

A RITUAL GENRE OF A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE AS A POTENT MEANS OF INFLUENCING AN ADDRESSEE

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INTRODUCTION

Modern linguistic science, based on the principle of anthropocentrism, has estimated the issue of language and personality as the core one in the realm of research endeavors. Striving to solve this challenging problem, scholars scrutinise the products of a person's speech activity from different perspectives. One of the crucial issues under consideration is the effectiveness of linguistic and non-linguistic means employed by the speaker to influence an addressee. Researchers focus their attention on the thorough analysis of the category of incentive modality in the aspect of influencing the addressee¹; sentence comprehension specifics²; they study assertive and suggestive language of pro-social messages meant to produce the desirable effect on the addressee³; conduct suggestive strategies analysis in political advertising and political slogans⁴; study persuasiveness and suggestiveness features of the discourse⁵.

Although the issue of linguistic and nonlinguistic influence is of high priority for many researchers, there has not been conducted a profound study of a Christmas message as the embodiment of a ritual genre in the aspect of an addressee's targeted impact, that constitutes the topicality of

¹ Shynkaruk V., Kharchenko S. Communicative-functional potential of incentive modality in psycholinguistic dimension. *Psycholinguistics*. 2020. № 28 (2). P. 183–203. DOI: 10.31470/2309-1797-2020-28-2-183-203.

² McElree B. Sentence comprehension is mediated by content-addressable memory structures. *Journal of psycholinguist research*. 2000. № 29. P. 111–123. DOI: 10.1023/A:1005184709695.

³ Still waters run deep: Comparing assertive and suggestive language in water conservation campaigns / D. Katz et al. *Water*. 2018. № 10. P. 275. DOI: 10.3390/w10030275.

⁴ Kovalevska A. Ukraine's political advertisement: suggestion realization strategies analysis. *Лінгвістичні студії*. 2010. № 40 (1). P 112–121. DOI: 10.31558/1815-3070.2020.40.1.9.

⁵ Zaitseva M., Lypko I. Features of persuasiveness and suggestiveness in legal discourse. *Psycholinguistics*. 2018. № 23 (2). P. 81–93. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1199138.

the research. The aim of the study is to analyse verbal means employed in a Christmas message by top officials of the countries to influence an addressee successfully. The following tasks are set forth:

(1) to analyse the peculiar features of the a ritual genre of a Christmas message;

(2) to research the functional specifics of addressability;

(3) to study the relevance of precedent phenomenon and universal concepts usage by top officials in the perspective of influencing an addressee;

(4) to analyse the specifics of lexical, stylistic and rhetorical means choice in the pursuit of influencing an addressee.

The interdisciplinary nature of modern linguistics determines the emergence of anthroposoriented scientific directions at the nexus of various humanitarian fields, among which political linguistics, where the genre of a Christmas message belongs to, takes a special place. In the modern information saturated society, the problem of political linguistics is foregrounded in active use of speech technologies in order to influence the recipients.

Macmillan dictionary offers the following definitions of the lexeme “manipulation”:

(1) behaviour that influences someone or controls something in a clever or dishonest way;

(2) the process of skillfully handling, controlling, or using something;

(3) the use of your hands to move or press part of someone’s body as a part of a medical treatment;

(4) the process of changing, correcting, or moving information stored on a computer⁶.

It should be noted that like many other polysemous concepts, the word manipulation has a figurative meaning. In a figurative sense, manipulation is defined as a conjuring or self-serving action of a deceptive nature, the purpose of which is to create various illusions in the mind of the object of manipulation when perceiving any phenomena of reality⁷. In this context, the essence of the manipulator’s actions is reduced to a skillful control not of any device, but to a virtuoso effect on

⁶ Macmillan dictionary. URL: <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/manipulation> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁷ Ермаков Ю.А. «Мягкая сила» социально-политических манипуляций человеком. *Известия Уральского федерального университета. Серия 1 «Проблемы образования, науки и культуры»*. 2013. № 4 (119). С. 215–225.

the attention and consciousness of a person through the use of various techniques.

According to van Dijk⁸, “manipulation implies the exercise of a form of illegitimate influence by means of discourse: manipulators make others believe or do things that are in the interest of the manipulator, and against the best interests of the manipulated”. Holiday⁹ draws the attention to the fact that manipulation in media “exploits the difference between perception and reality”.

Some scholars view manipulation as a constructive phenomenon that is beneficial for both the subject and the object of manipulation. Zivaljevic¹⁰ sees the aim of positive manipulation in facilitating “delivery and maintenance of a functional, productive employee equally beneficial for both, the organisation and the individual involved”. The researcher notes that positive manipulation is often used as a hidden motivation in various production organizations. Motivation should be strong enough to make people do what they don't want to do. Otherwise, the tasks that are imposed on the employee will not be perceived as desirable. The goal of the positive manipulation is to increase the functionality and productivity of an employee. The result of using manipulation tools and techniques in this way can benefit both the organization (ensuring high-quality work) and employees (providing work and a remuneration system). Moreover, positive manipulations “is considered to be particularly effective in a time of economic downturns when jobs are scarce”¹¹.

The word “manipulation” is also often used as a synonym for “influence”, “suggestion”, “persuasion”. In this regard, we consider it necessary to define the meaningful boundaries between these concepts in order to estimate the specifics of the term “manipulation” more clearly.

Influence is understood as “the effect that a person or thing has on someone's decisions, opinions, or behavior or on the way something

⁸ van Dijk T.A. Discourse and manipulation. *Discourse & Society*. 2006. № 17 (2). P. 359–383.

