Connectivism Practice in English Language Teaching (ELT): Teachers' Perception on Benefits and Challenges

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Informasi Artikel	Abstract
                  Keywords: Connectivism Benefits Challenges	*Connectivism provides abundant enchanting experiences in ELT context due to the benefits that it offers. However, as the practice requires technology integration, physical, and psychological readiness, teachers discover challenges upon the implementation. This study aims at investigating the benefits and challenges of the practice in ELT context. Through content analysis qualitative study, the study attains the targeted exploration. 5 experienced English teachers are selected to conduct semi-structured interviews. The data were analyzed and reviewed by the researchers and experts for affording the valid results towards the issues that are raised. Findings revealed that Connectivism can definitely foster learners' language skills, such as speaking, listening, and pronunciation through the various digital platforms that are provided. Interestingly, connectivism is advantageous for strengthening learners' 21st century skills, namely critical thinking, collaboration, communication skills, and creativity in learning English. On the other hand, the challenges encountered by teachers in integrating connectivism are 1) inadequate facilities and infrastructure, 2) lack of training and development in educator resources, and 3) low internet network access or the bandwidth. To sum up, connectivism is the most preferrable pedagogical approach in ELT. This study sheds a light on the essence of digital environment in ELT which assists the accessible various sources of learning to be attained. Pertaining to the challenges, teachers and stakeholders are responsible to overcome.*

Abstrak

Konektivisme memberikan banyak pengalaman yang mengesankan di konteks pengajaran bahasa inggris dengan berbagai benefit yang ditawarkan. Meskipun, praktik penerapannya memerlukan integrasi teknologi, kesiapan fisik dan mental, guru bahasa Inggris menemukan tantangan-tantangan dalam penerapannya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi persepsi guru terhadap manfaat dan tantangan yang dihadapi dalam penerapan konektivisme di pengajaran bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif analisis konten. Untuk teknik pengumpulan data, peneliti melakukan wawancara semi terstruktur dengan 5 guru bahasa Inggris. Data yang diperoleh kemudian direview oleh para peneliti and ahli untuk mendapatkan temuan yang valid. Temuan penelitian ini mengungkapkan manfaat penerapan konektivisme untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbahasa, seperti *speaking*, *listening*, dan *pronunciation*. Disamping itu, siswa mampu mengembangkan keterampilan abad 21, seperti keterampilan berpikir kritis, kolaborasi, komunikais, dan kreativitas dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Namun demikian, guru menghadapi tantangan dalam penerapannya di kelas, yakni 1) kurangnya fasilitas dan infrastruktur, 2) kurangnya pelatihan dan pengembangan sumber daya pendidik, dan 3) rendahnya akses jaringan internet dan *bandwith*. Kesimpulan penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa konektivism adalah suatu pendekatan pedagogis yang paling digemari dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini berfokus pada esensi penciptaan lingkungan digital yang menyediakan variasi sumber pembelajaran yang mudah diakses. Mengenai tantangan penerapannya di kelas, guru dan pemangku kepentingan bertanggung jawab untuk menanganinya.
Kata Kunci : Konektivisme, Manfaat, Tantangan

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, the interconnected world is created where the internet and computer assist how people live their lives. The vast development of the digital era brings about required adaptation on several aspects, especially education. Learning ought to be designed with an adjustment upon the technology development, learners' need and role (Rahmadani et al., 2019; Feyza & Seyda, 2023, p. 114).

This era of modern technology drives an alteration of the education system, encompassing both social and daily life aspects. The traditional role of the school as a social and learning environment, restricted by space and time, is being reshaped by approaches that exceed these boundaries, such as online education environments and courses. With the advantages provided by the internet and computers, both formal and informal education can reach more people under more favourable conditions (Boyraz & Ocak, 2021, p. 1127).

In ELT, teachers conduct transformation pedagogy for promising better meaningful outcomes in learners' language proficiency. Professional development program is requirable to embody long-life and valuable learning (Paschal & Gougou, 2022, p. 69). The learning process concerns the required skills; critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, creativity, and communication (Feyza & Seyda, 2023, p. 126). Contradicting to it, the 4C's are considered to be the prominent themes which comprise critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration (Yeşilçınar & Aykan, 2021, p. 320). Learners perceive that the essential technology incorporation enables an engaging and dynamic learning environment. In terms of attaining the demanded purpose of education where learners' achievement meets the expected outcome, teachers are ought to design a structured lesson plan which is highly possible to activate learners' collaboration and communication skills which drives them to think creatively and critically (p. 326).

