

**THE VIOLATION OF WOMEN'S LANGUAGE FEATURES USED BY
BUBBLEE IN NADIYA HUSSAIN'S *THE SECRET LIVES OF THE AMIR
SISTERS***

A GRADUATING PAPER

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for Gaining
the Bachelor Degree in English Literature



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YOGYAKARTA**

2021

A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

I certify that this thesis is definitely my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of this thesis. Other writer's opinions or findings included in the thesis are quoted or cited in accordance with ethical standards.

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Saya menyatakan bahwa skripsi tersebut sudah dapat diajukan pada sidang Munaqosyah untuk memenuhi salah satu syarat memperoleh gelar Sarjana Sastra Inggris.

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By: Nuly Ariane

ABSTRACT

Gender influence is inevitable, especially in conversation. It affects the communication style between men and women. The research on women's language has been more frequently studied than men's language due to the influence of the feminist movement in the 1970s. However, women's language criteria cannot cover the entirety of women. The violation of women's language can be seen in Nadiya Hussain's novel entitled *The Secret Lives of the Amir Sisters*, especially in a character named Bubblee. The purpose of this thesis is to discuss Bubblee's utterances that violate women's language features. The researcher examines the study by using the descriptive qualitative method to explain the features of women's language that Bubblee violates. The theory used is The Six Differences of Men's and Women's Languages by Deborah Tannen and is supported by The Ethnography of Communication theory by Dell Hymes. The researcher examines the factors that follow Bubblee's conversation, the violation of women's language features uttered by Bubblee, and the indication of the similarity to men's language features in her utterances. The indication of the similarity in men's language strengthens the evidence of Bubblee's mistakes in using women's language features. After conducting the study, the total data obtained are 112 with the following violation of features: *Support* (13), *Intimacy* (6), *Understanding* (7), *Feelings* (48), *Proposals* (11), and *Compromise* (27). All factors of The Ethnography of Communication also follow the utterances.

Keywords: *Language and Gender, Women's Language Features, The Violation of Women's Language Features, Error Analysis, The Ethnography of Communication, Nadiya Hussain, The Secret Lives of the Amir Sisters*

**KESALAHAN PENGGUNAAN FITUR BAHASA PEREMPUAN OLEH
BUBBLEE DI *THE SECRET LIVES OF THE AMIR SISTERS* KARYA
NADIYA HUSSAIN**

Oleh: Nuly Ariane

ABSTRAK

Pengaruh gender tidak dapat dihindari, khususnya pada percakapan. Hal itu mempengaruhi gaya bahasa di antara laki-laki dan perempuan. Penelitian tentang bahasa perempuan lebih sering dikaji dibanding bahasa laki-laki karena pengaruh gerakan feminis pada era 1970-an. Meskipun begitu, kriteria bahasa perempuan tidak dapat mencakup keseluruhan perempuan. Fenomena kesalahan bahasa perempuan dapat terlihat pada novel karya Nadiya Hussain yang berjudul *The Secret Lives of the Amir Sisters*, khususnya pada tokoh bernama Bubblee. Tujuan analisis ini adalah untuk membahas tuturan Bubblee yang menyalahi fitur bahasa perempuan. Peneliti mengkaji ini menggunakan metode penelitian deskriptif kualitatif untuk menjelaskan fitur-fitur bahasa perempuan yang disalahi oleh Bubblee. Teori yang dipakai adalah Enam Perbedaan Bahasa Laki-laki dan Perempuan oleh Deborah Tannen serta didukung dengan teori Etnografi Komunikasi oleh Dell Hymes. Peneliti mengkaji faktor-faktor yang mengikuti percakapan Bubblee bersama lawan bicara, kesalahan ucapan Bubblee dalam bahasa perempuan, dan indikasi kesamaan ucapan tersebut dengan fitur bahasa laki-laki. Indikasi kemiripan bahasa laki-laki memperkuat bukti kesalahan tuturan Bubblee pada penggunaan fitur bahasa perempuan. Setelah dilakukan pengkajian, keseluruhan data yang diperoleh yaitu 112 dengan jumlah kesalahan per fitur sebagai berikut: *Support* (13), *Intimacy* (6), *Understanding* (7), *Feelings* (48), *Proposal* (11), dan *Compromise* (27). Seluruh faktor Etnografi Komunikasi juga mengikuti tuturan tersebut.

