

Social Networking Sites and Their Role in Improving English Speaking Skills for University Students



مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي ودورها في تحسين مهارات التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية
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المخلص

يركز موضوع الدراسة المعروف باسم "وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي" على التمثيل الرقمي والتخزين والنقل والتلاعب بأي شكل من أشكال المحتوى المرئي والسمعي الذي أنشأه الإنسان، بما في ذلك على سبيل المثال النصوص والرسومات والرسوم المتحركة والصوت وغيرها. بفضل التقدم التكنولوجي، ظهر عالم افتراضي ثالث حيث يمكن للأشخاص من مختلف اللغات والمواقع التواصل مع بعضهم البعض. تشمل هذه الأماكن، على سبيل المثال مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي مثل Facebook و Twitter و Instagram. الغرض من هذا البحث هو معرفة كيف يمكن لطلاب الجامعات العراقية استخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي لتحسين قدراتهم في التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية. لمعالجة قضايا الدراسة، يتم استخدام نهج البحث النوعي. شارك في هذه الدراسة، مجموعة من الطلاب الجامعيين الذين كانوا من أصحاب العمل النشطين على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي من جامعات بغداد وأوروک. جميع المشاركين كانوا الدارسين باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية. وفقا للنتائج الدراسة ساعدت مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي بشكل كبير في تطوير اللغة الإنجليزية لدى المشاركين من خلال زيادة توسعهم في اللغة، وتسهيل التفاعل في

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الحياة الواقعية، وتوفير المعرفة اللغوية، وخلق بيئة ترحيبية للتعلم، وإشباع حاجتهم للتعبير عن الذات.

Abstract

The subject of study known as "social media" focuses on the digital representation, storage, transmission, and manipulation of any forms of human-created visual and auditory content, including but not limited to text, graphics, drawings, animation, audio, and video. Thanks to technological advancements, a third virtual world has emerged where people of different languages and locations can communicate with one another. These places include, but are not limited to, social media websites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The purpose of this research is to find out how Iraqi college students can use social media to improve their English speaking abilities. To address the study issues, a qualitative research approach is used. Two undergraduates who were active social media employers from universities in Baghdad and Uruk participated in this investigation. Everyone who took part was a student in the English as a Second Language program. Social networking sites significantly aided participants' English language development by increasing their exposure to the language, facilitating real-life interaction, supplying linguistic knowledge, creating a welcoming environment for learning, and satisfying their need for self-expression, according to the results.

Introduction

The progression of technology has created a third virtual realm where individuals from different geographical areas and linguistic origins can engage in communication and interaction. Social network sites (SNS) such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, among others, serve as prime examples of these online platforms. English is frequently utilized as a lingua franca to facilitate cross-cultural communication. Although there are several publications on the use of social networking sites (SNS), there have been few empirical studies that have delved deeper into this subject. The efficacy of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), particularly in the 21st century, has been on the rise due to the utilization of social media platforms that promote active engagement and interactivity. The Internet and Multimedia are fundamental components of modern technology. Multimedia refers to the combination of several formats, allowing users to access a wide range of information such as animations, videos, and sounds. These integrated tools facilitate the development and integration of language abilities for language learners.





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By utilizing various multimedia technologies, learners can regulate their learning speed. (Warschauer, 2004).

In addition, e-learning technologies and many other tools are utilized as a means for students to actively build knowledge, engage in collaborative efforts, and exchange content with their peers. This attribute of Web 2.0 aligns with an optimal learning language environment. The source of this information is Lomicka and G. Lord's publication from 2009. To enhance the four language abilities of hearing, reading, writing, and speaking, individuals have begun utilizing Web 2.0 tools in an informal and non-formal manner. New media and Web 2.0 technologies provide support for language classrooms and curriculums. Interactivity, particularly in listening and speaking skills, is essential and not present in Web 1.0 (Stevenson & Liu, 2010). Furthermore, individuals can enhance their language acquisition abilities by engaging in activities such as streaming online films, watching news programs, browsing the Internet, using applications, and enrolling in virtual language courses. To enhance language learning confidence, individuals can utilize Web 2.0 tools to engage in additional practice and interact with native speakers from different nations. (Marinescu, 2013). In this study, our objective was to investigate the utilization of social media networking platforms that are developed using new media and Web 2.0 for language acquisition.

