



Translation of Cultural Terms: A Case Study of a Novel Titled ‘For One More Day’

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Abstract

Translating the cultural terms in an understandable way for the target readers can be challenging for translators. Translators should be familiar with the cultures of both languages (i.e. source and target languages). The present study aimed to show that which cultural terms strategies are more common in translation of the novel titled “For One More Day” based on Aixela’s model. This study also investigated the relevancy of the translation of the cultural terms to Aixela’s Model. The corpus of this study was the novel “For One More Day” and its Persian translation under the title of “Baraye Yek Rooz Bishtar”, which has been translated by Manizheh Jalali. At the first step, the researchers extracted some part of the original book. They later took out the cultural terms from the original book and looked up for their equivalences in the Persian translation. After these steps, the researchers analyzed those equivalences based on Aixela’s model. The findings of the study showed that the translator of the so-called novel used conservation and substitution strategies for translating the cultural terms.

Keywords: Aixela’s model, Culture, Cultural terms, Strategy

INTRODUCTION

For a long period, translation was about just transmitting a language (Durdureanu, 2011). For example, Catford (1965) believed that translation transmitted the textual material from one language into equivalent textual material in another language. Nida and Taber (1969) had different idea. They believed that translators should find the closest natural equivalence in the target

language according to the meaning and the style. They further acknowledged that conveying the correct meaning is also important in translation.

One of the most important approaches in translation can be the culture. Translation should not only transfer the meaning and the grammar of a language into another one. It also requires to transfer the culture as well (Nida, 1985). Some scholars in the field of translation investigated the difficulties translators have in the process of transferring the culture (e.g. Nida, 1985; Nida &

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Taber 1969; Abbasi et al., 2012). Abbasi et al. (2012) asserted that to transfer the culture from one language to another, translators need to be bilingual and bicultural. Brislin (1976) introduced the „back translation“ method in relation to culture barrier in translation. According to this method, a bilingual translator (preferably native speaker of the target language) from the source language to the target language first translates the original text and another bilingual translator should translates it back to the source language. The two versions would then be compared and an approximate translation, between these two, would be accepted.

Translation and culture are two inseparable entity. The culture of all nations varies and when someone from a different background uses some other nation’s language, it can cause misunderstanding (Mahadi & Jafari, 2012). For example, something that is acceptable and even desirable in one society, maybe unsuitable and even taboo in another society (Illic, 2004). When translators decode a corpus, they should be aware of the culture of both contexts. There are some barriers and difficulties that translators face while trying to transferring the cultural values and implications. One of the most important points is the strategies translators can use in the translation of cultural terms. The present study explored the strategies used in translating the cultural terms of the novel “For One More Day” based on Aixela’s (1996) model. This comparative-qualitative study compared the cultural terms of the original novel with the features of the cultural terms in the translated version (Williams & Chesterman, 2002); therefore, the following research questions were proposed:

1. What „cultural terms“ strategies were more common in translation of the novel titled “For One More Day” based on Aixela’s (1996) model?
2. To what extent, was the translation of the cultural terms in the novel “For One More Day” relevant to Aixela’s (1996) model?

REVIEW OF THE RELATED

LITERATURE Translation Strategies

Krings (1986, p. 18) described the translation strategy as “translator's potentially conscious plans for solving concrete translation problems in the framework of a concrete translation task”. Balfaqeeh (2009, p. 1) defined the translation strategy as “one of the tools, translators use to overcome translation problems among which are Idioms and culturally-bound expressions”. Venuti (1998, p. 240) also stated that the translation strategy "involves the basic tasks of choosing the foreign text to be translated and developing a method to translate it”. He suggested domestication and foreignization as the two translation strategies of the cultural terms.

Cultural terms and their translation

Harvey (2000) referred the cultural terms to the concepts, the institutions and the people of the source language culture. Newmark (1998) believed that some words could be reproduced to designate a special language or terminology of a speech community when that community focuses on a particular topic. He categorized them into five categories: Ecology, material culture, social culture, organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts, and finally gestures and habits. Different theorists provided different procedures for translating cultural terms. Graedler (2000) suggested to produce a new word or to explain the meaning of the source language expression instead of translating it. In translation of the cultural terms, the loss and gain in their connotations are very important (Akbari, 2013). Aixela (1996) offered several strategies for translating cultural terms: repetition, orthographic adaption (including transcription and transliteration), linguistic translation or non-cultural translation, and extra-textual/intra-textual gloss, and the procedures for substitution of cultural items, or domestication, which includes synonymy, limited universalization, absolute universalization, naturalization, deletion, and autonomous creation.

