



METHODS OF TEACHING RUSSIAN AS A NATIVE, NON-NATIVE, FOREIGN LANGUAGE

МЕТОДИКА ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ РУССКОГО ЯЗЫКА КАК РОДНОГО, НЕРОДНОГО, ИНОСТРАННОГО

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Research article

Metaphorical maps as a means of developing speech imagery at classes of Russian as a foreign language

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Abstract. The relevance of the study is conditioned by the need to develop speech imagery in foreigners studying Russian and to improve their communicative competence in speaking and writing. The aim of the study is to justify the use of metaphorical associative cards in teaching a foreign language and to suggest forms of working with metaphorical cards at classes of Russian as a foreign language. The feasibility and prospects of metaphorical associative cards are proved with empirical and analytical methods; a pedagogical experiment was conducted in a group of Chinese 3rd-year students of “Linguistics” at Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University; oral statements of students produced when working with usual metaphors and with a metaphorical map were analyzed. Comparative analysis of students’ statements allowed us to interpret metaphorical associative cards as a tool for foreign language speech development, substantiate its expediency for the development of students’ speech imagery. The speech imagery is understood as a mechanism for forming an idea of a future statement. Together with speech actions, it takes part in the process of speech generation. The metaphorical map increases students’ creativity, allows them to move from combining template constructions to creating an original text idea. The study characterizes the functions of a metaphorical associative map at different stages of a student’s speech activity, gives recommendations for using them for developing creative speech abilities of foreign students and their speech imagery, and suggests scenarios for working with them at the classes of Russian as a foreign language. The study implies further search for ways of developing speech imagery and increasing the

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linguistic and didactic potential of metaphorical associative cards in teaching Russian as a foreign language. The results of the study are useful for teaching written and oral communication in a foreign language.

Keywords: speech intention, metaphor, metaphorization, cognitive theory of metaphor, speech production, Chinese students, Russian language

Contribution: *Fedotova N.L.* — research design, manuscript revision and editing, formulation of the conclusions; *Burtseva A.V.* — theoretical framework, illustration preparation, data analysis; *Ryzhkova I.V.* — analysis of scientific literature, manuscript drafting.

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Introduction

Language education is mainly aimed at developing foreign speech abilities. To achieve this aim, we need to take into account the regularities of speech abilities development and to clearly understand their nature based on the creative, artistic character of speech activity. Psychologists studying speech and creative abilities (Zhinkin, 1998: 187; Teplov, 1995: 41) prove the relationship of speech perception and generation to empathy and emotionality, associativity and synaesthesia, imagination and transformation, which ultimately define the creative personality. The creative component of speech activity is fully realized in a dialogue with an artistic text, but the creative function of speech is not limited to human interaction with an artistic text; it is inherent in the process of speech production, thought can undergo transformation: ‘at every single moment of linguistic activity, the interpreting thought adapts to the communicative space as it appears to the speaker at that moment’ (Gasparov, 1996: 307).

Unfortunately, teaching a foreign language does not often consider the artistic nature of speech abilities, although many scientists point out its role in vocabulary learning (Koreneva, 2010) and the development of speech skills (Belikov, Kachesova, 2020; Burtseva et al., 2024). From our point of view, metaphorical associative maps are an effective means of developing creative speech abilities. Their integrative nature helps them effectively

develop a whole complex of speech creative abilities: associativity, imagery, emotionality, reflection, and language play.

The above-mentioned abilities have creative nature, which is inherent in speech activity, according to N.I. Zhinkin (Zhinkin, 1998: 86). These abilities can be developed with meta-subject approach embedded in the very nature of metaphor as a linguistic phenomenon.

In the methodology of teaching Russian as a foreign language, new metaphors are born in the students' consciousness based on their unique cultural and social personal life experience, the specifics of their interaction with the surrounding world (Moskvin, 2019). That is why researchers substantiate the need to form a special metaphorical competence (Bruskova, 2019; Alekseeva, Mishlanova, 2016). It is due to the metaphorical human thinking, which determines the use of metaphor as a didactic tool both to introduce and explain new knowledge and illustrate certain linguistic phenomena and rules (Ivinskikh, Mishlanova, 2011). It is no coincidence that modern methodologists pay special attention to metaphor as a means of teaching a specialty language (Utkina, Mishlanova, 2016; Skrynnikova et al., 2019) since the imagery of metaphors in professional discourse ensures the achievement of greater communication efficiency.