According to Shahid, Aleem, Islam, Iqbal, and Yousaf (2019), technological advancements are outpacing those in the field of education. According to Bhatla (2020), there have been major improvements in the last 20 years when it comes to using technology and social media. Consequently, people's habits regarding technology use fluctuate depending on the task at hand, shifting from a focus on television to a more diverse array of screen-based pursuits throughout the day (Orben, 2020). Technology comes in many forms; computer-based technology is one of them. According to Schindler, Burkholder, Morad, and Marsh (2017), a wide range of tools are included in computer-based technology. These include web-conferencing software, blogs, wikis, social networking sites, and digital games.

Everyone uses social media and networking sites now—for everything from communicating with friends and family to learning new skills (Hussain, Cakir, & Candeger, 2018). The term "social media" refers to a category of online tools that facilitate two-way communication between users. It has quickly become the de facto standard for communication among people of all ages (Alam&Aktar, 2021). There are three main types of social media websites, according to Faizi, El Afia, and Chiheb (2013). In the first grouping, we find social media sites that



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facilitate communication and the sharing of information and ideas, like Facebook, Skype, Telegram, Twitter, TikTok, and WhatsApp. In the second group, you'll find platforms that mainly aim at making it easier to share content, such as Google+, Snapchat, Pinterest, Flickr, YouTube, Tumblr, and SlideShare. The final set includes content-creation and editing tools like Canva, Google Docs, and PowToon. Anwas, Sugiarti, Permatasari, Warsihna, Anas, Alhapip, Siswanto, & Rivalina (2020) state that one of the main draws of social media is its accessibility, meaning that users can log on from anywhere and at any time. (2101) (Dehham)

A wide range of opinions have been voiced in response to the use of social media in the classroom. A study found that students in the modern day are more inclined to be driven to learn if they find the learning process engaging and fun. Namaziandost and Nasri (2019) assert that social media when utilized properly, may be a powerful instrument for education. One study found that students' speaking skills might be improved by the use of social media (Ismail, Ahmad, Zaim, Mukhaiyar, and Gistituati, 2019). Furthermore, the question of whether social media is a useful educational tool or only a distraction was brought up by Alamri (2019). When looking at it from both angles, though, the evidence for the positive effects of social media in the classroom, especially for enhancing students' public speaking skills, is stronger. Using social media and other forms of technology in the classroom might give students more opportunities to practice public speaking, according to John and Yunus (2020). The use of social media to hone public speaking skills has been supported by multiple studies. Devi, Virgiana, and Auli (2020) and Muxamatjonova and Xoshimova (2020) are some of the earlier works that contain these references.

This study set out to discover how self-assured Iraqi undergraduates majoring in TESL are in their command of the English language and how they feel about the idea of utilizing social media to hone their oratory talents. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between undergraduates' degree of self-awareness and their proficiency in public speaking. Through conscious recognition of their belief, individuals might discover methods to continuously enhance their personal growth. The study aimed to ascertain the respondents' perception of their proficiency in speaking and their level of self-assurance in speaking performance.

2. Literature Review



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Social Media

Social media, as defined by the Lexico Dictionaries (2022), refers to websites and programs that allow users to generate and distribute information or engage in social networking. Obar and Wildman (2015) defined social media as an internet-based platform where users actively participate and create content. The extensive utilization of social media has the potential to significantly enhance various pursuits, including schooling. In their 2010 study, Roblyer et al. found that university students have a higher propensity than faculty members to utilize Facebook and are more receptive to employing similar technology to enhance their classroom activities.

