

Grammar Learning Strategy (GLS): Male and Female EFL Students' Preferences

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Abstract

This research compares the preference for Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) between male and female EFL students of Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong. The research aims to identify the preferred strategies for learning grammar among males and females students and determine if a statistically significant disparity exists in preference for grammar learning strategies among males and females students. A total of 70 students, comprising 35 males and 35 females, took part in the research. They were obtained from 48% of the entire population. A Simple Random Technique was employed to randomly select 35 males and 35 female students from all the classes. The data were gathered using Pawlak's Grammar Learning Strategy Inventory (GLSI) questionnaire. The acquired data were analyzed using the Independent sample t-test procedure using SPSS version 29. The results indicate that male students preferred social grammar learning strategies (GLS). The preference for cognitive grammar learning strategies (GLS) was found among female students, particularly for dealing with Corrective Feedback (CF). Male and female English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong did not differ significantly with regard to their preferred strategies for learning grammar. Based on the analysis of the data, the researchers found that there was no statistically significant distinction between males and females regarding the strategies they preferred to learn grammar. Both males and females are utilizing a Grammar Learning Strategy at a medium level.

Keywords: Grammar, Gender, Preference, Grammar Learning Strategy (GLS), Grammar Learning Strategy Inventory (GLSI)

Abstrak

Penelitian ini membandingkan preferensi Grammar Learning Strategies (GLS) antara mahasiswa laki-laki dan perempuan pada mahasiswa Bahasa Inggris di Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan apakah ada perbedaan yang signifikan antara preferensi siswa laki-laki dan perempuan terhadap strategi pembelajaran tata bahasa. Penelitian ini melibatkan 70 siswa, 35 laki-laki dan 35 perempuan. Mereka diperoleh dari 45% dari seluruh populasi. Teknik Acak Sederhana digunakan untuk memilih 35 siswa laki-laki dan 35 siswa perempuan dari setiap kelas dengan metode acak. Data dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan angket Grammar Learning Strategy Inventory (GLSI) Pawlak. Data yang diperoleh dianalisis menggunakan prosedur uji independent sample t-test menggunakan SPSS versi 29. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa siswa laki-laki lebih menyukai strategi pembelajaran social grammar (GLS). Preferensi terhadap strategi pembelajaran tata bahasa kognitif (GLS) ditemukan di kalangan siswa perempuan, khususnya untuk menghadapi (CF). Berdasarkan hasil analisis data peneliti, siswa laki-laki dan perempuan di Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong tidak menunjukkan perbedaan yang signifikan dalam strategi pembelajaran grammar. Baik laki-laki maupun perempuan menggunakan strategi pembelajaran tata bahasa pada tingkat menengah.

Kata Kunci : Tata Bahasa, Gender, Preferensi, Strategi Pembelajaran Tata Bahasa (GLS), Inventarisasi Strategi Pembelajaran Tata Bahasa (GLSI)

1. Introduction

The acquisition of new knowledge and abilities in the learning process requires the application of a specific set of strategies. These strategies involve various techniques, habits, and modes of thinking that learners employ to facilitate their learning objectives. Students employ the strategy to enhance the effectiveness, autonomy, efficiency, and applicability of language acquisition across many contexts. When students participate in a learning activity, they use specific resources in different ways to achieve or complete the task at hand. This process may be referred to as a learning strategy process. Students can engage in many academic practices such as note-taking, keyword searches, repetition, communication with peers, translation, and recombination of information. According to Chamot et al (1999), learning strategies refer to specific cognitive processes or behavioral acts employed by individuals to facilitate the assimilation, acquisition, or retention of novel information.

Learning strategies are widely recognized as a crucial component that contributes to the achievement of students in acquiring proficiency in a second or foreign language. When considering several strategies to learning, students have the option to employ a blend of strategies, while some may exhibit a preference for a single dominant strategy. Moreover, the implementation of many strategies for learning endeavors can contribute to a more conducive classroom environment since they have been found to significantly enhance students' proficiency in areas of language that they may find less enjoyable or engaging. For instance, students may have a high level of enthusiasm in a particular language field while demonstrating a relative deficiency in other areas. Acquiring grammatical skills, such as English grammar, can provide challenges, leading to ineffective communication.

