
The EFL Students' Perceptions on the Use of *Genshin Impact* in Increasing Reading Skills

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Abstract

The rise of game-based learning in English language teaching signifies a shift towards more engaging and interactive methods. *Genshin Impact* is a game that can be used as an alternative media to improve students' English skills, specifically reading, through its interactive gameplay. The game's requirement to understand characters' dialogues is valuable for developing reading skills. This research investigates whether games, particularly *Genshin Impact*, can enhance students' reading skills by assessing how much this game positively impacts students' reading abilities. The qualitative method is used with interviews as the instrument in data collection to ensure a more in-depth understanding of the obtained data. The research was conducted on ten UHAMKA students from various departments and semesters. Of the ten students who participated in the study, most saw *Genshin Impact* as a language learning tool that enhanced their English language skills with a focus on reading. However, not all respondents reported reading improvements. However, as participants played more *Genshin Impact*, there was a positive correlation between increased playtime and the levels of improvement in English language skills of the participants. Participants learned further aspects of English, vocabulary development, contextual understanding, and reading proficiency by playing *Genshin Impact*.

Keywords: English language teaching, reading, game, *Genshin Impact*



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1. Introduction

English is an international language and our main requirement for communicating with the world. In Indonesia, English is a foreign language that is not used in formal activities. Unlike in neighbouring countries such as Singapore, Hong Kong, and Malaysia, where English is widely spoken as a second language, Indonesia is more likely to be taught and learned only as a foreign language. This means that learning and teaching English occurs mostly in classrooms rather than during daily communication. English learners in Indonesia need more access to English as a communication tool during their daily lives outside the classroom (Sulistiyo, 2015). Therefore, the use of English in Indonesia is relatively low, as reported by KataData (2020), which says that English proficiency in Indonesia is only ranked fifth with a score of 466. The classification of English proficiency by the Education English First Institute is divided into five. College students below thresholds in foundational reading skills show lower reading strategy scores and are likelier to be assigned to developmental literacy programs (Magliano et al., 2023). Therefore, the ability of students to read in English must be improved. However, as time progresses, learning English can also be studied in various media (Dhany et al., 2022). Reading much English literature is the first way to sharpen one's English skills.

According to statements by Harianto (2020), reading is the pronunciation of words and the acquisition of words from printed material. This activity involves analyzing and organizing various complex skills, including learning, thinking, consideration, synthesis, and problem-solving, which means explaining information to the reader. The diverse methods students employ in reading underscore the importance of using various strategies to sustain their motivation. Susanthi (2020) articulated that reading much English literature is the first way to sharpen your English language skills. If one enjoys following news or gossip about the celebrity world in newspapers and magazines, he can regularly read news from foreign websites. If one is a fan of novels or comics, try reading fiction novels and comics in English. Within its methodologies, diverse strategies can be implemented, including scanning, skimming, intensive reading, extensive reading, reading aloud, etc. Additionally, many reading genres exist, such as poetry, storytelling, narrative texts, and many others. In the research conducted by Asrul and Rahmawati (2022), the exploration of storytelling as a recommended reading material has arisen. This recommendation is rooted in the

comprehensive nature of storytelling, which encompasses narrative texts and character dialogues.

In general, learning media serves as a tool to facilitate the teaching and learning process. It encompasses any resource that can stimulate learners' minds, emotions, attention, and capabilities or skills, thereby fostering the learning process. This definition is expansive and comprehensive, covering the understanding of sources, environments, individuals, and methods utilized for the specific objectives of learning and training (Hamidah et al., 2021). There are various learning media available to enhance English language proficiency. Traditional resources such as textbooks, novels, and articles offer structured insights into language constructs, vocabulary, and writing styles. Additionally, specialized language learning varies. Formal English classes at schools, colleges, or language institutions remain conventional but effective. Participating in study groups or language exchange tandems aids collaborative practice. Reading English magazines and newspapers aids in comprehending everyday sentence structures and vocabulary. By leveraging these diverse learning resources, individuals can enrich their learning experiences and holistically improve their English language skills.