The terms social media and social networking have often been used interchangeably, despite their distinct differences. Social media, as described by Andreas M. Kaplan and Michael Haenleina, refers to a collection of Internet-based apps that are built around the principles and technology of Web 2.0. These applications enable users to create and share content that is generated by the users themselves. The source cited is Kaplan and Haenlein's work from 2010. (Bairmani,2022)

Social networks or social networking sites, which are products of Web 2.0, enable individuals to establish connections and form relationships inside a defined system for various purposes, such as common hobbies, political affiliations, or educational pursuits. While social media networks share common features such as content sharing, personal profile creation, and showing friends' profiles, they also have distinct traits that set them apart from each other (Edosomwan, Prakasan, Kouame, Watson, & Seymour, 2011). Users have the option to control the appearance of their profile on Facebook, choosing to make it visible to friends only or the public. In contrast, on LinkedIn, a social network site focused on professional connections, users can view the profiles of others. The second distinction lies in the fact that social media primarily caters to a wide audience, whereas social networking focuses on fostering relationships between individual users or inside online groups. Individuals inside social groups and communities can generate, provide feedback on, inquire about, compose, modify, manipulate, or engage in discussions on any topic with their acquaintances within social networking sites. However, social media does not facilitate users in engaging in these activities. Another distinction between social media and social media network sites is that social media serves as a communication channel. Although not a website itself, it is a broad notion that encompasses a collection of applications. In contrast, social network sites are specifically web-based platforms where users are confined within the



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site's framework. The sources used are Cohen (2009) and Hartshorn (2010). (Hasan,2022)

The bulk of students at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia's Faculty of Computer Science and Information Systems think that social networking sites have a positive effect on their grades, according to research by David and Rahim (2012). Other studies have found other outcomes, which go against the positive social media and education reactions. According to Aloraini and Cardoso's (2020) research, proficient learners are more reluctant to use social media for schoolwork. Similarly, this conclusion was also supported by other research (Gagalang, 2022). Moreover, the use of social media sites helps language learners make strides toward becoming proficient in their target language.

Recent research by Moh'dZakarnah et al. (2021) found that young Arabs have positive views of social media and think they are great tools for learning a new language. Previous studies have demonstrated the positive impact of social media on language acquisition, and this new finding is in line with those findings (Yunus et al., 2012; Xodabande, 2017). A whopping 99.7 percent of Malaysian college students surveyed by Hamat and Hassan (2019) admitted to using SNSs to hone their English language skills.

According to the results, almost all of the students in this study used their SNSs to improve their English skills. Instagram and YouTube were identified by students as their primary outlets for English language acquisition in a separate poll by Sely (2018). Furthermore, studies by Norman, Adnan, Nordin, Ally, and Tsinakos (2022) and Galoyan and Madyarov (2016) provide credence to the idea that students are motivated to study English through social media. (Al-Azzawi,2022)

Social Network Sites (SNS) are extensively utilized by young people. It is a crucial component that is essential to the younger generation known as 'neo-millennials' [McBride, 2009]. Based on a 2015 research from the Pew Center, it was found that 90% of those between the ages of 18 and 29 were utilizing social media. Although the paper specifically focuses on the United States, it is possible that similar trends can be observed in other regions of the world.

Based on the above statistics, it is evident that SNS (Social Networking Sites) can serve as a crucial platform for seeking information and pleasure. In their study, Ranieri, Manca, and Fini (2012) demonstrated that the utilization of technologies can augment and expedite an individual's social network by providing access to a diverse range of information, opportunities, and advantages. Furthermore, social media serves as a global platform for individuals to disseminate news and





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express their ideas [Siddiqui, and Singh, 2016]. According to Al-Rahmi, Othman, Yusof, and Musa (2015), individuals can communicate, collaborate, and exchange desired information and news on social media platforms. Engaging on social networking sites (SNS) can foster genuine social and communicative behavior, as shown by McBride (2009).

