (Androutsopoulos 2014; Mortensen et al. 2017)

- Speech style is interpreted relative to the normative association between linguistic and contextual categories

- Gendered representations of TM align with the shifting models of cosmopolitanism and masculinity

Changing power, changing ideologies

- The perceptions of TM:
  - cosmopolitan identity effete and effeminate
  - meekness and babyish style represented in televised media
- Chinese mainlanders are gravitating towards masculine and homegrown speech patterns and rejecting effeminate, girly speech styles linked to TM.
- Such preference can be tied to the rise of China's political and economic power.

Conclusion

- Role of Media
  - Semiotic links between social/ indexical meanings and linguistic practices
- The case of TM
  - Mediatizaion: Styling and stylizing
  - New forms of masculinity
  - Changing power dynamics

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