The study asserts that grammar holds significant importance, although it presents a formidable challenge to attain mastery. As stated by Ellis (2008), there exist two distinct categories of obstacles encountered in the process of acquiring grammar knowledge: (1) the challenge in comprehending and enhancing their grasp of a particular grammatical aspect and (2) the challenge in assimilating a given grammatical feature so that they can employ it effortlessly and unconsciously during communicative interactions. Consequently, students are obligated to possess a comprehensive understanding of grammar. Hulstijn (1995) also examines challenges related to grammar, including: (1) challenges stemming from limited metalinguistic knowledge, (2) challenges arising from differences between the foreign language and the first language, (3) challenges related to the time required for acquisition, (4) challenges related to the reliability of grammar usage, and (5) challenges arising from the distinction between normal and formal-semantic aspects.

Students sometimes find grammar challenging to grasp due to its adherence to specific rules. Huegli (2008) posits that grammar encompasses the system of regulations governing the formation of words and sentences. Consequently, students doing English studies should attain proficiency in grammar, as it plays a crucial role in enhancing their abilities in reading, writing, and speaking. The comprehension of grammar is a must for students enrolled in the English Department of an Indonesian institution in order to meet the demands of their language proficiency. The acquisition of grammar is a challenge for several students, despite its crucial role in developing English language proficiency.

The resolution of grammar learning challenges can be achieved by the use of a successful learning strategy. Laoli (2010) argue that the use of learning strategies by students is crucial in addressing challenges related to language acquisition and contextual understanding. A learning strategy refers to the deliberate efforts made by students to enhance their ability to acquire knowledge more effectively. According to Oxford (1990), learning strategies may be defined as the deliberate acts undertaken by students to facilitate the process of learning, with the aim of enhancing its efficiency, speed, enjoyment, self-directedness, effectiveness, and transferability to various situation. The learning strategy fulfills several objectives.

Students who are engaged in the study of English and encountering difficulties should cultivate effective learning strategies in order to enhance their grammatical proficiency. In accordance with the findings of Chamot (1999), students who possess a conscious understanding of their individual language learning process, strategies, and preferences are able to effectively manage their educational goals in order to attain their desired objectives. An essential component of learning English is considering the student's perspective. One of these elements is the consideration of gender. The grammar component is the most challenging aspect of learning English due to its diverse patterns. Male and female students have distinct aptitudes for learning, notably in grammar acquisition. In Linguistics, the concept of language category is of utmost importance when discussing gender distinctions. Conducting a study on

gender issues in learning grammar is crucial. There is limited knowledge on the influence of influencing factors on GLS, as just a few research have investigated aspects such as achievement, gender, and age. (Gurata, 2008; Pawlak, 2009a, 2011b, Tilfarlioglu & Yarcin, 2005). Understanding the distinct grammatical learning techniques male and female students employ in learning English is of utmost importance. This phenomenon has generated considerable attention among researchers who want to further their understanding of it. Numerous research studies have developed and modified assessment tools and learning methodologies to evaluate preferences for learning strategies within the domain of acquiring foreign languages. The researchers attempted to ascertain the preferred grammar learning strategies of male and female students in an English class since it is plausible that they exhibit notable differences in their strategy for studying the subject of grammar.

2. Method

A descriptive quantitative research was conducted to determine the preferred Grammar Learning Strategies of EFL students. The study reported the data findings in numerical form. Data was collected through questionnaire administrated to 70 EFL students of Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong consisting of 35 female students (50%) and 35 male students (50%). Pawlak's Grammar Learning Strategies Inventory (GLSI) to explore the preferred Grammar Learning Strategies used by EFL students and the different GLS used by Male and Female EFL students. The first section encompassed demographic data regarding the participants, including gender, age, and other relevant factors. In contrast, the subsequent section consisted of 70 statements, divided into four parts, which explored the various types of grammar learning strategies potentially employed by male and female students. The first section consists of Metacognitive GLS, which includes 8 items. The second section focuses on Cognitive GLS and is divided into four parts: 10 items for Cognitive GLS Used in Communication, 24 items for Cognitive GLS for developing Explicit Knowledge of Grammar, ten items for Cognitive GLS for Developing Implicit Knowledge of Grammar, and 6 items for Cognitive GLS for Dealing with Corrective Feedback (CF). The third section consists of 7 items for affective GLS, and the final section includes 5 items for social Grammar Learning Strategy.