With so many ways that students can learn English, some ways are relevant to today's youth, namely learning English using games as their learning medium. Individuals entirely unfamiliar with the English language will gradually acclimate to encountering vocabulary in English while participating in online gaming (Prastius, 2020). In the current era of rapid technological advancement, using games as a learning tool has become an alternative for students to enhance their competencies. Besides being utilized for entertainment, games can serve as a learning medium. Numerous studies have discussed using games as an effective learning method for students, as conveyed by many experts (Aguilera & Mendiz, 2003). From all the references above, video games are of unquestionable importance and have already begun to be used at different academic levels. In addition to stimulating motivation, video games are useful in acquiring practical skills, increasing perception and stimulation, developing skills in problem-solving, strategy assessment, media and tools organization, and obtaining intelligent answers. According to Ray (2019), learning motivation significantly influences students' achievement in English. It shows that students motivated to learn are still interested in learning, concentrated, and diligent in reaching out. Of all the games available, simulators stand out for their enormous educational potential. This is due to the games' enjoyable, stimulating, and motivational nature, which encourages players to progress continuously.

Game is a medium that can be used in the learning process to stimulate students in teaching and learning activities in the classroom. The game in question is a game that has been adapted to the needs of learning in a class called game-based learning or educational games (Dewi & Listiowarni, 2019). Therefore, the game can be used to improve its users' use of English.

Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are four things that can be obtained by playing games according to what we want—like playing games that are riddles, stressing us more to read and examine the intent of the quest. In this era of globalization, foreigners have influenced the culture of all people, especially students. One example of such culture is the internet. There are many products we can find on the internet, such as one of the products, namely online games, which are currently popular among students. Online games are one of the entertainment media that can influence the dynamics of the world of education, especially for students. As we know, nowadays, many teenagers experience the effects of online games themselves, both negative and positive (Ariantoro, 2016). The ability to learn languages is a positive impact that can be generated when playing online games, especially the ability to speak English because it can be seen that most online games today use English. People who do not understand English will start to get used to encountering English vocabulary when playing online (Kho & Eko Prastius; Rachmawan; Jhon Carlie, 2020). Engagement with online video games has been observed to enhance students' learning motivation. However, there is a growing concern about the increasing addiction to online games, particularly in Indonesian society (Mursidin et al., 2022).

Reading skills and game-based learning are interrelated in several key ways. Educational games incorporate interactive texts, such as instructions and dialogues, which enhance reading practice. The engaging nature of games increases student motivation to read. Games also provide contextual learning environments that facilitate a better understanding of vocabulary and concepts. Additionally, they offer immediate feedback, allowing for quick correction of reading errors, and they adapt text difficulty to match individual reading levels. They integrate text with visuals and audio to support multimodal learning, while collaborative game activities encourage peer-assisted reading improvement. The problem-solving elements in games necessitate critical reading, further deepening comprehension. Therefore, game-based learning serves as an effective tool for enhancing reading skills through an engaging and interactive approach. As stated by Salgarayeva (2021), Digital game-based learning accelerates the development of reading skills in learners, especially those with special educational needs.

The rise of game-based learning in English language teaching signifies a shift towards more engaging and interactive methods. Educational games enhance student motivation and involvement by making learning fun and competitive. They provide interactive contexts that improve speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills, while personalized challenges cater to individual proficiency levels. Games offer immediate feedback, helping students quickly correct mistakes and reinforcing correct usage. They also foster soft skills such as problem-solving and collaboration through interactive tasks. The principles of gamification, like rewards and levels, further boost motivation. Technological advancements have made various digital games accessible, supporting diverse and innovative teaching methods.

Research confirms that game-based learning improves language skills, motivation, and overall satisfaction, highlighting its effectiveness in modern English language education.

The *Genshin Impact* is a role-playing game (RPG) developed by *miHoYo*, a Chinese game development company. The game was released in September 2020 for various platforms, including *Microsoft Windows*, *PlayStation*, *iOS*, and *Android*. *Genshin Impact* also supports cross-platform play, allowing players from different platforms to play together. *Genshin Impact* offers a vast and beautiful open world called *Teyvat*, where players can explore various regions, complete quests, and engage in battles against various enemies. The real-time combat system is one of the game's key features, allowing players to switch characters during battles to leverage different skills and elements. The game is also known for its RPG elements, such as a diverse selection of characters with unique abilities, an elemental system influencing combat, and a gacha element allowing players to obtain specific characters or items through a lottery-like system.

