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Digital Governance and Youth Political Socialisation in China: A Corpus-Based Discourse Analysis of Local Communist Youth League Micro-blogs

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Abstract: The model of digital government services have transformed communication between the state and citizens in contemporary China. As young people dominate online platforms like Sina Weibo, the official microblog accounts run by the Communist Youth League (CYL) have become key channels for ideological education and public service delivery to youth. However, how municipal-level grassroots accounts conduct their daily discursive practices remains largely academically unexplored. Most previous research on CYL accounts has examined discourse strategies at the national and provincial levels; municipal-level grassroots accounts have rarely been analyzed systematically, let alone with corpus-based methods. This study builds a specialized corpus of 2,133,609 Chinese characters from the official Sina Weibo accounts of six municipal CYL committees in Anhui Province, China, and makes qualitative and quantitative analysis from the perspective of corpus linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis. Three distinct discursive patterns emerge: (1) an authority-endorsed model that relies heavily on reposting content from national-level authoritative media; (2) a local-service-oriented model centered on addressing specific local youth needs; and (3) a local-integration model that embeds macro-political issues within a local narrative framework. These patterns reflect how municipal CYL accounts strategically balance the dual responsibilities of political guidance and local youth service, a balance shaped by each city's position in the regional governance and media hierarchy. The findings offer empirical evidence and practical recommendations for improving discursive strategies in grassroots youth political communication, extending the literature on digital governance and youth political socialization in contemporary Asia.

Keywords: digital governance; Communist Youth League; discourse analysis; Corpus Linguistics; youth political socialization

I. Introduction

The convergence of the "Internet + government services" model and the rapid spread of mobile internet has reshaped state–citizen communication in contemporary China. In this changing environment, official government microblog accounts have become central platforms for information disclosure, public opinion guidance, public service delivery, and citizen participation in political affairs.

According to the 2024 report from Sina Weibo Data Center, users born in the 1990s and

2000s account for 78.7% of all Weibo users. Young people have thus become the platform's primary users, engaging actively with social hotspots and emerging issues and acting at once as recipients and disseminators of ideas and values. The Chinese central government (2017) has called for more timely and effective ideological education for youth, urging that the Chinese Dream and socialist core values be used to build consensus among young people. However, in a diversified online environment where multiple ideological trends emerge, young people are vulnerable to various misconceptions, and their value orientations face considerable challenges. How official microblog accounts can effectively carry out ideological education, deliver services, and provide proper guidance to young people has therefore become a critical issue in contemporary Chinese governance and youth policy. For municipal-level grassroots accounts run by the Communist Youth League (CYL) committees, this issue reduces to two related tasks: classifying the discourse patterns these accounts employ in their daily practice, and deriving policy recommendations from that classification.

Scholars in China have recently produced a substantial body of research on the discourse of official microblog accounts, focusing on three aspects: discourse style, issue framing and dissemination strategies concerning youth matters, and the optimisation of public opinion guidance and interaction mechanisms. In studies of discourse style, scholars generally agree that the language of official microblogs has moved toward a more "youthified" and "de-administratised" register. Yang (2014) argues that microblog discourse can follow a "weibo-weaving" model, using concise syntax and cyberlanguage at the micro-linguistic level and guiding public opinion through hot spots. Fu and Wang (2020) similarly contend that official propaganda needs to promote the "youthification" of discourse to improve its acceptability among youth. In terms of issue framing and political communication, national-level accounts such as "the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League" have become typical research targets because of their authoritative status and vast youth audiences. Wei (2020) studied how this account uses new media matrices for microblog broadcasting and argues that it has accumulated rich experience in political image-building and value transmission. Xie (2024) further found that the account adopts a strategy of balancing service provision with ideological guidance when addressing "youth issues", which enables it to convey mainstream values effectively. The optimisation of public opinion guidance mechanisms and interaction strategies is a third focus. Long (2013) identified persistent problems in the operation of current official microblog accounts, including disordered management, poor interactivity with receivers, and sluggish responses to public sentiment. Si (2017) emphasised that government communication targeting young audiences needs to strengthen "fragmented" instillment, implicit advocacy, and participatory interaction, while addressing the problems of excessive entertainment-oriented content and insufficient originality.

Despite these achievements at both the micro-design and macro-effect levels, two notable gaps remain. First, most studies focus on top-tier accounts such as "the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League" or provincial-level platforms. Far less attention has been paid to the daily discursive practices of municipal-level and grassroots CYL microblog accounts, which are the frontline directly connecting with local youth and implementing concrete services and political guidance. This gap deserves attention because grassroots accounts are shaped by local factors and working conditions that differ greatly from those at the national level. Second, most existing studies are qualitative case studies, and few have systematically examined discourse patterns using

a corpus approach. Without large-scale empirical data, the distribution and general patterns of discourse strategies remain unclear, and it is hard to know how widely the findings can be applied.

To address these gaps, this study focuses on the official Sina Weibo accounts run by CYL committees in six cities in Anhui Province, China: Hefei, Wuhu, Bengbu, Ma'anshan, Lu'an, and Tongling. The sample covers diverse urban contexts, from the provincial capital to mid-sized industrial cities such as Wuhu and Ma'anshan, offering a representative picture of how local CYL committees operate online. A specialized corpus was built containing all posts from these six accounts from January 2024 to December 2025, totalling 2,133,609 Chinese characters. Combining corpus linguistics with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the study systematically examines discourse styles, issue-framing strategies, and interaction patterns related to youth issues across the six accounts. Based on both qualitative and quantitative analysis, it centres on three research questions:

(1) What are the typical linguistic patterns of municipal-level CYL official microblog discourse?

(2) How do discourses with different sentiment orientations construct local government images and guide young people?

(3) What discourse optimisation strategies can be proposed for municipal-level CYL official microblog accounts?

The first two questions jointly establish a classification of the discursive patterns used by municipal-level CYL accounts; the third asks what policy recommendations can be drawn from that classification.

Based on the analysis, the study makes three major contributions. Empirically, it provides a large-scale, corpus-based classification of municipal-level grassroots CYL discourse—2,133,609 Chinese characters from six Anhui cities—that complements the qualitative case studies and top-tier account analyses dominating existing work. Practically, the classification yields differentiated policy recommendations that local CYL committees can apply to strengthen their communicative capacity and ideological guidance toward youth. Theoretically, it extends the emerging literature on digital governance and youth political socialisation in contemporary Asia, showing how local governments balance political guidance and local service delivery in the digital age.

II. Theoretical Framework

This study adopts a dual analytical framework that integrates Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with Corpus Linguistics. Critical Discourse Analysis, which regards discourse as a fundamentally social activity, influences and, in some cases, actively constructs social reality (Wodak and Meyer, 2009, p.5). As a social problem-oriented and interdisciplinary research approach, CDA aims to reveal the intricate relationships among language, power, and ideology thorough discourse analysis (Wodak and Meyer, 2009, p.9). Therefore, the principal domains of CDA research cover political, ideological, advertising, media, institutional and educational discourse (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). Through the analysis of discourse, CDA investigates ideology within various social institutions, including government departments, commercial organisations, news media, and educational institutions.

Despite its significant contributions to discourse studies, the limitations of CDA have been noticed. Scholars such as Blommaert (2005, 35) and Stubbs (1996, 82) have argued that CDA's theoretical analytical approach, which interprets complex social problems through the close

reading of individual texts, undermines its empirical persuasiveness and generalisability to some extent. This methodological limitation has prompted an increasing number of scholars to adopt a hybrid quantitative-qualitative approach that integrates Corpus Linguistics with CDA inf news, media and political discourse (Zhang & Li, 2020). Corpus Linguistics, grounded in large collections of authentic texts, employs probabilistic and statistical methods to calculate word frequencies, keywords, collocations from numerous texts (Liang, Li & Xu, 2010, p.3). This dual approach helps identify linguistically significant patterns, which improves the authenticity, reliability, and replicability of analytical results (Dong, 2016). This integrated approach allows researchers to move beyond intuitive or impressionistic interpretations of individual texts, and instead anchors critical analysis in statistically verifiable linguistic evidence.

Accordingly, this paper combines Corpus Linguistics with Critical Discourse Analysis to probe into discourse strategies on youth issues in the official microblog accounts of Chinese local Communist Youth League on the Sina Weibo platform. The analysis follows a two-stage procedure. First, the paper uses computational tools to obtain quantitative statistics from the self-constructed corpus, including high-frequency word lists, keyword extraction, collocation analysis, and concordance analysis. Second, on the basis of the quantitative results, the paper applies approach of CDA to reveal the content orientations, emotional features, and ideological functions embedded in the discourse. Finally, this paper explores how local Communist Youth League new media can achieve more effective ideological guidance and value communication with young people in China through differentiated discourse strategies.

