Discourse Analysis of Chinese Provincial and Regional Foreign Promotional Videos in the Framework of Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model

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Abstract—Chinese culture is a convergence of local cultures, and an in-depth understanding of local culture is the same as an understanding of Chinese culture. By constructing analysis framework, this paper not only analyzes text mode from the perspective of Halliday's three meta-language functions, but also studies collaborative discourse propaganda effect of visual mode, auditory mode, and text mode from the perspective of semantic coherence and intertextuality at the level of discourse practice. This paper also expounds the performance of ideology and discourse power in propaganda film of Shanxi Province. The study has drawn the conclusion that regional propaganda films are mostly characterized by material and relational processes, third-person, and unmarked theme structure. Communication effect of multimodal synergy maximizes propaganda effect during text production and consumption. And regional propaganda films reflect the historical, cultural and political will and China's determination to open up to the outside world at the same time.

Index Terms—Cultural communication, Fairclough three-dimension discourse analysis, multimodal regional promotional video, social symbols

I. INTRODUCTION

As the world becomes more and more multipolar and globalized, in addition to Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong and Hong Kong, which are already well known to foreigners and active in international political arena and international trade market, other provinces and regions in China should also go abroad, which will facilitate two-way exchange of natural resources and human resources, empower import and export trade, and help build Chinese discourse and Chinese narrative system, allowing the world to understand China more comprehensively.

Regional propaganda film shows hardware strength and software characteristics of the region from economic, humanistic, ecological and other aspects in the form of a video in a period of about ten minutes, which can achieve the role of promoting regional economic development and building regional image.

This study uses Fairclough's three-dimensional discourse analysis model and RST Tool to analyze discursive factors affecting overseas communication influence of propaganda films, reveal discourse mechanism and ideology behind the symbols, and explore effective forms of image dissemination in China's non-popular provinces and regions under the guidance of cultural self-confidence, aiming at linguistic and discursive characteristics of regional propaganda films. The

main research questions in this paper are: (1) What are the characteristics of the text mode at the text level in regional promotional films? (2) How can the non-text mode be combined with the text mode to improve the publicity effect of regional propaganda films at the level of discourse practice? (3) At the level of social and cultural practice, what kind of ideological and discursive power are reflected in regional propaganda films?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Previous Studies of Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model

Three-dimensional discourse analysis model is Fairclough's important pioneering achievement in the field of critical discourse analysis. Chouliaraki and Faiclough described Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as follows: "It is an important characteristic of the economic, social and cultural changes of late modernity that they exist as discourses as well as processes that are taking place outside discourse, and that the processes that are taking place outside discourse are substantively shaped by these discourses [1]."

The prototype of three-dimensional discourse analysis was formed in 1989's *Language and Power*, where Fairclough focused on the relationship among language, power, and ideology and argued that the relationship among the three could be studied through three-dimensional hierarchy of "text-interaction-context" [2].

Although some scholars have raised objections to Faircough's critical discourse analysis method, such as Widdowson who explored specific meaning of "criticism" and "discourse interpretation" [3], pointing out that Fairclough's CDA model is not a method, but a way to interpret phenomena, more foreign scholars have given it higher recognition by applying the theory to wider range of texts. Bezar *et al.* used this model to analyze Blake's *Ah Sunflower!* Text [4]; Hassan *et al.* applied Faiclough's model to Australian Senate [5]. Many scholars in China have also summarized the theoretical methods of CDA [6] and development dynamics [7]. It is worth emphasizing that, although the word "critical" is included, according to Fairclough, "Critical" means "dialectical" rather than complete negation [8], and this study hopes to take positive stand in an attempt to inform social practice of propaganda filmmaking through discourse analysis.

Fairclough's three-dimensional discursive analysis model focuses on a variety of problems involving social relations and ideology in all fields. With regard to the relationship between ideology and social and cultural life, scholars have collected information on political discourses [9] and multimodal discourses such as media discourse [10] and

documentary discourse [11] and analyzed them using three-dimensional discourse models. However, relevance and complementarity of three-dimensional discourse model and multimodality still need to be strengthened.

