

A Case Study in Language Preference of Three Trilinguals in Japanese, English and Spanish Living in Brisbane

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Abstract

Spanish-speaking (non-Japanese) multilingual migrants were observed to code switch more frequently than ethnically Japanese multilinguals in Tokyo (Quintero, 2015). The goal of this paper is to explore three trilinguals' language preferences and language patterns living in Queensland and to find out if and why the same linguistic phenomenon occurs in a different dominant culture and language setting from the Tokyoites. I will first explore the two communities' linguistic ethnography in Brisbane and then move on the case study. This research was based on fieldwork conducted in 2018 in Queensland, Australia because (a) English is the dominant first language (L1) and (b) Japanese- and Spanish-speakers have roughly the same population density (0.4%).

Communities Linguistic Ethnography

This ethnographic research took place in 2018 over five main fields: religion; Languages Other Than English (LOTE) publications; LOTE library resources; meet-ups, and mass media & Internet networks.

Religion

Religion is a strong parameter for Latin American Spanish-speakers but not for Japanese. The latter had occasional gatherings at some Japanese religious groups in the past but no longer. However, around 450 Latin American devotees gather at three interconnected Catholic parishes in Queensland that deliver mass in Spanish during the weekends: The Jubilee Catholic Parish (Brisbane), Our Lady of the Way Parish (North Brisbane) and Surfers Paradise Parish (Gold Coast). This network forms the *Capellanía Católica Latinoamericana de Brisbane*, which also has a Facebook page and regular bulletins in Spanish.

Brisbane mass is bigger and attracts around 350 devotees, mainly older first-generation (G1) Salvadorans but also young G1 Colombians. The Gold Coast mass is very flexible and is usually attended by 70 older G1 Uruguayans and young G1 Colombians who visit the area on holidays. North Brisbane attracts around 40 devotees, mostly older G1 Salvadorans and younger G1 Colombians. The religious gatherings offer social activities during lunchtime. These gatherings also cater for special celebrations like Christmas or the Guadalupe Virgin Patronal Day where live music and folkloric performances are organized. Masses have been held from the early 2000s at the request of earlier migrant Salvadorans. This explains why approximately 75% of devotees are from El Salvador.

Non-Catholic Christian groups also attract a considerable number of Spanish-speakers¹ around the Brisbane and Gold Coast areas. Monthly Bible studies in private houses and social activities after masses are regularly held in Spanish among the devotees.

LOTE Publications

Japanese used to have two free paper publications providing community news and information: *Nichigo Press*, which was established in 1977, and the extinct *Southern Cross Press*, a more local and female-oriented magazine.

Newspapers in Spanish include *Extra Informativo*, *El Español*, *Spanish Herald* and *Noticias y Deportes* (Later *Latino-Australian Times*). In 2017 two newspapers disappeared. *Extra Informativo*, which was established in 1979, has the size of 20,000 of weekly circulation (5,000 in Queensland).

Aradia Multilingual Communications, which was established in 1986, was the first independent multilingual publishing company in Queensland and is still active today. Other paperback magazines in the past included *Diferente*, *Carabela*, and *Nuestra Gente* for the Colombian community and *La Voz*, *El Sol* and *El Chasqui* for the Peruvians; however, they are extinct today.

LOTE Library Resources

LOTE libraries in Queensland together with MyLanguage website, seek to meet the needs of those readers who want to read and get information in a language other than English. In 2016, the libraries included over 70,000 items in 50 languages and the MyLanguage website helped access information links in 67 languages to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups.

According to State Library of Queensland (SLQ), during the 2000s, in terms of item presence and demand, Japanese items were the most overrepresented while the Spanish issues were the fourth most underrepresented. From the 2010s Spanish loans (2100) surpassed the Japanese's (2050) for the first time. In 2018 items in Spanish were more diverse and numerous (589) than the Japanese items (415). These figures still do not satisfy the library policy to provide one item per every six LOTE speakers, since these would make a ratio of around 35 items per Spanish speaker and 40 items per Japanese speaker.