METHODS

Source materials

There were two sources analyzed in this study. The original source was the novel called „For One More Day“ by Mitch Albom published in 2006 by Hyperion publications in New York City, the United States of America (The novel includes four chapters and 208 pages).

The translation of the original source titled „Baraye Yek Rooz Bishtar“ by Manizheh Jalali published in 2007 by Alborz publications in Tehran, Iran (The translation version includes and 231 pages).

Instruments

To analyze the translation of cultural terms in “Baraye Yek Rooz Bishtar”, the researchers used Aixela’s (1996) model in translation of the cultural terms. This model was used to identify the strategies for translating the cultural terms. Aixela’s model (1996) divided all of the strategies into Venuti’s (1995) dichotomy of *domestication* and *foreignization* (Shokri & Ketabi, 2015). Domestication means replacing the source culture with the target culture and foreignization means preserving the differences of the source cultures i.e. all of the source culture should be translated the same without any modifications. According to Aixela’s model, the procedures for conserving cultural items, or *foreignization* includes repetition, orthographic adaption (i.e. transcription and transliteration), linguistic translation or non-cultural translation, and extra-textual/intra-textual gloss, and the procedures for substitution of cultural items, or *domestication*, involves synonymy, limited universalization, absolute universalization, naturalization, deletion, and autonomous creation. Here is the definitions of these terms by Aixela (1996):

Foreignization (Conservation Strategies)

- *Repetition: the translators keep as much as they can of the original reference.*
- *Orthographic adaption: like transcription and transliteration. The original reference is expressed in a different alphabet from the one that the target readers use.*

- *Linguistic translation or non-cultural translation: the translator chooses a denotatively very close reference to the original, but increases its comprehensibility by offering a target language version, which can still be recognized as belonging to the cultural system of the source text.*
- *Extra-textual gloss: the translator uses footnote, endnote, translation in brackets, in italics, and alike to offer some more explanation.*
- *Intra-textual gloss: it is like extra-textual gloss but the translator brings it as an indistinct part of the text because not disturbing the reader’s attention.*

Domestication (Substitution Strategies)

- *Synonymy: The translator resorts to some kind of synonym of parallel reference to avoid repeating the culture-specific item.*
- *Limited universalization: translator seeks another reference, also belonging to the source language culture but closer to their readers.*
- *Absolute universalization: the translators do not find a better-known CSI or prefer to delete any foreign connotations and choose a neutral reference for their readers.*
- *Naturalization: Translator brings the culture-specific item into TL culture that felt specific by the TL culture.*
- *Deletion: The translators consider that the translation of CSI is unacceptable or they think that it is not relevant enough for the effort of comprehension required of their readers, or that it is too obscure and they are not allowed or do not want to use procedures such as the gloss, etc. They therefore decide to omit it in the target text.*
- *Autonomous creation: translators decide that it could be interesting for their readers to put in some nonexistent cultural reference in the source text.*
- *Compensation: This strategy is a combination of deletion and autonomous crea-*

tion at another point of the text with a similar effect.

- *Dislocation*: This strategy is a displacement in the text of the same reference.
- *Attenuation*: attenuation is “replacement, on ideological grounds, of something 'too strong' or in any way unacceptable, by something 'softer', more adequate to target pole written tradition or to what could, in theory, be expected by readers”.

Procedure of the study

After identifying the cultural terms in the novel, the researchers could locate their equivalences in the Persian version of translation i.e. Baraye Yek Rooz Bishtar. Then the researchers analyzed those equivalences based on Aixela’s (1996) model. As mentioned above Aixela’s model divided all of the strategies into Venuti’s (1995) dichotomy of domestication and foreignization (Shokri & Ketabi, 2015).

