

Evaluating Students' English Writing Project through Pear Deck

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Abstrak

Menulis merupakan salah satu keterampilan belajar bahasa yang paling penting, terutama menulis dalam bahasa Inggris. Hasil tulisan siswa atau mahasiswa dapat dinilai secara manual atau elektronik. Pear Deck merupakan platform pembelajaran digital yang memungkinkan siswa atau mahasiswa belajar secara digital dan membantu pengajar dapat dengan mudah mengevaluasi tulisan peserta didiknya. Namun, penelitian tentang kegunaan Pear Deck belum menemukan hasil yang menyimpulkan sehingga dalam penelitian ini, penulis bermaksud untuk menganalisis bagaimana Pear Deck dapat dimanfaatkan sebagai pendekatan pembelajaran yang efektif untuk menilai tulisan siswa. Penulis menggunakan metodologi kualitatif dan objek kajian ini diambil dari tulisan 15 mahasiswa President University, Indonesia jurusan Komunikasi. Sebagai pendukung lainnya, data dikumpulkan dari situs resmi Pear Deck, publikasi jurnal, dan prosiding konferensi. Penulis menerapkan teori Penilaian Bahasa: Prinsip dan Praktik Kelas dari H. Douglas Brown dan konsep Discourse Analysis dalam konteks pendidikan. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa Pear Deck adalah salah satu pilihan yang efektif untuk menilai kemampuan menulis mahasiswa khususnya dalam konteks penulisan cerita berbahasa Inggris. Selain itu, Pear Deck juga memiliki tampilan visual yang menarik yang membuat mahasiswa memiliki rasa ingin tahu yang besar tentang jenis aktivitas selanjutnya. Aplikasi ini juga memberikan fitur interaktif yang dapat membuat mahasiswa berinteraksi dengan cara memberikan saran kepada teman-teman mereka terhadap hasil tulisan yang mereka buat.

Kata kunci: evaluasi, media digital, Bahasa Inggris, Pear Deck, kemampuan menulis

Abstract

Writing is a fundamental language-learning skill, particularly in English. The writing of students could be assessed manually or electronically. Pear Deck is an interactive tool that helps students do their writing assignments digitally. It also helps teachers create an interesting writing class. In this study, the author aims to determine how Pear Deck could be utilized as an effective learning approach for assessing student writing. The author utilized a qualitative methodology and the instrument of this study was taken from 15 students' writing at President University, Indonesia majoring in Communication. As another support, the dataset was collected from the official Pear Deck website,

	<p><i>journal publications, and conference proceedings. The author applied the Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices theory from H. Douglas Brown and the concept of Discourse Analysis in educational settings. This study revealed that Pear Deck is an effective option for assessing students' writing, particularly composing a paragraph in the English language. Besides from it, Pear Deck also has an interesting visual screen that makes the students curious to learn the following activities. This application is also equipped with an interactive feature that allows students to give written feedback to their friends.</i></p> <p><i>Keywords: evaluation, digital platform, English, Pear Deck, writing skill</i></p>
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INTRODUCTION

According to [Carter et.al.](#) (1988), in recent years, the teaching of writing has become a contentious curriculum issue, particularly at the first-year level. They argued that frequently the only required course in a college's curriculum, the first-year composition course or course sequence may be asked to serve multiple agendas, some resulting from tradition, others from new curricular pressures, and others from specific teaching conditions or student needs ([Carter et al.](#), 1998). Meanwhile, [Klimova](#) (2013), writing is a challenging foreign language skill to master. However, it is essential for developing other languages and metacognitive abilities. Nowadays, using technology in the educational field has significantly impacted the process of teaching and learning ([Ni et al.](#), 2020). It is line with [Kutlu](#) (2012), technology use in studying and teaching foreign languages has drawn increasing attention over the past few decades. The integration of technology into educational settings has been a long-standing goal of policymakers worldwide ([Regan et al.](#), 2019). Using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education alters classroom teaching techniques. Using technology in a language classroom enhances students' language acquisition. Thus, many educators have begun using ICT in teaching and learning activities ([Azmi](#), 2017). New technologies in the digital age have influenced writing in a second language, as have all forms of writing ([Li et al.](#), 2017). Technology has an impact on writing in significant ways ([Porter](#), 2003). Technology enables students to improve their writing by including more specific details in their compositions, prompting self-revisions ([Sandolo](#), 2010). It motivates students to act on their curiosity, access resources, and embellish their work, resulting in enhanced reading comprehension and more sophisticated writing ([Montelongo & Herter](#), 2010). From my perspective, I also view that technology has helped both students and teachers in the learning process. For this specific purpose, technology could be used as a learning tool to enhance students' writing.