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on physical distancing and necessitated changes in every aspect of life, including education. Educators worldwide, who were already striving to adapt to digitalization to meet the demands and needs of today's learners—often referred to as digital natives—found themselves thrust into an entirely new educational paradigm, where face-to-face classes were no longer freely available (Feyza & Seyda, 2023, p. 114). Due to the condition, the teacher begins to conduct online learning with connectivism theory. Sidik et al (2021) investigate the learners' engagement that is influenced by the online mode of learning. The positive outcome heavily validates previous study on how beneficial to use technology for fostering learners' participation in discussion where they learn in a community (Alhammadi, 2021; Sidik et al., 2021, p. 1361).

On the other hand, there is no clear agreement on what generates a successful learning process. Many theories are presented which are related to meaning-constructed, behaviour, motivational theory, and others. There are various explorations to examine the effective learning that match learners' need (Downes, 2020, p. 59). Connectivism, considered as a young theory, works as a favour to alter the learners' insight into learning skills that is required for following the digital era (Siemens, 2004, p. 163). In the classroom practice is not primarily concerned with whether the use of technology provides advantages for learning, but merely on what best strategy to use the technology for granting positive outcomes (Boyraz & Ocak, 2021, p. 1127).

The appearance of connectivism brings about criticism of its practice in the digital learning environment (Downes, 2020, p. 112). It is broadly applied which positively results in learners' autonomy and interactivity. Learners are accustomed to work on 'do it yourself' which they choose what they learn (p. 118). In constructivism classroom, learners, eventually, learn how to learn and construct new knowledge (p. 124). Moreover, learners explore the online learning resource in order to discuss such issues and develop new insight (Al-Maawali, 2023, p. 69)

Hussein (2021, p. 116) examines the connectivism practice. The practice benefits EFL learners' critical literacy. Through seamless circumstances, learners can be more active in the online classroom. The diverse sources of learning is utilized for designing the material that keeps up the trend as to enhance learners' engagement. Learners are accustomed to insightful global phenomena that unconsciously train their awareness to critically determine appropriate action for becoming social justice warriors.

Several studies concern exploring the impact of connectivism practice on linguistic competence. (Omar Jerónimo Mosquera Camargo, 2022) has investigated the use of connectivism on learners' oral communication skills. The practice creates an engaging learning environment for teaching English. Learners' motivation to perpetually practice speaking is the main core that leads to improvement. It also benefits on the enhancement of writing skills since the teacher is able to activate meaning-making process, reflective practice (Al-Maawali, 2022). This study investigates teachers' perception on the

benefits of connectivism in their teaching and challenges encountered by the teachers owing to the practice.

METHOD

A qualitative content analysis method is carried out to this present study in order to investigate teachers' perception upon the benefits and challenges of connectivism practice in their language learning classroom. Qualitative content analysis is a research technique that systematically examines textual data to uncover patterns, themes, and meanings. It elicits rich information which are fruitful for depicting in-depth exploration upon the problem statements (Krippendorff, 2013 ; Feyza & Seyda, 2023, p. 118). The data collection utilizes semi-structured interviews that involve 5 EFL teachers. The interview is conducted with the use of Bahasa Indonesia for allowing the flexibility, clear, and detailed information from the interviewees.

The Participant and Setting

The study involves 5 English teachers in EFL classroom. They have experienced teaching 4-20 years. The government has perpetually held several trainings dealing with technology-enhanced learning as the base of connectivism which they have participated in. 2 teachers are public teachers in urban areas and the rest are (1) private teachers in urban and (3) suburban areas. The implementation of connectivism has been conducted in ELT context. The group of teachers are eager to foster the quality of connectivism in their classroom.