III. Methodology

A dedicated corpus consisting of posts from local Communist Youth League's official micro-blog accounts was first constructed. Based on *2025 Influence Report on Official Weibo Accounts of Government Departments*(2026), the research selected six municipal-level Communist Youth League's official accounts from the top ten Youth League microblogs in Anhui Province. The selected accounts are: @Wuhu Communist Youth League, @Bengbu Communist Youth League, @Ma'anshan Youth League Committee, @Hefei Communist Youth League, @Lu'an Communist Youth League, and @Tongling Communist Youth League. These six cities cover diverse urban contexts across Anhui Province, from the provincial capital Hefei to medium-sized industrial cities such as Wuhu and Ma'anshan, providing a representative sample of municipal-level Communist Youth League's official Weibo accounts. Using the Octopus Data Collector (V10.0.0), all posts published by these six accounts from January 2024 to December 2025 were automatically crawled. After necessary text leaning, a dedicated corpus of CYL official Weibo accounts with a total of 2,133,609 Chinese characters was build.

After corpus construction, systematic data processing was undertaken. The online Chinese corpus word segmentation tool (CorpusWordParser) was applied to perform automatic tokenisation on the corpus text. All the segmentation texts were manually proofread to ensure accuracy. The Chinese text analysis software ROST CM6 (5.8.0.603) was used to get word frequency, semantic network analysis, and sentiment tendency analysis of each account. The corpus analysis tool AntConc 4.4.0 (Anthony, 2025) was also employed to obtain keywords and their concordance contexts. AntConc's keyword calculation compares the frequency of each word in the target corpus against a reference corpus, generating a keyness score (measured by log-likelihood) that identifies statistically over-represented lexical items. This dual methodology of combining quantitative description with qualitative interpretation ensures that the critical

analysis stays grounded in empirical data, yet goes beyond simple description to examine broader questions of power, ideology, and social reproduction.

Ultimately, using this dual methodology, the paper draws on corpus findings within the CDA framework to examine how local Communist Youth League's official Weibo accounts can deliver more effective ideological guidance and interactive values to young people through differentiated discourse strategies.

IV. Data and Results Analysis

1. High-Frequency Words and Semantic Network Analysis

Corpus researchers generally agree that frequently occurring forms, meanings and functions can profoundly reflect the core and typical elements of language use, which also reveals the most commonly used forms, the most frequently realised meanings and the most common functions in communicative processes (Wang, 2014). These patterns, in turn, can illuminate the foci and priorities of language users.

Using ROST CM6 software, this study conducted word frequency analyses on the CYL official Weibo posts of the six municipal-level CYL Committees in Anhui Province from 2024 to 2025. The top 20 high-frequency words from each account were selected to form a high-frequency word list, as presented in Table 1. Additionally, the semantic network, which uses high-frequency words as nodes and represents their co-occurrence relationships through connecting lines, was constructed through ROST CM6; it can reflect the semantic implications conveyed by high-frequency word combinations in the texts (Wang, 2014). The semantic networks for each of the six accounts are shown in Figures 1–6 respectively.

Table 1: High-frequency word list of six municipal CYL accounts in Anhui Province (top 20)

No.	Wuhu		Bengbu		Ma'anshan		Hefei		Lu'an		Tongling	
	Words	**Fre.**	**Words**	**Fre.**	**Words**	**Fre.**	**Words**	**Fre.**	**Words**	**Fre.**	**Words**	**Fre.**
1	*wenti* (problem)	73	*wenti* (problem)	102	*Zhongguo* (China)	567	*wancheng* (complete)	87	Lu'an	51	Tongling	122
2	*zuizhong* (ultimate)	63	*weixing* (satellite)	101	*Weibo* (micro-blog)	491	*weixing* (satellite)	82	*Zhongguo* (China)	40	*qingnian* (youth)	81
3	*weixing* (satellite)	44	*zhuxi* (chairman)	94	*Renmin Ribao* (*People's Daily*)	267	*wenti* (problem)	76	*qingnian* (youth)	35	*qingchun* (youthfulness)	35
4	*yuanshi* (academician)	40	*zuizhong* (ultimate)	54	*jingji* (economy)	263	*zheshi* (this is)	72	*qingchun* (youthfulness)	20	*rencai* (talent)	25
5	*guocheng* (process)	40	*tuandui* (team)	41	*xinwen* (news)	203	*yuanman* (successful)	52	*Weibo* (micro-blog)	19	Anhui	18
6	*tielu* (railway)	31	*yuanman* (successful)	41	*fazhan* (development)	155	*zhuxi* (chairman)	38	*Gongqingtuan* (CYL)	18	*jiti hunli* (group wedding)	16
7	*zuihao* (best)	29	*zhuyan* (leading actor)	37	*Xinhua* (Xinhua)	124	*kaimushi* (opening ceremony)	35	Anhui	17	*yexiao* (night school)	14
8	*tuandui* (team)	29	*guocheng* (process)	35	*Gongqingtuan Zhongyang* (Central CYL)	105	*zuihao* (best)	32	*meihao* (wonderful)	17	*fuwu* (service)	14
9	*guoqu* (past)	28	*guoqu* (past)	28	*zhijing* (tribute)	104	*zuizhong* (ultimate)	31	*shoucang* (collection)	17	*dasai* (competition)	14
10	*zuigao* (highest)	26	*weigui* (violation)	26	*renmin* (people)	103	*zuigao* (highest)	25	*anquan* (security)	15	aixin (love)	13
11	*zhuxi* (chairman)	26	*zhuren* (director)	25	*Xinhua She* (Xinhua News Agency)	99	*zuixin* (latest)	24	*quanguo* (nationwide)	14	*Zhongguo* (China)	13
12	*yuanman* (successful)	24	*jinji* (promotion)	24	*xiaofei* (consumption)	97	*guocheng* (process)	23	*zhijing* (tribute)	14	*xuanjiang* (lecture)	12
13	*kaimushi* (opening ceremony)	21	*kuoda* (expand)	23	*woguo* (our country)	95	*yuanshi* (academician)	21	*xuexi* (study)	14	*weilai* (future)	11
14	*zhudong* (initiative)	16	*tielu* (railway)	23	*guojia* (nation)	94	*guoqu* (past)	21	*dongfang* (oriental)	13	*zhiyuanzhe* (volunteer)	11
15	*zuixin* (latest)	15	*tuanhuo* (gang)	23	Ma'anshan	87	*tielu* (railway)	21	*jinri* (today)	12	*zhiyuan* (voluntary)	11
16	*zhewei* (this)	15	*shijiebei* (World Cup)	22	*zhengce* (policy)	86	*wanzheng* (complete)	21	*Zongshuji* (General Secretary)	12	*shoujie* (first session)	11
17	*guomin* (allergy)	15	*yuanshi* (academician)	22	*quanguo* (nationwide)	84	*zhujiao* (protagonist)	19	*zhenxuan* (selection)	12	*chuangye* (start-ups)	10
18	*guolai* (come over)	15	*zhuquan* (sovereignty)	22	*hangtian* (aerospace)	83	*zheci* (this time)	18	*chenggong* (success)	11	*qidong* (launch)	10
19	*tuanyuan* (reunion)	15	*weifa* (illegal)	21	*hangtianyuan* (astronaut)	77	*zhudong* (initiative)	18	*renmin* (people)	10	*shiwei* (Municipal Party Committee)	10
20	*tieqi* (iron cavalry)	15	*zhubo* (streamer)	18	anquan (security)	76	*tuandui* (team)	18	*wenhua* (culture)	10	*kuaile* (happiness)	10