The rating scales for each item are determined using a 5-point Likert scale, with values ranging from 1 to 5. The scale employed in this particular context spans from 1, denoting that a statement is "Rarely or almost never applicable to me," to 5, signifying that a statement is "Consistently or almost invariably applicable to me." This scale is employed to evaluate the extent of preference for various strategies. Oxford (1990) classifies the frequency of strategy utilization into three intervals: low strategy use (0.00 – 2.49), medium strategy use (2.50 – 3.49), and high strategy use (3.50 – 5.00).

In order to address the research problem, The data obtained was subsequently analyzed in two stage using the independent sample T-Test technique of SPSS version 29.0. Initially, the data were subjected to descriptive analysis to determine the preference for grammar learning strategies among males and females students. Researchers used SPSS's initial result at this step. The data were also compared to discover whether males and females preferred different Grammar Learning Strategies. The researchers used SPSS secondary output for this step.

3. Findings and Discussion

This research investigated two research questions. In two phases, male and female EFL students' GLSI preference was analyzed using SPSS.

a. GLS Preferences of Male and Female EFL Students: A Descriptive Analysis

The researchers compared male and female EFL students' Grammar Learning Strategies. Data was analyzed using SPSS's independent sample T-Test technique, and the first output table displayed the mean score shown in the table below.

Table 4. Male and Female EFL Students' GLS Preferences

	Gender_GL SI	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Metacognitive_GLSI	Male	35	3.0000	.54233	.09167
	Female	35	3.0857	.61220	.10348
Cognitive_GLSI	Male	35	2.8857	.32280	.05456
	Female	35	3.0000	.24254	.04100
Cognitive_Used_In_Communication_Tasks	Male	35	2.8571	.49366	.08344
	Female	35	3.2000	.47279	.07992
Cognitive_For_Developing_Explicit_Knowledge_of_Grammar	Male	35	2.9714	.16903	.02857
	Female	35	3.0000	.24254	.04100
Cognitive_For_Developing_Implicit_Knowledge_of_Grammar	Male	35	3.0286	.45282	.07654
	Female	35	3.0571	.53922	.09114
Cognitive_For_Dealing_with_CF	Male	35	3.0286	.61767	.10440
	Female	35	3.3143	.67612	.11429
Affective_GLSI	Male	35	2.9714	.61767	.10440
	Female	35	3.0286	.61767	.10440
Social_GLSI	Male	35	3.0857	.65849	.11131
	Female	35	3.0000	.68599	.11595
Overall	Male	35	3.0571	.23550	.03981
	Female	35	2.9714	.16903	.02857

The table indicates that male EFL students preferred the Social GLSI, with an average score of 3.0857. The following strategies were used: Cognitive for Developing Implicit Knowledge of Grammar (M=3.0286), Cognitive for Dealing with CF (M=3.0286), Metacognitive GLS (M= 3.000) Cognitive GLS (M=2.8857), Cognitive for Developing Explicit Knowledge of Grammar (M=2.9714), Affective GLS (M=2.9714), Cognitive Used in Communication Tasks (M=2.8571).

Meanwhile, female EFL students preferred the Cognitive GLS Dealing with CF (M=3.3143), The following strategies were Cognitive Used in Communication Tasks (M=3.2000), Metacognitive GLS (M=3.0857), Cognitive for Developing Implicit Knowledge of Grammar (M=3.0571), Affective GLS (M=3.0286), Cognitive GLS (M=3.0000), Cognitive for Developing Explicit Knowledge of Grammar (M=3.0000), Social GLS (M=3.0000).