⁹ Holiday R. What is media manipulation? *A definition and explanation*. July, 16, 2012. URL: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ryanholiday/2012/07/16/what-is-media-manipulation-a-definition-and-explanation/?sh=42db3ba39397> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

¹⁰ Zivaljevic A. Positive manipulation theory. A base for continuous motivation. URL: <https://www.managementexchange.com/sites/default/files/media/posts/documents/Positive%20%20Manipulation%20Theory.pdf> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

¹¹ Ibid.

happens”¹². Suggestion is defined as “a process of communication resulting in the acceptance with conviction of the communicated proposition in the absence of logically adequate grounds for its acceptance”¹³. Persuasion is understood as a “symbolic process in which communicators try to convince other people to change their attitudes or behavior regarding an issue through the transmission of a message, in an atmosphere of free choice”¹⁴.

The listed definitions demonstrate how closely these concepts are interrelated. It is obvious that both influence, suggestion, and persuasion presuppose direct subject-object communication. Moreover, all of these phenomena are procedural, dynamic in nature and are aimed at changing the inner condition of a person or a group of people.

Material and Methods

Methods and methodology applied in this research are stipulated by the aim and tasks of the study. The study is based on the principles of cognitive^{15, 16, 17, 18} and intent analysis^{19, 20} of the political discourse.

To solve the tasks set in the research the following methods are employed:

¹² Macmillan dictionary. URL: https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/influence_1?q=Influence+ (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

¹³ McDougall W. Some general or non-specific innate tendencies. Chapter 4. *An introduction to social psychology* (Revised Edition). Boston : John W. Luce & Co., 1926. P. 93–124. URL: https://brocku.ca/MeadProject/McDougall/1926/1926_04.html (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

¹⁴ Perloff R.M. The dynamics of persuasion communication and attitudes in the twenty-first century. New York : Routledge, 2020. 576 p.

¹⁵ Browse S. Cognitive rhetoric. The cognitive poetics of political discourse. Amsterdam : John Benjamins, 2018. 235 p.

¹⁶ Chilton P. Manipulation, memes and metaphors: the case of Mein Kampf. *Manipulation and ideologies in the twentieth century* / L.D Saussure, P. Schulz (Eds.). P. 15–55. Amsterdam : John Benjamins, 2005.

¹⁷ Diaz-Peralta M. Metaphor and ideology: Conceptual structure and conceptual content in Spanish political discourse. *Discourse & communication*. 2018. № 12. P. 28–148.

¹⁸ Hart C. Critical discourse analysis and metaphor: Toward a theoretical framework. *Critical discourse studies*. 2008. URL: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/1640665.pdf> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

¹⁹ Dickerson P. “I did it for the nation”: Repertoires of intent in televised political discourse. *British journal of social psychology*. 1998. № 37 (4). P. 477–494.

²⁰ Слово в действии: Интент-анализ политического дискурса / Т.Н. Ушакова и др. Санкт-Петербург : Алетейя, 2000. 314 с.

(1) descriptive and observation methods that belong to general scientific methods are used to identify specifics of the ritual genre of a Christmas message in the aspect of influencing an addressee;

(2) methods of theoretical analysis and synthesis made it possible to systematise and generalise the collected data.

Among the special linguistic methods involved there is:

(3) the method of contextual and interpretative analysis to determine the functional load of linguistic and non-linguistic means of exerting influence on an addressee of a Christmas message;

(4) the method of cognitive and pragmatic interpretation analysis was used to identify the impact potential of lexical units employed;

(5) the stylistic analysis was applied to specify stylistic means an addresser resorts to striving to reach out an addressee.

The research material comprises Christmas messages delivered by Elizabeth II, the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; Donald John Trump, the 45th president of the United States, and Melania Trump; Justin Trudeau, the 23rd Prime Minister of Canada during five consecutive years 2016–2020 (2017–2020 for Donald and Melania Trump).

1. Addressability and the ritual genre of a Christmas message

Addressability is the inner nature of any speech production. As Bakhtin points out, the appeal, addressability of an utterance is its constitutive feature, without which an utterance does not exist and cannot exist²¹.

Addressability is viewed as the orientation to the interlocutor²². It is crucial for any personal interaction as the primary initiator of communication expects a certain response from the partner, so he has to, in addition to planning the content of his message, foresee both the attitude of the interlocutor to this message and the attitude towards himself, as well as the psychological effect that the message can produce on the interlocutor. Based on these tasks, while structuring the message, the addresser should construct a model of the addressee's personal traits, conceptualise his personality in order to correctly predict the effectiveness of the message.

²¹ Бахтин М.М. Эстетика словесного творчества. Москва : Искусство, 1986. 445 с.

²² Леонтьев А.А. Психология общения. Москва : Смысл ; Академия, 2005. 368 с.

Vorobyova²³ considers addressability as a category of discourse, which with the help of semantics and structure of discourse reflects the orientation of the latter to the intended addressee of communication; orientation to a hypothetical addressee sets a specific model of discourse interpretation and is the semantic base of the text reception.

Addressability is not only a content parameter of the speech intended for the addressee, it also affects the form of speech, forcing the speaker to take into account social, educational, professional, personal and other parameters of the addressee, as well as his psychophysical state.

Semantic categories focused on the addressee include:

(1) informativity, as the main purpose of an utterance is to convey certain information to the addressee;

(2) expressiveness (it is focused on the addressee, as it aims to interest, influence, impress him);

(3) transparency (the degree of speech clarity for the addressee)²⁴.

Addressability may vary in the degree of specification of the addressee's image, for example, in the mass media. In this case, the addressee's image affects the addresser's speech by determining: (a) the functional style and genre of speech; (b) its compositional structure; (c) metalanguage; (d) metatext constructions of speech authorization and addressing²⁵.

The most obvious way to demonstrate the addressability of any speech message is its representation at the syntactic level, where the addressee is expressed by a separate syntactic formula, called an address in traditional syntax. Addressability is considered to be a cross-cutting grammatical (morphological) category that has specific means of expression, namely, lexical and grammatical classes (addressable-personal pronouns, substantive and adjective vocatives, addressable substitutes), special grammatical indicators (addressable-personal verb forms, forms of the imperative mood of the verb, vocative case)²⁶.

