| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Text and Context in Multimedia Translation

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| ABSTRACT

Multimedia translation refers to the process of translating multimedia content, such as videos, audio, and images, from one language to another. This type of translation is becoming increasingly important as more and more content is being produced and distributed globally. Multimedia translation is a complex field that requires in-depth technical and linguistic expertise and a thorough knowledge of the culture and communication norms of the target language. Plurisemiotic and micro-textual analyses of translations can help to develop an effective translation grid. The aim of this article would be, on one side, to restore certain implicit and explicit parameters of a silent source text so that a multimedia translation faithfully communicates the original and multidimensional meaning of a source text. On the other side, this article will try to demonstrate the usefulness of applying some concepts from a branch of socio-semiotics concerned with the production of multimodal texts that can be easily incorporated into existing methods in translation studies. As technology continues to evolve, we can expect multimedia translation to become even more sophisticated and effective. We will try to show in this article that the real context occupies a large place in which the work of translating audiovisual programs is carried out while presenting the various challenges of audiovisual translation, which is part of an extremely dynamic field that combines theory and practical. The aim of this article is to attempt to provide answers to these questions due to the increasing complexity of textual concepts and text production today. Translation and text production sometimes become almost indistinguishable, which will increase the emphasis on text analysis and different forms of intertextuality rather than on translation in the strictest sense.

| KEYWORDS

Multimedia translation; plurisemiotic; microtexual, implicit ;explicit; multimodal

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

1. Introduction

In the twenty-first century, the media is omnipresent: to inform, probably sometimes to misinform, sell, entertain, and educate. In addition, inferred sound properties are provided that accompany any text, including voice quality, dynamics, tempo, rhythm, and inflection. Other inferred visual properties include all the images that a text evokes in a reader's mind. Such sound and visual properties are called "paralinguistic" in functionalist theories of translation. Implicit and explicit contextual properties include, for example, the rhetorical structure of a text, the physical environment, the occasion of its performance, and the body language of one or more performers[1] (Alexieva, 1997).

In functionalist theories of translation, such properties are called "extralinguistic". These three parameters (linguistic, paralinguistic, extralinguistic) are not arbitrary but are required by the new technologies themselves, which play on electronic texts containing these three elements in the form of words, sounds, and images[2]. The main question of multimedia translation has two parts: how do the linguistic, paralinguistic, and extralinguistic parameters of a text appear, function, interact and contribute to the total

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[1] Alexieva, B. (1997). *The polysemic text in multimedia communication, its translation and interpretation*.   Seminar in Misano Adriatico on "Multimedia Translation".

[2] Tannuri, B., (2018). *Handbook of Translation Studies* - Vol 1; ISBN: 9789027203311

meaning of a text? How is the meaning of these settings transferred or translated into a multimedia environment? Our task would be to restore certain implicit and explicit parameters of a silent source text so that the multimedia translation faithfully communicates the original and multi-dimensional meaning of the source text. Tools and methods from a wide range of scientific disciplines shall be deployed to analyze and translate these linguistic, paralinguistic, and extra-linguistic parameters. Some concepts and methods of the "norm" in descriptive translation studies will need to be adapted but not necessarily discarded. A trend is that translation and text production sometimes become almost indistinguishable, which will increase the emphasis on text analysis and on different forms of intertextuality rather than on translation in the strictest sense. To replace the binary source text, (Cattrysse[3], 2001) suggested a star-shaped constellation in which a target text is considered derived from various source texts of varying influence. Should we develop a new multimedia translation methodology? Is multimedia translation a specialized object of study? Can we speak of a uniform field of multimedia translation studies? It is a matter of providing answers to these questions, and due to the increasing complexity of textual concepts and text production today, we believe that multimodal and multimedia translation studies should first focus on descriptive approaches.

2. Concepts and terminology

There are many definitions of multimedia (MM), just as there are many types of multimedia projects: e-books, e-magazines, multimedia databases, interactive education, interactive games, interactive music, interactive art and performance, interactive sales and marketing, presentations and communications, desktop and video conferencing, productivity and creative tools, etc. Multimedia has become a buzzword used in so many senses and contexts to such an extent that its meaning has begun to erode. Multimedia can be defined broadly as "the processing and presentation of information in two or more media simultaneously[4]" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020). In a narrower and progressively more usual sense, however, multimedia is referred to when we talk about the processing and presentation of texts, graphics, and images, if not animations and animated videos. Another important parameter that is usually required is interactivity.