Previous research from Seventilofa (2022) was aimed at the positive and negative impacts of playing *Genshin Impact*. Furthermore, In another study from Pierre & Dien (2023), *Genshin Impact* has been identified as a learning medium to enhance students' vocabulary. As an action role-playing video game, *Genshin Impact* offers an immersive and dynamic setting, making it a valuable tool for language learning. Teachers can leverage *Genshin Impact* to teach reading, as reading comprehension is essential for understanding the game's plot, objectives, and mythology. As students encounter progressively intricate language structures and terminology within the game, it can contribute to developing their reading comprehension skills (Pierre & Dien, 2023). *Genshin Impact* has received positive feedback from players for its beautiful graphics, expansive open world, and engaging and deep gameplay. Another finding (Kerstin et al., 2012) is that playing digital games at an early age positively correlates with L2 English proficiency, with frequent gamers (5 hours/week) outperforming moderate gamers and non-gamers. While this discovery has been established for some time, it is notable that only this article's author is willing to assert the effective estimated gaming duration for students.

The *Genshin Impact* is a valuable resource for improving students' reading skills due to its interactive nature, which requires players to understand the dialogues of in-game characters. Reading instructions and descriptions within the game can enhance players' reading skills. *Genshin Impact* offers a rich vocabulary that players can learn. Moreover, the accessibility of *Genshin Impact* across various platforms, such as *Microsoft Windows*, *iOS*, *Android*, and *PlayStation*, makes it a versatile learning tool. Despite its substantial storage requirements, the technological advancements of the current era mitigate this issue. In summary, *Genshin Impact* stands out as a game that supports students in developing their reading skills through interactive text interactions, reading instructions, and exposure to a

diverse vocabulary. Its availability on multiple platforms makes it a convenient choice for learners in the current technological landscape.

The research objectives are to investigate whether games, particularly *Genshin Impact*, can enhance students' reading skills by assessing how much this game positively impacts students' reading abilities. The research benefits are understanding students' perceptions of using *Genshin Impact* as an English language learning tool, particularly in improving reading skills, and evaluating the effectiveness of *Genshin Impact* as a learning tool, focusing on improving students' reading skills. These can help determine whether the game adds value in the context of English language learning. Moreover, this research is beneficial in demonstrating the potential of game-based learning, especially *Genshin Impact*, as a learning medium that can enhance students' English language skills. This can serve as a foundation for developing alternative learning methods in the future. This research also provides recommendations based on students' perceptions and offers guidelines for using games in English language teaching within educational settings. This research aims to see the effect of using games, whether it can develop reading skills or vice versa. Reading is one of the things that is needed in any case, including the game itself. Reading will help develop other skills, such as speaking and writing, and add more vocabulary.

This research is expected to contribute to understanding how *Genshin Impact* can improve students' reading skills and how students perceive its effectiveness as an English language learning tool. With the existence of game-based learning media, the research question can help students develop their English language skills. Therefore, the research question is: What are EFL students' perceptions of using the Genshin Impact Game to increase reading skills?

2. Method

In this research, the researcher employs a qualitative method. Furthermore, subsequent research will involve recruiting respondents who play *Genshin Impact*, conducting in-depth interviews with these participants, analyzing their responses, and coding the data obtained in data collection to ensure a more in-depth understanding of the received data. As stated by Hidayatullah and Qomariyah (2022), the qualitative method is a research procedure that generates descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from individuals and observed behaviours. This results in data presented in words, pictures, and human behaviour.

The research instrument was focused on the ability to read English while playing *Genshin Impact*. A qualitative semi-structured interview with several questions was used as the instrument. It is described as a data collection method where an interviewer asks questions to an interviewee either face-to-face or at a distance. It is conceptual and theoretical and based on the meanings of life experiences for the interviewees (Saarijärvi & Bratt, 2021). This research can be done by collecting data through in-depth interviews with *Genshin Impact* players playing the game and how it can improve their English reading skills. This research

method can also be done by collecting information through interviews and analyzing documents related to the game Genshin Impact. The participants were provided the freedom to expose and express their opinions, minds, and perspectives about the topics (Alhassan & Ali, 2020)

The participants in this study consist of 10 students. They have at least six months of experience playing Genshin Impact, primarily using English as the main language. The selection of these participants is deliberate to ensure the research obtains accurate and relevant information. The criteria for their inclusion not only consider the duration of their experience playing Genshin Impact but also emphasize the language used during the game. Given the study's focus on the ability to read English text, participants needed to be individuals who utilize the default language, English, when engaging with Genshin Impact. Once the data is collected, it can be analyzed by identifying patterns and themes that emerge from the collected data. The interview results are the primary data that will be utilized and transcribed. The interview recordings will be transformed into written text and coded.