²³ Воробьева О.П. Лингвистические аспекты адресованности художественного текста (одноязычная и межъязычная коммуникация): дис. ... докт. филол. Наук : 10.02.19. Москва, 1993. 382 с.

²⁴ Гак В.Г. Прагматика, узус и грамматика речи. *Иностранные языки в школе*. 1982. № 5. С. 11–17.

²⁵ Формановская Н.И. Речевое общение: коммуникативно-прагматический подход. Москва : Рус. яз, 2002. 216 с.

²⁶ Полонский А.В. Категориальная и функциональная сущность адресатности (на материале русского языка в сопоставлении с польским): дис. ... докт. филол. наук : 10.02.01. Белгород, 1999. 451 с.

The concept of a speech genre was introduced by an outstanding philosopher and literary critic Bakhtin²⁷ at the beginning of the twentieth century to define fixed thematic, compositional and stylistic types of utterances. The semiotic essence of a speech genre is manifested in the fact that speech genres are foregrounded in the addressee's mind through a hint, they appear as a unity of form and meaning (communicative meaning), which native speakers master in communication and which, as a rule, is associated with conventional tactical moves of communicants in discourses²⁸.

At the present stage of linguistics research the theory of speech genres is being developed by many linguistic schools that demonstrates the diversity of studies in this area. The following approaches to understanding the linguistic nature and essence of a speech genre are suggested, namely: a speech genre is viewed as:

- (1) a stylistic phenomenon;
- (2) a type of an utterance;
- (3) a textual phenomenon;
- (4) a communicative phenomenon;
- (5) A. Vezhbitska's concept, according to which any speech genre is based on an emotional and cognitive frame²⁹.

In modern communicative linguistics, a speech genre is considered to be a complex set of speech acts, therefore, speech acts constitute a certain speech genre or its specific implementation³⁰.

According to the studies in the field of linguistic genology, speech acts and speech genres are discourse components³¹. Genre studies proceed from the standpoint of the dialogical nature of a speech genre and are based on Bakhtin's³² integral dialogical and cultural philosophy. A speech genre is viewed as a verbal formalization of a typical situation of people's social interaction. In the aspect of linguistic genology, speech

²⁷ Бахтин М.М. Эстетика словесного творчества. Москва : Искусство, 1986. 445 с.

²⁸ Бацевич Ф.С. Лінгвістична генологія: проблеми і перспективи. Львів : ПАІС, 2005. 264 с.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Кожина М.Н. Речевой жанр и речевой акт (некоторые аспекты проблемы). *Жанры речи*. 1999. № 2. С. 52–61.

³¹ Дементьев В.В. Теория речевых жанров. Москва : Знак, 2021. 600 с.

³² Бахтин М.М. Эстетика словесного творчества. Москва : Искусство, 1986. 445 с.

genres³³ are understood as certain patterns that embody the specifics of human behaviour in various stereotypical situations that make up the continuum of life, and in that way structuring it. A speech genre is defined as “a micro-rite, which is a verbal formalization of interaction between communication partners”³⁴.

For genre studies the addressee factor is the starting point of the pragmatic analysis of a particular speech genre.

Yakhontova³⁵ offers a comprehensive model of genre analysis that comprises eight stages, namely: Stage 1. Analysis of situational and contextual factors of genre functioning → Stage 2. Analysis of the mode and substrate of the genre; research corpus formation → Stage 3. Analysis of formal structuring of genre texts and their spatial and textual localization → Stage 4. Analysis of the cognitive structure of the genre and cognitive-rhetorical strategies for its foregrounding → Stage 5. Analysis of genre (text) elements → Stage 6. Analysis of the key features of speech foregrounding → Stage 7. Reverse and verification → Stage 8. Comparative and integrative. The researcher points out that it is always possible to modify or simplify the genre analysis procedure (that is to reduce the number of stages suggested in the model pattern) in accordance with research goals and capabilities.

The communicative nature of a speech genre is foregrounded by the fact that it regulates the relationships of individuals of a certain society; it serves the purpose of being a speech stereotype for building strategies and tactics of communicative discourse. A speech genre is a communicative category of language code organization, a certain typified model that contains linguistic and extralinguistic parameters of the participants' communicative behavior, who implement their intentions within a typical communicative situation. A speech genre is as an important discourse category and a complex set of speech acts. The main communicative features of a speech genre are dialogics, formal integrity and structuring, as well as recognition by the addressee³⁶.

³³ Селіванова О.О. Сучасна лінгвістика: напрями та проблеми. Полтава : Довкілля-Кб, 2008. 712 с.

³⁴ Седов К.Ф. Дискурс и личность: эволюция коммуникативной компетенции. Москва : Лабиринт, 2004. 320 с.

³⁵ Яхонтова Т. Жанровий аналіз. *Наукові записки. Серія «Філологічні науки»*. 2015. Вип. 138. С. 477–480.

³⁶ Матусевич Л.М. *Мовленнєвий жанр дозволу в українськомовному діалогічному дискурсі: комунікативно-прагматичний та структурно-семантичний аспекти* : дис... канд. філол. наук : 10.02.01. Київ, 2018. 214 с.

Shmeleva³⁷ identified seven features that allow us to distinguish various types of genres. It is by these criteria that we differentiate a Christmas message as a genre.

1. The first and priority feature is outlined by the researcher as a communicative goal. The main aim of the Christmas message is to congratulate the addressee on Christmas.

2. The next feature is the representation of the author/the addresser. In our research, we focus attention on the addressers of the Christmas message who are top politicians, but the author / the addresser of the Christmas message can be any individual willing to congratulate the other people.

3. The addressee's image is represented by the audience the Christmas message is meant for. The audience comprises both the fellow citizens of the speaker and any person in the world.