According to [Anggoro](#) (2021), the development of technology has provided instructors with a variety of possibilities for English training. He believed that Facebook, Socrative, and Kahoot, to mention a few, are well-known and regularly utilized by English teachers worldwide. However, additional techniques could be utilized to enhance English training. Pear Deck is one of these options. Another point of view is taken from [Mache et.al.](#) (2017). Pear Deck intends to aid educators in engaging pupils of all ages and abilities during lessons. It offers a virtual teaching tool that can improve English classes when mixed with its dynamic class response system. It indicates that Pear Deck can boost student interest in English classes. A recent study found that the digital gadget dramatically enhanced students' classroom engagement ([Javed & Odhabi](#), 2019).

One of Pear Deck's most significant characteristics is its accessibility. Currently, Google and Microsoft accounts are linked. Hence, those familiar with Google Slides and the online version of Microsoft PowerPoint may master the platform fast. Pear Deck is available as an add-on for Google Slides and Microsoft PowerPoint Online. Once added, users can begin picking their preferred interactive templates. The templates contain three sections: lesson builders, learning development, and topic areas. There are subject-specific templates for language classes, such as text, drawing, and multiple-choice slide templates. The drawing slide templates can function as an online whiteboard to facilitate brainstorming before writing a paragraph or essay. The website provides text slide templates that enable students to compose words, phrases, and paragraphs (Anggoro, 2020). The digital learning platform, Pear Deck could be used for any English skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. However, in this study, the author focused on how Pear Deck could be used as an alternative tool to assess students' writing. To support the analysis, the author applied the theory of Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices theory from H. Douglas Brown and Abeywickrama. According to Brown and Abeywickrama (2019) in Language Assessment Principles and Classroom Practices, the assessment process is underway and has greatly expanded its scope. When a pupil responds to a query, remarks, or attempts a new phrase or structure, the teacher subconsciously evaluates their performance. From a scribbled sentence to a structured essay, the writer, the teacher, and sometimes other students evaluate written work (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019).

Language assessment literacy covers not just familiarity with tools and procedures for evaluating students' language abilities, but also extra components, such as the capacity to provide relevant feedback to aid students in effectively creating and accomplishing future learning goals. In addition, assessment-literate professionals are aware of the ethical considerations involved in the assessment process and the potential ramifications of adopting assessment-based decisions, assuring consequential validity. When this concept is related to the digital tool, Pear Deck, the author views that Pear Deck could be used as an alternative to e-assessment. An e-assessment is an assessment created, administered, and evaluated with the aid of technology; this technology is often a specialized assessment platform. They argue that instead, any evaluation approach integrates technology into any step of the procedure. They believe that this is often the entire computer-based end-to-end evaluation procedure, including creation, dissemination, and scoring. However, the term often refers to merely a few stages, such as creating tests or marking them on-screen. Besides that, they also think that there is essentially no difference between e-assessment and traditional assessment modalities, such as pen-and-paper testing, because the underlying idea of assessing learning outcomes stays the same. Another theory that supports the author's analysis is taken from the concept of Discourse Analysis written by Adger and Wright (2015) in Van Dijk (2015). According to Adger and Wright (2015) that interpreted Van Dijk's concept, they believed that three main approaches could be applied in an educational context. One of them is the Systemic Functional Linguistic approach. Adger and Wright (2015) argued that SFL is founded on the idea that spoken language has developed into a system of indicators with social significance. In practice, this means that language users generate meanings in different social settings by selecting from a variety of sign options (linguistic and non-linguistic). Therefore, SFL has been advantageous for analyzing language usage in different fields of study. Differences in language utilization between historical and science classrooms impact school performance (Van Dijk, 2015). Meanwhile, another point of view is taken. He believed that currently, SFL is extensively employed to investigate language use in academic contexts.