B. Previous Studies of Multimodal and Promotional Video Discourse Analysis

Kress and Van Leeuven first introduced the concept of "multimodality" in *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* in 1996, hoping to provide a "tool-kit" to help researchers apply Halliday's three major language metafunctions to study various modes in turn [12]. Barthe [13] explains that multimodal discourse integrates multiple senses such as sight, hearing, and touch, and communicates through resources such as language, sound, movement, and image. Auditory modalities are often analyzed together with visual modalities and text in video materials [14], which is conducive to the construction of meaning under the interaction of visual modalities and sound modalities.

Multimodal discourse is special language phenomenon, which is closely related to people's five senses and transmits information through multimedia technology combined with various symbolic resources such as texts, music, and images. In recent years, multimodal discourse analysis has been extended from static discourse to dynamic media such as advertisement [15], television and film narratives [16], and video conferencing [17]. Domestically, from the perspective of social semiotics, Zhu, Zhang and others explored research content and theoretical framework of MDA [18, 19], and after that, many MDAs with Chinese characteristics appeared, such as foreign language teaching [19], advertising [20], and the construction of female identity [21].

As one of research objects of multimodal discourse analysis, propaganda film is a kind of media method that integrates the characteristics of propaganda object by means of video and introduces it in orderly and systematic manner, aiming to highlight its strength and enhance its influence.

According to different targets of propaganda, researchers start from two aspects: physical objects such as propaganda regions, enterprises, universities, and non-physical objects such as propaganda culture and education, and reveal powerful communication utility and research value of propaganda films [23, 24].

According to different purposes of publicity, the analysis of propaganda discourse focuses on different angles such as image publicity, emotional publicity, and public welfare publicity [25–27].

C. Theoretical Basis—Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model

In order to allow the study of discourse analysis to unfold within clear framework, Fairclough combined discourse analysis theory to propose the concept of three-dimensional model, arguing that discourse can be interpreted at three levels, corresponding to three analytical methods, namely (a) text (analyzed by description); (b) discourse practice (analyzed by explanation); (c) sociocultural practice (analyzed by explanation) (see Fig. 1).

First, text level refers to the relationship between the elements of language itself (spoken or written). Second, discourse practice level refers to interactive relationship between discourse participants and language itself, in which the discourse can be regarded as a "product" on production

line, and this level studies whole process of discourse starting from the speaker (production), being received (purchased), and then producing digestion and understanding (use) of the recipient. Third, sociocultural practice refers to the application of discourse under the influence of ideology in environment, aiming to reveal the interrelationship between the process of speech and social background.
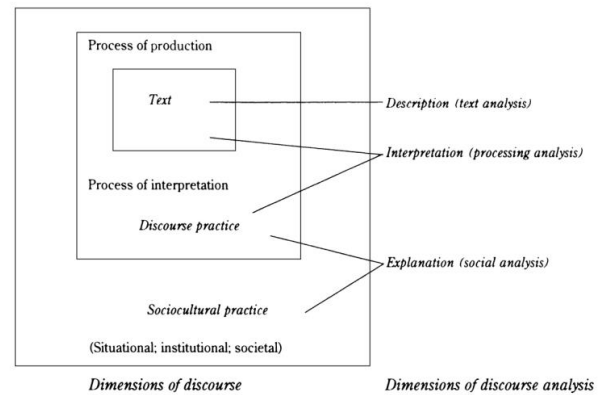

Fig. 1. Fairclough's three-dimensional model [22].

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Source Selection and Data Calculation

Main research object of this study is promotional video released at the 17th Provincial, Autonomous Regional and Municipal Global Promotion Activities in Shanxi, which is typical multimodal material that combines text, animation and sound and jointly produced by People's Government of Shanxi Province and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the theme of "Shanxi's New Transformation, Sharing a New Future". It should be emphasized that in text analysis part, this study selects promotional video with the theme of "Ecological Fujian, Silk Road Sails" released at Fujian Promotion Conference of the 19th Provincial, Autonomous Regional and Municipal Global Promotion Activities in the same year as a comparison.

Prior to the analysis, the narration of original video of research corpus and control corpus was dictated, and on this basis, the sentences that had been truncated due to the presentation of subtitles were re-integrated, and a total of 680 words (English) and 49 clauses and a total of 977 words (English) and 64 clauses were obtained.