4. The event content of the Christmas message refers to the present, but at the same time, it incorporates reference to the past and projections to the future.

5 and 6. Communicative past and communicative future as two symmetrical features do not manifest themselves in the speech genre of the Christmas message, since the production of this speech genre correlates with social, but not speech prerequisites.

7. Language implementation parameter – linguistic representation of the speech genre, the way it reaches the addressee is foregrounded in a number of structural and semantic characteristics that allow us to consider the genre of a Christmas message as a separate genre having a ritual nature.

In the realm of political communication ritual genres of greetings, ritual messages correspond to fixed speech structures anchored in the consciousness of native speakers. The constancy of the speech genre of a Christmas message instantly actualises genre-forming features in the minds of recipients, according to which addressees expect to be addressed, congratulated, hear some wishes, be offered to recall some memorable facts, where the last option can be a variable one. Taking that into consideration, a Christmas message as a speech genre meets the speaker's intentions to congratulate and wish, that is supported by the appropriate semantics and fixed at the structural level.

³⁷ Шмелева Т.В. Модель речевого жанра. *Жанры речи: Сборник научных статей*. 1997. № 1. С. 88–98.

The speech genre of a Christmas message we understand as a ritual genre that foresees a greeting on behalf of a political leader on the occasion of one of the most important religious holidays of a year – Christmas.

2. Precedent texts and names in a Christmas message

The analysis of the research material demonstrates that Christmas messages are structured relying heavily on rhetorical traditions and are grounded on an appeal to collective morality, to the nation's emotional and collective memory. In this respect, incorporation of precedent texts and precedent names into the Christmas message comes as a valid means of influencing the addressee. A precedent name is understood as “an “embodied” proper name associated with a well-known text, situation, and/or a fixed set of certain qualities, which can be regularly used denotatively, acting as a semantic predicate”³⁸. As Levko³⁹ puts it: “Precedent phenomena are the efficient instrument to reach the aim of the speech influence planned by the addresser of the discourse”.

Taking into account the fact that the modern socio-cultural situation is characterised by tendencies to discover a common space and common principles, to preserve cultural heritage, the Biblical text has a precedent significance on the scale of world civilization. Religious words have such features as “familiarity (i.e., familiar or unfamiliar), imageability (i.e., imageable or non-imageable), emotional valence (i.e., positive or negative), and emotional arousal (i.e., calm or excited)”⁴⁰.

A Christmas message as an official greeting on the occasion of one of the most important religious holidays – Christmas – is sure to encompass the theonyms that can be presented as compound, semantically free precedent names, the components of which can be used together as an integral unit, namely *Jesus Christ*, or they can function separately, but at the same time they don't lose their precedent feature – *Jesus, Christ, God*. For example:

³⁸ Ковшова М.Л., Гудков Д.Б. Словарь культурологических терминов. Москва : Гнозис, 2017. 192 с.

³⁹ Levko O. Precedent units as a means of manipulation in Ukrainian religious media discourse: Psycholinguistic approach. *Psycholinguistics*. 2020. № 28 (2). P. 99–127. DOI: 10.31470/2309-1797-2020-28-2-99-127.

⁴⁰ The Relationship between psycholinguistic features of religious words and core dimensions of religiosity: A survey study with Japanese participants / T. Kambara et al. *Religions*. 2020. № 11. P. 673. DOI: 10.3390/rel11120673.

(1) *“At this time of year, Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ”*⁴¹;

(2) *“The Bible tells how a star appeared in the sky, its light guiding the shepherds and wise men to the scene of Jesus’s birth”*⁴²;

(3) *“It’s a time to celebrate Christ’s message of compassion, and show people that we love them and that message’s never been more important”*⁴³;

(4) *“In this holy season, we thank God for his infinite love and we pray that the light of his glory will forever shine on this magnificent land”*⁴⁴.

Precedent texts and names in the structure of a Christmas message have a special aesthetic and meaning-generating function. They are intentionally incorporated into a Christmas message, firstly, to outline the speaker’s stance on a certain issue and its explicit or implicit evaluation on the scale GOOD :: BAD, and, secondly, to induce the addressee’s emotional response.

Use of the biblical parable in a Christmas message foresees the appeal to the addressee’s background knowledge that, in its turn, facilitates the communication with the addressee and encourages the latter to search for the deeper important meaning. For example:

(5) *“Jesus touched on this with the parable of the Good Samaritan. The man who is robbed and left at the roadside is saved by someone who did not share his religion or culture”*⁴⁵.

It is an indirect calling to join the league of Good Samaritans of the 21st century.

Referring to a biblical parable or incorporating precedent names in a Christmas message the speaker punctuates it with the metaphorical markings of some hidden semantics of the text, encouraging the actualisation of an interpreter’s role in the addressee.

The research material demonstrates that Queen Elizabeth’s Christmas messages abound in precedents texts and precedent names. The Queen

⁴¹ Trump D., Trump M. Christmas message. 2020. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUI2v2z9RSA> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁴² Queen Elizabeth II. Christmas message. 2020. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1eZL3UJGQ8> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁴³ Trudeau J. Christmas message. 2020. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZ2CU_Vb0aI (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁴⁴ Trump D., Trump M. Christmas message. 2020. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUI2v2z9RSA> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁴⁵ Queen Elizabeth II. Christmas message. 2020. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1eZL3UJGQ8> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

refers to national and world heroes who selflessly devoted their lives to serving other people and the whole humanity. They are the people to seek your inspiration from, the ones who pave the way to the future. For example:

(6) *“This year, we celebrated International Nurses’ Day, on the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale. As with other nursing pioneers like Mary Seacole, Florence Nightingale shone a lamp of hope across the world”*⁴⁶;

(7) *“Yet this year we marked the fiftieth anniversary of the famous Apollo 11 mission. As those historic pictures were beamed back to earth, millions of us sat transfixed to our television screens, as we watched Neil Armstrong taking a small step for man and a giant leap for mankind – and, indeed, for womankind”*⁴⁷;

(8) *“They are an inspiration to those who know them, and their lives frequently embody a truth expressed by Mother Teresa, from this year Saint Teresa of Calcutta. She once said: “Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love”*⁴⁸.