Translation studies have evolved from linguistic and literary studies, audiovisual (AV) and so-called media translation, and now multimedia translation (MM). MM translation, like media translation, is often understood as the (verbal) translation of the linguistic part of MM messages. This approach is problematic because it isolates the linguistic part from the rest of the MM message[5]. (Apple Comuter, 1994) Questions concerning the relationship between the language part and the rest of the MM message are not often raised. If one wants to analyze how the translation of the linguistic elements of an MM message affects its overall MM effect, one must integrate the analysis of the verbal part into global MM communication.

Multimedia has become something of a catch-all expression for a wide range of new communication technologies. On the one hand, it is used to refer to an array of high-tech features of our time, such as interactive television, reality, digital video discs, and the like. On the other hand, it is used for audiovisual translation for cinema or television, i.e. subtitling, dubbing, voice-over, etc. The first and main question we will try to answer is: *what are the semiotic and pragmatic specificities of multimedia translation?* To analyze the usefulness of this concept, we will rely in our research on a field examination, followed by a stop on the role of language in multimedia translation while focusing attention on the analysis of source and target text in this process. We will then focus on the contextualization of multimedia translation that will focus on obtaining multimodal texts to finally lead to an interdisciplinary approach that would embrace many fields of study in this process.

3. A multifaceted field of work

First, we would like to point out that in multimedia translation, we are not dealing with intersemiotic translation, i.e. translation from one semiotic system to another, but rather with the translation of texts and intertextuality[6] (Munday, 2012). However, these texts may involve the use of signs from different semiotic systems, which is the reason why some of the concepts used by Kress and Van Leeuwen[7] prove to be very useful. The three central concepts are: sign, fashion, and medium[8] Bosseaux, 2015). Signs are defined as "reasoned conjunctions of signifiers (forms) and signified (meanings)[9]". In other words, signs are never arbitrary: sign makers always use the form they find appropriate to the meaning they wish to express (Kress & Leeuwen 1996: 7). Such signs can therefore be made of different materials, or different media can communicate fashions and them. (The latter being the mode of distribution chosen by a sign manufacturer. Kress gives the following example: "If I write a letter to someone, my letter will be the medium of communication, my writing, the graphic material, its mode"[10] (Kress l997: 6-7).

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[3] Cattrysse, P. (2001). *Multimedia & Translation*. Bern: Peter Lang.
[4] Cambridge Dictionary (2020). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/illusion
[5] See *Multimedia Demystified* (1994) by Apple Computer, Inc. (ed. Random House, New York)
[6] Munday, J. (2012) *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*, 3rd edition, Abingdon: Routledge.
[7] Kress, G. & Leeweun, V. (1996). *Read the images. The grammar of visual design*. London: Routledge.
[8] Bosseaux, C. (2015). *Dubbing, Film and Performance*: Uncanny Encounters, Bern: Peter Lang
[9] Ibid
[10] Ibid

For the sake of transferring these concepts into a TV movie, for example, the medium would, in this case, be television, and it would broadcast a text using various auditory and visual modes to construct nonverbal messages, verbal visuals, and non-verbal visuals. Indeed, as Kress[11],1997) points out that under the influence of laptop publishing and the use of computers in general, layout acquires greater importance in writing. It influences the form, including the sentence structure of the written text. To return to the combined concept of multimedia translation, which provides a way out of aimless discussions that would inevitably be the result of any attempt to formulate an overall definition of what new multimedia is. A branch of translation studies should emerge, especially since new forms of communication continue to appear.

To federate research of common interest and to encourage the essential (interdisciplinary) interaction, it would be important to define a field of work capable of adapting to the change in which particular attention will be paid to multimodal functioning and to the transformations that this could undergo in the transfer from a source context to a target context. By using the concept of multimodal texts, a link is created with translation studies that can be maintained, especially since the inclusion of other purely verbal or written texts is made possible. In other words, useful distinctions can be incorporated, such as that between oral and written verbal, which distinction has undergone major and crucial changes in recent times and in many forms of audiovisual translation[12]. Moreover, specific research projects should delimit more specific fields of work defining the multimodal texts with which they deal, as well as the medium(s) of their dissemination and the possible influence exerted by these on the modes used in the text[13] (Gerzymisch-Arbogast & S. Nauert. (2005). This would make it possible to set up fields of work covering the study of multimodal texts and their translations within the same medium (with or without international variants); also the study of multimodal texts (translated) disseminated by various media or the study of texts translated from one means of dissemination to another.

Let us return once again to one of the bifurcations of our problematic but somewhat reformulated: "What are the semiotic and pragmatic specificities of multimodal and multimedia translation?" We will examine the role of language in this type of text production since we have proposed to include only multimodal texts with a verbal component in our field of work. This topic will be associated with what appears to be the "semiotic and pragmatic specificities" of multimodal and multimedia translation.