Kata Kunci: *Bahasa dan Gender, Fitur Bahasa Perempuan, Kesalahan Fitur Bahasa Perempuan, Analisis Kesalahan, Etnografi Komunikasi, Nadiya Hussain, The Secret Lives of the Amir Sisters*

MOTTO

“If you tried to count Allah’s blessings, you would never be able to number them.

Surely Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

Surah An-Naml [16:18]

“What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.”

Fatima’s Motto (The Secret Lives of the Amir Sisters)

“Something that troubles you without making you better is certainly not the path
you are looking for.”

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DEDICATION

My beloved parents,
Muhammad Idhar and Emi Sumarni,
who are constantly pouring me with great blessings.

My little siblings,
Maulie Nur Aini and Nabil Aqhar Yahaga,
who are always there for me.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

In human life, the existence of language is vital. Wardhaugh (2006:1) stated that language is an arbitrary vocal system used by humans to communicate. The communication carried out aims to express something or exchange information. Humans, when exchanging information, do not escape from some factors. Chaer (2014:71) described that there is a relationship between language and the factors prevailing in humans' society, such as the status and the function of their behavior in society. Along with Chaer's statement, the meaning of status is not narrow but refers to the attributes carried by humans. One of the attributes that humans cannot avoid is gender.

As a study of linguistics that is more oriented to human society, sociolinguistics discusses gender. From that, it can be found that gender differences are very influential in society. Gender in society often creates specific roles between men and women. It makes a significant level in people's points of view. According to Lakoff (as cited in Gu, 2013:248), women's language is often considered inferior to men's language. Many such assumptions enact women's language to be more often studied and examined by sociolinguists.

In the study of women's language, women have many differences in their language uses compared to men. Women have language characteristics to convey

something both verbally and in the written form. Lakoff (1973:45) insisted that women's language has a foundation attitude that women are marginal to the serious concern of life. From that statement, this kind of attitude sometimes establishes women to become feminine and minor figures. It is the same as Labotka's opinion that women are systematically taught to speak with specific language features, and those language features are associated with a lack of power (2009:18). Specific utterances for women aim to be goal-oriented; for example, women are expectant mothers who must be gentle. It has been rooted in human life because it creates such a perspective in the mindset of society. Thereby, the uniqueness of women's language features makes this study essential and often probed.

There are many ways to investigate the phenomenon related to women's language. One of the ways is by researching a novel. A novel is a long work of fiction that is usually published as a book. A novel can represent a human's life, society, and the circumstances of something. Scott (as cited in Maning, 1992:129) explained that novel contains events accommodated to the ordinary train of human events and the modern state of society. In a novel, characters appear during conversation and participate in certain activities created by the author. Characters are essential to support the story plot from the beginning to the end. By that, the conversation in a novel also shows some of the factors that follow the characters' utterances.

The researcher found the phenomenon of women's language in a novel entitled *The Secret Lives of the Amir Sisters*. This Islamic-themed novel was

written by Nadiya Jamir Hussain (A Muslim Bangladeshi, A former ‘The Great British Bake Off’ winner) in 2017 and was published in the same year by Harper Collins Publishers. This novel is quite significant in selling and was reprinted with a hardback edition by the same publisher. For almost 300 pages, the author tells the uniqueness of the sisters in the Amir family with distinctive humor. This family is described as a representative of Muslim Bangladeshi that lives in the English village of Wyvernage. Even though they live in the United Kingdom, they still maintain their native culture. It can be seen in the novel that they usually talk about matchmaking between cousins and setting the rules for boys and girls. Islamic values are also inseparable from the plot of this novel, and most of them are told through the characters’ utterances. Each child in the family, including the four sisters, has different views of those values.