The use of quotations in Christmas messages alongside with precedent names is a proven way to sharpen the addressee’s attention and foster positive perception of the information presented.

The analysed material shows that the Christmas messages of Donald Trump and his wife Melania Trump contain either the direct citing of the Bible, for example:

(9) *“As the Book of Isaiah told us, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace””*⁴⁹,

or citing quite close to the original text:

(10) *“An angel announced the birth of our Lord and Savior to humble shepherds. He said, “I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all of the people. Today in the town of David, a savior has been born to”*

⁴⁶ Queen Elizabeth II. Christmas message. 2020. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1eZL3UJGQ8> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁴⁷ Queen Elizabeth II. Christmas message. 2019. URL: <https://www.cornwalllive.com/news/uk-world-news/queens-speech-christmas-day-2019-3679956> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁴⁸ Queen Elizabeth II. Christmas message. 2016. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zscqxcgDc9f> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁴⁹ Trump D., Trump M. Christmas message. 2017. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hae9AjPhIc> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

you. He is the Messiah, the Lord. You will find a baby wrapped in clothes and lying in a manger”⁵⁰.

The use of direct quotes from the Bible in terms of eliciting the addressee’s emotional response and reaching them out efficiently is stipulated by peculiar characteristic features of the Bible quotes, namely: by their ultimate repute, by completeness and self-sufficiency of these units, by associativity, as they trigger certain images in the addressee’s mind.

The undeniable specifics of the modern times is the tremendous speed of life that affects everyone and everything, and the language as well. We can observe how just in a year and a half one harsh acronym COVID-19 turned into a global precedent phenomenon. The research material shows that the Queen Elizabeth II, Donald Trump and Melania Trump, Justin Trudeau in their Christmas messages 2020 refer to the issue of pandemic, but the way it is done is quite different.

Knowing how painful and stressful the year 2020 was to everyone, the Queen mentions the issue of pandemic indirectly through a series of references using:

– the negative particle *not* after the modal verb *can*. For example:

(11) “*For Christians, Jesus is ‘the light of the world’, but we can’t celebrate his birth today in quite the usual way*”⁵¹;

– negative prefix *un-*. For example:

(12) “*People of all faiths have been unable to gather as they would wish for their festivals, such as Passover, Easter, Eid and Vaisakhi*”⁵².

Both structures are used to highlight the necessity of the restriction measures and to point out sincere understanding how emotionally draining these measures are for the addressee;

– indirectly referring to medical recommendations to curb the spread of the disease. For example:

(13) “*Last month, fireworks lit up the sky around Windsor, as Hindus, Sikhs and Jains celebrated Diwali, the festival of lights, providing joyous moments of hope and unity – despite social distancing*”⁵³;

⁵⁰ Trump D., Trump M. Christmas message. 2017. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hae9AjPhcIc> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁵¹ Queen Elizabeth II. Christmas message. 2020. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1eZL3UJGQ8> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

– metaphors such as “*a year that has kept people apart*”, “*the challenges of the year*”. For example:

(14) “*Remarkably, a year that has necessarily kept people apart has, in many ways, brought us closer*”, “*In the United Kingdom and around the world, people have risen magnificently to the challenges of the year <...>*”⁵⁴.

It has been proved by the researchers that “conceptual metaphors help us understand abstract concepts through the use of more concrete terms”, and they “play a special role in evoking affective responses, as compared to their literal counterparts”⁵⁵.

Donald and Melania Trump in their Christmas message are more direct addressing the issue of COVID-19, though they purposefully avoid using the acronym. While talking about Christmas 2020, Melania Trump uses the adjective *different* and the preposition *than* to contrast the year 2020 with the previous ones. For example:

(15) “*As you know, this Christmas is different than years past*”⁵⁶.

In the aspect of influencing the addressee, very remarkable is the introductory phrase “*As you know*”. It instantly makes the addressee personally involved in the issue being discussed; it creates the feeling of belonging, of being the one among the others experiencing the same.

Both Melania and Donald Trump in their Christmas message use the nouns *pandemic*, *scientists*, *vaccine*. For example:

(16) “*We are battling a global pandemic that has affected all of us*”⁵⁷;

(17) “*Brilliant scientists have developed treatments and vaccines*”⁵⁸;

(18) “*We are delivering millions of doses of a safe and effective vaccine that will soon end this terrible pandemic and save millions and millions of lives*”⁵⁹;

(19) “*We’re grateful for all of the scientists, researchers, manufacturing workers, and service members who have worked tirelessly to make this breakthrough possible*”⁶⁰.

⁵⁴ Queen Elizabeth II. Christmas message. 2020. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1eZL3UJGQ8> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁵⁵ Citron F., Lee M., Michaelis N. Affective and psycholinguistic norms for German conceptual metaphors (COMETA). *Behavior research methods*. 2020. № 52. P. 1056–1072. DOI: 10.3758/s13428-019-01300-7.

⁵⁶ Trump D., Trump M. Christmas message. 2020. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUi2v2z9RSA> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

Key words repetition reinforces the message, grants the addressee confidence in the future, evokes the belief in a positive outcome.

Interesting is the choice of adjectives to characterise the pandemic. Melania Trump turns to emotionally neutral adjective *global* talking about the pandemic, while Donald Trump employs the strong, affecting adjective *terrible* that is sure to elicit the addressee's emotional response.

The Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau structures his message moving from indirect mentioning of the global problem of the pandemic by contrasting Christmas celebrations people used to have and Christmas 2020 with the help of the coordinating conjunction *but*, adverb *not*, adjective *different*:

(20) *“This time of the year is supposed to be full of joy, light and family traditions, but this Christmas is different. Families aren't getting together for big dinners, and friends aren't stopping by for cookies and eggnog. This isn't the holiday season we wanted <...>”*⁶¹ to direct reference to Year 2020 as “a tough year”, “these challenging times”;

(21) *“We can all agree that 2020 has been a tough year, but through it we've seen Canadians meet these challenging times with generosity, kindness, and hope”*⁶² and use of the acronym COVID-19;

(22) *“We've seen neighbours helping neighbours, kids giving up play dates and birthday parties, businesses retooling to help in the fight against COVID-19”*⁶³.

The use of the war metaphor *fight against COVID-19* is sure to produce the mighty emotional effect on the addressee as it is easily interpreted by the latter as “you must now your enemy to win”.

3. Key concepts, stylistic and rhetorical strategies in the pursuit of influencing an addressee

The analysed material shows that Queen Elizabeth's Christmas messages are structured around anthropological universals – concepts that present the live knowledge, which come as a dynamic functional formation, the product of processing of verbal and non-verbal experience.

⁶⁰ Trump D., Trump M. Christmas message. 2020. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qui2v2z9RSA> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁶¹ Trudeau J. Christmas message. 2020. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZ2CU_Vb0aI (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁶² Trudeau J. Christmas message. 2020. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZ2CU_Vb0aI (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁶³ Ibid.

The key concept of the Queen Elizabeth's Christmas message 2020 that shines through each line is the concept *HOPE* which correlates with the concept *LIGHT*. For example:

(23) *“Every year we herald the coming of Christmas by turning on the lights. And light does more than create a festive mood – light brings hope”*⁶⁴.

The opposition of the metaphors *“the darkest nights”* – *“the new dawn”* serves the purpose of instilling the most needed feeling of hope in the addressee, leading them through difficult times. For example:

(24) *“We continue to be inspired by the kindness of strangers and draw comfort that – even on the darkest nights – there is hope in the new dawn”*⁶⁵.

In the addressee's mind, *light* correlates with *life*, but life without hope could be daunting.

The Christmas message 2019 of the Queen is centered on the concept *MOVEMENT* that belongs to basic linguistic universals. In the text of the message the concept is foregrounded through:

– the verb denoting motion, such as *to walk*. For example:

(25) *“As a child, I never imagined that one day a man would walk on the moon”*⁶⁶;

– phrasal verbs *to come through*, *to come together*, *to move forward*. For example:

(26) *“By being willing to put past differences behind us and move forward together, we honour the freedom and democracy once won for us at so great a cost”*⁶⁷;

– the phraseological unit *to follow in one's footsteps*. For example:

(27) *“Many of us try to follow in his steps”*⁶⁸;

– nouns *step*, *leap* that, being put in one sentence, enhance the perception of movement that causes radical changes. For example:

(28) *“It's a reminder for us all that giant leaps often start with small steps”*⁶⁹;

⁶⁴ Queen Elizabeth II. Christmas message. 2020. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1eZL3UJGQ8> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Queen Elizabeth II. Christmas message. 2019. URL: <https://www.cornwalllive.com/news/uk-world-news/queens-speech-christmas-day-2019-3679956> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

(29) “*And, as we all look forward to the start of a new decade, it’s worth remembering that it is often the small steps, not the giant leaps, that bring about the most lasting change*”⁷⁰.

Contrasting adjectives *small* :: *giant* used to characterise different types of movement (*small steps* :: *giant leaps*) facilitate in the addressee’s mind the correlation between movement and speed, and at the same time the addressee is being reminded that each breakthrough (*a giant leap*) is preceded by painstaking work (*a small step*).

The Queen Elizabeth’s Christmas message 2018 is structured around the concepts *SERVICE* and *GOODWILL*. The resort to the concept *SERVICE* that embraces various meanings, namely: self-sacrifice, the ability to renounce one’s interests in the name of higher goals, voluntarily taking hard and strenuous duties to perform, such as serving the highest spiritual principle, the great idea, God or people, make the addressee think how they could serve their country and countrymen. The concept *SERVICE* is foregrounded through:

– the verb *serve*. For example:

(30) “*He had served as a military chaplain in the First World War*”⁷¹;

– the noun *service*, where the direct reference to the *Armed Services* comes as a reminder of all those people who have made their choice to do their best to serve the others. For example:

(31) “*We owe them and all our Armed Services our deepest gratitude*”⁷².

The concept *SERVICE* is interrelated to the concept *GOODWILL* that is foregrounded through the lexeme *goodwill*, meaning “friendly or helpful feelings towards other people or countries”⁷³. For example:

(32) “*Indeed, the Commonwealth Games, held this year on Australia’s Gold Coast, are known universally as the Friendly Games because of their emphasis on goodwill and mutual respect*”⁷⁴.

⁷⁰ Queen Elizabeth II. Christmas message. 2019. URL: <https://www.cornwalllive.com/news/uk-world-news/queens-speech-christmas-day-2019-3679956> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021)..

⁷¹ Queen Elizabeth II. Christmas message. 2018. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZlnESDCDj9o> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Oxford advanced learner’s dictionary. URL: <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/goodwill?q=goodwill> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁷⁴ Queen Elizabeth II. Christmas message. 2018. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZlnESDCDj9o> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

The idea is triggered in the addressee's mind that a person who voluntarily chooses and exercises helpful behaviour is the one who is able to achieve good for himself and for those he cares about.

The core of the Queen Elizabeth's Christmas message 2017 rests upon the concept *HOME* and the concept *FAMILY* that organically come in unity. For the vast majority of the addressees home is their most needed shelter that gives the exceptional sense of security; it's their unique universe that ties tightly and steadily their memories, thoughts and dreams. For example:

(33) *"We think of our homes as places of warmth, familiarity and love – of shared stories and memories – which is perhaps why, at this time of year, so many return to where they grew up. There is a timeless simplicity to the pull of home"*⁷⁵.

