Verifying the Authorship of the Yasunari Kawabata Novel *The Sound of the Mountain*

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Abstract: Yasunari Kawabata was a famous Japanese novelist and the winner of the 1968 Nobel Prize in Literature. However, considerable debate persists concerning the authorship of his novel, *The Sound of the Mountain*, which some claim was in fact written by another celebrated author, Yukio Mishima. In this research, we attempt to resolve this issue by applying character bigrams, part-of-speech bigrams, and phrase pattern analysis stylometric features, and principal component analysis, hierarchical cluster analysis, and random forests as authorship attribution methods. As a result, we obtained compelling evidence to show that Yukio Mishima was not the author of *The Sound of the Mountain*.

Keywords: Yasunari Kawabata, ghostwriter, authorship attribution, principal component analysis, cluster analysis, random forest.

1. Introduction

Statistical authorship analysis began in the nineteenth century with the pioneering work of Thomas Corwin Mendenhall [1]. Among Mendenhall’s first forays into this field was his demonstration of the frequency at which Dickens, Thackeray, and Mill used words of certain lengths in their works. Later, he would apply this process to the writings of Shakespeare and Bacon, through which he revealed that the most frequent word length in Shakespeare’s works is four letters, but three letters for Bacon [1-2]. Yule [3] extended Mendenhall’s study to sentence length, while Zipf [4] exerted a potent influence on this field through the creation of his famous Zipf’s Law. Generally, modern authorship attribution is considered to have begun with Mosteller and Wallace’s study [5] on “The Federalist Papers,” a collaborative written work consisting of 146 political essays authored by John Jay, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison. Critics had debated the authorship of 12 of the 146 essays, with some attributing them to Hamilton and others to Madison. Mosteller and Wallace applied Bayesian statistical analysis to several function words impressively determined the authorship. Since the 1990s, the authorship attribution field has experienced dramatic developments due to advancement in natural language processing, multivariate statistical analysis, and machine learning. Modern statistical authorship attribution methods are regularly applied to the literature field in order to determine the true authors of anomalous writings. For example, Noel et al. [6] reported that the writing style attributed to Francis Bacon differs in his autobiographic writings, and Juola [7] revealed that *The Cuckoo’s Calling*, a novel published under the name “Robert Galbraith,” was actually written by J. K. Rowling.

In Japanese classic literature, Yasumoto [8] applied statistical and computational methods in the 1950s to resolve the issue of *The Tale of Genji*’s authorship. Later, Tsuchiyama and Murakami [9] highlighted that *The Tale of Genji* may have been written by two
authors. Uesaka and Murakami [10] have also found
evidence that some writings attributed to Saikaku
Ihara were actually written by his disciple.
Accompanying the development of Japanese tokenizer
and parser tools, a series of powerful stylometric
features for conducting modern Japanese authorship
attrition have been in use since the 1990s. Jin and
Murakami [11] revealed that the position of commas
in a text is an excellent stylometric feature for
determining Japanese authorship attribution. Further,
Jin [12-13] proposed that the n-grams of particles and
phrase patterns are also powerful stylometric features
and Matsuura and Kanada [14] reported that the
distribution of character n-grams is useful for
Japanese authorship attribution. Aside from literature,
authorship attribution methods have also been applied
in the forensic field. Jin [15] determined the author of
an anonymous letter written in an attempt at life-insurance fraud, and Zaitsu and Jin [16] applied
authorship attribution methods to the famous “Glico-Morinaga” criminal case. From the perspective
of classification methodology, machine learning
classification algorithms are a growing trend in modern Japanese authorship attribution solutions [17]. Jin [18] proposed
the adoption of an integrated classification algorithm
for avoiding collisions between classification results
derived from different pairs of stylometric features
and machine learning algorithms. The integrated
classification algorithm combines the results of plural
stylometric features and classifiers under the majority
classification rule.

Yasunari Kawabata (Jun 11, 1899-Apr 16, 1972) was a famous Japanese novelist. His masterpieces,
such as Snow Country, Thousand Cranes, and The Old
Capital, won him the 1968 Nobel Prize in Literature,
which made him the first Japanese winner of the prize.
Kawabata was orphaned at the age of four and he lost
most of his close relatives, including his older sister,
grandmother, and grandfather, before he was fifteen. It
has been claimed that he suffered from mental
disorders as a result of his losses and that he was
addicted for a long time to sleeping pills, which he
took in order to alleviate anxiety. As result of his
mental condition, critics have postulated that some of
his works may have been written by ghostwriters. The
Sound of the Mountain, one of his most famous novels,
is one such work.