The previous studies, [Anggoro & Khasanah \(2022\)](#) described the implementation of Pear Deck to give students a self-learning platform. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, online lessons have become commonplace, and teachers have utilized additional resources to help students' autonomous language study. Pear Deck is superior to other presentation software because it allows students to access interactive slides easily. Their study contains information about Pear Deck, including how to access it and what features it offers. They suggest that despite a few drawbacks, Pear Deck offers many advantages and can drive students to study independently while allowing professors to monitor them ([Anggoro & Khasanah, 2022](#)). Then, another study is taken ([Javed & Odhabi, 2019](#)). An approach for creating an environment where students actively participate in learning activities and contribute to dynamic discussions is explained. Hence, a perspective on students' engagement in traditional active learning pedagogies improved by new affordable technology is provided. In this study, we compared the usage of an online portal (Pear-deck) for active learning pedagogies and its impact on students' learning outcomes with traditional classrooms. The results indicate that active learning pedagogical activities are key elements that improve student performance relative to typical classroom settings ([Javed & Odhabi, 2019](#)). Meanwhile, in this study, the author focused on how Pear Deck could be used as an alternative tool to assess students' writing. The author wishes that the findings could assist further researchers to explore the function of digital platform, Pear Deck and its correlation between technology and education.

METHOD

This study relied on a qualitative approach. The studies analyzed how Pear Deck was used as an educational and digital platform to assess students' writing. To support the analysis, the author applied the theory of Language Assessment Principles and Classroom Practices from [Brown and Abeywickrama \(2019\)](#) and the concept of Discourse Analysis written by [Adger and Wright \(2015\)](#). There were several stages in this study. First, the author introduced the features in Pear Deck to determine what students and teachers can discover. Second, the author analyzed the compositional writing of the 15 students of President University. There were 15 paragraphs written by 15 students. The topic was Daily Routines and the grammar focus was Simple Present. The 15 paragraphs contain about 4.550 words as the lecturer asked them to write in at least 250 words. Due to the length of the paragraphs, the author decided to choose only 1 sample of the research. Then, the author analyzed the students' writing using the scoring rubric adapted from [Weigle \(2002\)](#) in [Table 1](#). After analyzing the compositional writing using Weigle's concept, the author then connected the research subject to the Language Assessment theory and Discourse Analysis written by ([Adger & Wright, 2015](#)). Finally, the author summed up the findings from the students (15 students' writing) and concluded.

Table 1. Scoring rubrics

Aspect of Writing	Score	Criteria
Content	5	Give a comprehensive aspect (objective, materials, and actions) that is simple to comprehend.
	4	Offer nearly complete (objective, materials, and procedures) and easily understood information.

(continue)

Table 1. (continued) Scoring rubrics

Aspect of Writing	Score	Criteria
Organization	3	Execute relatively complete (objective, materials, and procedures) and straightforward (element) information.
	2	Offer extremely detailed (objective, resources, and procedures) and straightforward information.
	1	Limited and difficult to comprehend.
	5	Effectively organized and employ Utilisation of transitional terms and phrases
	4	Good organization and efficient use of transition words/phrases.
Grammar	3	Organized, but the primary concepts are distinct and logical, with complete transitioning phrases and words.
	2	Disjointed and devoid of transitional phrases or words
	1	Lacks organization and uses no transitional words or phrases.
	5	No mistakes with the use of the present tense usage.
	4	Very few present-tense mistakes were found.
Vocabulary	3	Several errors with the present tense
	2	Numerous errors in present-tense uses
	1	There is no command of the present tense; errors in the present tense predominate.
	5	Excellent choice of terms and word structure
	4	Effective use of language and word forms
Mechanics	3	Acceptable vocabulary but with specific terms and word form errors
	2	Low vocabulary and inconsistent use of words and phrases
	1	Very limited vocabulary and poor comprehension of word forms
	5	Well-structured and punctuated with full stops, punctuation, semicolons, quotation marks, and the first capital letter.
	4	Well-structured and punctuated with full stops, commas, semicolons, quotation marks, and the first uppercase letter.
Mechanics	3	Uncommon misuse of periods, commas, semicolons, quotation marks, and the first capitalized letter.
	2	Common mistakes in punctuation include missing periods, commas, semicolons, quotation marks, and the first uppercase letter.
	1	Punctuation errors predominate, including misuse of periods, commas, semicolons, quotation marks, and initial capital letters.