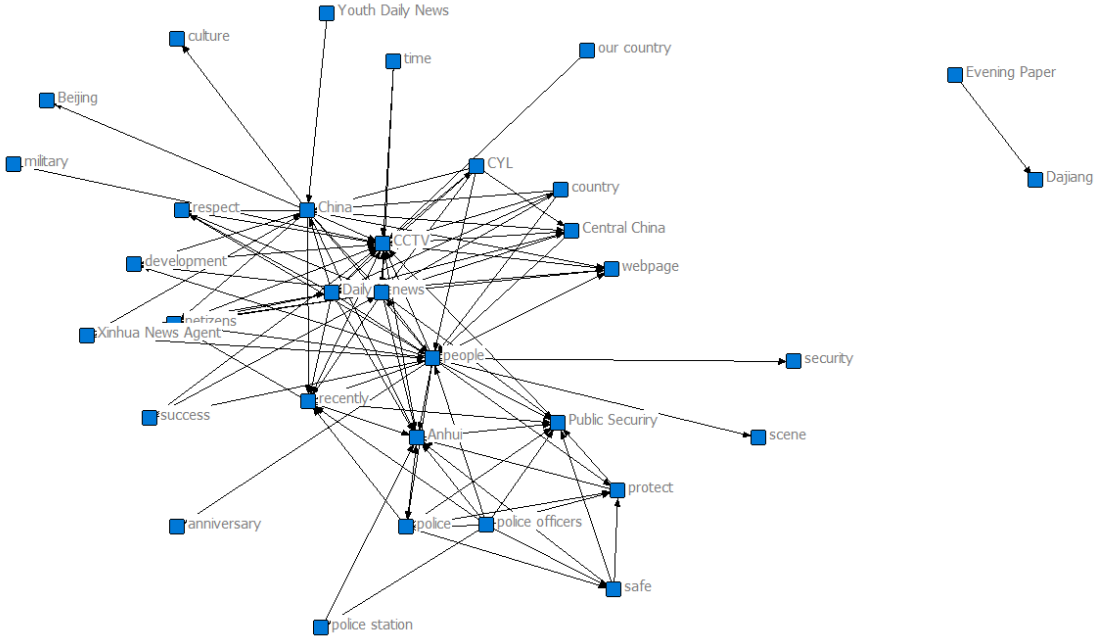


Figure 1: Semantic network of Wuhu CYL official Weibo account

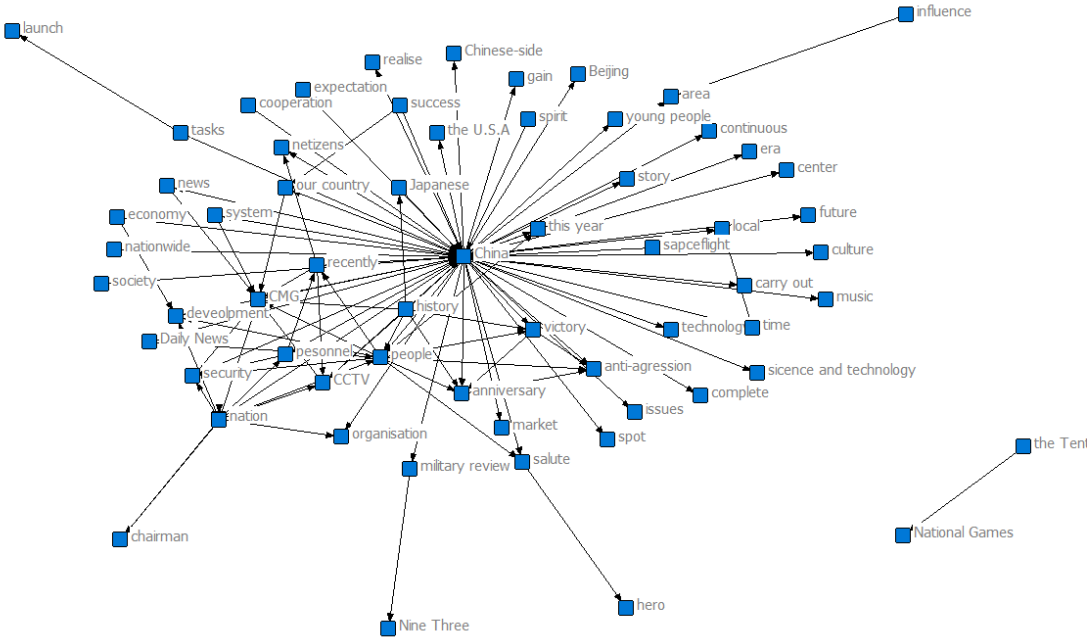


Figure 2:Semantic network of Bengbu CYL official Weibo account

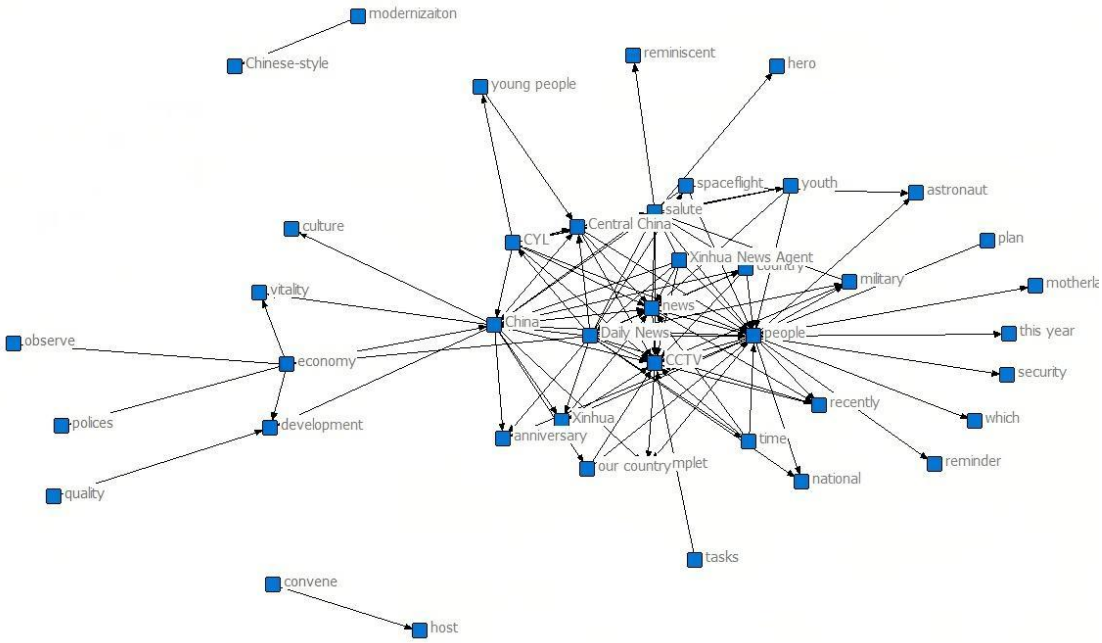


Figure 3:Semantic network of Ma'anshan CYL official Weibo account

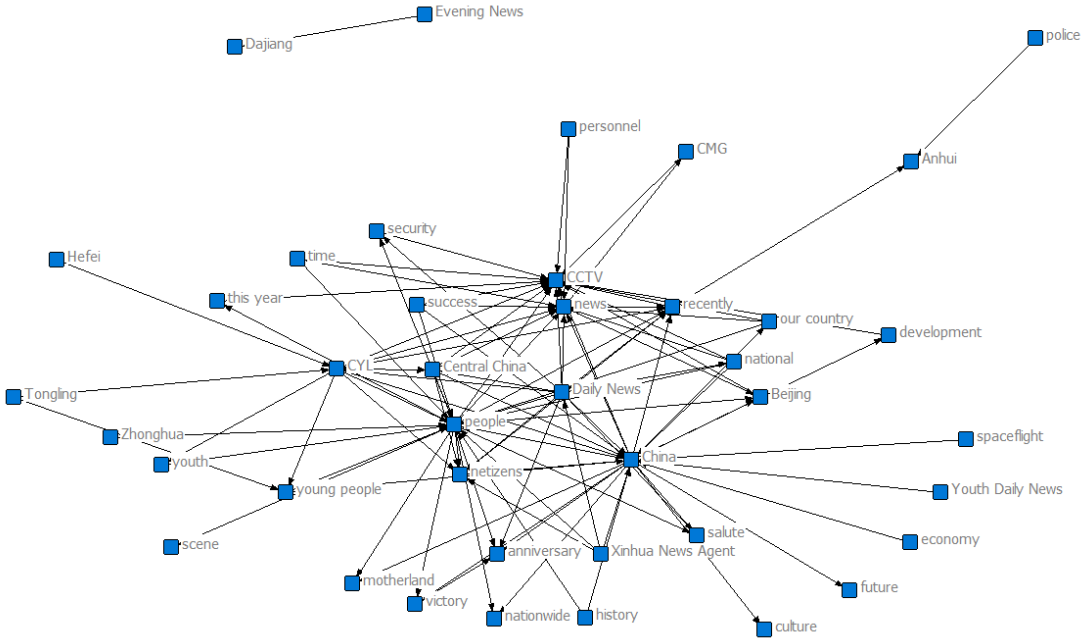


Figure 4:Semantic network of Hefei CYL official Weibo account

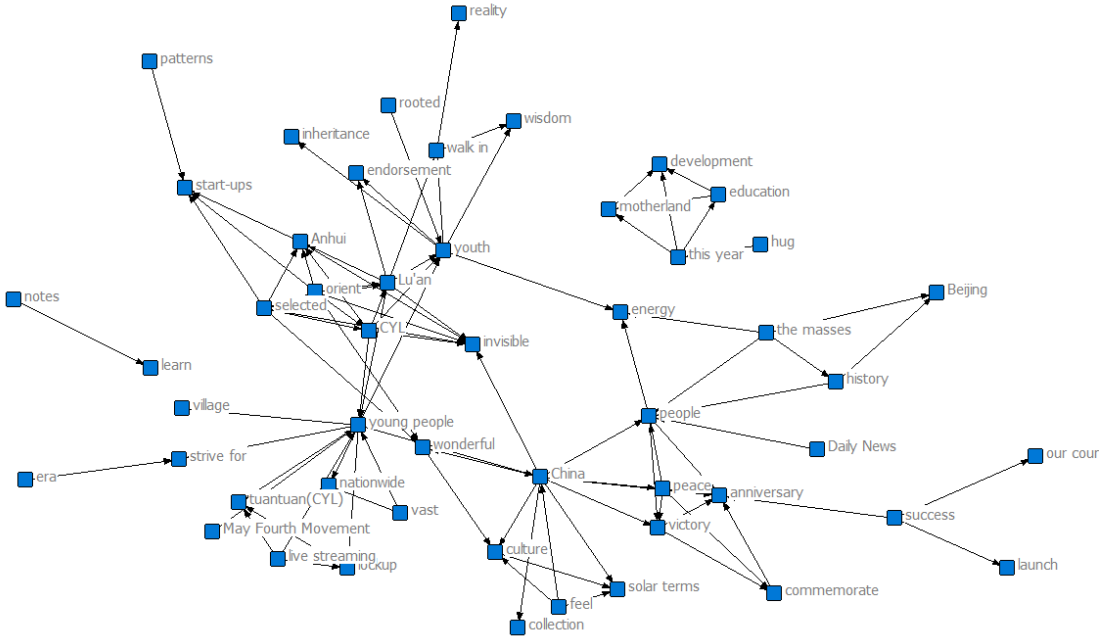


Figure 5:Semantic network of Lu'an CYL official Weibo account

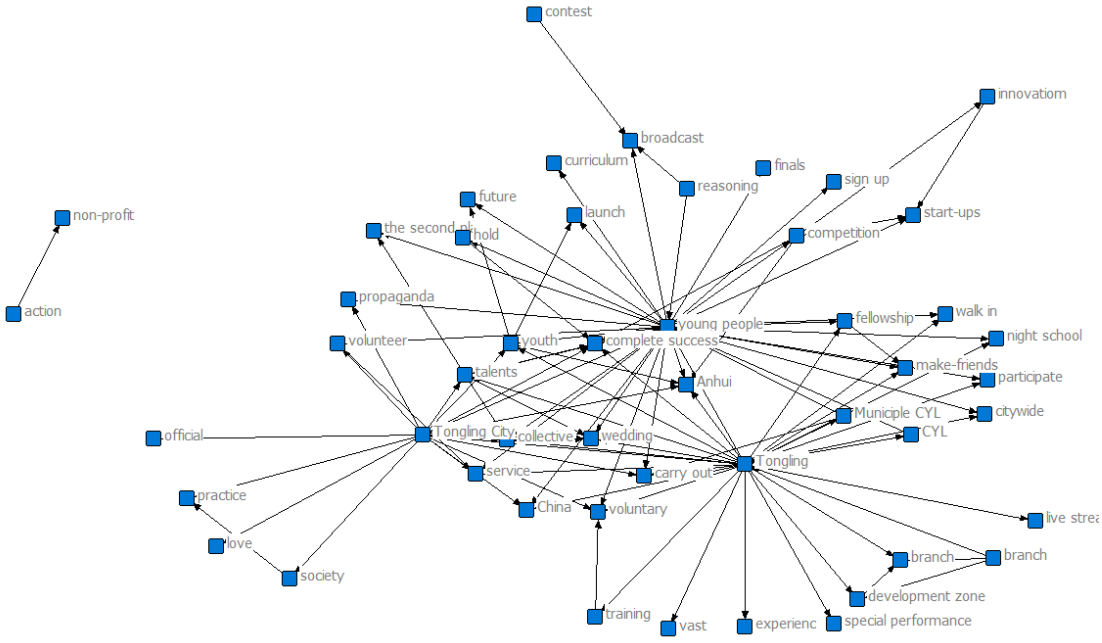


Figure 6:Semantic network of Tongling CYL official Weibo account

Note: CMG= China Media Group; CYL=Communist Youth League

Source: Authors' corpus analysis

Based on the data the high-frequency word list (Table 1) and the semantic networks (Figures 1–6), three prominent linguistic patterns of the six Weibo accounts can be concluded as following:

①Emphasis on Political Guidance and Dissemination of Mainstream Values

As shown in Table 1, some CYL official Weibo accounts of Ma'anshan and Lu'an are characterized as highly political-oriented guidance and dissemination of mainstream values. The

words “*Zhongguo* (China)” (Ma’anshan: 567 occurrences; Lu’an: 40), “*Zongshuji* (General Secretary)” (Lu’an: 12), and “*Gongqingtuan Zhongyang* (Central Committee of the Communist Youth League)” (Ma’anshan: 105) rank high in CYL official Weibo accounts of Ma’anshan and Lu’an. These rankings show their emphasis on political guidance. Specifically, the Ma’anshan Weibo account demonstrates prominent macro-political discursive characteristics. In its high-frequency word list, there is a cluster of authoritative media and macro-political terms, including “*Renmin Ribao*(*People’s Daily*)” (267), “Xinhua” (124), “*Gongqingtuan Zhongyang*(Central Committee of the Communist Youth League)” (105), “*zhijing*(salute)” (104), “*renmin*(people)” (103), and “*Xinhua She*(Xinhua News Agency)” (99). The semantic network of the Ma’anshan account (Figure 3) further supports this observation: nodes like “China,” “*People’s Daily*,” and “Weibo” are connected by dense lines, forming a highly interconnected core semantic circle. These findings indicate that the Ma’anshan account relies heavily on reposting and sharing content from authoritative media, systematically transmitting mainstream discourse to young receivers.

The Lu’an CYL account shows a similar discursive orientation, but differs notably in its integration strategy. In its semantic network (Figure 5), terms like “China” are closely clustered around the core node “Lu’an.” However, macro-political vocabulary accounts for a smaller proportion of the overall network than in Ma’anshan, indicating a more locally integrated approach to disseminating mainstream discourse.

②Focus on Local Youth Services and Responsiveness to Local Youth Needs

As shown in Table 1, some municipal CYL accounts tend to combine macro discourse with local youth services and shed lights on responding to local youth needs. In the high-frequency word list of Tongling CYL official Weibo account, “Tongling” (122 occurrences) ranks first, followed by “*qingnian* (young people)”(81), “*qingchun* (youth)” (35), “*rencai* (talent)” (25), “*jiti hunli* (group wedding)” (16), "*yexiao* (night school)" (14), and “*fuwu* (service)” (14). These terms mainly relate to local youth talent development, social networking, friendship activities, skills training and volunteer services. The semantic network of the Tongling account (Figure 6) also clearly reflects this discursive orientation: “Tongling” is the absolute core node, forming tight semantic associations with words such as “young people” “youth” “talent” “service” and “group wedding”. Macro-level terms such as “China” and “Communist Youth League” are relatively marginalised within this network. This pattern indicates that the semantic structure of the Tongling CYL official Weibo account takes localised youth services as its narrative mainline.