Male students (M= 3.0571) employed more language learning strategies for their English learning compared to their female counterparts (M=2.9714). However, both individuals employed grammar learning strategies at a middle level.

Moreover, to determine the frequency at which students employ grammar learning strategies, their average usage is categorized into several categories based on Oxford's SILL Category (1990). The table below summarizes the students' preference levels for Grammar Learning Strategy.

Table 5. GLS Levels of Male and Female EFL Students

Gender	Metacognitive GLSI	Cognitive GLSI	Cognitive Used In Communication Tasks	Cognitive For Developing Explicit Knowledge of Grammar	Cognitive For Developing Implicit Knowledge of Grammar	Cognitive For Dealing With Cf	Affective GLSI	Social GLSI
1 Mean	3.0000	2.8857	2.8571	2.9714	3.0286	3.0286	2.9714	3.0857
Level	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
2 Mean	3.0857	3.0000	3.2000	3.0000	3.0571	3.3143	3.0286	3.0000
Level	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium

Female students demonstrated a higher utilization of grammar learning strategies (M=2.9714) than male students (M=3.0571) in the overall strategy to learning English. Both individuals are employing Grammar Learning Strategy at a medium level.

b. Male and Female EFL Students' GLS Preference: A Comparative Analysis

The research aimed to analyze the difference in Grammar Learning Strategies preference among males and females. The result of the Independent sample T-Test was utilized to examine the significant

difference in Grammar Learning Strategy preference among males and females. The result of the SPSS may be observed in the following way:

Table 6. A Comparison of Male and Female EFL Students' GLS Preferences

		Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance p	Mean Sided p	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Metacognitive_GLSI	Equal variances assumed	1,511	0,223	-0,620	68	0,269	0,537	-0,08571	0,13824	-0,36158	0,19015
	Equal variances not assumed			-0,620	67,025	0,269	0,537	-0,08571	0,13824	-0,36165	0,19022
Cognitive_GLSI	Equal variances assumed	6,291	0,015	-1,675	68	0,049	0,099	-0,11429	0,06825	-0,25047	0,02190
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,675	63,110	0,049	0,099	-0,11429	0,06825	-0,25066	0,02209
Cognitive_Used_In_Communication_Tasks	Equal variances assumed	0,088	0,768	-2,967	68	0,002	0,004	-0,34286	0,11554	-0,57341	-0,11230
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,967	67,874	0,002	0,004	-0,34286	0,11554	-0,57342	-0,11229
Cognitive_For_Developing_Explicit_Knowledge_of_Grammar	Equal variances assumed	0,001	0,973	-0,572	68	0,285	0,569	-0,02857	0,04997	-0,12828	0,07114
	Equal variances not assumed			-0,572	60,724	0,285	0,570	-0,02857	0,04997	-0,12850	0,07136
Cognitive_For_Developing_Implicit_Knowledge_of_Grammar	Equal variances assumed	1,063	0,306	-0,240	68	0,406	0,811	-0,02857	0,11902	-0,26607	0,20893
	Equal variances not assumed			-0,240	66,027	0,406	0,811	-0,02857	0,11902	-0,26620	0,20906
Cognitive_For_Dealing_with_CF	Equal variances assumed	3,142	0,081	-1,846	68	0,035	0,069	-0,28571	0,15480	-0,59460	0,02317
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,846	67,451	0,035	0,069	-0,28571	0,15480	-0,59465	0,02322
Affective_GLSI	Equal variances assumed	0,000	1,000	-0,387	68	0,350	0,700	-0,05714	0,14765	-0,35178	0,23749
	Equal variances not assumed			-0,387	68,000	0,350	0,700	-0,05714	0,14765	-0,35178	0,23749
Social_GLSI	Equal variances assumed	0,013	0,910	0,533	68	0,298	0,596	0,08571	0,16073	-0,23502	0,40645
	Equal variances not assumed			0,533	67,886	0,298	0,596	0,08571	0,16073	-0,23503	0,40646
Overall	Equal variances assumed	1,386	0,243	1,749	68	0,042	0,085	0,08571	0,04900	-0,01206	0,18349
	Equal variances not assumed			1,749	61,684	0,043	0,085	0,08571	0,04900	-0,01224	0,18367

Relying on Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, the significance (Sig.) value for the overall strategies was 1.386, above the threshold of 0.05. Thus, it is likely inferred that the variances were equivalent. Subsequently, the hypothesis may be evaluated using the "Equal Variances Assumed" column of the t-test in Table 6.