B. Theoretical Framework

This study follows the structure of Fairclough's three-dimensional discourse analysis model, and it is proposed to analyze external communication effect of Shanxi Provincial Promotion Conference propaganda film from text level, discourse practice level and sociocultural practice level.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Text Level—Based on Halliday's Functional Grammar

Transitivity is important research direction of ideational function in Halliday's Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which reflects ideational function of language by explaining various processes and their related participants and environments, including six processes, namely material processes, mental processes, relational processes, behavioral

processes, verbal processes, and existential processes. Statistical results are shown in Tables I and II.

As can be seen from Table I, research corpus of propaganda film selected for this study includes a total of 49 clauses, but not all of six processes in research corpus are reflected. In short, material process and relational process are more prominent in regional propaganda film, which is consistent with control corpus (see Table II).

TABLE I: TRANSITIVITY OF SHANXI PROVINCIAL PROMOTION CONFERENCE PROPAGANDA FILM (RESEARCH CORPUS)

Process Components (arranged from highest to lowest according to frequency of occurrence)	Quantity (Frequency)
Material Processes	36 (73.47%)
Relational Processes	10 (20.41%)
Mental Processes	2 (4.08%)
Behavioral Processes	1 (2.04%)
Verbal Processes	
Existential Processes	
Total	49

TABLE II: TRANSITIVITY OF FUJIAN PROVINCIAL PROMOTION CONFERENCE PROPAGANDA FILM (RESEARCH CORPUS)

Process Components (arranged from highest to lowest according to frequency of occurrence)	Quantity (Frequency)
Material Processes	40 (62.50%)
Relational Processes	18 (28.13%)
Mental Processes	3 (4.69%)
Existential Processes	3 (5.69%)
Behavioral Processes	
Verbal Processes	
Total	64

Material process describes the process of doing something, generally including process itself and actors and goals involved in the process [28]. In this study, action process verbs have positive meanings. The actors mainly include words with "Shanxi", people, place, and organizations related to Shanxi, and words for regional attributes and development. Action goals usually include synonyms for Shanxi. In conclusion, propaganda film has always narrated around main promotion locations, and large use of material processes and video pictures has built more vivid image of Shanxi Province, expanding from the perspective of time, space and society.

Relational process which indicates the process of establishing the connection between things includes three types: intensive, circumstantial, and possessive. In this study, relational process accounts for 20.41%. Main relational processes are intensive attributive class (sentence a), intensive identifying class (sentence b), circumstantial attributive class (sentence c), and circumstantial identifying class (sentence d). Relational process is mainly used to describe the progress made by Shanxi and its competitive characteristics.

a. Socio-economic development has become more coordinated.
b. Over the last 70 years, ecological conservation has always been a priority here.
c. The emission of coal-fired power-generating units is among the lowest in the world.
d. The biggest world market is in China's Province of Shanxi.

Tone and modal system of research corpus is relatively homogeneous, so in order to make the features of interpersonal system more explicit, interpersonal meaning of the discourse is analyzed from the perspective of personal pronouns used in the discourse. The use of the third singular and plural person throughout the introduction of Shanxi's customs and development is consistent with that in control corpus, indicating that objective description of local conditions from third-party perspective is more authoritative and can make propaganda film more convincing (Tables III and IV). First-person "we" appears in interview part of the promo, which is used by the interviewee when explaining the motivation of cooperation (sentence e). The use of the first person can evoke the viewer's self-awareness.

TABLE III: PERSONIFICATION IN PROMOTIONAL VIDEO (RESEARCH CORPUS) OF SHANXI PROVINCE PROMOTION

Third Person				First Person	
Singular		Plural		Plural ("we")	
Quantity	Frequency	Quantity	Frequency	Quantity	Frequency
39	79.59%	9	18.37%	1	2.04%

TABLE IV: PERSONIFICATION IN PROMOTIONAL VIDEO (CONTRAST CORPUS) OF FUJIAN PROVINCE PROMOTION

Third Person				First Person		Second Person	
Singular		Plural		Singular ("I")		Plural ("you")	
Quantity	Frequency	Quantity	Frequency	Quantity	Frequency	Quantity	Frequency
46	71.88%	13	20.31%	4	6.25%	1	1.56%

e. We must work with a long plan, a long-term future.