Through the points of view of the four sisters in each chapter, it can be seen that there is a connection between the use of women’s language in Islamic values and Bangladeshi cultures in the family. The four sisters of Amir are secretly struggling for life, including family issues related to the values. They sometimes quarrel over their life choices and the secrets that they keep. Among them, Bubblee has a different view than her three sisters. She pursues her dream in London and is reluctant to meet her family. She does it because she feels her family restrained her from doing something outside her family’s culture. Her view affects the utterances that she speaks. Her unique contradictions make the researcher interested in examining her speeches through this novel.

This thesis aims to analyze some utterances by Bubblee, the third child in the Amir family. In several plots, the researcher sees the uniqueness in Bubblee's utterances from the beginning of the story until the end. Bubblee is an independent yet ignorant woman. People see her as a not-so-Muslim girl because she does not wear the veil and has worked as a sculpture artist. Bubblee does not speak like other girls who speak softly and avoid explicit words. She speaks harshly and clearly articulates what she wants to say, regardless of whether her words will hurt people around her or not. Her utterances are very contrasting to the words of Tannen (1990:38) that in linguistic behavior, women show the form of caring in their utterances. This phenomenon encourages the researcher to study Bubblee's utterances by using Deborah Tannen's theory.

In Tannen's book entitled *You Just Don't Understand* (1990), she explained the contrasting differences between men's and women's languages and some examples of conversation phenomena between them. To clarify those differences, Tannen then published an article entitled *Can't We Talk?*. She mentioned that this article is a condensed version of her book. The six theories are: (1) Status vs. Support: Men say to gain status, while women choose to support others to gain relationship; (2) Independence vs. Intimacy: Men focus on independence, while women think of closeness to maintain intimacy; (3) Advice vs. Understanding: Men focus on what he can do, but women want sympathy (Tannen, 1984:80); (4) Information vs. Feelings: Men talk for information, while women also share their emotion; (5) Orders vs. Proposals: Men use direct orders

and women say with proposals; (6) Conflict vs. Compromise: Men tend to speak their dislikes and women try to complain silently.

It can be ensured that Bubblee's utterances in *The Secret Lives of the Amir Sisters* novel do not follow women's language features even though she is a woman. Thus, this research aims to study Bubblee's conversations that contradict women's language features in Tannen's theory. In this case, the researcher compares Bubblee's utterances to the features of women's language to determine unsuitably. The researcher also analyzes these utterances with men's language, which tends to be alike. Here is one example that the researcher will examine through the theory.

MALIK : "Bubblee?"

BUBBLEE : "Sash, sorry, I have to go. I'll call you later tonight, okay?"

SASHA : "Yeah. Sure. I hope he gets better, Bubs."

Bubblee turns off the phone.

BUBBLEE : "What?"

MALIK : "We need to get in touch with Jahangeer."

BUBBLEE : "No kidding!" *folding her arms.*

In theory by Deborah Tannen, women tend to ask for information politely by saying, “Would you like to repeat your order?” or “Yes, I’m sorry I was calling my friend”. It is because women keep feeling with others, so they do not want others to get hurt because of that short sentence. Men, on the other hand, are always distinctly expressing it. Men want information without thinking about things like that. The researcher sees that Bubblee violates women’s language because she orders Malik not to interfere and joke about her family’s business. From the context, Malik is her family member and feels offended by Bubblee’s utterance, which sounds like a confrontation. Her utterance is unsuitable from the words by Tannen (1990:75) that women will choose words to avoid confrontation by making creative ways to tell others.

Based on the data example above, the researcher examines more profound the violation of women’s language in Bubblee’s speech by using Tannen’s theory. Even though there is a men’s language in this theory, the researcher uses it as a supporting theory that can fit Bubblee’s speeches. Besides that, the researcher also uses The Ethnography of Communication theory by Dell Hymes to explain the factors that influence Bubblee conversation with her partners. These theories that will be used are expected to answer the phenomenon that the researcher will investigate.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the explanation of the discussion above, the researcher formulates the problem into the questions below:

1. How do Bubblee's utterances become violations of women's language in *The Secret Lives of the Amir Sisters* novel?
2. What are the factors that influence Bubblee's utterances in *The Secret Lives of the Amir Sisters* novel?