Source : (Adapted from Weigle, 2002)

RESULT

The advancement of technology brings positive effects, especially in education. Pear Deck is one of the digital platforms that could help teachers and students in the learning process, especially in the writing assessment. To analyze how Pear Deck could be used as a digital learning platform to assess student's writing, the author introduced the features of Pear Deck in [Figure 1](#).



Figure 1. Pear Deck's prompt
Source: app.peardeck.com

Pear Deck is an interactive digital platform that provides the prompt. Pear Deck has equipped the teachers with practical and clear teaching stages which started at the beginning while teaching, and post-teaching. In the pre-teaching class, Pear Deck provided some interactive questions so that the students could answer what they have understood from the previous lesson. The types of questions are, "What do you wonder about today's topic? Write everything you remember from the homework" or even the stress check that asks the students' feelings before they begin the class. The author views those types of questions as essential for the students engaging in the activity. Aside from that, the teacher could see the readiness of the students. Another interesting thing is that Pear Deck provides the While-teaching stage. The types of instructions or questions they provide are, "Drag your dot to how you are feeling." Then, "Do you feel comfortable sharing your thoughts out loud right now?" The author sees that engaging instructions are important to check the student's understanding of the lesson. The last important thing is Pear Deck provides post-teaching. Pear Deck gives several examples of the post-teaching stage such as, "Pause, and write what you have just learned!" "Draw or type two things you learned" and "Reflect on today's activities". From this post-teaching stage, the author believes that Pear Deck has provided clear, engaging, and interactive questions and instructions so the students could be more engaged in the activities.

On closer observation, Pear Deck also has other benefits. Another advantage of Pear Deck is its real-time response system. It may be used in two distinct methods. One is the instructor display. This feature facilitates continuous monitoring of the responses and names of students to a template assignment. It enables immediate input to be provided to individuals. Teachers' ought to offer students feedback while they are still considering the subject (Brookhart, 2008). Pear Deck serves as a session review feature. It provides an in-depth analysis of each student's answers to the instructor. This can be a helpful starting point to assess the engagement and development of each student. In addition, there is a response spreadsheet. This displays the student responses in a more concise format. The comprehensive individual report and the spreadsheet can provide additional feedback or teachings to the class or specific students. Throughout instruction, email or in-person feedback may be provided. Additionally, both can be beneficial contemplative resources (Anggoro, 2020). Reflection improves student learning and fosters the development of

teachers (Fendler, 2003). In addition to being advantageous for the instructor, session review also benefits the students. The instructor can display the lesson's essential takeaways and each student's replies or solutions. Students can use this to evaluate and ruminate on their work. This may encourage students to reflect on themselves, promoting continuous development (Bennett-Levy et al., 2009). The following observation can be seen in Figure 2.

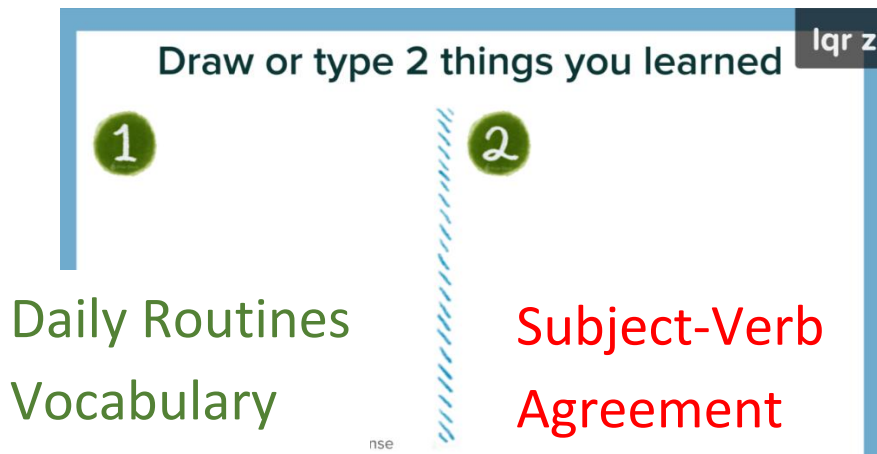


Figure 2. Students' understanding of the lesson

Source: www.peardeck.com

In Figure 2, the teacher could provide a template that could be used to measure students' understanding. In this context, the students at President University learned about Daily Routines. They learned vocabulary and grammar like Simple Present. Besides that, to make the class more engaged, the students could also respond and share their understanding by drawing some pictures instead of writing. The author views that this stage is essential as the stage could make the students understand every activity in order. The last observation can be seen in Figure 3.