This research involved interviewing 10 UHAMKA students from various departments and semesters to assess the impact of playing Genshin Impact on their English skills. The interview questions will cover the duration and frequency of playing Genshin Impact and using the English language option within the game. Explore how often they use English while playing and how this affects their understanding of the language, including reasons if they feel it does not help. Additionally, the interviews asked whether students felt their English reading skills had improved after playing Genshin Impact and requested explanations regarding any changes they have experienced or reasons for no improvement. The researcher also asked students' beliefs on the effectiveness of Genshin Impact in enhancing English reading skills, including which aspects they find most helpful or reasons for their scepticism. Finally, the interviews asked about the advantages and disadvantages of using Genshin Impact to improve English reading skills.

3. Results and Discussion

In this research, the researcher interviewed ten respondents, who were students of UHAMKA from various study programs and semesters. The researcher found various answers from respondents—the first question aimed to assess the eligibility of the respondents in providing statements for the subsequent questions. The first interview question consisted of three parts. The researcher then categorized the respondents' answers into two groups: those who are still actively playing, which included eight respondents (R1, R2, R4, R5, R6, R7, R9, R10), and those who no longer play, which included two respondents (R3, R8). Further classification was made based on how long they have been playing. Two respondents have played the game for 0-1 year (R2, R3) and five for two years (R1, R5, R6, R8, R9). Lastly, three respondents have played for over three years (R4, R7, R10).

Subsequently, the researcher inquired about the frequency of playing each week. Seven respondents reported that they actively play every day, with one of the reasons being to complete daily quests aimed at obtaining rewards. They are active for 1 to 4 hours per day. Additionally, one respondent actively plays five days per week with the same playing duration as the previous seven respondents, which is 1 to 4 hours per day. Two other respondents stated that they only play this game twice a week, with one respondent mentioning that they can spend up to 5 hours in a single day of playing. Respondents also provided varied answers regarding their use of language options in the game. Some respondents use English options in both text and audio formats, with one explaining that they use these options for learning purposes. Others use English for text and Japanese for audio, finding it more engaging in their gameplay experience. 2 respondents mentioned using English options and occasionally switching to Indonesian to understand the context of the game's English content. One respondent explained that they had two accounts in the game, with the main account using English language options and the second account using Indonesian, aiming to compare the storyline in different languages (R5). Another unique response was from a respondent who initially started playing using Indonesian but switched to English later on. The respondent mentioned that frequent reading of English-language comics influenced this change, finding that using the English option made the game's storyline more exciting for them (R2).

In the subsequent question, all respondents indicated that using English in Genshin Impact has helped enhance their English comprehension. The respondents provided various reasons for their answers, including increasing vocabulary comprehension, as mentioned by seven respondents, enhancing reading skills through the game's storyline, as stated by five respondents, and improving their understanding of expressions and intonation in English, as noted by two respondents. Regarding the enhancement of vocabulary comprehension mentioned by the respondent, it was stated that they discovered new vocabulary previously unknown to them through reading the story's narrative. Subsequently, they began translating the meanings of these words, thereby gaining an understanding of pronunciation and learning the definitions of the words themselves (R10). One respondent stated that the reason for improving reading skills is through the storyline presented in Genshin Impact.

"Genshin Impact is story-based. Because it is story-based, we can understand the story and its flow. To understand it, we need to understand English, and that's where we try to grasp the meaning of the story" (R4).

Regarding the statement made by a respondent about enhancing understanding of expressions and intonation in English through this game, one respondent mentioned that "the intonation of characters speaking and the expressions they use can be used for learning" (R8). Another respondent added regarding the improvement of reading skills through the storyline of this game, stating,

"It's quite helpful, especially because there are many narratives with precise grammar. The stories, the interactions between the characters, are quite well done, the storyline."(R7).