The Lu’an CYL official Weibo account shows a similar pattern, with “Lu’an” (51 occurrences) as the core node radiating outward to terms like “young people,” “wonderful,” “Anhui,” and “youth” in the semantic network (Figure 5). This forms a tripartite discourse integration structure of “locality–youth–values,” reflecting an effective connection between serving young people and building the city’s image.

③ Diversified Regional Discourse and Differentiated Strategies

The third linguistic feature is the diversified regional discourse and differentiated strategies across the six selected accounts. As presented in Table 1, municipal CYL official Weibo accounts differ significantly in the proportion of high-frequency words across semantic categories. Specifically, macro-political vocabulary accounts for the largest share (over 60%) of high-frequency words in the Ma’anshan CYL official Weibo account, while the same category accounts for less than 20% in the Tongling CYL account. The former leans toward

“upward-oriented messaging” (reporting to higher-level authorities), whereas the latter focuses more on “downward-oriented service” (responding to local youth needs).

In terms of semantic network structure, Lu’an and Tongling demonstrate typical “single-centre” radial structures, with “Lu’an” or “Tongling” as the local core nodes dominating the semantic organization of the whole network. Meanwhile, the macro-level issues are well integrated into the local discursive framework. The Ma’anshan account, in contrast, presents a “dense network” structure, with multiple core nodes such as “China”, “*People’s Daily*”, “economy” and “news” intertwined and densely connected, forming a high-density cross-issue semantic association.

The CYL official accounts of Bengbu, Hefei, and Wuhu lie between these two extremes, displaying mixed characteristics of both macro-issue attention and micro-affair handling. For example, in the semantic network of the Hefei account (Figure 4), the word “*wancheng* (complete)” has the densest connections, with numerous references to the “completion” status of various tasks, reflecting a strong task-oriented and transactional orientation.

In summary, the above word-frequency and semantic-network analyses jointly indicate that, in their daily discursive practices, these CYL official accounts present divergent strategies in combining youth political guidance and mainstream value dissemination with local youth service. Specifically, the strategies vary across different accounts: Ma’anshan adopts an authority-endorsed macro-political style, Tongling centers around local services, Lu’an integrates macro topics into the local framework, and Bengbu, Hefei and Wuhu show mixed characteristics.These patterns suggest that municipal CYL accounts strategically balance “being accountable to higher levels” (conveying macro-political discourse) and “serving downward” (responding to local youth needs), though the corpus alone does not establish why a particular account adopts a particular emphasis.