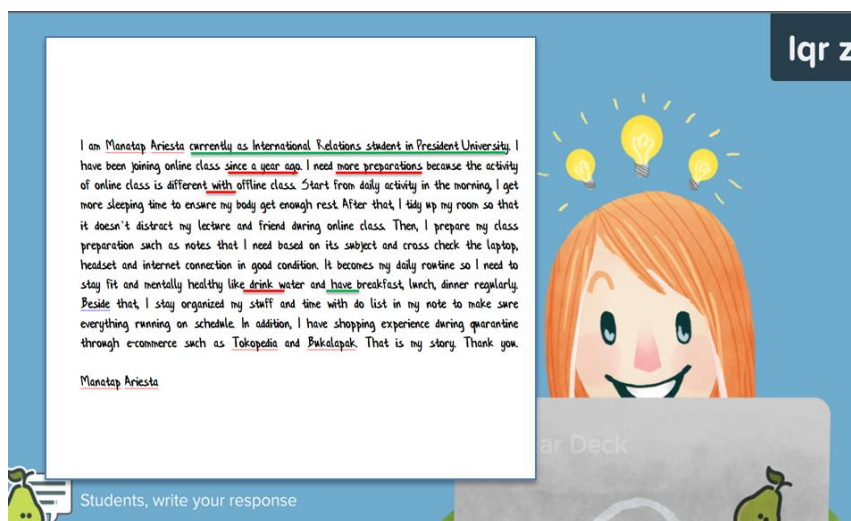


Figure 3. Assessment part

Source: www.peardeck.com

In Figure 3, we can see the students' writing on the Pear Deck slide. In this slide, the student named Manatap Ariesta wrote her daily routines. In her writing, we could find a few mistakes, especially in compositional writing. The errors made by Ariesta can be checked

either by the teacher or students. The students can check and give feedback on their friends' writing by underlining or highlighting the errors. The last analysis was taken from the survey which was calculated by the author's observation as seen at [Table 2](#).

Table 2. Students' survey

Students	Percentage of Effectiveness
10	66,7%
3	20%
2	13,3%

It indicates that 10 students (66,7%) agree that Pear Deck is an effective teaching and learning media platform that could help both teachers and students in the academic process. Then, 3 students (20 %) argued that Pear Deck is a teaching and learning alternative tool that could help educators and learners, but its implication does not significantly impact their needs and objectives in the learning process. Meanwhile, 2 students (13,3%) view that they do not get any impacts from its application. From this survey, it could be interpreted that most of the students agree that Pear Deck has helped them improve their learning abilities. Thus, the author views Pear Deck could be seen as an effective digital tool to assess students' writing or any other learning objectives.

DISCUSSION

Being able to write well is not intrinsic; instead, it is typically acquired through formal education or alternative settings. The ability to write must be acquired through experience and practice. Composing includes writing, and it involves the ability to tell or reproduce the information in stories or descriptions or to transform information into new texts, such as expository or argumentative texts (Myles, 2002). According to Brown and Lee (2015), the constructed nature of writing has led to the development of writing pedagogy that emphasizes teaching students how to come up with ideas, arrange them logically, use examples of elements and rhetorical rules to combine them effectively into a piece of writing, revise material for better meaning, edit material for correct grammar, and create a result. They believed compositions should adhere to English rhetorical style requirements, use appropriate vocabulary, and be organized structurally and coherently. Significant emphasis was placed on model writings that pupils would imitate and on the level to which the pupil's final work fulfilled a list of criteria, including material, organization, vocabulary use, grammatical use, and mechanical features such as spelling and punctuation (Brown & Lee, 2015).