The Queen points out that for many people the word *home* has much broader meaning, home is their town/city, country. For example:

(34) *"For many, the idea of home reaches beyond a physical building, to a home town or city"*⁷⁶.

The concept *FAMILY* triggers in the addressee's mind such axiological parameters as unity, solidarity, love and respect, security and protection. In this aspect the use of the metaphor *"open my home to a different type of family"* is a potent means to indirectly remind the addressee of the importance of mutual trust and respect that should always thrive in a family. For example:

(35) *"In 2018, I will open my home to a different type of family, the leaders of the 52 nations of the Commonwealth, as they gather in the UK for a summit"*⁷⁷.

The concept *INSPIRATION* is the key one that the Queen Elizabeth's Christmas message 2016 rests upon. It is foregrounded through the verb *inspire* and its derivatives *inspiration*, *inspirational*, *inspiring*. For example:

(36) *"Many of this year's winners spoke of being inspired by athletes of previous generations. Inspiration fed their aspiration; and having discovered abilities they scarcely knew they had, these athletes are now inspiring others"*⁷⁸.

⁷⁵ Queen Elizabeth II. Christmas message. 2017. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch/ijtbcqpl2kc> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Queen Elizabeth II. Christmas message. 2016. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zscqxDc9f8> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

The addressee is encouraged to draw inspiration from the deeds of the others and reminded that “*inspiration is a gift to be given as well as received*”⁷⁹.

The use of the metaphor *inspiration is a gift* is carefully chosen by the speaker as it is sure to evoke positive emotions in the addressee’s mind associated both with giving somebody a present and receiving a gift; it encourages the addressee to be inspired by the outstanding performance and deeds of the others and inspire people around.

Though belonging to the same genre, Christmas messages of the Queen Elizabeth II, Donald and Melania Trump, Justin Trudeau differ in structure. The Queen’s Christmas messages are reflections on the year passed centered around the key concepts. There is no direct address at the beginning of the Queen’s Christmas messages, while Donald and Melania Trump, Justin Trudeau explicitly address the addressees in the very first lines of the Christmas messages:

(37) “*The president and I want to wish every American a very Merry Christmas*”⁸⁰.

(38) “*Merry Christmas, Canada!*”⁸¹.

It should be noted that Donald and Melania Trump directly address *every American*, greeting them on the occasion of Christmas. It is explained by the fact that the USA is a highly individualistic society. Justin Trudeau opts for addressing his country (“*Merry Christmas, Canada!*”) and implying every Canadian. That way he appeals to collectivism adherent to Canadians that “is characterized by prioritization of the group over individual self”⁸².

In the concluding part of the Christmas messages the speakers once again wish the addressees Merry Christmas. The Queen resorts to the personal pronoun *I*, making the greeting very personal:

⁷⁹ Queen Elizabeth II. Christmas message. 2016. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zscqXgDc9f8> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁸⁰ Trump D., Trump M. Christmas message. 2020. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUi2v2z9RSA> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁸¹ Trudeau J. Christmas message. 2020. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZ2CU_Vb0aI (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁸² Putting the “we” into well-being: Using collectivism-themed measures of well-being attenuates well-being’s association with individualism / K. Kryś et al. *Asian journal of social psychology*. 2019. № 22 (3). P. 256–267. DOI: 10.1111/ajsp.12364.

(39) “*It is in that spirit that I wish you a very happy Christmas*”⁸³, while Donald Trump and Justin Trudeau make wishes on behalf of their families;

(40) “*On behalf of Melania and the entire Trump family, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year*”⁸⁴;

(41) “*From our family to yours, Hadrien, Ella-Grace, Xavier, Sophie, and I wish you joy, health, and love this holiday season and beyond. Merry Christmas, Canada!*”⁸⁵.

The analysed material demonstrates that the inclusive pronoun *we* and its objective (*our*), possessive (*us*) forms are of great importance and are actively used in Christmas messages uniting the speaker with the addressee, building and strengthening the invisible bond. The pronoun *we* triggers the basic and proven equation in the addressee’s mind “you + me = we”, and that means you are not alone, there are people around you can trust and rely on. For example:

(42) “*We’ve seen our frontline workers put themselves at risk to keep us safe and our families fed*”⁸⁶.

The conducted research shows the preference of the top politicians to use in Christmas messages lexemes implying unity and solidarity with the addressee. The data are given in Table 1.

The basic rhetorical techniques, namely:

– repetition of words:

(43) “*Some cultures believe a long life brings wisdom. I’d like to think so. Perhaps part of that wisdom is to recognise some of life’s baffling paradoxes, such as the way human beings have a huge propensity for good, and yet a capacity for evil*”⁸⁷;

– repetition of sounds:

(44) “*It’s a time to spread joy and cheer, appreciate our blessings and honour traditions like opening presents, decorating the Christmas tree, or setting aside a couple of cookies for Santa. We’re also well into winter from coast to coast to coast*”⁸⁸;

⁸³ Queen Elizabeth II. Christmas message. 2020. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1eZL3UJGQ8> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁸⁴ Trump D., Trump M. Christmas message. 2020. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUi2v2z9RSA> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁸⁵ Trudeau J. Christmas message. 2020. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZ2CU_Vb0aI (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Queen Elizabeth II. Christmas message. 2018. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZlnESDCDj9o> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁸⁸ Trudeau J. Christmas message. 2018. URL: <https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/read-prime-minister-justin-trudeau-s-christmas-message-1.4230076> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

Table 1

Consolidating vocabulary frequency in top politicians' Christmas messages Unity and solidarity foregrounding						
Lexeme	The Queen Elizabeth II	Lexeme frequency of occurrence	Donald and Melania Trump	Lexeme frequency of occurrence	Justin Trudeau	Lexeme frequency of occurrence
we		34		39		43
our		20		20		28
us		16		8		16
together		9		4		15
to support (+ derivatives supporter/s, supporting)		4		–		4
to help (+ a derivative helping)		5		3		5
can		16		–		3
hope		8		3		3
serve		3		2		2