2. Keywords and Concordance Analysis

Keywords—words that occur with statistically significant frequency in a target corpus when compared against a reference corpus—serve as important indicators of thematic prominence and lexical distinctiveness. Through the statistical analysis of keywords and their collocational patterns, the lexical characteristics and underlying discursive priorities of texts can be systematically revealed (Liang, Li and Xu 2010, p.86).

To identify the keywords of the target corpus, this study constructed a reference corpus consisting of Weibo posts published from January 2024 to December 2025 by nine central, provincial, and municipal-level CYL official Weibo accounts ranked among the top ten nationally in the *2025 Government Affairs Weibo Influence Report*(2026). These include “@Central Committee of Communist Youth League” “@Henan Communist Youth League” “@Heilongjiang Communist Youth League” “@Chongqing Communist Youth League” “@Liaoning Communist Youth League” “@Jilin Communist Youth League” “@Chengdu Communist Youth League” “@Youth Beijing” and “@Fujian Communist Youth League” with a total of 9,001,358 Chinese characters. Using the corpus analysis tool AntConc 4.4.0, the top 20 keywords ranked by keyness (log-likelihood) were extracted from each of the six municipal-level CYL official Weibo accounts in Anhui Province (Tables 2-1 and 2-2).

Table 2-1: Top 20 Keywords of Local CYL official Weibo Accounts (Wuhu, Bengbu and Ma'anshan)

No.	Wuhu			Bengbu			Ma'anshan		
	Keywords	**Fre.**	**Keyness(Likelihood)**	**Keywords**	**Fre.**	**Keyness(Likelihood)**	**Keywords**	**Fre.**	**Keyness(Likelihood)**
1	*laiyuan* (source)	1082	4462.19	*jizhe* (reporter)	396	605.126	*Xinhuawang* (Xinhua Net)	92	678.62
2	Weibo	1465	1361.117	*Zongtai* (China Media Group)	187	501.425	*jingji* (economy)	221	657.081
3	Anhui	285	950.424	*mou* (certain)	222	241.044	Ma'anshan	67	439.345
4	*dianzan* (likes)	138	784.43	Bengbu	44	225.637	*Yangshiwang* (CCTV Network)	62	392.305
5	*zaixian* (online)	165	619.596	Wang Chuqin	118	221.884	Weibo	491	348.031
6	*minjing* (police officers)	312	606.939	*jiasha* (Gaza)	88	200.207	*zairen hangtian* (manned spaceflight)	37	272.886
7	*gongan* (public security)	192	604.48	Sun Yingsha	118	167.392	Shenzhou [spacecraft]	36	265.51
8	*xinwen* (news)	690	589.077	*Quanyunhui* (National Games)	89	128.266	*nian* (year)	467	259.677
9	*Renminwang* (People's Net)	286	584.13	*shoufang* (interviewed)	38	127.321	*Renmin Ribao* (*People's Daily*)	265	244.302
10	*Yangshiwang* (CCTV Network)	115	575.662	*yuebing* (military parade)	185	112.853	*xiaofei* (consumption)	96	239.853
11	Wuhu	97	477.204	*zan* (thumb up)	137	122.886	*guancha* (observation)	63	203.062
12	yi (one)	1414	474.016	*Meiguo* (the USA)	157	98.379	*shichang* (market)	74	201.72
13	*laoren* (elderly)	268	449.452	*zai* (in/at)	1617	94.121	*Gongqingtuan Zhongyang* (Central Committee of the CYL)	105	191.691
14	*Yangshi* (CCTV)	676	443.232	*dianying* (movie)	94	93.008	*xin* (new)	280	186.201
15	*Xinhuawang* (Xinhua Net)	75	426.286	*ying* (ying [name])	21	84.453	*zhengce* (policy)	86	185.619
16	*Zhongguo Qingnianbao* (*China Youth Daily*)	73	414.917	*yinyue* (music)	90	83.935	*goupiao* (ticket purchase)	25	184.377
17	*Renmin Ribao* (*People's Daily*)	547	377.046	*Zhongqingwang* (China Youth Network)	17	83.245	Shenshi [spacecraft]	25	184.377
18	*jingfang* (police)	155	328.428	*jiqiren* (robot)	90	81.795	*Jingji Ribao* (*Economic Daily*)	23	169.626
19	Xinhuashe (*Xinhua News Agency*)	251	317.076	Wang Manyu	50	80.051	*Zhongguo Qingnianbao* (*China Youth Daily*)	21	154.875
20	*shipin* (video)	1660	245.054	*zhuyan* (lead actor)	37	78.978	*yi* (one)	541	150.18

Table 2-2: Top 20 Keywords of Local CYL official Weibo Accounts (Hefei, Lu'an and Tongling)

No.	Hefei			Lu'an			Tongling		
	Keyword	Freq.	Keyness(Likelihood)	Keyword	Freq.	Keyness(Likelihood)	Keyword	Freq.	Keyness(Likelihood)
1	*laiyuan* (source)	512	1647.703	Lu'an	51	569.17	Tongling	42	521.402
2	Weibo	1614	1571.717	*zhenxuan* (selection)	11	115.415	Tongling City	35	467.885
3	Tongling	187	983.563	*hang* (line/industry)	25	86.064	*tong* (copper)	40	341.031
4	Anhui	258	803.054	*qingnian* (young people)	17	79.279	*Qingnian* (young people)	68	253.645
5	Hefei	149	595.189	*shihua* (poetic painting)	6	59.434	*rencai* (talent)	22	166.5
6	Wuhu	116	568.766	*dongfang* (orient)	12	57.325	*hunli* (wedding)	16	158.989
7	*Yangshi* (CCTV)	667	383.48	*meihao* (wonderful)	17	47.523	*yexiao* (night school)	14	146.91
8	*xinwen* (news)	561	307.625	*guyu* (Grain Rain)	7	46.155	*huodong* (activity)	36	135.939
9	*Renmin Ribao* (*People's Daily*)	527	306.286	*qingnian* (young people)	35	43.317	*hang* (line/industry)	24	116.124
10	*shipin* (video)	1808	299.689	*shi* (city)	16	42.781	*jiti* (collective)	16	107.32
11	*Gongqingtuan Zhongyang* (Central Committee of the CYL)	214	296.629	*bujian busan* (see you soon)	5	38.53	*shutuiban* (summer care class)	8	106.862
12	*Renminwang* (People's Net)	200	292.291	*shoucang* (collection)	17	36.501	*qingchun* (youth)	34	98.046
13	*jingji* (economy)	211	284.376	*youdai* (preferential treatment)	6	36.322	*aixin* (love)	13	95.801
14	Ma'anshan	59	276.989	*daiyan* (endorsement)	6	33.234	*jiangli* (reasoning)	7	93.501
15	Lu'an	54	267.506	*jinri* (today)	12	31.545	*xuanjiang* (publicity lecture)	12	91.9
16	*Wanbao* (Evening News)	61	239.65	*ren* (person)	6	29.275	*shoujie* (first session)	11	90.308
17	*Xinhuashe* (Xinhua News Agency)	224	231.812	*kua* (cross)	10	28.801	*la* (modal particle)	18	81.829
18	Dajiang	62	217.742	*shiba* (eighteen)	8	28.757	*Anhui Qingnian Chuangxin Chuangye Dasai* (Anhui Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition)	6	80.142
19	*jizhe* (reporter)	211	188.618	*nian* (year)	49	27.347	*tongling shiwei* (Tongling Municipal Party Committee)	6	80.142
20	*jingfang* (police)	110	171.2	*kaigong* (start construction)	5	26.798	*zhuanchang* (special session)	8	72.752

Source: Authors' corpus analysis

The keyword distribution of the six municipal CYL official Weibo accounts reveals clear systematic differences in how these accounts select discursive content, construct issue frames, and transmit ideology. These differences are interpreted from the four analytical dimensions:

discursive subject construction, issue-framing strategies, interactive contextualization, and hierarchical differentiation.

①Discursive Subject Construction: Visibility, Invisibility, and Authority Strategies

The first dimension concerns the visibility and invisibility of discursive subjects, as well as the strategies adopted for authority construction. In the keyword lists of the Wuhu and Hefei CYL official Weibo accounts, the word "*laiyuan* (source)" ranks first, with keyness values of 4,462.190 and 1,647.703, respectively. Concordance searches in AntConc reveal that its frequent collocational clusters include authoritative media terms such as"*Renmin Ribao* (*People's Daily*)" "*Renminwang* (People's Net)" and "*Gongqingtuan Zhongyang* (Central Committee of the CYL)" This "source-labelling" discursive practice indicates that these two accounts tend to establish discursive legitimacy through explicit citation of authoritative sources. Their strategy is essentially one of external authority endorsement—grassroots accounts function as "re-mediators" of information rather than "original source providers". This pattern can be understood through the lens of media system dependency theory (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur 1976): where local media actors operate within tightly integrated, vertically structured information environments, they are more likely to legitimate their discourse through affiliation with centralised authority sources rather than through autonomous discursive production. In terms of subject construction, discursive authority flows downward through posting and reposting, and local accounts, such as Ma'anshan account, gain credibility through their proximity to and faithful reproduction of national or provincial CYL Weibo posts.