English, as a lingua franca, has the potential to serve as a global language for facilitating international communication, as observed by Fang (2018). Utilizing social networking sites (SNS) for these reasons has the potential to enhance one's exposure to the English language. According to Liu [2010], one advantage of social media in language learning is the ability to learn independently. Independent learning enables students to have the autonomy to choose activities and allocate time in a manner that effectively enhances and advances their English language proficiency. SNS includes chat rooms that enable students to engage in authentic English communication [Richards, 2015]. The abundance of tools, ample locations, and flexible time available to students can potentially facilitate independent learning. Social networking sites (SNS) offer numerous advantages for enhancing pupils' English language proficiency. One advantage is that the utilization of social media might enhance students' motivation [Lin, et al., 2016]. Students are drawn to using social networking sites (SNS) because of the abundance of engaging and up-to-date content available. One additional advantage of using social networking sites (SNS) is that it allows pupils to have firsthand experience in using language authentically. Blattner and Fiori (2011) stated that utilizing social media can foster a constructive and cooperative rapport between students and both non-native and native speakers through interactive exchanges.

Although the potential benefits indicated above exist, there is still skepticism regarding the effectiveness of language learning on social networking sites (SNS). According to McBride (2009), online socialization on social networking sites (SNS) may lack significance because it does not consistently facilitate the exchange of knowledge. Furthermore, learners may have a deficiency in their understanding of how to effectively engage with others on social networking sites in their second language [2009].

2.2 Social Network Sites and Language Learning

The ability to express oneself verbally is a key component of effective communication because it allows people to understand one another and share their points of view [Fang, 2018]. Rather than focusing on a strict code of grammar, language activities include communicative

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encounters. Translation into real-world contexts should thus be the primary goal of language learning. Gaining fluency in spoken language is the primary goal of language acquisition, which places a premium on honing one's oratory abilities and getting comfortable with the use of language for productive discourse. Only those with excellent communication skills will be able to articulate their ideas and understand how to fit in with their communities' norms and expectations [Richards, 2015]. People use vocalizations to convey ideas and concepts. Speaking is a complex reality, not a simple one at all. It includes other things to do, some of which are obvious at first glance and others which become clearer when more data is taken into account [Kachru, 1985].

English can function as a universal language [Fang, 2018] to facilitate worldwide communication. Utilizing social networking sites (SNS) for these objectives could enhance one's exposure to the English language. According to Liu (2010), one advantage of social media in language learning is the ability to learn independently. Independent learning provides students with the autonomy to choose activities and allocate time in a manner that effectively enhances and advances their English language proficiency. SNS offers chat rooms that enable students to engage in authentic English communication [Richards, 2015]. The abundance of resources, freedom of space, and flexibility of time available to students can potentially facilitate independent learning.

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Although the potential benefits indicated above exist, there is still skepticism regarding the effectiveness of language learning on social networking sites (SNS). According to McBride (2009), online socialization on social networking sites (SNS) may lack meaningfulness, as it does not consistently facilitate the exchange of information. Furthermore, learners may have a deficiency in their understanding of how to effectively engage with others on social networking sites in their second language [McBride, 2009].





2.3 Speaking Skills

Without question, the ability to talk effectively is crucial in the process of communication. Given that the majority of communication occurs through verbal exchanges, proficiency in speaking is the most essential means of communication. Within the context of English Language Learners (ELLs), the ability to talk effectively is of utmost importance to demonstrate their communication abilities for a wide range of objectives (Rao, 2019). According to Dirjal and Ghabanchi (2020), educational specialists prioritize the development of speaking abilities in language acquisition. Proficiency in speaking is crucial in various domains, and it is imperative for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a Second Language (ESL) learners to prioritize the development of their speaking skills (Rao, 2019). Speaking is often regarded as one of the most demanding language structures.