Based on the provided table, it is evident that the significance (2-tailed) value for the overall strategy is 0.085, which is above the threshold of 0.05. It indicates that the probabilities are more than 0.05, Leading the alternative hypothesis (Ha) to be rejected and the null hypothesis (Ho) to be accepted, Male and female EFL students do not differ significantly in their preferred Grammar Learning Strategies. An in-depth analysis of hypothesis is conducted for each strategy:

a) Metacognitive GLS

Metacognitive GLS has a t-value of -0.620 and a probability of 0.573, more significant than 0.05, as shown in the table. It follows that Ho, the null hypothesis, is acceptable. All things considered, there is no significant distinction in the preference for metacognitive GLS among male and female students when it comes to learning English grammar.

b) Cognitive GLS

According to the table, cognitive GLS has a t-value of -1.675 and a probability of 0.099, which is more than 0.05. It follows that Ho, the null hypothesis, is acceptable. In the end, there is no substantial difference among males and females in preference for Cognitive GLS when it comes to learning grammar.

c) Cognitive Used In Communication Tasks

Cognitive Used in Communication Tasks have a t-value of -2.967 and a probability of 0.004, which is more than 0.05. As a result, the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is acceptable. There is a considerable gender gap among male and female students in the preferred Cognitive GLS Used In Communication Tasks.

d) Cognitive for Developing Explicit Knowledge of Grammar

This hypothesis (Ho) is accepted because, according to the data in the table, the t-value for Cognitive for Developing Explicit Knowledge of Grammar is -0.572 and the probability is 0.569 > 0.05. Finally,

when it comes to learning English grammar, there is no discernible gender gap in terms of preferred Cognitive for Developing Explicit Knowledge of Grammar strategies.

e) Cognitive for Developing Implicit Knowledge of Grammar

Cognitive for Developing Implicit Knowledge of Grammar provides a t-value of -0.240 and has a probability of 0.811, which is more significant than 0.05. It follows that H_0 , the null hypothesis, is acceptable. Regarding the cognitive GLS for developing implicit knowledge of grammar, there is no discernible difference in learning grammar among male and female EFL students.

f) Cognitive for Dealing with Corrective Feedback

Cognitive Dealing with CF had a t-value of -1.846 and a probability of 0.069, more significant than 0.05. It follows that H_0 , the null hypothesis, is correct. In the end, when it comes to learning grammar, there is no discernible gender gap in the preference for Cognitive Dealing with CF.

g) Affective GLS

Affective GLSI has a t-value of -0.387 and a probability of 0.983. The null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted since this probability is above 0.05. Males' and females' preference for affective GLS for grammar learning is significant.

h) Social GLS

Social GLSI's t-value is 0.533, and its probability is 0.983. The null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted since this probability is above 0.05. Social GLS is preferred by both males and females for grammar learning.

The data analysis highlighted several results. The initial finding shows that male students tend to favour social-oriented strategies when learning English grammar, as the social GLSI shows. Females preferred social strategies less than other domains, whereas males had a higher average score, indicating overall dominance in this area. This finding contradicts previous studies (Tam, 2013; Green and Oxford, 1995 as mentioned in Tam, 2013; Jamiah et al, 2016; Mulugeta & Buyaou, 2019) that found female learners to have a higher inclination towards employing social strategies compared to male learners. As stated by Oxford (1990), Social GLSI refers to acts that enable learners to organise their learning and assist them in arranging and planning their language learning productively and efficiently. Both male and female students showed a propensity for utilising these strategies, indicating a tendency to actively manage their learning and seek out more practice opportunities, often beyond the confines of the classroom.