In contrast, the keyword list of the Tongling CYL official Weibo account mainly consists of localized terms, such as "Tongling" "Tongling City" and "*tong*(copper)", with frequent collocational clusters such as "*qingnian* (young people)" and "*daxuesheng* (college students)". Notably, none of the authoritative media-type keywords appear in its top 20. The discursive authority of the Tongling CYL official Weibo account does not rely on external citations, but is constructed through internal subjectivity. It establishes discursive power by reinforcing the identity of "Tongling CYL" as the core service provider for local youth issues.. This alternative pathway to legitimacy aligns with theories of local governance autonomy in digital communication (Zheng, 2008): where local state actors have greater institutional discretion and operate in relatively autonomous media ecologies, they are more likely to build locally grounded discursive authority based on service provision and community identity, rather than through vertical chains of authoritative citation. Thus, the CYL official Weibo accounts of Wuhu and Hefei follow a "top-down" pathway of authority transmission, whereas the Tongling CYL official Weibo account adopts a "bottom-up" pathway of building service-oriented discourse.

② Issue-Framing Strategies: From Grand Narratives to Localised Service Frames

The second dimension concerns differences in issue-framing strategies. The Bengbu CYL's official Weibo account presents a distinctive issue structure, with international political terms such as "*jiasha* (Gaza)" "*yuebing* (military review)" and "*Meiguo* (the United States)" coexisting densely with sports-related terms including "Wang Chuqin" "Sun Yingsha" and "*Quanyunhui* (National Games)". This combination of "international conflict + competitive sports" essentially grafts topics of high interest to young people onto the implicit cultivation of national security awareness and patriotic sentiment. Through what is known as the anchoring effect of discourse framing (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974; Furnham & Boo 2011), the account directs audience attention to mainstream value dimensions including national identity and national pride.

With both external turbulence and domestic sporting excellence, the account constructs an implicit binary of "turbulent outside vs. stable inside", embedding ideological messages within seemingly neutral news coverage.

Similarly, the Ma'anshan CYL official Weibo account shows strong macro-political and economic discursive characteristics. Terms such as "*jingji* (economy)" "*xiaofei* (consumption)" "*zhengce* (policy)" and "*zairen hangtian* (manned spaceflight)" form a mutually reinforcing reference network with authoritative sources like "*Xinhuawang* (Xinhua Net)" and "*Renmin Ribao* (*People's Daily*)". This represents political socialization within a grand narrative framework, where the account acts as a transmitter of central policy discourses rather than creating locally relevant content. The high proportion of macro-economic and technological keywords shows that the Ma'anshan CYL account is deeply embedded in the national information dissemination chain, reflecting the city's industrial characteristics and strong institutional connections to central media infrastructures.

In contrast, the Tongling CYL official Weibo account focuses mainly on localized youth services. Frequent collocation clusters of the keyword "*qingnian* (young people)"include "*rencai* (talent)", "*hunli* (wedding)", "*yexiao* (night school)", "*shutuoban* (summer care class)", and "*jiti* (collective)". Its ideological function follows an indirect pathway: service satisfaction → organizational identification → political identification. It represents a routine, everyday form of ideological construction. Instead of explicitly stating political messages, this approach embeds value transmission in the practical delivery of youth services, letting ideological alignment emerge naturally from positive service experiences. This aligns with the concept of everyday statecraft (Scott, 1998; Li, 2007), in which legitimacy is built through the routine provision of public goods rather than explicit proclamation; however, whether this sequence occurs for actual audiences is not examined in this study.

③ Interactive Contextualisation: Emotional Connection and Discursive Power Adjustment

The third dimension concerns the construction of interactive contexts. In the Wuhu CYL official Weibo account, "*dianzan*(likes)"(keyness 784.430) and "*zaixian*(online)" (keyness 619.596) have high keyness values. Concordance searches show frequent collocations include "*Renmin Ribaov*(*People's Daily*)" "*zhijing*(salute)" "*jiayou*(cheer up)" and "*ni*(you)", showing the account emphasizes building emotional connections with its audience. By using affective expressions that simulate interpersonal communication, it softens the hierarchical and distant tone typical of institutional discourse. This strategy can be seen as a form of discursive power flexibility (Fairclough 1989): through strategic use of informal, emotionally resonant linguistic markers, institutional actors can soften the coercive dimensions of authority while retaining their underlying ideological objectives.

The particle "*la*" in the Tongling CYL official Weibo account and "*bujian busan*(see you there)" in the Lu'an CYL official Weibo account signal a similar "downward discourse adjustment" that matches young people's everyday language habits. This is essentially a calculated exercise in discursive softening: by giving up some formal markers of discursive authority, these accounts gain greater audience acceptance and emotional closeness, which in turn improves the effectiveness of ideological communication. This is best treated as an interpretation of the linguistic features observed; their effect on actual audience is not measured here.

④Hierarchical Differentiation and the Stratified Media Ecosystem

A horizontal comparison reveals a clear hierarchical pattern among these accounts. The Ma'anshan CYL official Weibo account shows the highest intensity of macro-political discourse, with over 60% of its top 20 keywords being macro-political terms, while the Tongling CYL official Weibo account has the highest intensity of localised service discourse, with macro-political keywords almost entirely absent. The other four cities 'official Weibo accounts fall along a continuum between these two poles. This pattern suggests that the discursive strategies of municipal-level CYL accounts are systematically shaped by their position in the local government new media ecosystem, although the present data support correlation rather than causation.

In a word, the systematic differences among the six municipal CYL accounts in Anhui Province in four aspects—discursive subject construction, issue-framing, interactive contextualisation, and hierarchical positioning—essentially reflect strategic trade-offs made by municipal CYL organizations balancing "political attributes" and "service functions" within institutional and media-systemic constraints.

3. Sentiment Analysis

Using ROST CM6 software, this study conducted sentiment analysis on the self-built corpus of the six municipal-level CYL official Weibo accounts in Anhui Province from 2024 to 2025. This analysis produced the overall proportions of positive, neutral, and negative sentiments for each account (Figure 7), along with the hierarchical distribution of sentiment intensity (Figure 8).