Theme-Rheme is the most common entry point for text analysis, where theme represents starting point of the discourse and is at the beginning of a sentence while rheme revolves around the content of main position and explains main content of the sentence [27]. It is concluded that a total of 33 (about 67.35%) of 49 sentences uses unmarked themes, 16 (about 32.65%) uses marked themes, and the distribution matches that of control corpus. Marked themes in promotional film mainly indicate geographical environment and time stage, emphasizing on creating an environment for the audience to understand the content of later description (sentences f and sentence g).

f. Here in Shanxi, Emperor Yan (T)// taught his people farming, giving birth to China's agrarian civilization (R) ("T" stands for theme; "R" stands for rheme.).
g. In June 2017, General Secretary Xi Jinping (T)// visited Shanxi again, China's only province-wide national pilot zone of comprehensive reform for the transformation of resource-based economy embarking on a new journey (R).

Unmarked themes mainly include Shanxi Province, natural landscapes, other place names in Shanxi Province and

personal pronouns, etc., which all stick to the theme and serve the purpose of introduction and promotion from Shanxi Province itself and its geographical environment and culture. For example, sentences h - sentence k:

h. Shanxi and Germany (T)// are cooperating on the manufacturing high-end coal machinery for the future (R).
i. The Yellow River, mother river of the Chinese nation, (T)// nourished the land of Shanxi for generations (R).
j. The county of Youyu, committed to afforestation and desertification control, (T)// has made deserted land into oasis (R).
k. ……, we (T)// must work with a long plan, a long-term future (R).

B. Discourse Practice Level

The study of discursive practices revolves around three processes of discourse production, distribution, and consumption. This chapter will explore discourse practice of Shanxi promotional video from the perspectives of semantic coherence and intertextuality and contrast image and sound modalities with textual modalities.

Semantic coherence is one of the criteria of textuality. This section mainly uses the Rhetorical Structure Theory Tool (RST Tool) to study semantic associations of various components of promotional video on Shanxi Provincial Promotion Conference. Total diagram of constituent structural relationships and the sub-plots of each part are obtained as shown in Figs. 2–7. (In Figs. 3–7, the subsection topic sentence is in the circle).

According to Fig. 2, the communicator chooses to use "general-partition-general" structure for the narrative of the campaign. This film is justified and suitable for the purpose of promotion meeting to let the recipients have general understanding of Shanxi Province in short period of time.

Overall, within each subsection, producers follow different development while choosing non-textual modalities that are in harmony with textual content to facilitate narrative construction of the promo, which meets consumers' requirements and expectations of promo discourse and achieves better referral results.
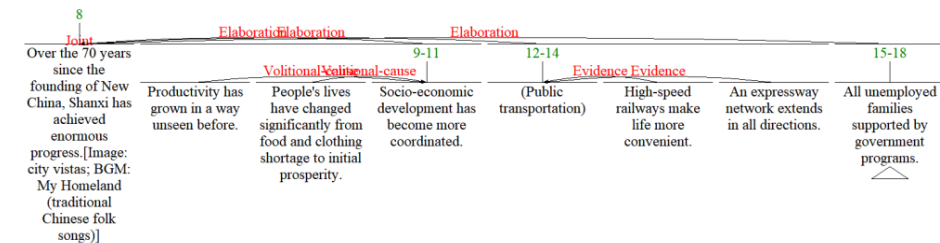