RESULTS

The cultural terms for the novel “For One More Day” have been analyzed based on Aixela’s (1996) model. The frequencies and the percentages of the different strategies, which the translator used for translating the cultural terms in the novel “For One More Day”, are as follows:

The frequency and the percentage of repetition is 0 because this strategy belongs to those languages, which have the same alphabet like English and French in which a word can be transferred exactly the same from one language into another language.

- 54 out of 394 equal 13.7% of strategies are “Orthographic adaption”.
- 32 out of 394 equal 8.1% of strategies are “Linguistic translation or non-cultural translation”.

- 19 out of 394 equal 4.8% of strategies are “Extra-textual gloss”.
- 22 out of 394 equal 5.6% of strategies are “Intra-textual gloss”.

The above-mentioned strategies are belonged to the conservation strategies, so 127 out of 394 equal 32.2% of strategies are “conservation strategies”.

- 66 out of 394 equal 16.8% of strategies are “Synonymy”.
- 73 out of 394 equal 18.5% of strategies are “Limited universalization”.
- 22 out of 394 equal 5.6% of strategies are “Absolute universalization”.
- 42 out of 394 equal 10.7% of strategies are “Naturalization”.
- 21 out of 394 equal 5.3% of strategies are “Deletion”.
- 12 out of 394 equal 3.0% of strategies are “Autonomous creation”.
- 18 out of 394 equal 4.6% of strategies are “Compensation”.
- “Dislocation Strategy” was not found in this corpus.
- 13 out of 394 equal 3.3% of strategies are “Attenuation”.

The above-mentioned strategies are belonged to the substitution strategies, so 267 out of 394 equal 67.8% of strategies are “substitution strategies”.

The following Tables and Figures displays the frequencies and percentages of the different strategies, which the translator used for translating the cultural terms in the novel titled “For One More Day”.

Table 1
Frequencies and Percentages of Strategies Applied in Translation of Cultural Terms

Strategy Type	Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
A. Conservation (Venuti's Foreignization)	1. Repetition	0	0.0%
	2. Orthographic adaption	54	13.7%
	3. Linguistic translation or non-cultural translation	32	8.1%
	4. Extra-textual gloss	19	4.8%
	5. Intra-textual gloss	22	5.6%
B. Substitution (Venuti's Domestication)	1. Synonymy	66	16.8%
	2. Limited universalization	73	18.5%
	3. Absolute universalization	22	5.6%
	4. Naturalization	42	10.7%
	5. Deletion	21	5.3%
	6. Autonomous creation	12	3.0%
	7. Compensation	18	4.6%
	8. Dislocation	0	0.0%
	9. Attenuation	13	3.3%
TOTAL		394	100.0%

