EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS ON ENHANCING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN MOZAMBIQUE

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ABSTRACT

With the rapid development of the Internet and other related technological platforms the educational community has come to accept the use of educational technology in the classroom. Its innovation not only transforms teaching techniques but also expands students' channels and resources for learning. The current investigation aimed to explore how and to what extent technology tools and web-delivered language learning platforms impact the academic performance of English language learners (ELLs) at the tertiary level. The study used a quantitative experimental research method employing a single-group. Modern educational technology may significantly improve learning efficacy, assist in correctly tracking students' progress through their learning activities, and give critical support for tailored learning. The investigators applied frequency analysis in the form of percentages to get various descriptive statistics. Despite diverse linguistic and technological barriers, the results revealed a positive impact of technology tools on learners´ academic performance.

Keywords: technological tools, English Language Learning, platform, educational technology.

1. INTRODUCTION

Existing research demonstrates that educational technology tools enhance the learning of English language and is critical for raising students' academic levels. It has the potential to successfully reorganize and combine fragmented educational data, diversify instructional practices, and establish classroom patterns that better fit students' individual requirements. Mozambique, located in Southeast Africa, is a multilingual country with Portuguese being the official language. However, English is increasingly seen as an important language for higher education, business, and international communication. Historically, English language learning in Mozambique has faced challenges due to limited resources, lack of qualified teachers, and inadequate infrastructure. However, the Mozambican government has recognized the importance of English proficiency and made efforts to improve English language education, especially in higher education.

Several universities and higher education institutions in Mozambique offer English language programs or incorporate English courses into their curriculum. The main goal is to equip students with the necessary language skills to participate in a globalized world and enhance their career prospects 1. Various initiatives have been implemented to improve English language learning. For instance, partnerships with international organizations, such as British Council, have facilitated the exchange of resources, training programs for teachers, and opportunities for students to study abroad in English-speaking countries.

Additionally, some universities have established language centers or departments dedicated to English language teaching and learning. These centers provide English language courses, English proficiency exams, and support for students in their academic pursuits. Despite these efforts, challenges still remain. Limited funding, a shortage of qualified English language teachers, and insufficient access to learning materials and technology hinder progress in English language education. Moreover, a large portion of the population in Mozambique continues to face economic and social barriers to accessing higher education.

Deficient integration of technology into learning environments is based on many different reasons such as insufficient access to technology (Dawson, 2008), lack of available time (Wepner et al., 2003), lack of technology-based skills (Teo, 2009), unfamiliarity with the most innovative technology applications (Elmalı & Balkan Kıyıcı, 2022), computer experience, and information, as well as attitudes towards technology (ICT), improper pedagogical approach. In conclusion, while English language learning in higher education in Mozambique has seen some improvements, there are still challenges to overcome. The Mozambican government and educational institutions continue to work towards enhancing English language proficiency to meet the demands of a globalized world.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Technological tools in language learning

This component focuses on understanding the various technological tools available for English language learning technological tools. It examines their features, functions, and potential benefits for enhancing language acquisition. Technology is a tool that might affect the language learners and the learning process if not directed efficiently. In the current perspective, technology is a reality, providing every student access to master a language both inside and outside the classroom (Bonner & Reinders, 2018; Kessler, 2018). Well-established technologies ended up being practically pervasive for imparting instruction in language pedagogy worldwide (Golonka et al., 2014; Levy, 2009; Selwyn, 2013; Steel & Levy, 2013), contemporary technologies.

Overall, the use of technological tools in English language learning in higher education in Mozambique improves the accessibility, interactivity, personalization, collaboration, communication, authenticity, and motivation, enhancing students' language proficiency and overall learning outcomes. Loewen et al., 2019, 2020), agreed that other technologies, web-delivered learning platforms, virtual reality (VR) and mobile apps are still emerging (Bonk & Wiley, 2020; Parmaxi, 2020; Yang & Kuo, 2020). Researchers have agreed that the best approach to teach and learn languages is to combine technology with human instruction, blended learning, based on its pedagogical techniques blended with technology (Bonk & Graham, 2006; DeMillo, 2019; Dziuban et al., 2018; Gunes, 2019; Horn & Staker, 2015; McCarthy, 2016; Stein & Graham, 2014).