The development of speech creativity, creative speech abilities, from the methodological point of view, uses creative didactic tools (methods and techniques), among which the metaphorical associative map. However, it is still underestimated by the scientific community.

There are many scientific studies on metaphorical associative maps in the work of a practical psychologist (Shebanova, 2020; Gilek, 2023; Aksyutina, 2023), but it is beyond the scope of the authors of this article to analyze psychological approaches and concepts. At the same time, we found only separate, extremely fragmentary attempts to methodologically interpret metaphorical associative cards for teaching Russian as a native language (Ponomareva, Gubchevskaya, 2024) and foreign languages, including Russian as a foreign language (Elizova, Lantsevskaya, 2024).

The metaphorical associative map as a didactic tool borrowed from the arsenal of a practicing psychologist is an image that stimulates the process of self-knowledge and self-development. From the psychological point of view, this tool improving the psycho-emotional state of a person includes the following components: safety, since the speaker is "protected" by the map and speaks on its behalf; reflection when analyzing the associations and images born during the perception of the image; personal meanings which are the result of working with the map (Aksyutina, 2023).

Metaphorical maps are a valuable tool in modern foreign language teaching methodology; they contribute to the development of oral speech,

language skills, and communicative competence. These maps are used in speech practice classes according not only to proven teaching methods, but also on the fundamental provisions of psycholinguistics and pedagogical psychology. This ensures the reliability of practical results and the effectiveness of their use.

In our opinion, the fundamental aspect that determines the methodological significance and attractiveness of metaphorical maps is their specific content that actualizes students' creative thinking. By providing students with alternative images containing implicit comparison and metaphorical transfers, the teacher stimulates the flexibility of foreign learners' thinking, expands the boundaries of linguistic expression of thought, and activates cognitive processes of associative thinking and semantic integration of language constructions.

The pedagogical experience of the authors of this article shows that metaphorical associative maps can be effectively used for teaching oral and written communication in Russian as a foreign language as a stimulus for developing the learner's speech abilities, especially speech associativity, imagery, and language play.

The aims of the study are to give a linguodidactic justification for using metaphorical associative maps in teaching a foreign language and to propose possible forms of using metaphorical maps in Russian as a foreign language (RFL) classes.

Methods and materials

To verify the effectiveness of metaphorical associative maps (hereinafter MAM) in RFL classes, empirical and analytical methods were applied. A pedagogical experiment on using metaphorical maps as a tool for speech development of foreign-language learners was conducted; its results were analyzed and described. The experiment involved 15 Chinese third-year students of the direction "Linguistics" from Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University. The respondents' Russian language proficiency was TRFL-2. The group included 39% of girls and 51% of boys aged 20–26.

The experiment was conducted at speaking classes. The topics of the classes were related to the concepts of "Time", "Language", "Stress", and "Human". The aim was to teach students how to construct an independent monologue in oral or written form on the basis of abstract concepts metaphorization. The organizers of the experiment observed how the ability to speech imagery was developed by analyzing usual linguistic metaphors and creating an original subjective image with the help of a metaphorical map. The students' utterances at different stages were analyzed in terms of the image presence, its originality, and the influence of the didactic material.

Results

The pedagogical experiment revealed that the MAM, being a visual learning tool, stimulates the generation of verbal metaphor; working with the map and analyzing the symbolic meaning of its images, the student is within a particular problem situation. Various interpretations of the metaphorical map have an impact on the students' critical thinking and make them seek the optimal solution to the problem.

Our observation helped describe the functionality of MAMs at different stages. At the first stage of speech production, the MAM becomes a trigger for word associations. Some associations arise in the students' native language, and they translate it and in such a way expand their vocabulary in the target language. Associations pass through a special emotional filter; after that, the most significant meanings are selected, an attitude to the subject of speech is formed, and the means of expressing this attitude are searched for. The feeling of security is significant. According to psychologists, the feeling relieves the stress inevitable in speech production in a foreign language and destroys the psychological barrier for active participation in communication. Various meanings embedded in the metaphor gives more freedom in image interpretation, and this interpretation refers to personal life and speech experience, as well as creative transformation of what is seen. The use of MAMs in the learning process naturally removes the language barrier, since the figurative nature of these maps implicitly includes many interpretations and, which is also important, excludes the wrong answer.