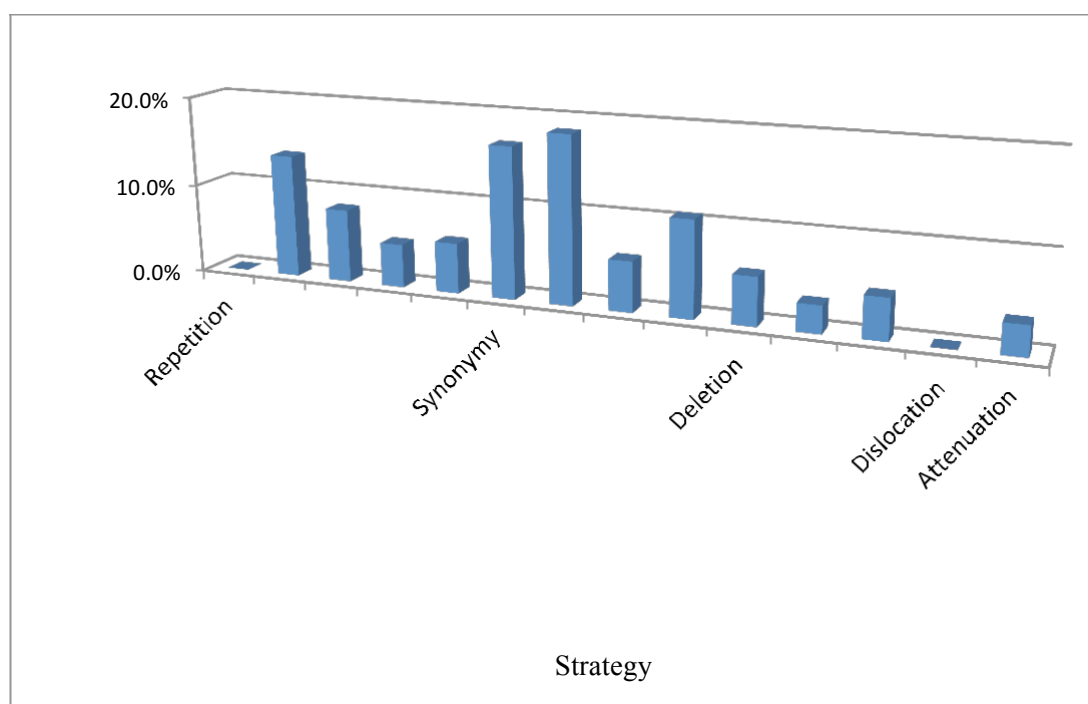


Figure 1. Bar Graph for Percentages of strategies applied in translation of cultural terms

Table 2

Frequencies and Percentages of Conservation (Venuti's Foreignization) Strategies Applied in Translation of Cultural Terms

Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
1. Repetition	0	0.0%
2. Orthographic adaption	54	42.5%
3. Linguistic translation or non-cultural translation	32	25.2%
4. Extra-textual gloss	19	15.0%
5. Intra-textual gloss	22	17.0%
TOTAL	127	100.0%

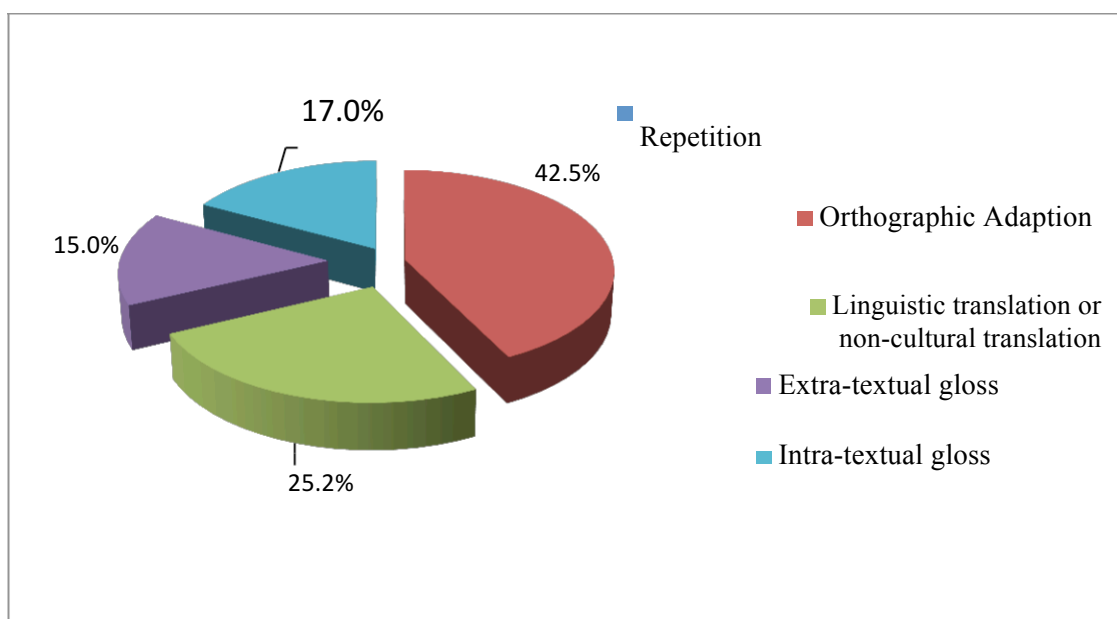


Figure 2. Pie Chart for percentages of conservation (Venuti's Foreignization) strategies applied in translation of cultural terms

Table 3

Frequencies and Percentage of Substitution (Venuti's Domestication) Strategies Applied in Translation of Cultural Terms

Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
1. Synonymy	66	24.7%
2. Limited universalization	73	27.3%
3. Absolute universalization	22	8.2%
4. Naturalization	42	15.7%
5. Deletion	21	7.9%
6. Autonomous creation	12	4.5%
7. Compensation	18	6.7%
8. Dislocation	0	0.0%
9. Attenuation	13	4.9%
TOTAL	267	100.0%