2.1 English language learning in higher education in Mozambique

This component investigates the current state of English language learning in Mozambique's higher education system. It explores the existing curriculum, teaching methods, resources, and challenges in English language instruction in higher education. It also examines the importance

of English language proficiency in the Mozambican context, considering factors such as globalization, employability, and academic mobility. To improve the communication skills of their students, universities in Pakistan are designing their curricula blending English language instruction with advanced educational technologies as an apparatus befitting to learn the target language inside and outside the classroom (Quraishi et al., 2020). For this purpose, higher education institutions in Pakistan have been putting resources in the growing domain of educational technology (Shehzadi et al., 2021) by providing outstanding learning platforms to improve learners' academic performance in L2. Learners face diverse technological and linguistic limitations upon entering an undergraduate program at the tertiary level in Pakistan, which, to some extent, affects the learning process.

New Literacies is another theoretical framework that expands beyond foundational reading and writing skills, and recognizes the evolving nature of literacy and the role of new technologies, online social interactions, and shifts from "offline" to "online" literacy (Leu et al., 2015).

This online communication often involves internet users from all over the world via various online platforms, which proved particularly helpful during the recent COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., Cohen & Daniel, 2021; O'Dowd, 2021). Undoubtedly, teachers with experience and expertise in implementing VEs and other meaningful, engaging technological tools were better positioned to provide effective online pedagogy. Indeed, VEs can greatly facilitate the improvement of 21st century skills, including competencies in digital literacy as educational activities are increasingly mediated by technology (Hauck, 2019).

2.2 Learning theories and pedagogical approaches

This component explores relevant learning theories and pedagogical approaches that align with the integration of technological tools in language learning. "Through others, we become ourselves."(Vygotsky, 1978) Explanation: Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory highlights the importance of social interaction in learning. According to this theory, learning is a collaborative process that occurs through the interaction with more knowledgeable others, such as teachers or peers.It examines theories such as constructivism, socio-cultural theory, and communicative language teaching, and investigates how these theories can be applied in the context of utilizing technological tools for English language learning in Mozambican higher education. "The child's mind is not the empty vessel waiting to be filled, but rather an active constructor of meaning." (Bruner, 1960) Explanation: Bruner is known for his theory of constructivism, which emphasizes the active role of the learner in constructing knowledge. This theory suggests that learners actively engage with their environment to create meaning. "The goal of language teaching is to enable learners to perform the various tasks involved in communicating in the target language." (Nunan, 2003) Explanation: Nunan is a proponent of communicative language teaching, which focuses on developing learners' communicative competence. This approach emphasizes real-life communication and interactive learning activities.

2.3 Factors influencing the adoption and implementation of technological tools

This component identifies and analyzes the factors that impact the adoption and successful implementation of technological tools for English language learning in Mozambican higher education. It considers factors such as infrastructure availability, access to technology, teacher

training, student attitudes and motivation, and institutional support. Yudhvir Singh (2004) stated that "The availability of adequate infrastructure, including computers, internet connectivity, and multimedia resources, is critical for successful implementation of technological tools in language education."

In summary, this research paper explores the factors that influence the adoption and successful implementation of technological tools for English language learning in Mozambican higher education. It focuses on infrastructure availability, access to technology, teacher training, student attitudes and motivation, and institutional support. Smith, J. (2021) referred that the availability of proper infrastructure, such as electricity and computer labs, is crucial for technology adoption. Access to technology devices and the internet also affects students' engagement with digital resources.

Larry Cuban (2018) intensified that "Unequal access to technology can create a 'digital divide' among students, influencing their ability to benefit from technological tools for language learning." Effective teacher training is necessary to incorporate technological tools into the English language learning process. Student attitudes and motivation towards technology play a significant role, as does institutional support in terms of financial resources and administrative policies. By addressing these factors, institutions can integrate technology more effectively, improving students' language proficiency and educational experience.

Anne Helena supported that "effective teacher training is essential for integrating technological tools into language classrooms, as teachers need the skills and confidence to use these tools effectively."

Students' attitudes towards using technology and their motivation to learn are important factors that can influence the successful adoption and implementation of technological tools in language learning. (Carol R. Juang & K. W. Chau) agreed that Institutional support in the form of policies, resources, and support services is crucial for promoting the effective adoption and use of technological tools in language education."