The offered image is metaphorical in nature. To interpret this image, the student needs to activate the mechanism of speech imagery "triggered" at the stage of inner speech. The mechanism is realized in thinking in a form of a universal-object code that summarizes the data from all senses and then "translate" them into the language of words (Zhinkin, 1998: 85).

MAM helps to formulate a thought-image and to interpret it, as it requires to translate the image into a verbal code. Speech reflection is necessary here because there is a need to critically analyze one's own speech; the speaker selects the most adequate lexical and grammatical linguistic means. When the student cannot convey a thought in stereotypical phrases, the mechanisms of construction and combination (Passov, 1989: 540–544) are activated, and it is resulted in a language play. When MAM images are perceived, one metaphor is supplemented by another. Thus, the development of metaphorical imagery is comparable to the comprehension of life meanings, and this angle of the problem acquires a special, deeply pedagogical meaning.

Thus, metaphor is not only a didactic tool for mastering a foreign language, but also a key to a deep understanding of the specifics of the language being studied (in our case, it is Russian).

The pedagogical experiment proves that work with metaphorical maps enriches the learning process as a whole and makes it more dynamic and interactive. Metaphorical maps help foreign students overcome language and psychological barriers, improve their cognitive and communicative abilities, and develop figurative and critical thinking. Visualizing abstract ideas, metaphorical maps contribute to a more effective and durable learning of lexical and grammatical material and help students express their thoughts more vividly and accurately. This is really important for successful speech development.

Discussion

According to Aristotle, metaphor is the basic sense of all living beings, including humans (Aristotle, 1975), and J. Lakoff believed, that metaphor is like the sense of touch (Lakoff, Johnson, 2021: 251). Interpreted as a linguistic conceptualizing and classifying phenomena of reality (Gibbs, 2009; Ghazinoory, Aghaei, 2024), metaphor is a unique didactic tool in language teaching.

The linguistic concepts of metaphor in the actively developing metaphorology (Kurash, 2019) note the fundamental diffuseness of lexical meanings because the exact reflection of reality in human consciousness is impossible. Therefore, metaphor is not a transfer, but a shift of semantics from the background, potential, or peripheral part of meaning to the conceptual part (Shmelev, 1964). Shmelev's ideas were supported by Kharchenko (Kharchenko, 1992), who put forward the concept of imaginary, playful, reduction of lexical semantics. According to him, metaphor perception and generation actualize both the direct and figurative meanings of a lexeme, which ensures image creation.

Based on the above properties of metaphor, Arutyunova (Arutyunova, 1999) concluded that it is metaphor that is the key property of artistic creativity. The ability to discover distant, from the point of view of ordinary thinking, connections, allows the speaker not only to identify objects, not only to establish similarities between areas perceived by different senses, but also to grasp the commonality between concrete and abstract concepts, matter, and spirit" (Arutyunova, 1999: 374). This mechanism works in all communicative situations.

Conceptual metaphors are a significant element of intercultural communication because metaphors are national and supranational at the same time (Metaphor..., 1988: 26). Being an act of characterizing predication (Arutyunova, 1999: 382), metaphor is a logical tool, an element of conceptualization, so it gives the foreigner the freedom of self-expression in the target language.

Here is the method of speech imagery formation based on the metaphorization of abstract concepts, usual metaphors, and metaphorical maps.

To comprehend the usual metaphors, we give the tasks to identify syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations of a lexeme, to compare proverbs and idioms in Russian and students' native language, and to model the semantic field of a word. When performing these tasks, fragments of linguistic world pictures of the studied and native languages are compared and refracted in the student's consciousness, and this naturally expands linguistic-cultural competence of students.

After analyzing the usual metaphors expressing a concept, students work with MAM and create their own metaphor figuratively characterizing the concept.