– use of contrasts and opposites:

(45) *“The Tomb of the Unknown Warrior isn’t a large memorial, but everyone entering Westminster Abbey has to walk around his resting place, honouring this unnamed combatant of the First World War – a symbol of selfless duty and ultimate sacrifice”⁸⁹;*

– grouping key points in threes:

(46) *“Canadians are neighbours helping neighbours, sharing warmth, compassion, and generosity – not just at Christmas, but all year round”⁹⁰;*

⁸⁹ Queen Elizabeth II. Christmas message. 2020. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1eZL3UJGQ8> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁹⁰ Trudeau J. Christmas message. 2017. URL: <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/statements/2017/12/24/statement-prime-minister-christmashttps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1eZL3UJGQ8> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

- accumulating supporting points:

(47) “*At this time of the year we see the best of America and the soul of the American people. We see children packing boxes to brighten the Christmas of our brave men and women in uniforms. We see families reaching out to neighbours in need, and we see communities coming together to serve one another*”⁹¹;

- use of the metaphorical language:

(48) “*We are battling a global pandemic that has affected all of us*”⁹² work perfectly well facilitating the influence on the addressee and are actively employed by the speakers in the Christmas messages.

Christmas messages of the Queen Elizabeth II, Donald and Melania Trump, Justin Trudeau abound in metaphors as this stylistic device serves as a way of cognition, conceptualisation and reconceptualisation of the reality. The example 48 (*battling a global pandemic*) shows that talking about the COVID-19 pandemic, Donald Trump employs the metaphorical model DESEASE – ENEMY that must be fought against ruthlessly. Metaphors come as a mighty means of guiding an addressee’s daily activities, organising their perceived reality and modes of behaviour. Metaphors provide an opportunity to comprehend the abstract in terms of the concrete, verbalise non-objective concepts through subject concepts, forming new meanings.

CONCLUSIONS

The conducted research shows that a Christmas message, presented by top politicians, belonging to a ritual genre of greeting, proves to be the efficient tool in reaching out the addressee, influencing their emotional state, carefully leading them through the everyday life. A Christmas message, as a speech genre where the intentions of the speaker are to congratulate and make wish, rests upon the befitting semantics and established structural form.

Addressability is foregrounded in the text of a Christmas message through the direct address to the addressees, taking into account cultural specifics of the nation. The research material shows that all the speakers (the Queen Elizabeth II, Donald and Melania Trump, Justin Trudeau) actively use the inclusive pronoun *we* and its forms *our*, *us* in order to assure the unity and accord with the addressee.

⁹¹ Trump D., Trump M. Christmas message. 2017. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hae9AjPhcIc> (дата звернення: 27.12.2021).

⁹² Ibid.

A thorough analysis proves that rhetorical techniques are of high priority to influence an addressee. The incorporated techniques include words and sounds repetition, contrasts and opposites usage, grouping key points in threes, accumulating supporting points, metaphorical language use.

Structuring each Christmas message around a universal concept, such as *HOPE, LIGHT, MOVEMENT, SERVICE, GOODWILL, HOME, FAMILY, INSPIRATION*, which is a characteristic feature of the Queen Elizabeth's Christmas messages, is stipulated by indirect appeal to collective morality, nation's emotional and collective memory.

In Christmas messages metaphor, as a figure of speech, is of high value assisting in shaping and reshaping the addressee's perception of the reality, their modes of behaviour.

Precedent texts and precedent names are of great importance for Christmas messages in the aspect of influencing the addressee. They include the theonyms that are used as compound, semantically free precedent names, the components of which come together as an integral unit, namely *Jesus Christ*, or they can function separately, retaining their precedent feature – *Jesus, Christ, God*. The use of the direct quotations, quotes from the Bible, reference to the biblical parables is meant to appeal to the addressee's background knowledge, elicit their emotional response, encourage the addressee to look for the important deeper meaning.

The perspective for the future research we see in the thorough analysis of the top officials' public messages in terms of influencing the addressee through specific structure, word choice, stylistic devices, non-verbal means employed.

SUMMARY

The aim of the article is to conduct a thorough analysis of the linguistic means used by top officials in a Christmas message to efficiently influence an addressee. The researched material is the Christmas messages of the Queen Elizabeth II; Donald and Melania Trump; Justin Trudeau. In the course of the study the following methods were used: descriptive and observation – to estimate special features of the ritual genre of a Christmas message; theoretical analysis and synthesis – to systematise and generalise the data; contextual and interpretative analysis – to establish functional load of linguistic means in order to influence an addressee; cognitive-pragmatic interpretation analysis – to identify the impact potential of lexical units employed.

A Christmas message as a ritual genre is bound to fixed speech structures anchored in the consciousness of an addressee. The use of precedent texts proves to be efficient in terms of influencing an addressee. Direct quotes outline the speaker's stance on a certain issue, explicit or implicit evaluation on the scale GOOD :: BAD, being a waymark for an addressee, inducing emotional response. Addressability is foregrounded through the direct address, taking into account cultural specifics. The use of the inclusive pronoun *we* and its forms *our*, *us* helps to build a rapport between the speaker and the addressee and grant the feeling of belonging. Reference to universal concept, such as HOPE, LIGHT, MOVEMENT, SERVICE, GOODWILL, HOME, FAMILY, INSPIRATION, is of great importance ensuring indirect appeal to collective morality, nation's emotional and collective memory. In this respect, the use of metaphors comes forefront. A Christmas message is a mighty tool of influencing an addressee. The prospects of the future study lie in the analysis of top officials' public messages in terms of influencing the addressee through carefully chosen lexis, speech techniques, non-verbal elements of communication.

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