The author offered another context of writing for further analysis, which could then correlate with the study's subject. According to Adger & Wright (2015), argue that science cannot be carried out using everyday language: scientific language has changed through exploration as scientists discovered the power of the grammatical system and developed a highly complex system for representing ideas. From this perspective, acquiring the language of science is essential for understanding its content; however, this sophisticated, technical method of using vocabulary – academic language – can make research difficult for students (Adger & Wright, 2015). They believed that SFL is comparable with different written research methods in considering the social context of language use. Text is the basic unit of analysis according to SFL, which views the text as the most compact functioning significance element (Adger & Wright, 2015).

The genre as recurrent forms of text used for purposes, with particular discourse organization and linguistic characteristics. Lists common academic genres, including procedures, recounts, reports, explanations, and arguments. All are culturally valued methods of achieving academic goals through language. To be successful academically, students must learn to use language in ways that are culturally identifiable as academic (Adger & Wright, 2015). In a closer context, the author views that understanding how to write does not only about the grammar issues but also the cultural goals. In this sense, the EFL student is required to go beyond the text which means the essence or content. When we take a look at the content of Ariesta's writing, she provided almost complete elements (goal, materials, and steps). The second observation is the organization concept. The author views that she deserved to get the 4th position. She organizes and utilizes transitional phrases and words reasonably well. The author then realizes in the grammar section that he or she deserved to be in fourth place. Utilization of the present tense was nearly flawless. Then, in terms of vocabulary, the author believes that the student merited a score of 4 because she utilized effective word choice and word forms. The final principle is mechanics. The author believes she did not make any significant mechanical errors. She used punctuation effectively, including periods, commas, semicolons, quotation marks, and the first capital letter. Based on the study's findings, the author concludes that she composed the story appropriately and effectively communicated her objectives and topic. However, this is only sometimes the case for students. Some left-handed learners must pay close attention to punctuation, grammar, spelling, organization, coherence, etc. According to the study, students make a substantial number of combination usage errors. Although they qualified as advanced-level learners, they make mistakes when using primary connecting devices. Specific categories of errors include substituting punctuation for conjunctions and the inconsistent use of conjunctions and punctuation. Incorrect application of conjunctions and the absence or getting of "that" to various extents, redundant elimination disregard of the connection between phrases such as a synonym and hyponymy, and indifference of the connection between terms such as integration or subordination show up to be significant variables (Shielamani, 1998). In the meantime, Khansir (2008) examined the syntactical mistakes of one hundred B.Com students in their second year at Mysore University, India. The study aimed to classify "errors" made by students at the sentence level, including the use of auxiliary verbs, passive constructs, and tenses. The research uncovered errors in auxiliary verbs, passive constructions, and tenses. Positive manipulation of teacher attitudes toward technology can improve technology integration in the classroom (Regan et al., 2019). The study uncovered systematic errors made by language learners in their target language.

From those studies, it could be interpreted that systematic errors are common to happen. In this context, the author views the cooperation between teachers and students as highly important. The teachers do not only use technology like Pear Deck as the learning tool but also provide a broad understanding of grammar, punctuation, and capitalization to the students. As a result, most of the students will get more learning outcomes, one is seen from the technology used, and another one is from the content and understanding of the topic. In this study, the author expects that this investigation could significantly impact the teachers to use Pear Deck as a solution of teaching method. Then, the students could also gain more understanding about any topics displayed on Pear Deck. Lastly, future researchers could also conduct a study about Pear Deck and develop the study with broad methods and investigation.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, this research was conducted with only 15 participants, consequently, the results may differ if applied to larger classes. It is expected that future researchers will be able to expand the observation with additional participants. Despite its limitations, Pear Deck is a teaching tool that could be used as an assessment instrument. Teachers and students can benefit from this digital learning platform. This tool would simplify the grading of student assignments for instructors. In the meantime, students could discuss their comprehension with one another. Consequently, students and instructors can collaborate. In this context, it is evident that technology improves instruction and learning. Teachers and students must also consider the following considerations. Instructors must continue to instruct and assess students' understanding of the format, components, and structure of writing. The author believes that if students and instructors collaborate, the previously mentioned challenges students face can be minimized.

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