Furthermore, the study found that female students tend to favor cognitive strategies, namely using corrective feedback, while learning English grammar. Consistent with the findings of this research, Salahshour F et al. (2013) also found that females used cognitive strategies more frequently than males. However, contrary to the findings of this study, Alsied et al (2018) showed that Libyan students employed cognitive strategies, despite the fact that most Libyan students still acquire grammar using traditional methods such as memorization. Overall, the outcome of the present study can likely be attributed to behavioral disparities between males and girls. Guys are inclined to have a greater inclination towards challenge. Oxford (1990) states that cognitive strategies are particularly beneficial for language acquisition. Consequently, these strategies help students to overcome several obstacles in learning. Males prefer engaging in problem-solving activities, whereas females prioritize the sensation of accomplishment as the most significant feature. Consequently, they tend to commit to memory the information they have acquired.

In addition, this research found no significant difference in the preference for grammar learning strategies among males and females when considering the strategies employed as a whole. The present study's findings on the relationship between gender and overall strategy use are consistent with previous studies (Wahyuni, 2013; Ansyari & Rahmi, 2016; Mulugeta & Buyaou, 2019; Dika et al, 2021). According to these research findings, there is no discernible difference among males and females regarding Grammar Learning Strategy. However, there were substantial variations between the two groups regarding particular strategy categories and the pattern of preferences for strategy categories. An explanation that may be considered reasonable for the absence of a gender impact in this research is that the participants were enrolled in an educational environment equivalent to the one being studied. Hence, it is plausible that the participants' cognizance of acquiring grammar diminished the impact of gender in this study. Contrary to prior research conducted by Aslan (2009 cited in Mulugeta & Buyaou, 2019), it was shown that there is a notable disparity in the overall use of strategies among males and females. Nevertheless, this study uncovers a notable disparity in the preference of male and female

students for language learning strategies, particularly in their usage of Affective strategies. Cahyani et al (2022) also discovered Grammar strategies utilized by students with low, moderate, and high achievement differ significantly.

Finally, while this finding does not show a significant difference in strategy preference among gender subgroups, a comprehensive examination of the particular items found that Male students had a higher frequency of utilizing social GLS compared to female students. consistent with previous study findings. It shows that they are hesitant to express their emotions.

4. Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the data analysis, this research concludes that male students prefer Social GLS as their Grammar Learning Strategy. The female students' grammar learning strategies were cognitive GLS for Dealing with CF. Both employ the overall grammar learning strategies at a medium level. Male and female EFL students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong do not differ significantly in their preferred strategies of learning grammar.

Based on the data findings, the null hypothesis (Ho) is acceptable, while the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is rejected for overall strategies. As a result, there is no statistically significant difference in the preferred Grammar Learning Strategies of male and female EFL students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong.

Furthermore, the null hypothesis (Ho) is accepted for the specific Grammar Learning Strategy, including Metacognitive GLS, Cognitive GLS, Cognitive for Developing Explicit Knowledge of Grammar, Cognitive for Developing Implicit Knowledge of Grammar, Cognitive for Dealing with CF, Affective GLS, and Social GLS, the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is rejected. As a result, there is no significant difference among male and female EFL students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong in their preference for Metacognitive GLS, Cognitive GLS, Cognitive for Developing Explicit Knowledge of Grammar, Cognitive for Developing Implicit Knowledge of Grammar, Cognitive for Dealing with CF, Affective GLS, and Social GLS in learning English grammar. Meanwhile, Ho is rejected for utilizing Cognitive GLS in Communication Tasks, although Ha is acceptable. As a result, there is a substantial difference between male and female EFL students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong in their preference for employing Cognitive GLS in Communication Tasks for learning English grammar.

This research examined the male and female EFL students' preferences for grammar learning strategies. However, significant gaps were identified that need more in-depth research. The present research assessed individuals' preferences for grammar learning strategies using a questionnaire called Pawlak's GLSI. Further research can include several methods, including think-aloud procedures conducted simultaneously with a specific learning activity, observations, and structured interviews. More research is needed to completely investigate the similiar and the relationship between grammar learning strategies and other aspects including learning interest, motivation, attitude, and students' belief in learning grammar.

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