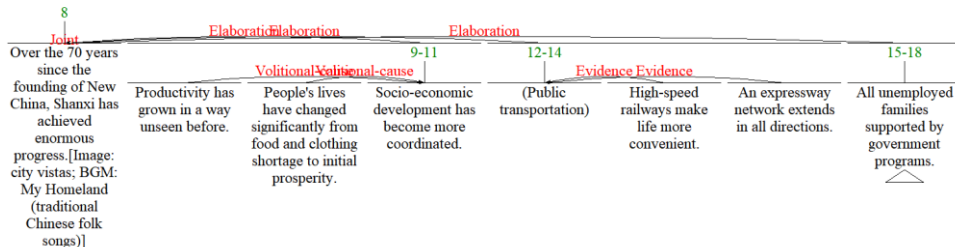Fig. 2. Total diagram of constituent structural relationships (The title of promotional film is inside the circle).
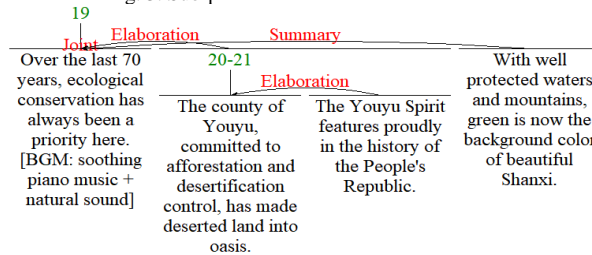

Fig. 3. Sub-plots of "Economic Construction".
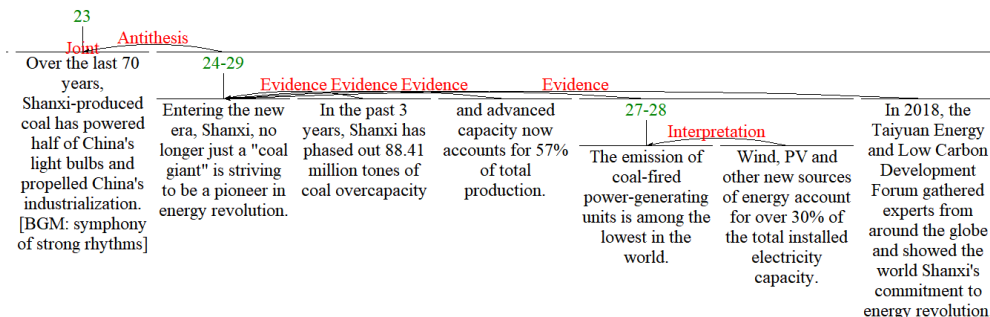

Fig. 4. Sub-plots of "Ecological Governance"
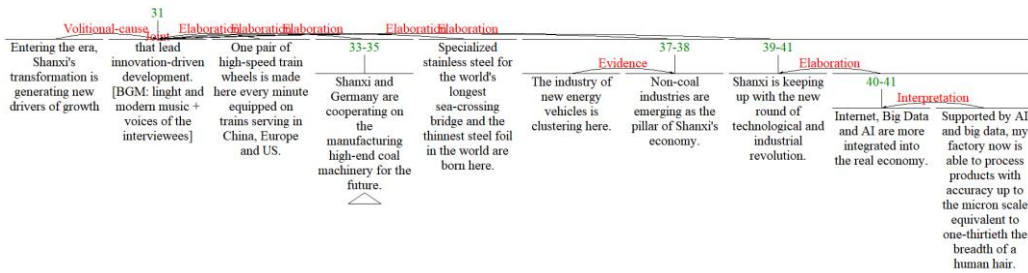

Fig. 5. Sub-plots of "Energy Transition".

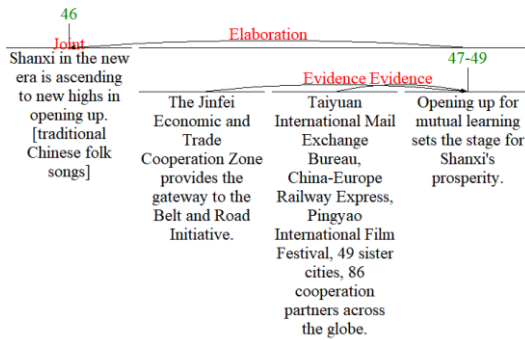Fig. 6. Sub-plots of "Scientific and Technological Innovation".

Fig. 7. Sub-plots of "Opening-Up".

Main sound modalities in promotional video not only fit promotional occasion of the conference, but also show the characteristics of Shanxi for the recipients with foreign background. The voice of the narrator as main voice mode in the promo is middle-aged male voice. Background music has also been carefully selected.