Data Collection and Analysis

The list of questions are prepared before conducting a semi-instructed interview. The group of teachers are called for promising the agreement as the interviewees and the interview schedule. The interview is carried out one-on-one that lasts approximately 30 minutes. The researchers develop the question in order to elicit a clear, comprehensive, and valid response towards the underlying issues. The results of the interview are collected and transcribed in organized note for enabling the feasible review. The note is reviewed by two researchers.

The data is analyzed through these phases according to Feyza & Seyda (2023, p. 118). The data were examined multiple times to grasp the overall content and identify emerging themes. Next, the data were segmented and coded, with similar codes grouped together to explore patterns and connections. The coded data were then organized into themes, and relationships between themes were analyzed. These themes were subsequently reviewed and refined to form a narrative that encapsulated the study's key findings. To ensure the study's trustworthiness, several measures were implemented.

First, the study received approval from an ethics committee to protect participants' rights. Second, it was conducted by the lead author, who has extensive experience in qualitative research. Third, an independent expert in ELT education reviewed the study and provided feedback on the methodology and findings. Lastly, the data were analyzed by two independent coders to ensure reliability and consistency in the coding process and to verify the accuracy of the findings. In conclusion, the qualitative content analysis method used in this study offered a comprehensive and detailed teachers' perception corresponding to the issues which are raised in this study.

Dalam metode hindari menggunakan konsep umum dan lebih memfokuskan kepada desain penelitian yang anda pilih dan dapat merujuk hasil atau pendapat dari ahli sesuai dengan metode penelitian terkiat yang anda lakukan.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to find out how to implement connectivity learning, and what is the influence of connectivity learning in 21st century skills. This connectivity research is prioritised to think more critically, understand the level of reflection so as to include the theory of connectivism. Combining connectivism and critical thinking can be highly competitive, can be integrated and produce quite satisfactory results. This theory also adheres to an academic grading system that is not limited by the

scope of classes and grades, but rather on other things that are not limited, such as internet connections, social media, and so on. Connectivism itself is more focused on broader knowledge and is not only limited to facts and information (Downes, 2022). But in this case, there needs to be an unlimitedness of access and digital tools.connectivism has basic characteristics: a creative process, learning from others, and a strong bond between teachers and learners. Connectivism embodies critical thinking through the presence of chaos causes, network models, healthy ecology and flow inhibitors. And the steps for the realisation of this theory are 1) determining the conditions of learning, 2) knowledge discovery 3) knowledge connection 4) discussion and answering 5) knowledge presentation (Kongrugsa et al., 2016). The knowledge reviewed by learners is based on learning supported by learners outside the classroom and in the classroom.

To find out the benefits and the challenges in integrating connectivism in ELT, an Interview session was conducted with 5 English teachers who teach at public and private schools in urban and suburban areas. Those teachers were selected because they implement connectivism in teaching English. The findings of this study shows the benefits and the challenges in integrating connectivism to enhance 21st century skill in ELT. The result is depicted as follows.

Benefits of Connectivism Implementation in ELT

1. Learners' Language Skills

    As the core purpose of ELT is concerned with language skills enhancement of learners, the result of the interview is monitored and explored dealing with the relation of the connectivism implementation upon the purpose's attainment.

    AA stated that the benefit of connectivism in ELT is that the implementation elicits a huge relation and collaborations in the wide world, and it enhances their skill in speaking English due to the social networking program. FNF stated that connectivism can provide a benefit in enhancing listening and speaking, because learners will pay more attention and give an opinion through discussion or presentation. AZ stated that in integrating connectivism it can help learners to promote their knowledge of grammar and pronunciation earlier before their teacher teaches the lesson.

    Whereas, AR utters that the use of connectivism can enhance learners' vocabulary and pronunciation. Through the internet and social networking, they can exchange information and knowledge from other people. MNF said that the used of connectivism can make teaching English more effective and efficient, cause through connectivism we can take the advantages of social media platforms and social networking to take speaking English assessment of learners, so the learners will not get nervous cause they are requested to make a video not to perform in front of their friends.

2. Learners' 21st century Skills
    a. Learners' Critical Thinking

        Based on the interview conducted with 5 English teachers. Of the five English teachers who have been interviewed, they agreed that the use of connectivism can improve learners' critical thinking skills in ELT. These are evidences from the interview that was conducted.