Meet-ups

Latin American communities gather together to celebrate their national holidays. In Queensland the most significant ones are the Chile's National Independence Day, Peru's Independence Ball, Colombia's Independence Day, Uruguay's National Day, and Argentina's National Day. *Fiesta Latina* hosted since 2013 by Latin American Community of Australia (LACA) (QLD) is held to celebrate Latin American culture with the wider community in Brisbane. More than 5,000 people join the festival to enjoy folkloric music, dancing, food, arts, and crafts.

Soccer clubs and music venues serve as social platforms for regular meet-ups within the Spanish-speaking communities. The Latin Connection Band, *Cachicano* Latin Harp, *La Gran Salsa*, *La Luna* Productions. provide Latin American music in many venues. Spanish clubs, such as the Spanish-speaking Grandparent Association's soccer club, El Salvador Soccer club and *Cuzcatlan* Sporting and Cultural Club, Spanish Center's soccer club White Star and *Rodelu*

¹ Except for the Adventists, no responses were received from other Christian affiliations. Adventists gathered around 120 devotees. mostly Chileans and Salvadorans and younger families and international students from Colombia, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Nicaragua.

Sport and Social Club Woodridge, attract more eclectic and diverse audiences today than in the past. Clubs and venues come and go.

The Japanese community is de-territorialized (Denman, 2014) and operates as individual initiatives through temporary physical meet-ups and digital social media connections. These encounters are generated prominently after motherhood as a vehicle for transmission and maintenance of Japanese to children.

Matsuri (Japanese festivals) and *Bonenkai* (end-of-year party) celebrations also reflect the efforts made by the more established Japanese citizens to strengthen the bonds of the Japanese community in Brisbane.

Mass Media & Internet Network

SBS Television and online programs operate nationwide and offer one hour of RTVE (Spanish News) every morning. SBS Viceland Television and online programs broadcast half an hour of NHK (Japanese News) daily. SBS Radio and online programs offer one hour of Spanish every afternoon and Japanese every evening.

Radio Austral FM, which was established in 1992, exclusively broadcasts in Spanish and has a significant audience in Queensland. Other local Ethnic Radio stations in Spanish include 3ZZZ, which was established in 2017, and Queensland's Radio 4EB, which was established in 1977.

Queensland's 4EB splits the Spanish programs in three different sections: Spanish Cultural Program (two hours on Fridays), Latin American program (75 minutes on Thursdays) and Latin Grooves program (two hours on Saturdays). The Latin American Group began to broadcast independently since 1981. The Japanese program, which was established in 1998, broadcasts five hours on Tuesdays.

The new 3ZZZ radio station broadcasts Spanish daily and Japanese only on Sundays. Programs popular in the 2000s such as *Mundo Musical Hispano* by radio 101FM no longer exist.

Networks are now instrumentalized through digitalized platforms and their respective social networks such as Japanese Club of Brisbane (JCB), Brisbane *Seinendan*. Inc, *Nikkei* Australia, LACA (QLD), *Latinos, chilenos, colombianos, abuelos latinos en* Brisbane, Playgroups, Language Exchanges, etc., which promote connectedness and support well both language communities. The digital weekly version of *El Español* and e-newsletters produced by LACA (QLD) provide local information to Spanish speaking communities and reach a very wide audience.

The ethnographic survey suggests a more vibrant ethno-linguistic vitality of the Spanish and a decline of Japanese, as presence in the mass media and representation in library resources show. This turning point suggests that Queensland is detaching from its local roots and boundaries and is having a more realistic approximation of the international values of both languages in the 21st century.

Descriptions of Three Trilingual Individuals in Two South Brisbane Suburbs

In the present study relevant data from three trilingual adult participants in Japanese, Spanish, and English were chosen in order to determine language preference in Brisbane. Care was taken to follow the methodology employed in a previous study in Tokyo², which consisted

² Approved by the Research Ethics Committee of ICU.

in a semi-structured sociolinguistic questionnaire and a linguistic diary designed to determine how, where, and with whom languages and linguistic patterns were chosen.

The participants were hard to find due to the special linguistic requisites of the case study and were recruited through individual connections. The interview process was split in two or more sessions: a main interview and follow-up interviews. The participants' names were changed in order to preserve their privacy. They had lived for five or more years in the same Brisbane outer suburb at the moment of the interview and had had experience using actively the three languages.

Aya

Sociolinguistic information.