Berman and Cheng (2010) and Adnan and Sayadi (2021) found that Non-Native Speakers (NNS) require significant assistance in speaking and writing while meeting the qualifications for admission into a university program. In addition, it was noted that non-native speakers (NNS) found speaking tasks, such as delivering oral presentations or engaging in classroom debates, to be difficult. Proficiency in this skill is essential for students enrolled in teaching programs, specifically those studying EFL and ESL. In a similar vein, Soomro and Farooq (2018) proposed that English educators can enhance their pedagogical approaches to teaching speaking skills to assist learners. Furthermore, the majority of the research findings indicate that learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) tend to have a low perception of their proficiency in speaking.

In her study, Nazara (2011) showed that 55% of the participants who were learning English as a foreign language (EFL) expressed dissatisfaction with their speaking abilities. This consistent outcome is shown in other studies such as Lee (2009) and Park (2006). The research indicated that teachers had a tendency to assess their current levels of competency in receptive skills (namely, Listening and Reading) more favorably than in productive abilities (namely, Speaking and Writing). An ongoing issue in the present day is the insufficient amount of study conducted on the learner's experience with their speaking skills. There is a scarcity of material that guides how to assist learners in successfully navigating this demanding skill.

2.4 Previous Studies



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Prior studies have been conducted to examine the experience of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students utilizing social media in various situations, including Malaysia, Indonesia, and Pakistan. The strategies utilized encompass a spectrum from quantitative to qualitative approaches. These studies have demonstrated that social media has a beneficial impact on the development of students' English skills. In their study, Zaidi, Awaludin, Karim, Ghani, Rani, and Ibrahim (2018) examined the impact of YouTube on the enhancement of English language proficiency among second-year university students. Using a quantitative methodology, the researchers collected data by administering surveys to students at a university in Malaysia. The research findings suggested that regular independent use of YouTube could enhance participants' proficiency in the English language. They utilize YouTube extensively due to its provision of engaging English content, which serves as a source of motivation and aids in the enhancement of their pronunciation skills.

A further investigation carried out by Soviyah and D.R. Etikaningsih [Soviyah, and Etikaningsih, 2018] examined the use of Instagram as a means to enhance the writing proficiency of high school pupils in Yogyakarta. A total of fifty students participated in this study, employing a quantitative technique. The research findings demonstrated a notable disparity in writing proficiency. Participants who actively utilized social media for writing were found to exhibit writing proficiency.

A study on social media was conducted by I. U. Khan, M. Ayaz, and M. Faheem [Khan, et al., 2016]. The study sought to examine the progress of vocabulary acquisition among university professors in Pakistan through the utilization of social media platforms. Data was gathered from 36 teachers using a quantitative approach. The research findings demonstrated that social media significantly contributed to the expansion of its users' language repertoire.

3. Method

To better understand how EFL students see social media as a tool to hone their public speaking abilities, this study sets out to investigate this question. The study's findings were described using a quantitative manner. The students' perspectives on using social media to improve their public speaking abilities are explored in this study through the use of questionnaires as research tools. We surveyed one hundred pupils. The pupils were selected at random. Taking a page out from Vandevateere and Desmet's (2009) case study on evaluating attitudes towards CALL (Computer Assisted Learning), we administer a 30-item attitude questionnaire to our students. Instead of





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referring to computers, the CALL research questionnaire now includes references to social media networking sites. The data that has been obtained is examined using SPSS, which stands for Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.

The survey is based on the CALL model. A five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly disagree," "disagree," "neutral," "agree," to "Strongly agree" follows the twenty-item text. A total of one hundred undergraduates from three different universities in Uruk and Baghdad, all of whom were active social media employers, participated in this study. Their selection is done at random.

Everyone who took part was a student in the English as a Second Language program.