The Sound of the Mountain is included in the
Bokklubben World Library's list of the 100 greatest
works of world literature. It was serialized in eight
different magazines from 1949 to 1954. There are
two reasons for suspicions that was a ghost written.
One is that the serialization occurred over five years,
which is much longer than most serializations. The
other is that The Sound of the Mountain is much
longer than Kawabata’s other works. Table 1 gives
detailed information on when each chapter of The
Sound of the Mountain was published and the
magazines in which each was featured.

A possible ghostwriter of The Sound of the Mountain
is Yukio Mishima (Jan 11, 1925-Nov 25, 1970), who
was also a famous Japanese novelist, renowned for his
novels Confessions of a Mask, The Sound of Waves,
and The Temple of the Golden Pavilion. He was also on
the final shortlist for the 1968 Nobel Prize for
Literature.

Table 1  Chapters of The Sound of the Mountain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Publishing date</th>
<th>Magazine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sep 1949</td>
<td>Kaizoubungei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Oct 1949</td>
<td>Gunzou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Oct 1949</td>
<td>Shincyo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dec 1949</td>
<td>Sekaihunshu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Apr 1950</td>
<td>Kaizou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>May 1950</td>
<td>Shincyo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Oct 1950</td>
<td>Bungakukai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mar 1951</td>
<td>Gunzou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Jun 1951</td>
<td>Bessatsubungeishunshu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Oct 1951</td>
<td>Shincyo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Jan 1952</td>
<td>Shincyo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Jan 1952</td>
<td>Bessatsubungeishunshu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Apr 1952</td>
<td>Kaizou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Apr 1952</td>
<td>Bessatsubungeishunshu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Oct 1952</td>
<td>Bessatsubungeishunshu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Apr 1953</td>
<td>O-ruyomimono</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mishima greatly respected Kawabata because Kawabata had given him considerable advice and assistance writing literature. Consequently, it has been suggested that in order to return the favor Mishima may have written *The House of the Sleeping Beauties* for Kawabata.

Previous literature has made several arguments concerning the ghostwriter question of *The Sound of the Mountain*. Itasaka [19] suggested that *The Sound of the Mountain* was actually written by Mishima. As proof of his claim, he states that he was informed as such by Mishima’s wife. However, Koyano, in his book about Kawabata [20], insisted that *The Sound of the Mountain* could not have been written by a ghostwriter. Murakami [21] nonetheless found that the writing style of Kawabata changed after the publication of *The Sound of the Mountain*. Murakami applied comma position and principle component analysis (PCA) to detect variations in the stylometry of Kawabata’s novels. The result of this study indicated that *The Sound of the Mountain* may not have been written by Kawabata because a different comma position was used in the novel. Although these studies have been unable to definitively settle the ghostwriter question of *The Sound of the Mountain*, Murakami’s study can now be enhanced through the application of several new features, as many effective stylometric techniques and methods have been developed since his research [12-13].

The authorship attribution approach for *The Sound of the Mountain* consists of three main steps. First, we built a corpus of works for both Kawabata and Mishima, then, we extracted stylometric features from the corpora and each chapter of *The Sound of the Mountain*. Finally, we selected classification algorithms to classify all the documents in the corpora and determine which group *The Sound of the Mountain* belongs to.

This paper is organized as follows: in section two, we introduce the novels selected for the corpora of both Kawabata and Mishima. Then, in section three, we introduce three stylometric features for ghostwriter verification. In section four, we present the mechanisms of three powerful methods for authorship attribution. In section five, we show the results of the authorship attribution methods and reveal the more likely author of *The Sound of the Mountain*. Besides the authorship problem, in section six we also discuss features of Kawabata’s and Mishima’s writings. Finally, in section seven we summarize the conclusion drawn by this research and discuss possible future work.

2. Corpora

We selected twenty representative novels from both the Kawabata and Mishima collections. The list of selected novels is shown in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected novels from the collected writings of Yasunari Kawabata and Yukio Mishima</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yasunari Kawabata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achirakochirade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenohi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayamenouta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hebi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iwanikiku</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iznoodoriko</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kakesu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kitanoumikara</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kubiwa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minaihitot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mizuumi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natsutofuyu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osyougatsu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saminme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sasabune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satogaeri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senwatsuru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suigetsu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yokocyou</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Stylometric Features

We extracted comma position, part-of-speech (POS) bigrams, and phrase patterns in terms of semiotics, morphology, and syntax.