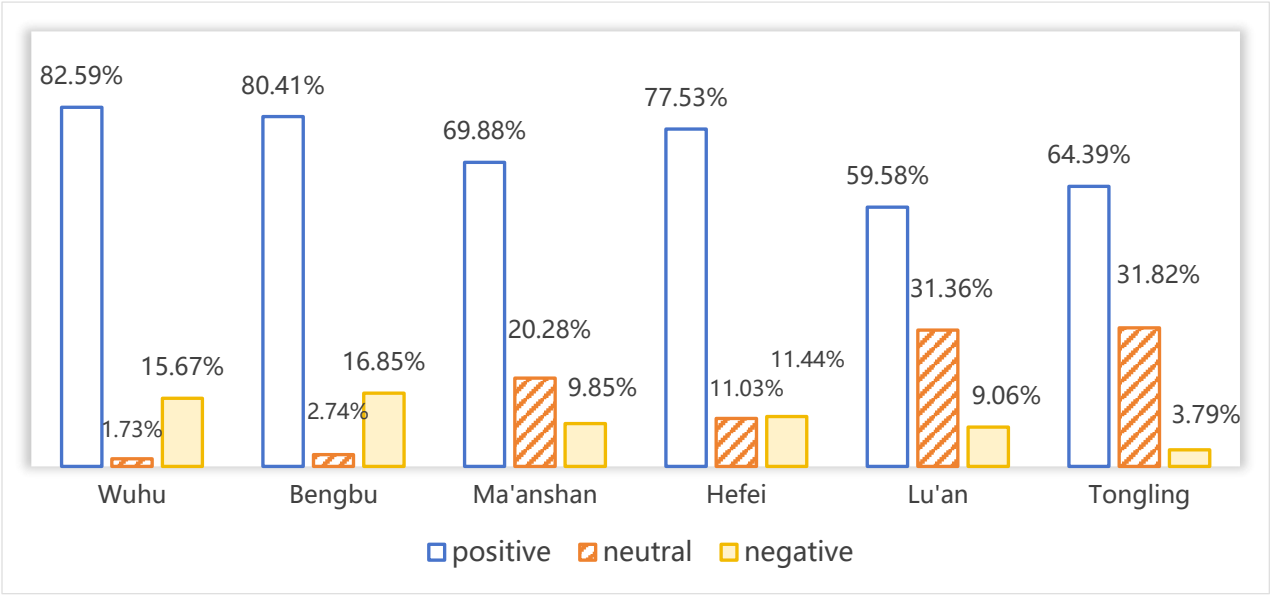


Figure 7: Distribution of sentiments of the local CYL Weibo accounts

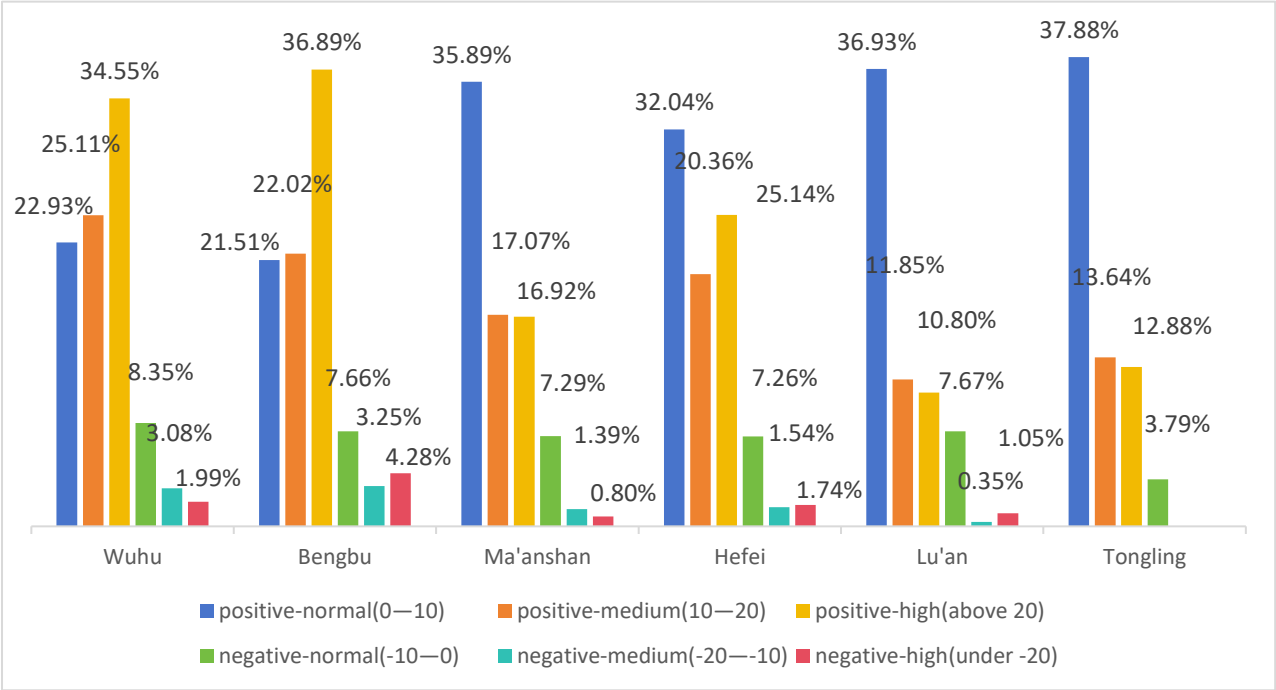


Figure 8: Distribution positive and negative sentiment intensity of the local CYL Weibo accounts

Source:Authors' corpus analysis

Figures 7 and 8 reveal clear differences across the six accounts in the proportions of positive, neutral, and negative sentiments, as well as in the gradations of sentiment intensity.

As shown in Figure 7, the proportions of positive sentiment for CYL official Weibo accounts of Wuhu, Bengbu, Ma'anshan, Hefei, Lu'an, and Tongling are 82.59%, 80.41%, 69.88%, 77.53%, 59.58%, and 64.39%, respectively. While positive sentiment dominates across all accounts—reflecting the officially prescribed communicative stance of the CYL as a political youth organisation—a clear inter-city gradient is evident. Positive sentiment for the CYL official Weibo accounts of Wuhu, Bengbu, and Hefei all exceed 77%, whereas that for Lu'an and Tongling remains below 65%.

In terms of neutral sentiment, CYL official Weibo accounts of Wuhu (1.73%) and Bengbu (2.74%) have near-zero levels, Ma'anshan (20.28%) and Hefei (11.03%) fall in the middle range, and Lu'an (31.36%) and Tongling (31.82%) are markedly higher. Negative sentiment also varies considerably: Wuhu (15.67%) and Bengbu (16.85%) show notably higher proportions than other cities, while Lu'an (9.06%) and Tongling (3.79%) are relatively low.

The sentiment intensity gradations in Figure 8 further illustrate the layered nature of emotional expression. Regarding positive sentiment intensity, high-positive intensity posts from the CYL official Weibo accounts of Wuhu and Bengbu stand at 34.55% and 36.89%, respectively, far exceeding those of other accounts, while their normal-positive intensity proportions are relatively low at 22.93% and 21.51%. This indicates a tendency towards intensely positive emotional language. In contrast, the normal-positive intensity proportions of the CYL official Weibo accounts of Ma'anshan, Lu'an, and Tongling all exceed 35%, while their high-positive intensity proportions remain below 17%, indicating a more moderate emotional register. For negative intensity, Bengbu's high-negative intensity reaches 4.28%, Wuhu's stands at 1.99%, all others are below 1.75%, and Tongling's CYL official Weibo account registers 0%. This suggests

negative sentiment is predominantly concentrated in a very small number of posts concerning adverse events or critical responses.

From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, these sentiment distributions are not just statistical variations; they represent active ideological construction and power-relation adjustments made by municipal CYL accounts in their discursive practices. The following analysis proceeds along four dimensions.

①Positive Sentiment as Institutionalised Affective Governance

The predominance of positive sentiment reflects the "positive publicity" (*zhengnengliang* orientation) that permeates Chinese state-affiliated digital communication and with the positioning of the CYL as the primary agent of youth political and ideological communication in China. However, the level of positive sentiment is closely tied to each account's discursive strategy: the high positive intensity in the CYL official accounts of Wuhu, Bengbu and Hefei coincides with their macro-discursive characteristics (reposting authoritative media and covering national issues such as aerospace and sports), whereas the lower positive sentiment of the CYL official accounts of Lu'an and Tongling coincides with a localised, service-oriented style that places more weight on factual reporting and restrained emotional expression.

②Dual Method of Neutral Sentiment and the Service–Propaganda

Differences in neutral sentiment proportions reflect a fundamental distinction between "service-oriented" and "propaganda-oriented" Weibo discourse. The CYL official Weibo accounts of Lu'an and Tongling have neutral sentiment exceeding 30%, while the Wuhu and Bengbu accounts have near-zero neutral proportions. This contrast shows that the former use objective, neutral language to share service information—such as night school courses, collective wedding arrangements, and summer care classes—aiming to build a service-oriented discourse that prioritizes practical action and transparent information. The latter, by contrast, almost completely avoid neutral expression, wrapping every topic in strongly emotional language, with the goal of turning every post into an opportunity for emotional mobilization—a propaganda-oriented discourse that puts informational function secondary to affective persuasion. Whether either strategy is more effective is beyond the scope of the corpus.

③ Negative Sentiment and the Openness of Issue-Framing

Negative sentiment distribution is related to how open issues are framed. The CYL official Weibo accounts of Wuhu and Bengbu have markedly higher negative sentiment proportions than those in other cities.Combined with the keyword analysis above, these two accounts cover more open and potentially contentious topics, including international conflicts (e.g., "*jiasha* (Gaza)") and social hotspots. Such topics tend to elicit diverse opinions from netizens during interactions, and negative sentiment accumulates through user comments and replies. In contrast, the CYL official Weibo accounts of Lu'an and Tongling focus on local services and avoid contentious issues, leading to extremely low negative sentiment. This difference shows that accounts make different strategic choices between "political guidance" and "risk avoidance". The former embrace issue openness as a way to demonstrate relevance and engagement, but pay the cost of higher negative sentiment; the latter prioritize discursive safety and stability, but may limit their ability to address young people/s concerns about broader social and political issues. Since the analysis is confined to posted text, the extent to which these differences reflect user comment dynamics cannot be established here.

④Sentiment Intensity Gradation and Ideological Function

The gradation of sentiment intensity serves different ideological functions. High-positive sentiment is concentrated in the CYL official Weibo accounts of Wuhu and Bengbu, used in grand narratives such as national achievements and model commendations to stimulate youth pride and patriotic sentiment. Normal-positive sentiment, by contrast, is widely used in routine services and event previews, maintaining an approachable institutional image without excessive emotional expression. This graded application of "high intensity for major events, low intensity for minor matters" ensures political seriousness while avoiding emotional fatigue. However, the near-absence of neutral expression in the Wuhu and Bengbu accounts also raises questions about discursive credibility: if every post—regardless of topic—uses equally intense positive emotion, the authenticity and trustworthiness of the discourse may erode over time, consistent with the concept of emotional habituation (Berger, 2011). This is a concern about a possible longer-term effect; it is not demonstrated by the present data.