1.3 Objectives of Study

Related to the research questions above, the study aims to explain the answers as mentioned below:

1. To explain the violations of women's language features in Bubblee's utterances in *The Secret Lives of the Amir Sisters* novel.
2. To find out the context or factors behind Bubblee's utterances in *The Secret Lives of the Amir Sisters* novel.

1.4 Scope of Study

This study focuses on women's language study, which is a part of Sociolinguistics. This section aims to limit the realm of discussion for Bubblee's utterances that do not follow the usual women's language.

1.5 Significance of Study

This research is expected to be useful for readers to understand women's language and the development of its use in daily life. The researcher hopes it can be a reference material for researchers who want to examine women's language or its misuse, both with the same or different theories. Besides, it is expected to be an inspiration for using the novel as an object study because it directly shows a picture of the phenomenon in writing. For the institutional purpose, this research

is intended to support the development of Sociolinguistics studies at the English Department in Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University Yogyakarta. The researcher hopes that this research can be used as a reading source and enhance knowledge for public use, especially in language and gender studies.

1.6 Literature Review

For the literature review, the researcher has found similarities in some researches which investigate women's language. A thesis titled "Features and Feature Changes of Women's Languages Found in *Amira and Sam* Movie" by Norlaili inspires the researcher to examine women's language features. This thesis discusses the features of women's language and the factors behind them uttered by Amira. Amira is the main female character in *Amira and Sam* movie who speaks with men's language features. That researcher uses linguistics features of women's language theory by Robin Lakoff and the theory of those factors by Dell Hymes. She analyzes the data with nine features of women's language, such as lexical hedge or filler, tag question, rising intonation or declarative, empty adjective, intensifier, hypercorrect grammar, super polite form, avoidance of strong swear word, and emphatic stress. Those data are also connected to the factors that follow Amira's utterances, for example, situation, participant, end, act sequence, key, instrumentality, norm, and genre.

Then, there is a journal entitled "The Features of Men's and Women's Language in *The Movie Camp Rock 2: Final Jam*" by Ni Putu Erna Meryanti, I Wayan Resen, and I Made Winaya. This research uses Tannen's theory. This research aims to investigate the use of men's and women's language in *Camp*

Rock 2 movie. The data is obtained from the main characters' utterances. From this research, it can be concluded that men often dominate the conversation and decide something without other's agreement. On the other hand, women are usually gossip and talk about their relationships with other people.

After that, there is a journal titled "Analysis of Genderlect Style in *Pygmalion*" by Tatik Irawati. This research also uses Tannen's theory. This journal aims to identify 'report-talk' to men and 'rapport-talk' to women in *Pygmalion Act 2*. In Tannen's theory, 'Report-talk' is related to the 'status' feature, while 'rapport-talk' is related to the 'support' feature. The researcher finds communication differences, communication commonalities, and communication changes in men and women. The researcher finds that there are many categories of men's and women's language: public speaking (men) and private speaking (women). She also finds Genderlect style changes in 4 characters.

Lastly, a journal titled "Features of Man and Woman Language Used by Two Main Characters in *Winds of Evil* Novel: Gender Perspective" by Slamet Riyadi and Slamet Setiawan uses Lakoff and Mulac's theory. This research shows nine features of women's language by Lakoff and three features of men's language by Mulac in *Winds of Evil* novel. In this study, those researchers find some similarities in language usage among women and men. Besides, this study discusses women's and men's languages that cause differences in their speech.

These researches are selected and sorted according to the theory used. However, the researcher rarely finds studies with the same theory due to limitations in accessing the researches. The discussions above are analyzed by using different theories, indicating that this research has never been studied before. Some of the different theories can equate with the used theory because there are similarities, even though fewer. Some similarities that can be investigated are appropriate with Genderlect theory, especially in women's language.

1.7 Theoretical Approach

The researcher uses The Six Differences of Men's and Women's Languages theory by Deborah Tannen through her book entitled *You Just Don't Understand* (1990) to analyze Bubblee's utterances. It is well known as Genderlect theory because it describes the differences between men's and women's languages based on their cultures (as cited in Griffin 2003:463). In contrast to the previous theory, such as Lakoff's, this theory brings men's language into comparison with women's language. In this theory, Tannen (1990:7) noted that the differences of speaking among gender must be identified and understood to avoid judging each other for the contrasting conversational styles. The six theories are: (1) Status vs. Support, (2) Independence vs. Intimacy, (3) Advice vs. Understanding, (4) Information vs. Feelings, (5) Orders vs. Proposals, and (6) Conflict vs. Compromise. The first feature mentioned by Tannen is men's language, and the second one is women's language. The 'vs.' word means there are significant differences between those features.