Sheard (2018) states that there are multiple places to find quantitative data. A typical image is of surveys that are given out in some kind of electronic or paper format. She elaborated by saying that secondary sources of quantitative data could include things like interviews, observations, or even automated procedures like web server log files. Steinfield et al. (2008) and Roblyer et al. (2010) were among the previous studies that employed surveys to examine SNS usage patterns. Because it is statistical and evaluated in terms of numbers and values, quantitative data is more inflexible and useful for data analysis. Therefore, it is easy to verify and assess this type of data. This method also helped respondents hone their public speaking abilities by allowing them to share their opinions and pinpoint their impressions through the medium of social media.

3.1 Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

Experts in methodology and linguistics were consulted to ensure the questionnaire's validity (Refer to Appendix A'). The suggestions they made have been carefully considered. Twelve undergraduates from the University of Babylon served as a pilot sample to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. We re-distributed the questionnaire to the same sample after 10 days under the same settings. The reliability coefficient, as determined by Cronbach's alpha after examining the questionnaire items, was 0.88. The results show that the questionnaire's dimensions and items are satisfactory.

4. Results

4.1 Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed and interpreted through the statistical tools.

Table T. below shows the of frequencies respondents' responses and percentages to each item of the questionnaire.

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Students' perspectives about Flashcards: Please tick the appropriate choice (✓)

No. item	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	25	50	10	20	10	20	5	10	0	0
2	26	52	10	20	5	10	5	10	4	8
3	20	40	12	24	7	14	4	8	7	14
4	18	36	16	32	8	16	5	10	3	6
5	16	32	14	28	10	20	6	12	4	8
6	16	32	14	28	4	8	8	16	10	20
7	10	20	6	12	14	28	12	24	8	16
8	10	20	13	26	12	24	10	20	5	10
9	8	16	16	32	10	20	12	24	4	8
10	20	40	18	36	8	16	4	8	4	8
11	10	20	6	12	2	4	16	32	10	20
12	22	44	9	18	10	20	3	6	2	4
13	10	20	16	32	8	16	8	16	6	12
14	12	24	15	30	6	12	5	10	10	20
15	14	28	16	32	14	28	8	16	6	12
16	8	16	16	32	7	14	5	10	10	20
17	16	32	22	44	8	16	8	16	6	12
18	10	20	9	18	8	16	4	8	8	16
19	20	40	10	20	10	20	4	8	8	16
20	20	40	8	16	9	18	10	20	3	6

4.2 Discussion of the results

The results revealed that :





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1. the participants had highly positive attitudes because social media provided them with the knowledge to implement mobile learning. The results also demonstrated students reported some benefits of learning through social media, including the probability of learning outside the classroom anywhere, at any time.
2. EFL learners who used social media enjoyed more vocabulary learning compared to those who did not use it.
3. A great majority of students agreed and strongly agreed with social media, since many students are used to sharing experiences via social networks, the students may find them to be most useful in memorizing new words.
4. The results of this paper indicated that social media stimulated students to fulfill their vocabulary tasks as they could take advantage of the elasticity of place and time to accomplish the tasks at their own pace.
5. They maintained that Social media helped them improve their studies and enabled them to become more confident in using the language

5. Conclusions

In the light of the preceding survey and discussions related to the findings and hypothesis, the following conclusions have been drawn:

1. The study's findings indicated that the majority of EFL college students prefer to use social media for language skill improvement.
2. The results revealed that the most of students favored learning vocabulary via Multimedia rather than other language skills.
3. The efficiency of the technology was evidenced, and social media is perceived as a venue for ELL, which could be attributable to a number of its features such as its ubiquity, ease of access, ease of sharing personal ideas, and peer feedback as well as the teacher's feedback to individual students.
4. Students can enjoy the comfort of using social media which could cater to their own needs and the capability of social media to provide them with a feeling of security
5. In light of the findings, social media could be incorporated into higher education curricula to improve Universities' educational process.
6. Students will be more active and work together by using social media.
7. EFL students can use social media to improve their English language outside the classroom.

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8. Using social media and technological resources enables learners to have a comprehensive scope for the learning process in the language classroom

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