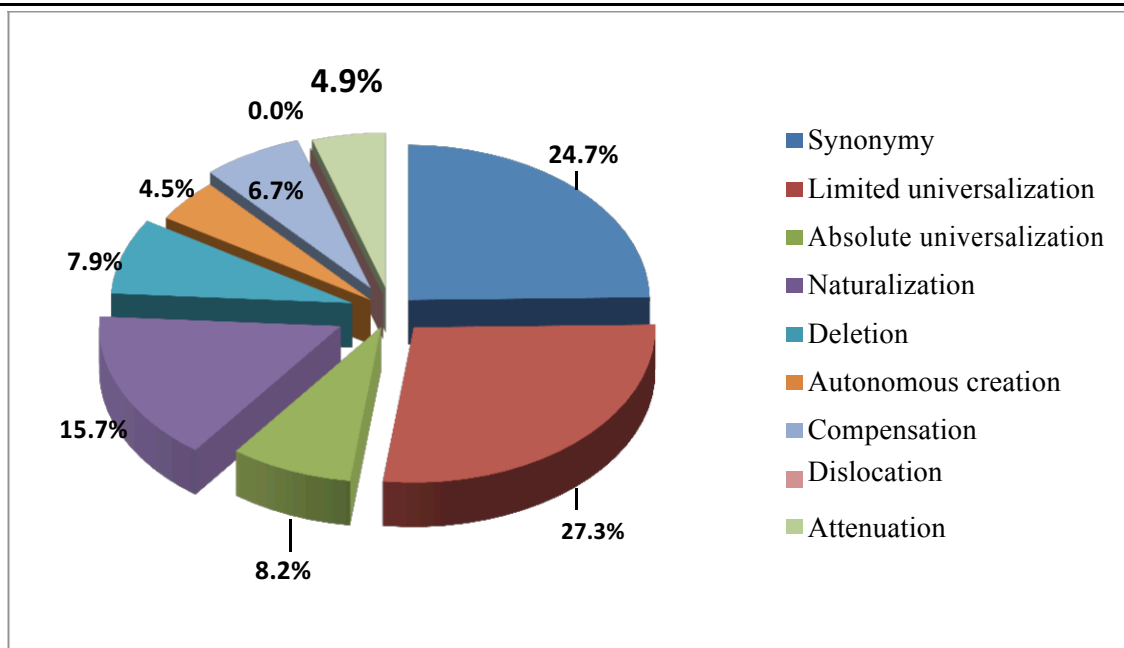


Figure 3. Pie Chart for Percentage of substitution (Venuti's domestication) strategies applied in translation of cultural terms

Table 4

Frequencies and Percentages of Conservation and Substitution Strategies Applied in Translation of Cultural Terms

Strategy Type	Frequency	Percentage
A. Conservation (Venuti's Foreignization)	127	32.2%
B. Substitution (Venuti's Domestication)	267	67.8%
TOTAL	394	100.0%