Aya is a 43-year-old ethnically Japanese female with Japanese-Australian identity. Mother of two kids and married to her Japanese husband, she has been living in Queensland for nearly 30 years. Currently she is supporting older G1 Japanese retirees and teaching Japanese to local children two to three days a week. Her mother tongue is Japanese. Her English is an L1 and Spanish is an L2 learned at university and reinforced while studying with Hispanic friends.

Languages' formation, maintenance, intergenerational language transmission (ILT), and attitudes.

Aya was exposed to Japanese until 13 years old. Japanese maintenance in Queensland was challenging but she was raised in Japanese at her home and managed to write letters to her grandparents and friends in Japan in Japanese regularly.

She went to a Japanese supplementary school and, during her teens, she worked as a Japanese voice actress for educational materials in Japanese. She frequently interacted with other Japanese students. Currently, as a mother she is reproducing the ILT strategies that her parents employed. As she prioritizes Japanese at home, she sends her older child to a Japanese supplementary school, and she makes sure that her children participated in Japanese playgroups. Her family visits her parents almost every weekend.

Aya was sent to a special school for immigrant children in Brisbane for six months, to study English, then took ESL classes at a regular state high school. She eventually entered mainstream high school soon after. Then, English became the language of university and in most social interactions. English became her dominant language outside home.

In her high school days Aya made Salvadoran friends and had a positive experience with food, music, and people. Since she wanted to become a teacher, she chose Japanese and Spanish as an L2 or second teaching area at university.

After a year of studying Spanish at university, she became a teacher of Spanish to children. She lived in a share house with Hispanic roommates and eventually was accepted as a pre-service teacher on the Gold Coast and eventually she lost her connection with the Spanish-speaking community.

Aya mixes Spanish in simple conversations with her Japanese husband, who also learned Spanish in his youth. She sent her children to a child-care school where Spanish was taught from age one until age four.

Spanish maintenance is difficult. Once every four months Aya meets up with mixed Japanese/Hispanic family friends, but she mostly speaks Japanese with the Japanese wives and English with their Hispanic husbands. Their G2 children prefer English over Spanish. Twice a week she listens to Latin music during her dance classes and occasionally speaks Spanish with her Spanish colleagues at her school.

A Case Study in Language Preference

Aya's attitudes to her three languages are very positive since they have enabled significant life choices. Japanese maintenance is actively pursued and prioritized, but her poor maintenance of Spanish involves anxiety and language attrition. She feels that Queensland society does not reward trilingual individuals with this specific language combination with proper jobs.

Linguistic diary.

The linguistic diary data were extracted from an average non-working day linguistic behaviour as shown in Table 1. Most of the interactions suggest a one person/one language linguistic pattern where Japanese is dominant in the home and English is used in interactions with non-Japanese friends at restaurants and playgrounds.

Table 1

Aya's Linguistic diary (non-working day pattern: half a week frequency)

Time	Place	Linguistic Event	Language(s)
6:00	Bedroom	Talks to baby daughter	Japanese
6:30	Living room	Breakfast with family	Japanese
7:00	Kitchen	Talks to baby daughter and son	Japanese
7:20	Car	Listen to songs and talks to children	Japanese
9:30-	Playgroup	Speaks to Japanese and non-Japanese mom friends	Japanese/English
11:30	(Once a week)	Baby daughter get exposed to books and songs	Japanese
12:00	Restaurant	Quick lunch with mostly Australian but sometimes Japanese friends	Japanese/English
15:00	Living Room	Children watch children YouTube programs Sings songs together	Spanish English, Japanese, Spanish, French
16:00	Living Room	Teaches words to kids	Japanese, English and Spanish
18:00	Kitchen	Dinner with children. Cooks Papusa sometimes	English, sometimes Japanese
19:00- 20:00	Dance Studio	Dances to Latin Music (twice a week) Speak some words such as <i>sí</i> , <i>vamos</i> , etc.	Spanish and Portuguese sometimes
21:00	Living room	Reads worlds news in the internet after children are asleep	Japanese/English

Japanese is prioritized over any other language in interactions with her children. English is preferred when she is by herself or socializing with other non-Japanese speakers. Lexical items in Spanish such as *Amarillo* and *sorpresa*, mono-sentential items such as *sí* and *vamos* emerge at home with her children or during her dance class with the dance teacher.