3.1 Comma Position

Punctuation has been proven to be a powerful stylometric feature for authorship attribution [22-23]. Baayen et al. [24] showed that analyzing punctuation frequency is an effective means of improving the performance of authorship attribution methods. Zheng et al. [25] achieved relatively high accuracy in this regard by applying a combination of function words and punctuation marks. As in other languages, punctuation marks are widely used in Japanese. Jin and Murakami [11] revealed that the combination of commas and Chinese characters or kanas1 that precede them is a useful and robust stylometric feature. This is because comma positioning is usually an unconscious decision by an author and preferences can differ between authors. The three most common comma and kana combinations are “de,” “wa,” and “ga.” We chose the 22 most frequently used comma styles and the kanas that precede them to constitute a stylometric feature. Hence, the feature matrix size of comma position is 40×22.

3.2 Part-of-speech (POS) bigrams

Part-of-speech (POS) n-grams have been applied to many authorship attribution issues in various languages. Binongo and Smith [26] used 25 prepositions to find differences between Oscar Wilde’s plays and essays. Unlike English or other European languages, Japanese sentences are not naturally divided by spaces. Consequently, we used a Japanese morphological analyzer called MeCab to separate Japanese sentences into morphemes. For example, Table 3 shows the result of analysis of the Japanese sentence “Ronbun wo kaku”(“Write papers”). The POS bigrams in this example are “noun_particle,” “particle_verb,” and “verb_punctuation.” We combined the variables that appear in less than half of our samples (less than 20) into one variable in order to reduce the dimension of the variables. Consequently, the feature matrix size of POS bigrams was 40×117.

3.3 Phrase Patterns

Phrase pattern is a powerful stylometric feature that can be extracted in terms of syntax [13]. The Japanese parser (Cabocha) was used to separate Japanese sentences into phrases. Phrases were defined as the smallest units that a sentence could be divided into before the parts became unnatural [13]. A phrase pattern is a combination of two parts. One part is the original form of the inherent particles and symbols, while the other part contains the POS of the other materials, except for the particles and symbols in the same phrase. Table 4 shows the two phrase patterns of the sentence “Ronbun wo kaku.” One phrase pattern is “noun_wo,” the other one is “verb_.” Phrase patterns that appeared less than twenty times were combined into one variable. The feature matrix size for phrase pattern was 40×474.

4. Methods

Unsupervised and supervised machine learning algorithms are commonly used in modern authorship attribution research. In this study, we used principle component analysis (PCA) and hierarchical cluster analysis (HCA) as unsupervised methods.

1kana is a component of the Japanese writing system.
Then, as the supervised method, we used random forest (RF).

We normalized the datasets using the formula shown below. In this formula, $f_{ij}$ is the frequency of each variable in each sample, this was converted into relative frequency using this formula.

$$x_{ij} = \frac{f_{ij}}{\sum_{j=1}^{n} f_{ij}}$$

### 4.1 Principal component analysis

Principal-component analysis (PCA) is a well-known, unsupervised method which has been widely used in authorship attribution studies [11-13]. This method uses orthogonal transformation to compress original high dimensional variables into linear uncorrelated ones so that the relationship between the samples can be discussed using lower-dimensional scatterplots. The lower-dimensional variables are called “principal components.” Parallel analysis (PA) was employed to determine the significant variable loadings for each component. The main concept of PA is to compare the eigenvalues of PCA and the relative PA eigenvalues from the generated random-data matrix. Component PCA eigenvalues are retained if they are greater than their respective component PA eigenvalues [27].

When there are two necessary principal components, the principal components can be used to represent the relations between texts in a two-dimensional space. PCA can be performed through a variance-covariance matrix or correlation-coefficient matrix. In this study, we chose to use a correlation-coefficient matrix. The necessary steps for PCA [28] are shown below.

Suppose we have a p-dimensional dataset, which has been normalized as an average equal to zero.

$$X_{n \times p} = \begin{bmatrix} x_{11} & \cdots & x_{1p} \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ x_{n1} & \cdots & x_{np} \end{bmatrix}$$

Average of each variable:

$$\bar{x}_j = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} x'_{ij}$$

Covariance:

$$s_{ij} = \frac{1}{n-1} \sum_{i=1}^{n} x_{ij} x_{iv}$$

Correlation coefficient:

$$r_{iv} = \frac{s_{ij}}{\sqrt{s_{ij} s_{iv}}}$$

Correlation coefficient matrix:

$$R_{p \times p} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & \cdots & r_{1p} \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ r_{1p} & \cdots & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

Eigen equation:

$$R R = \lambda R$$

Eigen values of the correlation coefficient matrix:

$$\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \ldots, \lambda_p (\lambda_1 \geq \lambda_2 \geq \ldots \geq \lambda_p > 0)$$