It is worth noting that, as shown in Fig. 8, three consecutive transitional sentences appear between "Science and Technology Innovation" and "Opening-Up" (at Node 42 in Fig. 8), but they are not closely connected with the context, which is a part that can be improved from the perspective of communication effect. Because the three sentences here are not closely related to the following texts, they are easy to affect the audience's understanding.
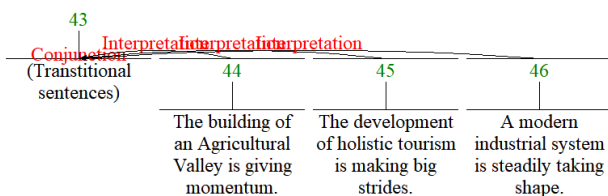

Fig. 8. Consecutive transitional sentences (see Node 43-Node 45).

Intertextuality, like semantic coherence, is one of the criteria for textuality. Intertextuality is expressed in the text in five ways and this study focuses on "quotations".

The first direct quote appears in the section on foreign cooperation in Shanxi's coal industry (see the film between 5 min 45 s and 5 min 47 s to 5 min 55 s), and this so-called "interruption" does not actually affect the narrative of the film, but rather complements the motivation of previous act.

The second direct quote appears in the section on technological revolution and industrial change in Shanxi (see the film between 6 min 36 s and 6 min 39 s to 6 min 45 s), and like the previous one, the narrative of the film is more coherent instead of "interruption" because of the interpretation provided by direct quote.

Besides, in "intertextuality", non-verbal modality in direct quotation plays positive synergistic effect on authority and authenticity of verbal modality.

In general, intertextual phenomenon embodied in the form of quotation can improve external communication effect of propaganda film.

C. Sociocultural Practice Level

For Fairclough, the level of sociocultural practices is closely linked to social ideology and is the most peripheral analytical part of critical discourse analysis, encompassing textual level and the level of discursive practices.

Shanxi Province promotional video material is closely related to the background of the times. Representatives of international organizations in China and the business community, Chinese and foreign experts and scholars and media reporters from more than 130 countries, no matter specific wording, the structure of the chapter or rhetoric technique, all of them are trying to build new developing image of China and break the stereotype of "mysterious", "old-fashioned" and "backward" of China in international community.

Shanxi Province's promotional video material is influenced by major national strategic decisions and aims to demonstrate to the world about China's international governance capabilities in new era. Chinese world view pursues world system of peaceful coexistence and common development above the interests of nation-states.

In short, research corpus of this paper is based on regional propaganda, and national development from provincial situation can be seen in every mode.

V. CONCLUSION

The development of the times requires Chinese language learners to not only understand foreign language and foreign country in learning process, but also to retain their own cultural confidence and cultural self-awareness, and to export Chinese and local culture effectively.

This paper constructs new research framework from the perspective of discourse analysis, and analyzes communication effects of textual, visual and auditory modalities in local promotional videos from three aspects: textual (transitivity, personification system, theme-rheme structure), discourse practice (semantic coherence and intertextuality) and sociocultural practice, taking promotional video of Shanxi Province jointly produced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Shanxi Provincial People's Government as an example.

Firstly, regional propaganda film favors material and relational processes at text level to build vivid regional image and leave deep impression in short time. Large number of third person enhances narrative objectivity, and unmarked theme meets the audience's comprehension habits and can reduce understanding threshold of propaganda film corpus.

Secondly, overall discourse mode including language, image and color, which is closely focused on the purpose of "deepening reform, expanding opening-up and walking hand in hand with other countries", provides clear logic of propaganda film, corresponds to textual and non-textual modes one by one and flexibly uses other discourses to improve foreign communication effect of propaganda film, which plays maximum benefit of the synergy of modes.

Thirdly, Shanxi provincial propaganda film studied in this paper reflects close connection with historical development of Chinese nation and the governance under the influence of traditional Chinese culture, while the discourse of Shanxi provincial propaganda film also conveys the aspiration of China as the world's largest developing country to play greater role in international arena.

In addition, there are some areas that could be improved according to the above analysis, such as the lack of in-depth introduction of other topics like culture, which could be enhanced in future production of promotional videos for other regions.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Xiaowen Wang conducted the research, analyzed the data, and wrote the paper; Xiaolan Lei was responsible for conceptualization, review and editing, and supervision; all authors had approved the final version.

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