Not only does it assist in enhancing reading skills and character interactions, but respondents also mention that grammar elements can be learned from the narrative of this game.

Nine respondents stated that their English reading skills had improved after playing Genshin Impact. One respondent mentioned that they did not experience an improvement in reading skills but rather their ability to understand through listening (R3). Respondents who reported an improvement in their English reading skills provided varied reasons such as (1) a drastic improvement(R9), (2) the necessity of reading to understand the storyline in the game (R10), and (3) However, one respondent expressed uncertainty, stating,

"In my experience, I can't specify the exact aspect of improvement because, besides Genshin Impact, I also watch English-language movies like that" (R8).

Respondent 3, who stated that their reading skills did not improve, mentioned that this was due to encountering many unfamiliar vocabulary words. This aligns with what another respondent mentioned, saying,

"However, in Genshin Impact, the vocabulary is richer, more extensive, and also, what's the term... the level of language used is higher than usual, so I learn more from the vocabulary and sentence structures" (R8).

Switching to the question of whether respondents believe that Genshin Impact can help improve reading skills, the answers can be divided into two statements: 1. Respondents believe that playing Genshin Impact can enhance reading skills (R1, R4, R6, R7, R9). 2 Respondents state that it depends on how players utilize the reading aspects in the game (R2, R3, R5, R8, R10). However, all ten respondents agree that several aspects of the game can improve English reading skills, such as (1) character interactions that aid improvement through dialogue, (2) subtitles of the narrative presented in the game, (3) vocabulary expansion, and (4) exposure to uncomplicated language structures. Although some respondents mentioned that improvement depends on the users themselves, respondent 10 said,

"It might depend on the individual, but overall, because texts are provided to be read in the game, people will inevitably read them whether they want to or not. It still depends on the individual; if they don't search independently, they might not understand, but they'll continue. They won't be able to improve like that. But because I know overall, people must read and be curious, so it's likely to significantly improve other people's reading skills by playing Genshin."

All ten respondents cited different benefits at the end of the question, including the advantages and disadvantages of using Genshin Impact to improve their English reading skills. For instance, respondent 9 mentioned that while playing, they look up the meanings of story vocabulary and often communicate with other players through chat features. Respondent 4 stated that through Genshin Impact, they not only play the game but also learn by reading the narrative stories, mentioned another advantage; respondent 7 mentioned another advantage, stating that they often use some of the vocabulary and sentences from Genshin Impact in their own fictional stories. Additionally, Respondent 6 mentioned that the game's story-driven and attractive animations keep users engaged in following the storyline, implying that users will read through each story. Respondent 6 also mentioned another unique advantage:

"It turns out that speaking skills improve as well because when reading, it's not just in your mind. Especially if there is an exciting part or scene, you just read it out loud. For example, questions like 'What is your name?' and so on are sometimes spoken unconsciously, and there is indeed an improvement. Speaking skills can be developed through Genshin Impact, so it's fun to learn and grow from Genshin Impact."

The disadvantages of using Genshin Impact to improve reading skills, as stated by respondents, include several reasons: (1) the high level of vocabulary, making it difficult to understand words or sentences at a glance, (2) the limited interaction between players, (3) the presence of a skip story feature in the game, and (4) occasionally inaccurate translations from the original language. The first reason regarding the high level of vocabulary making it difficult to understand words or sentences at a glance was conveyed by respondent 1, who stated that it is only highly recommended for users with basic English skills. This was supported by respondent 3, who mentioned many unfamiliar vocabulary words. Regarding the limited interaction between players, respondent 2 stated that players only comprehend and receive what they learn from the game. Interaction with other players is minimal because some use Indonesian in the chat feature, making the practice less effective. Regarding the skip story feature in the game, respondent 4 stated,

"The downside is that there will be skips. Even though it is in English, many sections can be skipped. So, if we take learning points, they are less effective because they can be skipped by those who are not interested in the storyline. That is the main disadvantage."

Regarding the occasional inaccuracies in translations, Respondent 5 stated,

"If I compare them, I use both. Sometimes, there are mistranslations. For example, I often see on Twitter that the original Chinese version is like this, but the English version is different... Yes, so for people who delve into the lore, they realize that the original

isn't quite like that. In the Chinese version, it is like this, but the translation from Chinese to English leads to mistranslations."