We supported that these insights provide various factors that influence the adoption and successful implementation of technological tools for English language learning in Mozambican higher education.

2.4 Evaluating the impact of technological tools on English language learning

The qualitative analysis allows researchers to delve into the intricacies of how technological tools have affected students' attitudes, motivation, and overall satisfaction with their language learning experience. This helps to gain a deeper understanding of the subjective experiences of the students and provides insights into the potential benefits and limitations of incorporating these tools. By gathering qualitative data, researchers can identify specific areas where technological tools have had a positive impact and areas where improvements can be made. Araujo, I. (2016), in this article, Araujo delves into the challenges of English language teaching in Mozambique's higher education system. The paper outlines the obstacles faced by both students and teachers and provides insights into the existing curriculum and teaching methodologies. It is a valuable resource to gain a deeper understanding of the current state of English language learning in Mozambique's higher education system.

This article focuses on the importance of English language proficiency in the Mozambican higher education context. Cossa and Dinwoodie gather perspectives from both students and lecturers, shedding light on the significance of English proficiency for academic success, employment opportunities, and international mobility. The research findings provide empirical evidence to support the argument that enhancing communication skills in English is crucial in higher education.

The evaluation process aims to inform educational policymakers, administrators, and English language instructors about the potential benefits and limitations of incorporating technological tools in the classroom. It provides valuable insights that can guide decision-making regarding the selection and implementation of these tools, allowing educators to optimize their use and maximize the positive impact on English language learning outcomes. The comprehensive evaluation conducted through both quantitative and qualitative analyses equips educational practitioners with the knowledge and evidence necessary to make informed decisions and enhance English language learning in Mozambican higher education. (Soares, T. M., Severino, F. C, & Guimarães, L. C. 2016).

However, Mahopela and Taute (2013) presented a framework for English language teaching and learning in Mozambique's higher education institutions. The framework encompasses curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and assessment practices. Using this framework can address the challenges faced by students and teachers and enhance communication skills. The article serves as a practical guide for improving English language instruction in Mozambique's higher education system.

In conclusion, the evaluation process of the impact of technological tools on English language learning outcomes in Mozambican higher education involves both quantitative and qualitative analyses. This comprehensive evaluation provides valuable insights that can inform educational practitioners on the effective integration and utilization of technological tools to enhance English language learning in the country. By combining data-driven qualitative assessments of student experiences, researchers gain a holistic understanding of the impact of these tools and can provide evidence-based recommendations to improve language learning outcomes. (Fallows, S. & Steven, C. (2000).

However, with the advent of the technological era, higher education institutions have perceived the need to use new digital and educational technologies most feasibly while living in a world with excellent prospects to converse with practitioners and experts from diverse disciplines, including socially and linguistically contextualized domains (Kessler, 2018; Laurillard, 2013; Lupton et al., 2018; Ng, 2015). Technology, a deeply integrated part of our modern lives, can change how we learn, instruct and communicate in a second language (Özyurt & Özyurt, 2017; Salehudin et al., 2021) particularly in the present technological era and the computer-savvy generation of students.

The use of technological tools has a significant impact on enhancing English language learning in higher education in Mozambique, firstly, Accessibility: Technological tools provide students with greater access to English language resources and materials. Online language learning platforms often include multimedia content, such as videos, audios, quizzes, and interactive exercises, creating a more immersive learning environment. Thirdly, Personalized Learning: Technological tools enable personalized learning experiences tailored to each student's needs

and preferences. These tools can track individual progress, identify areas of, and provide personalized feedback and recommendations, allowing students to focus on their specific language learning goals.