The forms of work with metaphor are diverse and are often determined by the specificity of the abstract concept. If the central lexeme is polysemantic, we characterize combinability in more detail, because it shows the differences in the semantics of the polysemantic word. Students are offered either to analyze different types of word combinations or to make associative schemes. For example, analyzing syntagmatic connections of the lexeme "language" (*show, stick out; dog's, beef's; teach, forget; English, Russian, native; syllabic, grammatical structure of ...; think, speak in ...; ... of literature, ... of art, Pushkin's ...; artificial ..., programming ...*) students independently determine all its meanings and establish connections between them, then check their hypotheses in the dictionary. A "top-down" way is also possible, when, after reading the dictionary article, students select examples of combinability using the resources of Russian National Corpus. This variant expands students' vocabulary and forms a lexical field.

Finally, meanings can be identified with metaphorical maps when visual images help distinguish between different meanings of a concept. The experimental group worked with the concept of "stress": having received the map, each student formulated what they understood by the word "stress", based on the associations that the metaphorical map evoked in them. As a result of making sense of the visual series, students offered a figurative interpretation of their vision of stress:

– *as rose-colored glasses, which correlate with stereotypes and illusions that prevent us from seeing the situation in its true light and make us suffer from the mismatch between our perceptions of reality and reality itself;*

– *as a crossroads, where it is necessary to make a choice about which path to take, etc.*

Each individual life experience stimulates the production of an oral utterance without preparatory lexical work, and the metaphorical map presents the emotional experience in the form of a visual image.

Directed associative experiment is possible if students already have an idea of the syntagmatic relations of a particular lexeme. For example, work with the lexeme “time” can recall verbs of motion in figurative meaning, compare them with the figurative interpretation of the flow of time in the native language, pay attention to the emotional coloring of these linguistic constructions and the specifics of contexts (*when time flies, when it stretches slowly*).

Paradigmatic associations for the word “time” outline the thematic field of the lexeme, including seasonality (seasons and days), orderliness (schedules, plans), history, age, time as a grammatical category and the ways of its expression, etc.

Tasks for idioms and proverbs are also variable: work with dictionaries of proverbs and phraseological units; restoring the integrity of phraseological units and proverbs (filling in the gaps, completing the statement); work with winged expressions and proverbs according to the POPS-formula. In a multinational group, it is recommended to carry out a comparative analysis of phraseological units and proverbs, which allows to reveal the national-cultural specificity of the concept. This work can be supplemented by metaphorical maps, which are used as illustrations to a proverb, winged expression, or phraseological units. It is fundamentally important that students explain their choice of this or that MAM.

In order to identify usual metaphors related to the central concept, the teacher together with the students compiles a lexical-semantic field. An example of such work is shown in Fig. 1.

Based on the obtained word combinations, students make up an oral mini monologue where they formulate what the analyzed concept represents in the Russian linguistic picture of the world. Thus, comprehending the concept “Person”, students noted that it is not static (*“a person becomes a person, he is not born”, “if we are asked to ‘be a person’, then we are not always people”*); they paid attention to its biological component (*“a species of living beings”*), gender, age, and social group.

After comprehending the usual connotations, the respondents were asked to choose the MAM corresponding to their personal concept of a human being and to justify their choice orally. Here are some examples of monologues:

– *When in life we are busy only with our troubles, we see only a part of life: stones, trees, but we do not see the whole, we do not see the beauty of this world (the island and the bear).*

– *I have a black and white picture, night and day. We work during the day and sleep at night. It’s also yin and yang, masculine and feminine, good and evil. Man is very complex; he has everything in him.*

– *I have a picture of swans and a ring. It’s about a relationship. But I think if it’s a man, then it’s about loyalty, because that’s the best quality of a man.*