A review of her linguistic preferences reveals no indications of inter-sentential code switch, but some intra-sentential lexical items in English appear to be embedded in the Japanese sentences. Lexical items in Spanish are indicative of language attrition.

Alberto

Sociolinguistic information.

48-year-old, ethnically Salvadoran³ male and Japanese national, Alberto arrived in Japan at 24 and moved to Brisbane at 40. Father of two children and married to an ethnically Japanese wife, he works full time in a university environment development project. Spanish is

³ Alberto denies ethnicity neither in its cultural nor its biological (phenotype) sides.

his mother tongue and English and Japanese are his two L2s, but English is used more intensely and in more social domains than Japanese, which currently is used in the home only and is going through lexical attrition.

Languages' formation, maintenance, ILT, and attitudes.

Spanish was used constantly in El Salvador until 24. After that, he used it with his Spanish-speaking friends in Japan and Australia, where it was mixed with English.

His family's good socioeconomic status allowed him to study English in San Salvador from second grade until he was 18 at a private Salvadoran school and at an American school. Movies and children's TV programs in English were an additional source of linguistic input.

English became his lingua franca in Japan with international students, friends, and colleagues. As a postgraduate student he taught English for a naval company, and after graduation he used English in finance-related jobs. When he came to Brisbane to study, he was already proficient in English. Alberto considers English of instrumental and economic value: a priority language in all social domains.

Japanese was difficult to acquire. Initially a *Monbukagakusho* (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) scholarship holder, he studied at a supplementary language school in Osaka for six months. From the beginning he felt cultural and emotional connections between Japanese and his native language, Spanish. He soon started to use it with his Japanese friends. His communication with his polyglot wife was in Japanese from the beginning.

Spanish is used at home through listening to Latin music, reading El Salvador News and watching Internet TV programs. English is used outside the home in oral and written forms at the social and working domains, and Japanese is restricted at the home through oral intra-family communication with his wife and children.

Japanese is prioritized over Spanish for ILT. His children attend one Japanese (and no Spanish) immersion program state school. Shifts to Japanese when intending to use Spanish at home occur frequently. ILT in Spanish with his children is becoming weaker.

His attitude towards all languages is very positive, but he feels partially alienated from mainstream Queensland society for three reasons. First, he perceives that monolingual people view his mix of languages as unusual. Second, they do not have a positive appreciation for LOTE around them. Third, they see non-English languages as a vehicle of exclusion.

Linguistic diary.

A non-working day pattern was also selected since the average working day displays a total dominance of English outside the home, as in Table 2. Linguistic interactions suggest two types of patterns: first, one person/one language pattern for social interactions in English with his neighbours or intra-family interaction in Spanish when communication involves his parents in El Salvador and his children and second, one person/two (or three) languages pattern in the home when interacting with his family.

Table 2

Alberto's Linguistic diary (non-working day pattern: twice a week frequency)

Time	Place	Linguistic Event	Language(s)
8:20	Living Room	Morning Greetings	Spanish/Japanese/English
8:30	Dining Room	Chats with his family	English
	Living Room	Videoconference with Parents in El Salvador with the children	Spanish
	Outside	Greeting to the neighbours	English
	Living Room	Watch ABC on TV	English
	Dining Room	Chat with the kids	English/Japanese/sometimes
			Spanish
12:30	House	Chats with his wife	Japanese/English
		Sends messages to his friends in WhatsApp	English
	Car	Listens to the radio	English
	Dining Room	Chats with his kids	English/Japanese/sometimes
			Spanish
18:00	House	Chats with his wife	Japanese/English

In the home, English emerges as the preferred language in the family. Japanese is used in informal conversations with his wife, and Spanish is the least favoured of the three languages. It is used occasionally when interacting with children.

Alberto's multilingual pattern suggests emblematic intra-sentential code switch driven by the necessity of language lexical precision embedded in English syntax and non-emblematic intra-sentential code switch driven by lexical insufficiency embedded in Japanese syntax. Inter-sentential code switch involving the three languages is frequently used with the children despite this language home policy not being supported by his wife. This finding is very significant to the present study as it verifies that multilingual migrants also code switch more frequently than ethnically Japanese multilinguals in a different linguistic context.

Emily

Sociolinguistic information.