Nevertheless, although the differences in the conversation between men and women are apparent, the researcher does not examine utterances that are following this theory. Otherwise, the researcher intends to study Bubblee's utterances that contradict the features of women's language and match them with the features of men's language, which tend to be similar with the data. This research does not necessarily violate the theory but aims to prove and explain Bubblee's deviations from the theory.

Besides, the researcher also uses The Ethnography of Communication by Dell Hymes as a supporting theory. The researcher uses this theory to explore the factors that follow Bubblee's utterances. These factors need to be known to answer how Bubblee's utterances become violations of women's language features based on its contexts. Dell Hymes (as cited in Wardhaugh, 2006:247) mentioned that there are eight factors which are abbreviated as SPEAKING: (1) Scene and Setting, (2) Participants, (3) Ends, (4) Act Sequence, (5) Keys, (6) Instrumentalities, (7) Norms of Interaction and Interpretation, and the last is (8) Genre.

1.8 Methods of Study

The researcher points out the method used in this section. The explanations about the methods of study are more distinctly discussed below.

1.8.1 Type of Study

In this analysis, an appropriate methodology is needed. The researcher uses the method of descriptive qualitative. According to Moleong (2007:6),

qualitative research intends to understand phenomena such as behavior, perception, motivation, actions, and others. Mukhtar (2013:10) added that the descriptive qualitative method is a method used by the researcher to find knowledge or research at a particular time. In short, the descriptive qualitative method aims to describe the phenomena and characteristics of the data. It is because the researcher investigates phenomena such as Bubblee's utterances that are not following the features of women's language.

By the object of study, the researcher uses a library type of research. Zed (2004:1-2) insisted that library research utilizes book sources to obtain data and does not conduct field research. The researcher only examines the written phenomena of Bubblee's utterances and uses theory from Deborah Tannen's books. The researcher also uses other books that are appropriate to this topic of research.

1.8.2 Data Sources

This research only involves the use of primary data. The primary data are from Bubblee's utterances in *The Secret Lives of the Amir Sisters* novel by Nadiya Hussain. This novel was published in 2017 by Harper Collins Publishers. Also, it is the second edition that uses a hardcover.

1.8.3 Data Collection Technique

According to Sugiyono (2016:224), the data collection technique is fundamental because the primary purpose of a study is to obtain data. The researcher uses the observation analysis technique and the note-taking technique.

Nawawi and Martini (via Afifuddin and Saebani, 2009:139) stated that the observation technique aims to observe and systematically record phenomena that appear in the research object. Then, the note-taking technique is an advanced technique of tapping or listening technique. Furthermore, Mahsun (2005:93) said that the note-taking technique is to write several relevant data for research of written language. There are several steps to collect and determine the valid data in *The Secret Lives of the Amir Sisters* Novel. First, the researcher reads the novel repeatedly. Then, the researcher observes and takes a note of Bubblee's utterances which violated the features of women's language. After that, the researcher looks for the speech's context that follows Bubblee and her partners in the conversation.

1.8.4 Data Analysis Technique

The researcher does some steps to analyze data. First, preparing and organizing the data. Organizing the data aims to facilitate the analysis process so that the data are not cluttered. This step consists of identifying and classifying Bubblee's utterances only. Then, analyzing and explaining the data with The Ethnography of Communication theory by Dell Hymes. After that, the researcher describes for further information about Bubblee's utterances that are not following women's language theory. The researcher also adds information and proofs that Bubblee's utterances are the same as men's language by Deborah Tannen. After the data is analyzed, the researcher provides the conclusion of the analysis of the data.