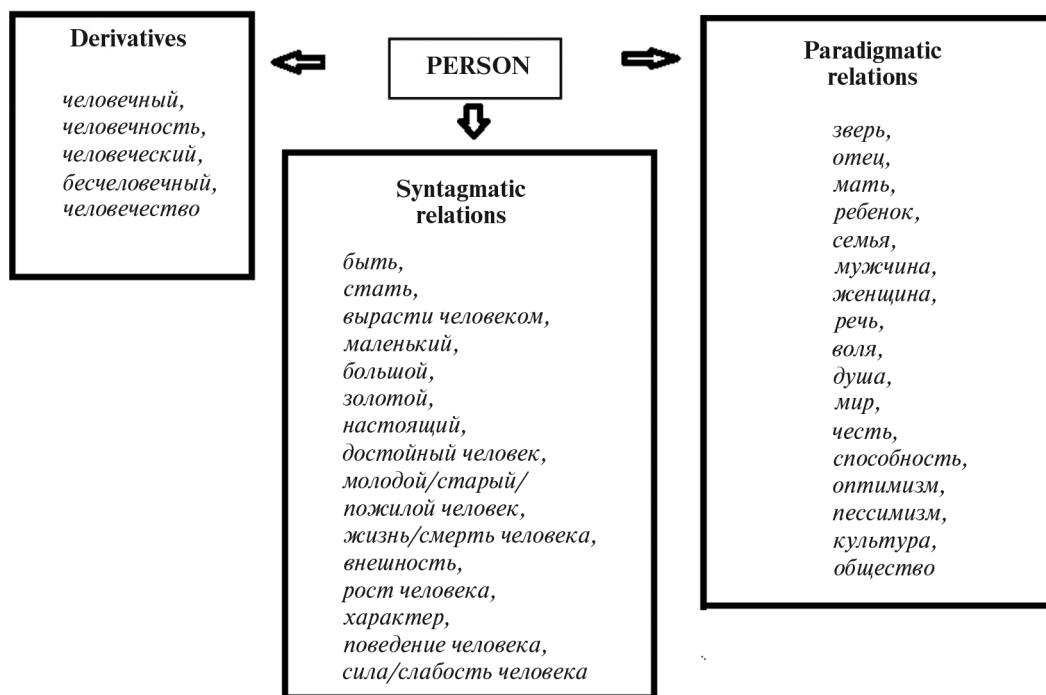


Fig. 1. Lexical-semantic field "Person"

Source: N.L. Fedotova, A.V. Burtseva, I.V. Ryzhkova.

Let us compare the students' statements about time based on MAM with their statements obtained after comprehension of the usual metaphors of time.

The most typical statements about time after working with the lexical-semantic field are related to the idea of transience, liminality, and irreversibility:

– *Time is day and night. Time is good and bad. I think time does not heal, but time teaches. It is impossible to stop time or bring it back; time only goes away. We have to appreciate time.*

– *Hours pass, days pass, years pass. You are growing, changing, always in a hurry to get somewhere. There is no way to stop time, to go back to your childhood, or to correct your mistakes.*

– *When I think of what time is, I remember it's money. Probably because we spend it. And it passes without a trace.*

As we see, these statements are characteristic of low imagery and originality, and the expressive means are limited.

Here are Chinese students' statements after working with MAM (we used metaphorical cards from the set "Duality" by Anna Grashchenkova in the experiment) (Fig. 2).

The MAMs were chosen because of their ambiguity, where one image did not seem to be combined with the other. This feature allowed students

to use the grammatical construction “*on the one hand, ..., and on the other hand, ...*” when justifying the connection of the two images of time. So longer utterances were created.



Fig. 2. A. Grashchenkova's cards “Duality”

Source: (Grashchenkova, 2021).

Each student had to choose one of the cards and compose an oral monologue using its images. They had three minutes to make up the utterance. 90% of students successfully coped with the task.

Particularly interesting were the interpretations of the concept “time”:

– *Time is like a room with many, many doors. I don't know what is behind them; we don't know where they lead to. I am afraid to open these doors, but it is even scarier to stay forever in this room, not to find my door and my way.*

– *I'm flying home by plane. It leaves a trail in the sky. I'm flying and thinking of my family who will meet me. My heart beats with happiness. I guess my time is the feelings I experience. And that's why the time is always different.*

– *On the one hand, life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you have to move. And where to move, how to move and at what speed to move is up to you!*

– *On the one hand, time flies — this is bad news; and on the other hand, you are the pilot of your time, and this is good news. Time depends on the person, on how you manage it, how you plan to do something. I don't think time is about “slow and fast.” Time is about discipline.*