Respondent R6 also mentioned that the game feels repetitive due to its simple language structures, and playing it for two years has made some aspects feel repetitive.

Based on the statements collected, the respondents expressed that playing the game Genshin Impact can improve their English language skills, which can help students develop their English language skills not only through academic learning. However, games should still be controlled so that students who use games as a learning medium spend only a little time playing. This is conveyed based on the interviews conducted with the respondents. They exhibit different gameplay durations, leading to varying degrees of improvement, as Kerstin SylveÅn & Sundqvist (2012) noted. Frequent gamers (5 hours/week) outperform moderate gamers who, in turn, outperform non-gamers in L2 English proficiency among young learners. As for other responses from respondents, Genshin Impact did not show a significant improvement, as they commented. Some also stated that they did not see much improvement in their technical skills while playing. Other subjects' responses revealed that Genshin Impact does not improve anything greatly there. Some said that even while playing, they did not feel like there was that much improvement in their abilities. As stated by Seventilofa (2022), Genshin Impact influences the English skills of the players, but it is not significant. It can happen if students do not have sufficient playing time.

Playing Genshin Impact can also develop English reading skills among students through its diverse game elements that require creativity, according to Pierre & Dien (2023). As students encounter progressively intricate language structures and terminology within the game, it can contribute to developing their reading comprehension skills. The game has a dense plot, many characters, and deep worldbuilding, all making a specific ground on which the language skills are to be practised. Further, dialogues and textual content provide exposure to idiomatic expressions for both real reading improvement and putting it across in context. Supported by statements from Kaniadewi and Sriyanto (2019), they discovered that using non-verbal language, such as gestures, facial expressions, and voice intonation, facilitated the delivery of meaning and messages. Additionally, the game has been reported to improve grammar and vocabulary among respondents. Also supported by statements from Castillo-Cuesta (2020), digital games effectively improve EFL grammar and vocabulary, particularly in topics related to jobs and education in higher education settings.

Moreover, gameplay problem-solving and strategic thinking develop the mind and cognitive skills, making a person more creative. Students are usually required to read through the quests, approach complex storylines, and even have conversations with game characters—all activities complementing learning the English language and finding practical applications for it. This creates a dose of study experience that is more entertaining and prompts students to apply, fortunately—the language, developing general language

proficiency. In line with the statements from Gyaurov (2022), this systematic review aims to identify features of entertainment digital games that can promote player enjoyment and complex problem-solving skills, aiding in the design and analysis of entertainment games for real-world learning.

Further, the option of forming teams and communicating with other players develops socio-emotional skills and the operative use of language in an active and stimulating relationship. These contacts enhance the motivation and sense of achievement, leading to an added impetus toward learning. In a nutshell, Genshin Impact has a multifaceted approach to language acquisition. This game-based learning provides educational content that achieves better learning experiences with creativity and interactivity, hence a comprehensive and fun learning experience for students. This statement is consistent with what Hong (2017) said that online English education games effectively improve English language skills, especially non-verbal pragmatic skills, and increase brain connectivity in language-related areas.

4. Conclusion

Students who participated in the study saw Genshin Impact as a language learning tool that enhanced their English language skills with a focus on reading. However, not all respondents reported reading improvements. However, as participants played more Genshin Impact, there was a positive correlation between increased playtime and the levels of improvement in English language skills of the participants. In addition to more general language skills and the enjoyment derived from the game, students also learned further aspects of English, such as vocabulary development, contextual understanding, and speaking proficiency, by playing Genshin Impact.

Genshin Impact can provide several immersive language learning experiences that intrapassively go beyond the English language skills being practiced. Language learning experiences like those mentioned require a level of interactivity that can generate cognitive enhancement beyond the language skills used to complete in-game tasks or navigate a narrative-rich game world, creating an opportunity for problem-solving and strategic thinking. Genshin Impact was more than just an entertainment game; it appeared to have value as an educational tool for enhancing students' English language skills at all levels of education.

This study specifically targets English reading skills; however, the findings suggest several avenues for future research. These include examining listening skills and analyzing the linguistic structures in the game Genshin Impact.

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