Emily is a 24-year-old Japan-born, ethnically Israeli-Australian citizen who has been living in Queensland for five years. She is a polyglot who speaks Japanese, Hebrew, and English as a native speaker. Spanish is her L2. She is currently finishing university and working part-time there as a writing counsellor for LOTE students. She also works in another language-related customer supporting job, and at the Brisbane Immigration office as a translator.

Languages' formation, maintenance, ILT, and attitudes.

Emily was exposed to three languages from childhood. The languages of the home were Hebrew and English, and the language of education and socializing was Japanese.

At 11 years old, her mother introduced a language literacy tutor once a week and from 12 she attended an international high school in Tokyo. English enabled her access to tertiary education and employment in Australia.

Japanese is her strongest L1, as she went to a *hoikuen* (Japanese Nursery School) and public elementary school in Japan. While in Japan, she spoke Japanese with her brother at home and with her friends at the school. Before moving to Australia, she took two courses of translation and interior design in Japanese. She feels that her literacy skills in Japanese are stuck. However, so far, it has been the most non-dominant valuable language to get her jobs in Australia.

A Case Study in Language Preference

Spanish was first learned at 17 in an intensive language program in Spain. Back in Japan she continued studying Spanish while working. In Japan she used the Internet to read and listen to Spanish. In Queensland, she took Spanish courses at university at 21. Today, she is a Spanish translator at the immigration office in Brisbane.

She speaks English in all social domains. Spanish is used regularly with her friends and international students. Japanese literacy is being maintained mostly through self-study since Japanese international students show a preference to practice English with her.

In terms of ILT, Emily is not yet a mother but she would prefer to have Spanish-speaking partner as Spanish is practical and complementary in her case. As a future mother, she would prioritize Hebrew or Japanese over Spanish or English to pass on to her children.

Emily assesses multilingualism positively, especially in the fields of social networks, cognitive abilities in mental mapping and producing written texts, and anthropological understanding. Japanese is the closest culturally, and it is the language through which she best expresses herself. In comparison to English, Japanese is felt weaker as a high context language in an Australian (low) context. She often feels awkward and rude when using English compared to Japanese as English is felt to be missing contextual nuances. However, she does feel comfortable using Hebrew despite it being more direct than English. Spanish is felt to be a happy, open, expressive, and sometimes dramatic language.

Linguistic diary.

As we can see in Table 3, linguistic interactions suggest two types of patterns. The first one is a one person-one language pattern with the family members and housemates in the home, and the second one is a one person-two languages pattern with her friends and international students at university.

Table 3

Emily's linguistic diary (university day pattern: half a week frequency)

Time	Place	Linguistic Event	Language(s)
6:30	Park near home	Listens to music	Spanish/English
7:30	Home	Talks to herself while showering	Japanese/Hebrew
8:30	Home	Works on the computer	English
9:00	Home	Talks to mother / brother on the phone	English/Japanese
9:30	Bus	Listens to music	Hebrew most of the times
9:45	Library	Talks to her father on the phone	Hebrew
10:00	Library	Reads and prepares assessments	English most of the times
		Have a snack with friends	
12:00	University	Reads and prepares assessments	English sometimes Spanish
13:00	Campus	Chats with Spanish Speakers friends sometimes	English
	University	Takes classes	
17:00	Campus	Chats and helps Japanese students sometimes	Spanish most of the times English Sometimes
	University	Listens to music	English
18:00	Campus	Chat with house mates	English/Japanese
		Listen to music	
19:00			Hebrew/Spanish
20:00	Volunteer Program	Talks to family on the phone	English
		Writes messages in WhatsApp to her family in Israel (on weekdays)	Hebrew/Spanish
	Bus	University work	Hebrew/English/Japanese
	Home	Spanish Homework	Hebrew/English

A Case Study in Language Preference

	Home	Chat with friends (on some weekends)	English most of the times Spanish (English and Japanese to make notes) English/Spanish
	Home		
	Home		
	Home		
	Club/Social Dinner		

The one person/one language pattern can be attributed not only to the family linguistic policy, of which she continues to be an active recipient, but also to the unidirectional mode of the telephone conversations. Communication with her housemates follows the same pattern. In both cases, no frequent intra-sentential or extra-sentential code-switching of any kind emerges here. Outside the home, interactions with her friends and other international students imply linguistic negotiations with other bilingual individuals. In this domain, both intra-sentential code-switching in English and Spanish, and especially inter-sentential code-switching in English and Japanese are emergent.