        AA agreed that connectivism can improve learners' critical thinking, AA argues that when learners get information from the internet they will be more curious which makes them wonder about things they just knew. This can stimulate them to learn English, considering that English is a language with a wide scope, which raises new questions and makes them more progressive. MNA also agreed that connectivism could improve learners' critical thinking in ELT, because in integrating connectivism learners must be able to think critically through a sharing program,

collaboration, or sharing program. FNF agreed that connectivism could improve critical skills, through connectivism learners can have any relations from the other side of the world. They can get any information from the internet, so in doing their task they can find any references, and choose any new topic in gaining an essay in English.

From the research that showed the benefit of connectivism can improve learners' critical thinking, it's confirmed by the five teachers. Critical thinking can enhance because of The amount of new information and knowledge obtained from the internet or social networking, which can change learners' perceptions to be more critical and aware of second language learning. With critical thinking, learners can do tasks and more easily understand the material given by the teacher. This is in line with the research of Aksal et al., (2013) which states that The benefits of connectivism is to create a new perspective in education in forming critical thinking. In the formulation of this theory, it can foster reflection, awareness of learners, leadership spirit, and independent organisation by learners. And this can support learners' relationships with the wider world, so that they have unlimited networking. In critical thinking, this can be fully supported because of some actions to pay more attention. Learning with self-organisation will make learners think harder, logically, and critically. Connection supports grown-up greater knowledge for learners.

In addition, in this study, the teacher also mentioned that connectivism can increase critical thinking due to collaboration between learners who exchange ideas or opinions. This makes learners more stimulated by sharing ideas with friends or through other social networks. From these thoughts and ideas, several questions arise from learners about the knowledge they have gained. This makes learners attempt to find answers to their ignorance or curiosity. Connectivism benefits the enhancement of learners' critical thinking. The dialogic learning process using technology-supported intervention increases learners' curiosity upon such issues and decreases their reluctance. It 's in line with some of the research and statement from these researchers like Aksal et al., (2013, p. 251) confess that structured group tasks lead discussion for activating the act of sharing and persuading others' ideas. It encompasses their ability in analyzing, argumenting, hypothesising, and inference-making The online-designed classroom prompts learners' decision-making and self-leadership. Also supported from (Al-Maawali, 2022) stated that those skills are required to be nurtured for establishing education supported connectivism which matches the 21st century. Another statement from researchers said that yet, it requires sufficient quality for triggering their critical thinking skills (Chen & Hu, 2018, p. 18).

b. Learners' communication skills

From the interviews conducted with 5 English teachers, AA, MNA, FNF, AZ, and AR agreed that connectivism can improve learners' communication skills in ELT. These are some evidence from an interview that was conducted by researchers.

According to AA', we can conclude that connectivism could improve learners' communication skills. Because in the English learning process we need to gain communication with others, like teachers, friends, and social networks. MNA said she gave the learners a turn to communicate with others or to sing in the class. This challenge can make learners being more active to use English and enhance communication skills. FNF opinion's said that she used gdocs, canva, and zoom to make learning collaboration, FNF believes that from those collaboration, can make learners have more interaction with other learners,

Furthermore, AZ agrees that the large access from social networking can make learners more fluent in their communication skills. Integration of connectivism can improve learners' communication skills, because sometimes learners enjoy speaking in English through the zoom meeting or video, than in real life. Also from connectivism learners can find tutorial videos from any platform to learn how to use particular accent.

In this study, it is stated that connectivism can improve learners' communication skills, this is due to social networking activities that make learners communicate more often with their friends, even communicating with friends across countries from social media platforms. Digital environment supports learners' communication skills. Online resources enriches learners' insight and comprehension. It's in line with Al-Maawali (2023, p. 69). They communicate their obtained knowledge and ideas in their community by recognising the concept of 'identity'. Unless that connectivism can stimulate learners in speaking, it's line with Adhelia & Triastuti (2023, p. 320). Through experiencing the concept of 'identity' as the writer or speaker in their virtual digital tool, they maintain their inquiry community. Online speaking tasks are utilised specifically for enhancing learners' linguistic competence. A positive brand new environment can maximize their participation, engagement, and interaction among others (p. 321) .The communication tools equipped with required facilities create greater benefit for learning activities (Lajmiri, 2016, p. 1858).

c. Learners' Collaboration Skills

From the interviews conducted with the 5 English teachers, they agreed that connectivism can enhance learners' collaboration skills in English language teaching. These are some evidences from interview that was conducted.