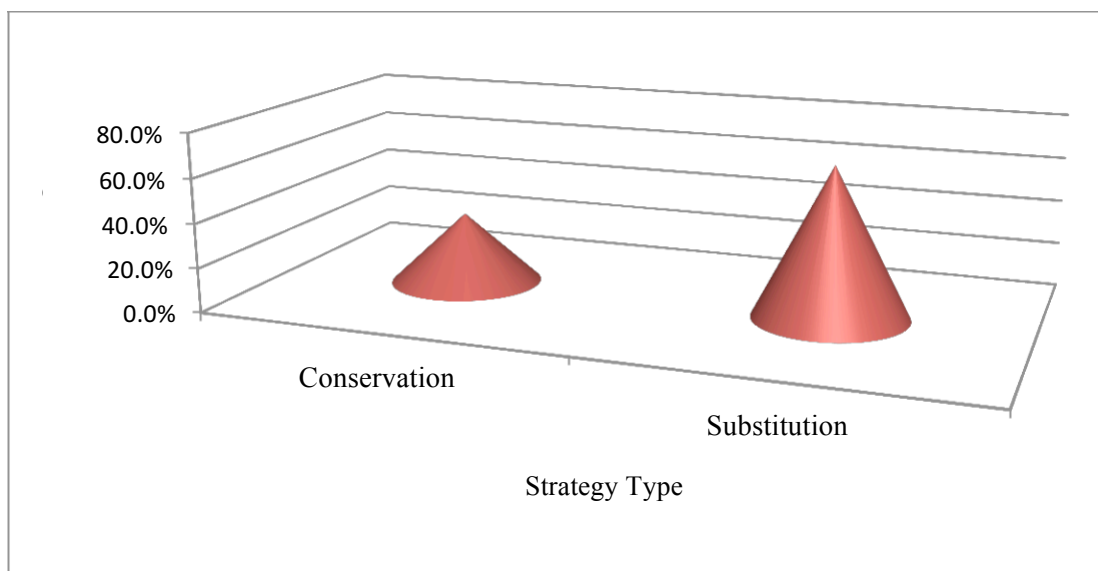


Figure 4. Bar Graph for percentages of conservation and substitution strategies applied in translation of cultural terms

DISCUSSIONS

This study aimed to discover the strategies, which are more common in Jalali's translation of cultural terms in the novel titled "For One More Day" which is the first question of this study. In response to the first question, According to the above results, the translator used twelve strategies of Aixela's (1996) model including (in order of frequency) limited universalization, synonymy, orthographic adaption, naturalization, linguistic translation or non-cultural translation, Intra-textual gloss and absolute universalization, deletion, extra-textual gloss, autonomous creation, compensation, and attenuation. According to this study, based on Aixela's model, "limited universalization strategy" is the most common strategy which Mrs. Jalali used in her translation of cultural terms of the novel "For One More Day". Among Conservation strategies, "Orthographic Adaption" is the most common strategy, but Generally, Substitution strategies are more common than conservation strategies in Jalali's translation of cultural terms in the novel "For One More Day".

In response to the second question, According to the results of this study, Jalali's translation of cultural terms in the novel "For One More Day" is completely relevant to Aixela's (1996) model because all of the cultural terms, which are translated can fit into one strategy of Aixela's model.

This study is parallel to the article of Translating culture-specific items in Shazdeh Ehtejab: Examining Foreignization and Domestication written by Shokri and Ketabi (2015). Of both article and the present study showed the strategies, which are more common in the translation of cultural terms based on Aixela's (1996) model but the differences between these two studies are that the case study of the article is a Persian story while the case study in the present study is an American novel. Also in the article, researchers considered word as the unit of their analysis but in the present study, context determines the unit of analysis, which could be a word, or a phrase or a sentence. The results of the Shokri and Ketabi's study showed that domestication (substitution) is

more common than foreignization (conservation) in Buchan's translation of "Shazdeh Ehtejab" that is similar to the results from this study.

The results from Shokri and Ketabi's study further expressed that synonymy is the most common strategy in translating cultural terms by James Buchan in the translation of "Shazdeh Ehtejab" while the present study shows that the most frequent strategy in translating cultural terms by Manizheh Jalali in the translating of the novel "For One More Day" is "limited universalization strategy".

CONCLUSION

In the present study, the researchers extracted some part of the novel titled "For One More Day" and after identifying the cultural terms and finding their equivalences in the Persian translation, which the translator brought in the novel "BarayeYekRoozBishtar"; they analyzed those equivalences based on Aixela's (1996) model. As it was mentioned above, there are two main groups in Aixela's categorization (i.e. Conservation and Substitution strategies). Conservation strategies include *orthographic adaption, linguistic translation or non-cultural translation, intra-textual gloss, extra-textual gloss and repetition*. These items are arranged in order of frequency in which the translator used them in her translation of cultural terms in the novel "For One More Day". Repetition strategies were not found in this corpus. Substitution strategies include *limited universalization, synonymy, naturalization, absolute universalization, deletion, compensation, attenuation, autonomous creation and dislocation*. These items are arranged in order of frequency in which the translator used them in her translation of cultural terms in the novel titled "For One More Day". Repetition strategies were not found in this corpus either.

The results from this study supported this notion that the culture is a very important factor in translation and they cannot be apart. Translators should therefore be aware of the cultural differences and values of the source language while translating. The findings of this will help transla-

tors to convey the meaning along with its sense of the source language into the target language more accurately considering the right cultural equivalence.

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