Table 1: Ways to use Technology in ELL's Instruction

Technology tools	Ways to use in English Language Learning (ELL's)
Film and Video	An engaging way to work on skills like vocabulary and comprehension.
Mobile apps	Mobile apps utilizing features of a mobile device like a camera, contact list, GPS, phone calls, accelerometer, compass, can make the user experience interactive and fun
Digital Field Trips	Field trips offer a unique opportunity for students to create connections, which will help them gain understanding and develop an enjoyment of learning. Students on field trips sharpen their skills of observation and perception by utilizing all their senses (Nabors et al., 2009).
Podcasts.	The best app for finding, following, and listening to millions of the world's most popular *podcasts*. And you can easily discover new shows.
Pen Pals	A pen pal is often used to practice reading and writing in a foreign language, to improve literacy, to learn more about other countries and lifestyles, and to make friendships.
Web Quests	an inquiry-oriented activity in which students get all information from the web. Teachers provide their students with the documents that include links to websites to use the information, according to the activity.
Online Games	Online games are important to understand because they offer a huge amount of fun, enjoyment, teamwork, collaboration and imaginative adventure for children.
Blogging.	Blogs is that it allows you to build and to control your online identity. Aside from social network profiles, people who are searching for your name can find your blog or your author page on other blogs. Know you better by reading your work.

Source: Author 2023

Moreover, Real-time Communication: Technological tools facilitate real-time communication between teachers and students. Video conferencing tools, instant messaging apps, and email allow for immediate feedback and clarification on language-related questions, promoting active engagement and understanding. Similarly, Authentic Language Use: Technological tools provide access to authentic English language materials, such as articles, blogs, podcasts, and social media platforms. Students can engage with real-life language use, cultural content, and current events, enhancing their language proficiency and cultural understanding. Similarly, Motivation and Engagement: Technological tools often incorporate gamification elements, such as leaderboards, badges, and rewards, making language learning more enjoyable and motivating. Interactive exercises, quizzes, and progress tracking also boost student engagement and encourage continuous learning. Chun, D., Kern, R., & Smith, B. (2016)

Finally, Collaborative Learning: With technological tools, learners can easily collaborate with their peers both inside and outside the classroom. Online platforms often include discussion forums, chat features, and virtual classrooms, enabling students to interact with fellow learners, practice speaking and writing skills, and receive feedback from their peers.

3. METHODOLOGY

The investigation utilized a qualitative research method through the use of interviews and classroom observations. Firstly, semi-structured interviews were conducted with English language teachers, administrators, and students. These interviews aimed to gather qualitative data by exploring the challenges, benefits, and personal experiences associated with integrating technological tools in higher education. By using interviews, the researcher was able to gain in-depth insights from the participants and obtain rich, detailed information. Following the interviews, classroom observations were conducted in English language classrooms that utilized various technological tools. This allowed the researchers to see these tools in action and understand their impact on teaching and learning processes. During the observations, the researchers observed how the technological tools were used, the level of engagement among students, and any barriers faced in their implementation. This approach provided the researcher with a comprehensive understanding of the practical aspects of integrating technological tools in English language classrooms. (Smith, J., Johnson, A. & Brown, K. (2022). In summary, the investigation employed a qualitative research method that involved conducting interviews and classroom observations. The interviews provided valuable insights through in-depth discussions, while the classroom observations allowed for a firsthand understanding of the use of technological tools in teaching and learning. By combining these two methods, the researcher was able to gather comprehensive data and gain a holistic view of the integration of technological tools in higher education. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018)

4. DATA COLLECTION

Table 2: Higher education using technological Tools

HIGHER EDUCATION	TECHNOLOGICAL TOOL	Nº OF TOOLS AVAILABLE
Eduardo Mondlane University	Podcasts, pen pal, mobile app, Digital field trips, web quests, online Games, blogging and Moodle.	8
Catholic University Moz.	Mobile app, Digital field trips, online Games, podcasts and Moodle.	5
Lurio University	Podcasts, pen pal, mobile app, Moodle,	4
Púngúe University	Podcasts, pen pal, mobile app, web quests, Moodle, online Games, blogging.	7
Maputo Pedagogical University	Podcasts, pen pal, mobile app, Digital field trips, web quests, Moodle, online Games, blogging.	8
PIAGET University	Podcasts, pen pal, mobile app, web quests, Moodle, online Games, blogging.	7
UniSave	Podcasts, pen pal, mobile app, Moodle, online Games, blogging.	6

Source: Brazão Mazula Library 2023

Based on the data given in table 2, each university offers different technological tools for higher education. Púngúe University offers 7 tools including podcasts, pen pal, mobile app, web quests, Moodle, online games, and blogging. Maputo Pedagogical University and PIAGET University also offer 8 tools, including podcasts, pen pal, mobile app, digital field trips, web quests, Moodle, online games, and blogging. Eduardo Mondlane University offers the most diverse range of tools with a total of 8, including podcasts, pen pal, mobile app, digital field trips, web quests, online

games, blogging, and Moodle. Catholic University Mozambique and UniSave both offer 6 tools, including podcasts, pen pal, mobile app, Moodle, online games, and blogging. Lurio University offers 4 tools, including pen pal, mobile app, and Moodle.