AA opines connectivism and collaboration are inseparable. Learners naturally grasp the concept of collaboration that alters their way of thinking. Through connectivism, they realize their incapability of being individual in every aspect of life. The statement is supported by MNF, she frequently implements connectivism for enhancing learners' collaboration skills in such topics of learning. The collaboration skills are formed by ideas and information exchange among learners in accomplishing instructed tasks. FNF has the same opinion as MNA. FNF asked learners to make a group to discuss and gain ideas, and it can enhance their collaboration and group control.

Whilst, AZ contemplates the benefits of connectivism as an aid to improve learners' collaboration through connectivism where learners can make a relation or collaboration with friends from the other countries, even if they have not met in person for real, but they can collaborate through social platforms. AR stated that learners can spend their time in collaboration online, anywhere and anytime. They can accomplish their task by collaborating and actively discussing in a network without face to face.

In this study, it is stated that connectivism can improve learners' collaboration skills in ELT. Because with social networking, learners will have more interactions, share funds, and collaborate with their friends. Online collaborative learning is embodied by the connectivism intervention. It's in line with Mapile & Lapinid, 2023 (p. 41) stated that the social community enables the development of active participation in creating the flow of interaction Learners perceive the dimension influences their motivation and satisfaction The use of social networks for conducting e-collaborative learning allows time flexibility in learning, either inside or outside class timeline. The opportunity overcomes the time insufficiency. In this study, teachers use

connectivism to improve collaboration in English by forming groups in doing a task and the role of teachers here is as a controller, supervisor, and tutor, in addition to providing assistance when problems occur in learning. This is also revealed in the research of Alzain (2019, p. 59) stating that teachers are able to practically handle and monitor learners' performance and progress-making.

d. Learners' Creativity

These are some evidence or teachers' opinions about the benefits of connectivism that could improve learners' creativity in ELT. In their opinion, the five English teachers agreed that connectivism could improve creativity in ELT.

AA declares that she takes advantage of Connectivism to increase creativity by utilizing Canva, it can enhance learners' creative skills in creating their presentation content in English. Almost the same as the MNA's opinion, FNF also shows evidence that learners will be more stimulated in their creativity through connectivity, such as when learners are asked to write an essay they will definitely show their best work through presentations, and look for some interesting references to create their essays. Learners' creativity is developed through feedback and any platforms they use. AR also shares identical opinions with other teachers. AR agreed that technology and social media can make learners more creative, and learners can express it through using od canva or learning videos that have a correlation with the topic of learning.

Connectivism can increase learners' creativity, namely with the new knowledge obtained, learners will be more creative in working on tasks and practicing in learning a second language. In addition, connectivism makes learners more creative in creating digital content, and creative in finding learning resources. This triggered an increase in learners' vocabularies as expressed by some teachers. This is because of the amount of information and new ideas that learners get so that they can stimulate more creative things to be producedLearners' creativity is prompted by the particular design of online classrooms.It's in line with this statement, online classroom activity by instructing their kinesthetic in creating such product-related learning enhances their creativity (Wati et al., 2022, p. 687). None of the studies depict specific improvement of the practice on creativity.

Challenges of Connectivism Implementation in ELT

In the integration of a method, it certainly brings several obstacles. As in teachers' efforts to integrate connectivism, teachers also experience some obstacles or challenges of their own. Some of these challenges were revealed by 5 teachers who had been interviewed by the researcher. Here are some evidence of interviews with English teachers.

According to AA, the challenge of integrating connectivism is a weakness of benwith's strength, according to AA Indonesia is a country with an internet network that is still classified at a weak level, this causes respondents to often have blank spot areas in schools. Even though learning is mostly carried out in the classroom, it is not uncommon for signals to penetrate into the classroom area, because the network in Indonesia is still weak and unstable. AA assesses that when implementing connectivism, we must pay close attention to the bandwidth. FNF admits the existing challenge is inadequate facilities. Facilities are important, but if in the middle of learning the existing facilities experience chaos or errors, it will hinder the learning process and take a long time, making learners lose enthusiasm. This is usually experienced by smart tv classes.