In summary, the sentiment distribution patterns of the six municipal CYL accounts in Anhui Province are not random data fluctuations, but systematic projections of their discursive strategies at the emotional level. The CYL official Weibo accounts of Wuhu and Bengbu use high-intensity emotional mobilization to maximize affective appeal and ideological impact. The CYL official Weibo accounts of Lu'an and Tongling follow low-affect service narratives that prioritize stability and discursive safety, but may weaken the penetrating power of political guidance. These differences are essentially adaptive adjustments made by municipal CYL organizations when balancing the dual goals of "guidance" and "service"in locally different institutional and media environments.

V. Conclusion and Discussion

This study built a corpus of 2,133,609 Chinese characters from the official Weibo accounts of six municipal Communist Youth League committees in Anhui Province and analysed it through high-frequency words, semantic networks, keywords with concordance, and sentiment measurement, interpreted within a critical discourse-analytical framework. The discussion below is organised as five findings. All in all, they describe how a group of municipal accounts reproduces, adapts and at points softens the discursive authority of the wider youth league system.

1. Discussion of Findings

Finding 1: three strategic types of municipal-level CYL discourse is detected. The corpus separates the six accounts into an authority-reposting type (Wuhu, Hefei and Ma'anshan), which builds its discourse from cited authoritative media and macro-political reference and whose own voice is largely that of the sources it carries; a local-service-oriented type (Lu'an and Tongling), which organises meaning around place names, youth services and activity information and secures its standing through usefulness to local young people; and a contrast-narrative type (Bengbu), which alternates between international conflict and domestic sporting achievement. This result agrees with the existing literature on one point and departs from it on another. Studies of central and provincial accounts have consistently reported a movement towards a more colloquial and "youthified" register (Yang, 2014; Fu & Wang, 2020), and that movement is present in all six accounts examined here. What the literature has not established is that the balance between political guidance and local service is itself patterned, still less that it takes recognisably different forms at the municipal level. The studies available for comparison are overwhelmingly single case analyses of prominent accounts (Long, 2013; Wei, 2020; Xie, 2024), and a single case cannot distinguish a local variant from a general norm. Once six accounts in one province are measured on the same instruments, the

variation appears neither random nor merely stylistic but organised.

Finding 2: the variation is consistent with institutional position. The variation among the six accounts forms a gradient. Accounts in cities more closely integrated into provincial and central media networks concentrate their vocabulary on macro-political and economic themes and act as relay nodes, passing centrally produced discourse downwards with limited local adaptation; accounts in cities with more autonomous media environments foreground local services and place identity. This is consistent with media system dependency theory, which predicts that actors in vertically integrated information environments will secure legitimacy by affiliation with authoritative sources rather than through independent production (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976). It also extends accounts of central-local relations that treat local discretion as a property of fiscal and administrative arrangements (Zheng, 2008), by showing that the same differentiation is legible in the ordinary language of government communication. However, it should be emphasized that the corpus is descriptive and correlational: it demonstrates that discourse differences co-vary with the institutional positions of the accounts, yet it can neither confirm that position causes the observed differences, nor rule out the influence of the teams managing these accounts.

Finding 3: authority is largely transmitted rather than generated. "*Laiyuan*" (source) has the highest keyness value in the Wuhu and Hefei lists, and its collocational range is dominated by named national media and central youth league bodies, whereas the Tongling account contains almost none of these markers and constructs its standing through consistent identification with local youth services. The practice of reposting authoritative content has been noticed before, but has been treated as a matter of operational convenience rather than as an index of where an account stands in a hierarchy of voice (Wei, 2020; Xie, 2024). Two explanations are available and need not exclude one another: accounts with less capacity for in-house production depend on external sources for credibility, and accounts in tighter vertical reporting relationships have stronger reasons to display alignment. The cost is the same in either case. Source-labelling solves the problem of legitimacy while leaving the account without a recognisable voice of its own; readers learn what the central organisations think and little about what the municipal committee thinks, although it is the latter that local youth can address.

Finding 4: affect is administered rather than merely expressed. All six accounts are predominantly positive, but they differ sharply in how that positivity is distributed. Wuhu, Bengbu and Hefei concentrate emotion in high-intensity expressions and leave almost no room for neutral reporting, while Lu'an and Tongling keep more than thirty per cent of their output neutral and reserve strong affect for major occasions. Research on sentiment in government communication has generally treated positive tone either as an outcome to be described or as a variable affecting engagement (Berger, 2011), and has paid little attention to how affect is graded from one topic to another. The corpus suggests that gradation is where the ideological work is done, since a rule of strong feeling for major events and weak feeling for routine matters produces a scale of importance in which national achievements are what one feels strongly about and administration is what one merely receives. This reading of the intensity data is interpretive; it describes the patterning of the text, not a demonstrated effect on readers.

Finding 5: youthification is concentrated at the margins, and service-centred discourse may carry a depoliticisation risk. Colloquial markers, sentence-final particles and greetings appear mainly in event previews, festival posts and service notices, while policy interpretation and ideological communication continue to be written in formal institutional language. The

service-centred accounts achieve identification indirectly, through service satisfaction, then organisational identification, and only then political identification, which is consistent with accounts of everyday statecraft, in which legitimacy is produced by the routine provision of public goods rather than by explicit persuasion (Scott, 1998; Li, 2008). What the present evidence adds is a cost the previous research has not emphasised. Where service content steadily displaces political content, an account's capacity to address the contentious matters young people actually discuss weakens, and its effectiveness as a service provider reduces the occasions on which an audience encounters an explicit political position. These are hypotheses about audience-facing consequences that require reception data to test; they should be read as directions for future work rather than as findings established here.

In a word, the five findings describe one structural situation. Each account works at the point where a vertically organised political system meets a locally differentiated audience, and each resolves the tension by oscillating between two poles: transmitting authority downwards, or building local standing through service. The three types are the visible forms of that movement, and the differences in sourcing, framing, address and affective range recorded are its costs and compensations. What appears from outside as variation in communication style is better understood as variation in how a shared institutional problem is settled locally. The following section draws the practical consequences and state the limits of what this evidence can support.

2. Implications for Policy and Practice

Two sets of limitations qualify these findings, and four lines of future work follow.

The first set concerns the sample and its representativeness. Six municipal accounts from a single province, observed over two years, keep the provincial policy environment constant and so allow a controlled comparison, but they cannot show how far the three types travel beyond Anhui Province. The typology is best read as a scheme for ordering cases, not an exhaustive classification. Several further constraints follow. The accounts were selected from a national influence ranking, which means they are among the more active and visible municipal accounts. Therefore, this self-built corpus may over-represent accounts that have already adopted a coherent strategy, while under-representing the full scope of municipal practices, including those with weaker or inconsistent performance.Six accounts are also insufficient to support statistical generalization, and classification relies on researchers' judgment when interpreting word lists, networks, and concordances; no inter-coder reliability check or independent validation of the typology has been carried out. Finally, the two-year sphere covers only a single period, so it cannot show whether these patterns remain stable over time, or whether they change along with shifts in leadership, policy priorities or platform evolution.

The second set concerns what a corpus can and cannot show.The analysis is confined to text, so the images, video, and emoji accompanying much microblog content, and the comment threads around it, are excluded. It examines production rather than reception, so the effect of these strategies on young audiences is inferred from design rather than established. And because the account is the unit of analysis, the interaction between posting practice and audience response goes unexamined. The sentiment measurement also has methodological limits: ROST CM6 uses a dictionary-based approach that may not fully capture sarcasm, irony, context-dependent meaning or domain-specific youth language, and both automatic tokenisation and manual proofreading carry the risk of error and of analyst subjectivity. The observed distributions should therefore be treated as indicative rather than as exact measurements. Given these constraints, the

causal-sounding interpretations in the analysis should be read as interpretive hypotheses, not as demonstrated outcomes.

Four lines of work follow. Firstly, extending the comparison to other provinces, and to same-level accounts with different resources, would test the typology's external validity. Besides, linking corpus features to institutional indicators would allow the institutional-position explanation to be tested against alternative explanations, such as team capacity or leadership preference. Furthermore, multimodal analysis could uncover the layers of meaning not addressed in this study. And combining discourse analysis with audience research (surveys, focus groups, or systematic analysis of comment threads), which could show whether the strategies reach the audiences for which they are designed and whether their intended effects occur.

3. Concluding Remarks

Discourse is the ordinary instrument through which youth work is carried on, and the question these accounts answer in practice, one post at a time, is what it means to speak to young people on behalf of an institution. The corpus shows that the answer is locally variable, that the variations cluster into recognisable types, and that they follow the position an account occupies in the youth league system rather than the preferences of the individuals who operate it.

Two consequences follow. For practice, the effectiveness of political communication at this level appears to depend less on the content of any single message than on whether an account's established discursive position is consistent with its institutional role and with what local audiences expect of it. For research, the value of working at the municipal level with corpus methods lies in making the local settlement of a general problem visible: central-local relations in China's digital governance are usually studied through institutional and policy documents, and the evidence assembled here suggests that they are also legible in the vocabulary of a municipal microblog post.

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