1.9 Paper Organization

This research paper is organized into four chapters. In the first chapter, there is an Introduction. This chapter consists of background of study, research questions, objective of study, scope of study, significance of study, literature review, theoretical approach, method of study, and paper organization. In short, this chapter is the beginning of the research. The second chapter consists of the Theoretical Background. This chapter includes the theories. In the third chapter, there is Research Finding and Discussion. The data are analyzed by using the theory in this chapter. The last chapter is Conclusion and Suggestion. This chapter provides the conclusion of the analysis and suggestions for practical use of the research implication.



CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

4.1 Conclusion

In this study, the researcher uses Bubblee's utterances from *The Secret Lives of the Amir Sisters* novel by Nadiya Hussain as the data. Those data are analyzed as the violation of women's language in Deborah Tannen's theory. The researcher also uses another theory as the supporting theory. Men's language theory by Deborah Tannen serves to equate features on Bubblee's utterances. The Ethnography of Communication theory by Dell Hymes is also used to analyze the contexts that influence her conversations. Furthermore, the researcher explains briefly the answers to the research questions mentioned in the earlier chapter below.

First, the researcher finds 112 data that violate women's language in all features in Bubblee's utterances. The researcher concludes that Bubblee often violates the 'feelings' feature. Bubblee always says what she thinks honestly and does not consider others' feelings. Although she was born as a Muslim Bangladeshi person, the religious and cultural values from her family do not affect all of her utterances. It is because Bubblee is raised in Wyvernage and continued her work in London, so she has independent views of something. The big city serves a more dynamic and hetero lifestyle, and those make Bubblee's view different from her three sisters who do not work in that city. In more detail, the

author even describes Bubblee several times as a woman who likes to involve cynicism and considers everyone terrible. She does not like to involve feelings in her utterances. Bubblee's view eventually leads to misspoken women's language in general. Her utterances, by the researcher, can be equated with men's language. Even though not all men spread cynicism like Bubblee, the researcher focuses on speech forms related to men's language features. As seen in the 'information' feature, it indicates that Bubblee prefers to give and get information patently, although it sounds straightforward and will hurt other people.

In violation of other features such as 'compromise', 'support', 'proposal', 'understanding', and 'intimacy', they also have the same reason. For breaches of 'compromise', Bubblee chooses to say her dislike of something so clearly and often causes conflict. For the violation of the 'support' feature, she seeks to reinforce her options, such as living in London, avoiding cleaning, and declaring herself better than anyone else. Bubblee also chooses to give the order because she wants her wished to be granted rather than asking it by 'proposal'. The last feature that Bubblee rarely violates is 'intimacy'. She sometimes does not want to tell others about her daily life in London.

Second, Bubblee's utterances certainly do not escape from the contexts or factors that follow. The researcher uses The Ethnography of Communication theory by Dell Hymes to describe these factors. These factors are very important for the researcher to analyze because they affect the spoken words, for example, Bubblee's relationship with the participants of the conversation, her thoughts about other people, the cause of the incident that she did, and the way she speaks.

It can be a conclusion that Bubblee's profanity on women's language appears in any context.

4.2 Suggestion

After finishing the study, the researcher finds some constraints and suggestions while writing this paper. First, the analysis of women's language features is prevalent, but the analysis of the violation of women's language features using Deborah Tannen's theory is very rare. When looking for the work with this theory, other researchers may find these that focus on Communication Analysis rather than Sociolinguistic studies. The researcher finds that Tannen's theory is rarely used because of the lack of adequate books and other sources. Tannen's theory is also quite complex compared to earlier theories, such as Lakoff's theory. The researcher suggests that other researchers read Tannen's article entitled *Can't We Talk?*. It will ease future researchers to focus on the theory. Before that, make sure to read Tannen's book entitled *You Just Don't Understand* first to add insight into the theory.

Second, related to the data, other researchers can find data in movies, series, comics, or novels as well as this study. Using literary works, such as novels, makes it easier to see phenomena in writing forms. Other researchers can also be helped by a description of the events in the story plot. Another research that can be examined in this novel is by analyzing the utterances of Bubblee's sisters with the same theory. Last but not least, this theory used can be applied to other realms of sciences such as Communication Analysis, Gender Studies, and

Sociology. By that, it can enrich the study and probably inspire future researchers to create more profound theories.



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