Similarly, AZ declares that the obstacle or challenge is the lack of availability of facilities and infrastructure, this is more or less the same as what was conveyed by FNF. Besides, resources, training and development of teachers that are not comprehensive. Because training for teachers is very important, because teachers as tutors will provide information and training also to learners regarding how to integrate technology. Therefore, if the training of human resources is still uneven, then this is a challenge in integrating connectivism to support English learning.

Furthermore, MNA perceives the challenges experienced are also the same, namely related to the lack of facilities and infrastructure, this makes teachers have to divide the existing computers so that they are evenly distributed to all learners, so for example, if there are 15 computers, they will be divided into groups so that one class can benefit from the computers themselves. Additionally, the opinion from AR, states that the challenge is that teachers must be able to think creatively in the sense that if there is a problem such as the internet or digital tools trouble, teachers must prepare with other plans, so that learning continues to run well.

This study examines what are the challenges and obstacles experienced by teachers or learners in integrating connectivism to improve learners' 21st century skills in ELT. Some teachers stated that some of them related to what difficulties they faced. The first challenge is the lack of facilities and infrastructure, facilities and p materials provided by the institution which are still limited, teaching teachers have to rack their brains twice to be able to make technology or resources that can be felt by all learners. Most of challenges are purpose to the technology. In addition, another challenge faced is the poor bandwidth in Indonesia, Indonesia is a country with a fairly weak bandwidth. This causes several problems such as the occurrence of blank spots at several points in the school area, which weakens the network. This, of course, makes learning disrupted, considering that the integration of technology will mostly be carried out in the classroom. This is in line with the research of Alshumaimeri (2008) which states that schools need to improve infrastructure to support digital learning activities using technology. Because there is still a lack or lack of facilities to support the implementation of existing digital-based learning.

The other challenge faced by teachers is the lack of training or development in integrating connectivism to support learners' 21st century skills, this requires more attention considering that teachers are tutors in learning. In this case, teachers are supported to be pro and active and have several plans to overcome some of the problems experienced such as problems in digital techniques or tools during learning, so that learners remain interested in learning. This is in line with the study of Özer (2018) which states that it is important for teachers to motivate learners to carry out training in integrating technology, but this is also balanced with teachers who must also be able to carry out development and training as well as in their skills to integrate existing technology.

This study sheds light on what connectivism benefits in enhancing learners' 21st century and what are the challenges in integrating connectivism in ELT. Further studies may look into the appropriate practice that is able to achieve the goal optimally and in-depth investigation regarding the impact on learners creativity. Teacher, additionally, requires the determination of topic-related learning objectives as the main concern and the targeted skills, as well.

CONCLUSION

This study uncovers the benefits and challenges in integrating connectivism to enhance learners' 21st century skills in ELT. The benefits of this implementation is the increased awareness, leadership, and self-organisation of learners, which makes their critical thinking patterns formed from various problems experienced when in an environment with many and high connections. So that it encourages learners to think more critically and logically. Furthermore, the digital environment enables the improvement of

communication and collaborative skills of learners. On the other hand, learners' creativity resulting from the approach will be optimally reached out by particular instructed tasks. The challenges of this theory are the lack of supporting facilities and infrastructure, which makes learning less comprehensive, because the existing facilities with the number of available learners are not balanced, which makes teachers have to be able to divide the existing facilities so that learners can use them. In addition, there is still a low level of training and development of existing resources, even though the role of teachers and learning implementers has an important meaning, but it is not uncommon for training in integrating connectivism is still lacking. In addition, the weakness of the bandwidth network is one of the problems that is quite crucial as well. We use networks in carrying out learning, with a weak network, learning will experience a little problem.

Due the small number of conducted research pertainining to the connectivism practice, the study might possess insufficient theories that supports the finding. This study belongs a limitation for attaining the underlying issue owing to the number of participants that poses a question. Appropriate training and development relating to the connectivism practice might potentially evolves subjected perception. For follow-up study, it is suggested to dig deeper the impact of practice in fostering learners' targeted skills with the use of suitable methodology.

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