Eigen vectors:

$$h_1 = \begin{bmatrix} h_{11} \\ \vdots \\ h_{p1} \end{bmatrix}, h_2 = \begin{bmatrix} h_{12} \\ \vdots \\ h_{p2} \end{bmatrix}, \ldots, h_p = \begin{bmatrix} h_{1p} \\ \vdots \\ h_{pp} \end{bmatrix}$$

Constraint condition:

$$h_1^T h_1 = 1, h_2^T h_2 = 1, \ldots, h_p^T h_p = 1$$

Principal components:

$$y_1 = h_{11} x_1 + h_{21} x_2 + \cdots + h_{p1} x_p$$

$$y_1 = h_{12} x_1 + h_{22} x_2 + \cdots + h_{p2} x_p$$

$$\vdots$$

$$y_p = h_{1p} x_1 + h_{2p} x_2 + \cdots + h_{pp} x_p$$

In this study, we apply parallel analysis to determine the number of components to retain. In parallel analysis, PCA eigenvalues are compared with PA eigenvalues, which are generated from a matrix of random values. The PCA eigenvalues are retained if they are greater than the PA eigenvalues.

### 4.2 Hierarchical cluster analysis

Hierarchical cluster analysis (HCA) is a kind of cluster analysis that allows classification through the building of a hierarchy of clusters. Two main points in HCA are the selection of a cluster, combination method and the distance between samples. We show the overall process of the HCA algorithm [31] in Table 4. $d_{ij}$ in the table represents the distance
between two clusters or individuals $i$ and $j$, and let cluster $i$ contain $n_i$ objects. Let $D$ represent the set of all remaining $d_{ij}$.

Ward’s method and KLD were selected because they have been proven to have the best performance in datasets used for authorship attribution research [30]. The Ward method is a well-known cluster combination method in which two clusters are combined when the ratio of between group variance and within group variance is minimal [29]. In Table 4, the coefficients of the distance equation for Ward’s method are $\alpha = \frac{n_i + n_j}{n_i}$, $\alpha_j = \frac{n_j + n_m}{n_m}$, $\beta = \frac{-n_m}{n_m}$, $\gamma = 0$, $n_{km} = n_i + n_j + n_m$.

KLD is an improvement on Kullback-Leibler distance. The effective performance of KLD has been proven [29]. The formula of KLD is shown below.

$$KLD(X,Y) = \frac{1}{2} \left[ \sum_{i=1}^{n} x_i \log \frac{2x_i}{x_i + y_i} + \sum_{i=1}^{n} y_i \log \frac{2y_i}{x_i + y_i} \right]$$

We introduced model-based clustering criteria in this research. Model-based clustering uses Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) to determine the number of clusters [30].

4.3 Random Forest

Random forest (RF) is an ensemble classification algorithm which has shown very impressive performance in regard to solving statistical classification problems [32]. RF has been proven to be a powerful machine learning algorithm in the authorship attribution field [33]. The results from using RF for classification depend on the majority vote of the decision trees. Table 5 shows the algorithm for the use of RF for classification in [31, 34-35].

5. Result

5.1 Results of PCA

5.1.1 Commas

Figure 1 shows the result of the parallel analysis of the comma position. From Figure 1, we can see that the first and second eigenvalues of PCA are greater than the randomly resampled data. Therefore, we chose to discuss the first and second components using a scatterplot.
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According to the result of the parallel analysis of comma position, we have created a scatterplot of the first and second principal component score, which is shown in Figure 2. We can see that the novels of Kawabata and Mishima form individual groups on the scatterplot. All 16 chapters of *The Sound of the Mountain* were plotted on the side relating to Kawabata. We can conclude from this scatterplot that, compared to the writings of Mishima, *The Sound of the Mountain* is more likely to have been written by Kawabata.

### 5.1.2 POS bigrams

Figure 3 shows the results of a parallel analysis on POS bigrams. We chose to discuss the first and second principal components because the eigenvalues decrease sharply between them.
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5.1.3 Phrase patterns

We can see from Figure 4 that most novels by Kawabata and Mishima can be divided into two groups according to the first and second principal component. The novels of Kawabata appear on the left side of the plot while Mishima appear on the right. Nearly all chapters of *The Sound of the Mountain* were plotted on the Kawabata’s side. This result shows that, in terms of POS bigrams, *The Sound of the Mountain* is more likely to have been written by Kawabata.