Conclusion

De-territoriality in Queensland, produced by the centralization of physical meeting points, the arrival of more homogenous and global G1 individualistic citizens and internet-driven communication, is dispelling the sense of ethnic community belonging in both communities. Only a small proportion of Spanish speakers gather at churches today. The Japanese do not attend Japanese-language religious services. The number of community paper publications is decreasing for both languages, and although the percentage of public library resources in Spanish is increasing, they have already stagnated for the Japanese. Community meet-ups during special celebrations continue to be organized but the traditional gatherings around soccer clubs for Spanish-speakers are decreasing. There is a higher representation of mass media programs in Spanish than in Japanese.

The case studies of the three trilingual individuals portray a clear dominance of English in the social and working domains, and a preference for Japanese over Spanish, particularly in the home; this situation is causing a serious attrition of Spanish in Aya and a possible failure of Spanish ILT in Alberto. Out of the three, Emily is the only individual that seems to directly benefit from the economic value of Spanish in Brisbane. This may be an indication of slow societal change affecting agency. Alberto's and Aya's linguistic behaviour may be caused by the following two reasons. The first reason is the pluri-centric and transnational character of Spanish, which indirectly translates into Alberto's failure to acknowledge the economic and instrumental value of the language; he has never used Spanish at work outside his native El Salvador, neither in Tokyo nor in Queensland, and he denies any ethnical identity with his country. The second reason is the mono-centric and ethno-national character of Japanese and the structural validation of the language that Aya perceives in education and the working domains in Queensland.

Language preference in these individuals appears to be a consequence of structural and multidimensional physics of power that is reminiscent of the 1970s. However, it is also determined through the microphysics of power, as monolingual individuals exert censorship on multilingual individuals as multilingualism is usually seen as a sign of impoliteness, aggression or even otherness. Shifting into and using only English is felt as a civil duty in Australia. (Eisenclas & Schalley, 2017).

However, the micro-physics of power has a stronger impact on language preference in Japanese and Spanish. The language patterns vary in time as societal negotiations of language preference are performed with different speakers, multilingual or not. Intra-family interaction, culture, parenthood, and ILT policy at home are decisive parameters that play an important role in negotiating language preference and patterns and determine the ethno-linguistic vitality of non-dominant languages in the home. In this domain, Japanese is also prioritized over Spanish within the endogamous marriage of ethnically Japanese Aya and her husband. Likewise, it is prioritized within the exogamous marriage of non-ethnically Japanese citizen, Salvadoran Alberto, and his ethnically Japanese wife, and it would also be prioritized in Emily's potential future family.

In Aya's case, language preference and patterns are not only connected to ethnicity *per se*, but to cultural paradigms projected through ethnicity through her own parents' ILT policy and to her conviction that Japanese should be prioritized over Spanish as a more socially validated and personally valuable language to pass on to her children. Endogamous marriage is another important parameter that favours the emergence of Japanese and the attrition of Spanish, her L2, in the home.

Alberto's preference for English in all the domains and his language patterns, often mixing codes intra and inter-sententially in his ILT, respond to the natural language attrition of a subtractive multilingual individual. However, they also respond to the transcendence of a cultural paradigm constructed throughout his personal and labour experiences. He has assumed that Spanish does not have an instrumental and economic value, which is essential to him as the main provider for his family. He is not reproducing his childhood ILT policy due to his exogamous marriage's prioritization of Japanese. Spanish emblematic value emerges only when Alberto interacts with his parents. Social inequality has taught Alberto to prioritize English and Japanese over Spanish, and this is a common language preference within these sorts of trilingual migrants, both in Tokyo and in Brisbane.

Reproduction of ILT can also be seen in Emily, but in her case, she would shift English for her cultural languages: Japanese (or Hebrew). Japanese ILT policy is correlated with a cultural parameter alone. Her negotiated code-mixing behaviour outside the home resembles Alberto's ILT policy. This confirms the observation that ethnically non-Japanese multilingual individuals switch intra- and inter-sententially more often than ethnically Japanese multilingual individuals.

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