– *Time is a woman, changeable and unpredictable. We try to know her, to conquer her, but she keeps slipping away. Time is the flame of a candle, and we circle around it like moths. You have to realize that your candle will not burn forever. You have to live, you have to shine, you have to find your love, your business while your candle is burning.*

– *We are always in a hurry, afraid of not having time to do something. We think that time is money. We rush to earn as much as we can. We write things in our notebooks, check the boxes, mark what we have already done, and write plans for tomorrow. This is our time, our work, our life. It passes. The ticks turn into birds and fly away. Where do they go?*

Students interpreted time as a heartbeat, a skein of wool, a thread that can suddenly break; a chick hatching from an egg because it is time to live; a flower that knows when to bloom; a candle that can burn brightly but quickly melt. The students also turned to metaphors from the natural world: “*time is a lotus that blooms in its own time, you just have to wait for the right moment, you need to have patience so that the time of your life will be blooming*”; here is the idea of waiting, realizing when to start doing something. The image of a time as a bird hatching from an egg, where time is a signal that you need to act, not being afraid to destroy the shell around you, was rather vivid.

Chinese students’ statements showed that MAMs allow students to go beyond the limits of learned clichéd phrases and to find unexpected words to express the idea.

MAMs are effective at the stage of creating the idea of an utterance; they allow to find an original idea and present it as an extended metaphor in the target language. In this context, the use of MAMs is a kind of “mechanism” for text production.

Conclusion

The focus of modern linguodidactics on the formation of communicative competence requires strengthening the creative orientation of teaching and shifting the focus from the formation of language skills to the development of speech abilities. The methodical interpretation of the MAM as a tool for developing speech imagery presented in the article expands the arsenal of didactic means of language education.

The variety of MAMs, the integrative nature of the phenomenon and its various functions prove that the full-fledged, from the methodological point of view, linguistic and didactic comprehension of MAM is still just beginning. The potential of MAMs as a means of text interpretation, a method of working on the composition of a coherent speech utterance has not yet been revealed, which determines the research prospects.

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Научная статья

Метафорические карты как средство развития речевой образности на занятиях русского языка как иностранного

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Аннотация. Актуальность исследования обусловлена необходимостью развития речевой образности у иностранцев, изучающих русский язык, а также совершенствования их коммуникативной компетенции в области говорения и письма. Цель исследования — дать лингводидактическое обоснование использования метафорических ассоциативных карт (МАК) при обучении иностранному языку и предложить возможные формы работы с МАК на занятиях по русскому языку как иностранному (РКИ). Для доказательства целесообразности и перспективности применения МАК использовали эмпирический и аналитический методы: проведены педагогический эксперимент в группе китайских студентов 3 курса, обучающихся по направлению «Лингвистика» в Санкт-Петербургском политехническом университете Петра Великого, анализ устных высказываний студентов, спродуцированных на этапе работы с узуальными метафорами и затем на этапе работы с МАК. Сравнительный анализ высказываний студентов, полученных на этих этапах работы, позволил трактовать МАК как инструмент иноязычного речевого развития, обосновать целесообразность ее применения для развития речевой образности обучающихся, понимаемой как механизм формирования замысла будущего высказывания, участвующий в совокупности с речевыми действиями в процессе речепорождения: обращение к МАК повышает уровень креативности студентов, позволяя им перейти от стадии комбинирования шаблонных конструкций к созданию оригинального текстового замысла. Описаны функции метафорической ассоциативной карты на разных этапах речевой деятельности студента, предложены рекомендации по применению МАК как инструмента для развития творческих речевых способностей иностранных студентов, и прежде всего, речевой образности, предложены сценарии работы с такими картами на занятиях РКИ. Проблематика исследования позволяет осуществлять дальнейший поиск путей развития речевой образности, а также дает возможность усилить лингводидактический потенциал метафорических ассоциативных карт в практике преподавания РКИ. Результаты исследования могут быть полезны при обучении письменной и устной коммуникации на иностранном языке.

Ключевые слова: речевой замысел, метафора, метафоризация, когнитивная теория метафоры, речепорождение, китайские студенты, русский язык

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