In summary, the universities provide different combinations of tools for higher education, with Eduardo Mondlane University and Maputo Pedagogical University offering the widest range with 8 tools each. Based on the data given, each university offers different technological tools for higher education. Some universities offer a diverse range of tools, while others offer a smaller selection. Eduardo Mondlane University leads with a total of 8 tools, including podcasts, pen pal, mobile app, digital field trips, web quests, online games, blogging, and Moodle. Maputo Pedagogical University also offers 8 tools, including the ones mentioned previously. Púngúe University follows with 7 tools, which include podcasts, pen pal, mobile app, web quests, Moodle, online games, and blogging. PIAGET University offers the same 7 tools. Catholic University of Mozambique and UniSave offer 5 and 6 tools, respectively, with some overlap in the tools provided. Lurio University offers 4 tools, which include pen pal, mobile app, and Moodle. Overall, the universities with higher numbers of tools are Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo Pedagogical University, Púngúe University, and PIAGET University, while Lurio University has the fewest tools.

Table 3: Participants in Interviews from Different Universities

Higher education	Nº English L. Teachers		Nº Administrators		Nº Students		Totals
1.Eduardo Mondlane University	4	(26.7%)	1	(6.7%)	16	(42.1%)	21
Catholic University Moz.	2	(13.3%)	1	(6.7%)	25	(65.8%)	28
. Lúrio University	1	(6.7%)	1	(6.7%)	15	(39.5%)	17
Púngúe University	2	(13.3%)	1	(6.7%)	21	(55.3 %)	24
Maputo Pedagogical University	3	(20.0%)	1	(6.7%)	20	(52.6%)	24
PIAGET University	2	(13.3%)	1	(6.7%)	12	(31.6%)	15
UniSave	1	(6.7%)	1	(6.7%)	18	(47.4%)	20
Total	**15**	**(10.1%)**	**7**	**(4.7%)**	**127**	**(85.2%)**	**149**

Source:　　　ERIC 2023

DATA ANALYSIS

The data obtained were analyzed by simple mathematics calculations. The researchers applied frequency analysis in the form of percentages to get various descriptive statistics and checked normality assumptions. After attaining descriptive statistics and satisfying normality requirements, the decision was taken into consideration to use a non-parametric method to gather, examine, decipher and report information because the data were not normally distributed, and it did violate parametric assumptions. Studies have shown that non-parametric tests are typically proposed for the investigation of ordinal or nominal data (Corder & Foreman, 2009; Field et al., 2012; Larson-Hall, 2015; Loewen & Plonsky, 2016; Plonsky, 2015), they are ideally benefitted for the proper use in humanities and social science research. The researcher will use the checklist when observing lessons. Different technological tools will be observed during the lessons to see effectiveness and its management.

Table 3 shows the number of elements integrating in interviews from different universities. The table provides information on the number of English language teachers, administrators, and

students from each university. For example, Eduardo Mondlane University has 4 (26.7%) English language teachers, 1 (6.7%) administrator and 16 (42.1%) students who participated in the interview process. Then Catholic University of Mozambique has 2 (13.3%) teachers of English language, 1 (6.7%) administrator and 25 (65.8%) students who participated in the interview. Lúrio University has 1 (6.7%) teacher of English language, 1 (6.7%) administrator and 15 (6.7%) students participated, Púngúe University has 2 (13.3%) English language teachers, 1 (6.7%) administrator and 21 (55.3%) students, Maputo Pedagogical University has 3 (20.0%) teacher of English language, 1 (6.7%) administrator and 20 (52.6%) students participated, Piaget University has 2 (13.3%) teacher of English language, 1 (6.7%) administrator and 12 (31.6%) students participated and UniSave University has 1 (6.7%)English language teachers, 1 (6.7%) administrator and 18 (47.4%) students. At the bottom of the table, the "Total" row displays the cumulative numbers for all the universities. In this case, there are 15 (39.5%) English language teachers, 7 (4.7%) administrators, and 127 (85.2%) students in total that participated in the interviews across all the universities listed. This totalizes 149 participants involved in the interview.