5.1.3 Phrase patterns

In Figure 5, we can see that the eigenvalues decrease sharply between the first and second principal components. Therefore, these two principal components were discussed.
Verifying the Authorship of the Yasunari Kawabata Novel *The Sound of the Mountain*

5.2 Results of HCA

5.2.1 Commas

Figure 7 shows the result of BIC and the proper number of clusters between the works of Kawabata and Mishima in regard to comma position. This figure shows that EEI does not fit our data because it
achieved the highest BIC for its eighth component. The second-highest BIC score was obtained by VEI, for which all of the data were divided into three clusters. However, for EEE, BIC was lower at the third component than the second. As a result of the above analysis, we chose to divide the data into two clusters.

Two clusters are shown in Figure 8, with most of Mishima’s novels in one, and Kawabata’s in the other. All chapters of The Sound of the Mountain are located in Kawabata’s cluster. This means that all chapters of The Sound of the Mountain are classified as Kawabata. The result reveals that the author of all chapters of The Sound of the Mountain is Yasunari Kawabata.

5.2.2 POS bigrams

Figure 9 shows the result of BIC in regard to POS bigrams. According to Figure 9, we can see that the two clusters are necessary for interpreting the classification result of POS bigrams.

Figure 10 shows the result of HCA in regard to POS bigrams. We can see that all chapters of The Sound of the Mountain are located in Kawabata’s cluster, which means that all chapters of The Sound of the Mountain are classified as having been written by Kawabata.

5.2.3 Phrase patterns

Figure 11 shows the result of BIC in regard to the phrase patterns feature. This figure also reveals that two clusters are sufficient for analyzing the result of the cluster analysis in regard to phrase patterns.

In Figure 12, all chapters of The Sound of the Mountain are located within Kawabata’s cluster, which means that all chapters of The Sound of the Mountain are classified as having been written by Yasunari Kawabata.

5.3 Result of RF

Unlike PCA and HCA, RF classification involves a supervised machine learning method. Application of the RF algorithm to the anonymous discrimination involves two steps. Firstly, the learning process, which means training the RF with data extracted from the corpora of Kawabata and Mishima; secondly, the prediction process, in which stylometric features extracted from all chapters of The Sound of the Mountain, were used as test data for RF to predict which group they belong to. The result of the prediction process is shown in Table 8.

![Fig. 7 Clustering number for comma position](image-url)
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Fig. 8  Dendrogram of comma use

Fig. 9  Cluster number of POS bigrams
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Fig. 10  Dendrogram of POS bigrams

Fig. 11  Clusternumber of phrase patterns
Fig. 12  Dendrogram of phrase patterns

Table 8  Predication result of RF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Comma position</th>
<th>POS</th>
<th>Phrase pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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Table 9 Effective features for classification

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comma</th>
<th>POS</th>
<th>Phrase pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>re,</td>
<td>auxiliary verb_pre-noun adjective</td>
<td>noun_mo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ki,</td>
<td>independent verb_suffix</td>
<td>nominal verb_verb_auxiliary verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toki,</td>
<td>period_symbol</td>
<td>nominal verb_wa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As is shown in this table, the predication results show that all 16 chapters of *The Sound of the Mountain* are classified as having been written, as compared to the works of Mishima.

6. Discussion

In the results section, we can see that some novels by Kawabata and Mishima are categorized into different groups. The fact that Kawabata advised Mishima on some of his writings may explain some of this similarity. Except for these few works, Kawabata’s and Mishima’s novels can be divided into two distinct groups. In this section, we attempt to analyze the use of words and expressions for this classification. In order to achieve this, we applied a decreased Gini index to analyze the features of Yasunari Kawabata and Yukio Mishima. In the RF algorithm, the decrease in Gini index shows us the importance of the variables. A variable is more important when the decrease of Gini is smaller. We list the effective variables of all three features in Table 9.

From Table 9 we can see that the biggest difference between Kawabata and Mishima in regard to the three stylometric features are “re,” “auxiliary verb_pre-noun adjectival,” and “noun_mo.” These stylometric features reflect a difference in use between the novels of Yasunari Kawabata and Yukio Mishima.

7. Conclusion

In order to determine the true author of *The Sound of the Mountain*, we first extracted the comma positioning, POS bigrams, and phrase patterns from the prepared corpora. Secondly, we applied PCA, HCA, and RF to the three stylometric features to perform classification. According to the results, we can conclude that, compared to Yukio Mishima, *The Sound of the Mountains* more likely to have been written by Yasunari Kawabata. The analysis of features in the novels shows us that the effective markers for distinguishing Yasunari Kawabata and Yukio Mishima are “re,” “auxiliary verb_,” pre-noun adjectival,” and “noun_mo.”

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