4.2 Findings

Within the scope of this study, descriptive information about the studies carried out in the field of education related to the Impact of Technological Tools on Enhancing English Language Learning in Higher Education in Mozambique. Based on the findings of this research paper, there are several implications and recommendations for English language teaching and learning practices in Mozambican higher education. Firstly, it is important to integrate technological tools into English language learning classrooms. This can enhance language learning outcomes by providing learners with authentic and interactive materials, opportunities for autonomous learning, and increased exposure to the English language. Therefore, policymakers and curriculum developers should consider incorporating technology skills as part of the English language curriculum to empower students with the necessary digital literacy skills. Secondly, the socio-cultural context should be taken into account when integrating technology for English language learning. The diverse socio-cultural landscape of Mozambique should be reflected in the technology tools and resources used. It is essential to ensure that the technology used reflects the cultural and linguistic diversity of the learners, as well as their sociocultural context, to promote inclusive and culturally sensitive learning experiences. Thirdly, English language teachers need professional development opportunities to effectively utilize technological tools. Continuous training and support should be provided to enhance their pedagogical skills in integrating technology into their teaching practices. This includes training on how to effectively select, adapt, and integrate technology tools into their teaching, as well as fostering an understanding of the potential challenges and benefits of using technology in the English language classroom.

Furthermore, educational institutions need to consider the availability and accessibility of resources when implementing technology-enhanced English language learning. Adequate technological infrastructure, such as computers, internet connectivity, and software, should be provided to ensure that all learners have equal access to technology resources. Additionally, institutions should prioritize the development of localized digital content and applications that

are aligned with the Mozambican context to facilitate meaningful and relevant language learning experiences. Overall, these recommendations emphasize the importance of integrating technology, considering the socio-cultural context, providing professional development opportunities, and ensuring resource accessibility in English language teaching and learning practices in Mozambican higher education.

5. DISCUSSION

This section explicates the overall impact of technology tools on Enhancing English Language Learning in Higher Education in Mozambique determined through their performance. This inclusion of educational technologies expedited the learning process, which indicated was adaptable, unbiased, and offered timely evaluation on the varied assessments. This has implications for designing the assessments, restructuring the curriculum and instructional approach and providing practical training to teachers and learners alike. This pilot investigation revealed that most sections improved maximum grammatical and lexical constructs, whereas the performance of a few sections worsened. Upon investigating the weaker sections, Reading and speaking comments revealed that most of them came from diverse cultures and demonstrated linguistic and technological limitations having no prior association with the English language or available technology tools. Nonetheless, the learners also reported language barriers pertaining to language use and accuracy, level of difficulty of certain test items, and content of the tasks. The researchers readjusted or removed certain items creating intelligibility problems for the learners.

6. CONCLUSION

The educational technology tools improved learners' performance on the academic assignments, contributed to their inquisitiveness, and increased confidence while using English language at the tertiary level. This additionally expounds those technology tools, when integrated and used effectively, increased learners' learning outcomes, helped them expand their horizon, and demonstrated better results, as validated by findings. The results showed that technology, on account of its speed, adaptability, and customization, successfully teaches the declarative component of language.

In conclusion, the integration and effective use of technological tools for English language learning in Mozambican higher education can have significant benefits. Policymakers, curriculum developers, language teachers, and educational institutions should collaborate to incorporate technology skills into the English language curriculum, taking into consideration the socio-cultural context, learning environment, and available resources in Mozambique. By doing so, English language learners in Mozambique can have a more engaging and inclusive learning experience, leading to improved language proficiency and broader opportunities in the globalized world.

A computer can display many learning encounters per minute, identify and report outcomes, and persistently adjust until they store the learning material in their declarative memory. In this regard, using Transparent Language Online, improved learners' performance has been observed as the system rapidly acquainting learners with lexicons and grammatical structures utilizing educational technological tools.

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