4. The role of language
Questions often heard about translation in a multimedia context such as: "What is the role of language in these source and target texts?", "Has the role of language changed?" Thus formulated, these questions remain unanswered. First, the role of language will be determined by the intended use of the text. Some research has shown that this particular mode dominates the others in some texts in which the balance achieved will be determined by the purpose and experience of the sign maker from the media that the text is to be used. Indeed, whether it is a question of creating or translating multimodal texts, it is often extremely difficult to distinguish between the influence of semiotic and pragmatic differences in the use of these modes.

We will take the example of the film, which is generally considered a visual medium to which studies have been devoted to establishing this medium as an art benefiting from its right. To do this, film scholars and teachers have often consciously focused on what they call the filmic aspect of the art form and neglected its links to literature. Film adaptation studies are often conducted by researchers in the field of literary studies whenever film specialists devote attention to aspects less specific to cinema than to their object of study. There has often been talk of incorporating them or subjecting them to the "real filmic[14]"(Evans, 2018). In mainstream narrative cinema, some characteristics are appropriate as filmic. A tight dramatic structure and delineated characters are not filmic in the sense that they are semiotically linked to the visual medium: they find their sources in literature and/or theatre and are determined by a cinematographic tradition and not by the film as a medium[15] (Cattrysse, 1992). Dialogue in movies is another example. Most, if not all, mainstream screenwriters[16] (Cornu, 1983) prescribe that the film's dialogue be concise; that is, it consists of short sentences and exchanges that perform several functions: they must contribute to the evolution of the narrative, characterize the characters, and make them more realistic, in addition to providing commentary on the action. At the same time, they must fit into the dramatic context and never be too wordy or carry obvious messages from the filmmaker to the viewer. Some will admit that while some features are dominant, it will largely depend on the genre. The verbal mode should be subordinated to

[11] Ibid

[12] Chiaro, D. (2009). *Issues in Audiovisual Translation*, in J. Munday (ed.), The Routledge Companion to Translation Studies, London: Routledge, 141-165.

[13] Gerzymisch, A., & S. Nauert. (2005). Proceedings of the Marie Curie Euroconferences MuTra 'Challenges of Multidimensional Translation' Saarbrücken 2-6 May 2005. Available online: http://www.euroconferences.info/proceedings/2005_Proceedings/2005_Gottlieb_Henrik.pdf [last access 27 August 2015].

[14] Evans, J. (2018) *Film remakes as a form of translation*. In: Pérez-González, L. (ed.) Routledge Handbook of Audiovisual Translation. Series: Routledge handbooks in translation and interpreting studies. Routledge: Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY, pp. 160-174. ISBN 9781138859524 (doi: 10.4324/9781315717166-11)

[15] Cattrysse, P. (1992). *Pour une théorie de l'adaptation filmique. American film noir*. Bern: Peter Lang.

[16] Cornu, J-F. (1983). *Translation and cinema. Notes on translating film dialogue*. Master's thesis, University of Nantes.

the visual mode in the film[17]. As a result, the influence and predominance of the verbal mode in films varies considerably. Today, more films, even explicitly traditional American films, are less afraid to renounce the absolute domination of image over the word than traditional screenwriting manuals promoted as filmic. They incorporated some features of another model, the so-called "arthouse cinema[18]" (Chion, 1988), and began to modernize the importance of (sometimes long) dialogue.

If the above holds for screenplays and films as texts, there is no reason why it should not do so for other types of multimodal texts created for today's multimedia technology. Some preliminary conclusions can therefore be drawn.

5. Multimedia translation of a text: an overview
The main question of multimedia translation has two parts: how do the linguistic, paralinguistic, and extralinguistic parameters of a text appear? How do they work, interact and contribute to the overall meaning of a text? How is the meaning of these parameters transferred or translated in a multimedia environment?

To answer the first part of the question, a translator must appeal to two axioms; that of translation theory and that of music and aesthetic theory: "Meaning exists only because there is contrast[19]". (Nida, 1964: 15) And: "Contrast can only be determined and appreciated from macro to micro, at all to the parts[20]." (LaRue, 1970: 5). To answer the second part of the main question, a translator is led to be grounded in some form of translation theory – be it formal equivalence, functional equivalence, or semiotics – and must understand how translation theory interacts with multimedia technologies, techniques, and context.

5.1 Analysis of source text
Source text analysis is the most traditional part of the multimedia process. However, three parameters must be taken into account; note that this work can only be done by specialists who are experts in each parameter. For the linguistic parameter, exegetes are needed to make literary, formal, and grammatical criticism. Music theorists and musicologists familiar with ancient languages are needed to examine the implicit paralinguistic parameters of the original text and to collect and analyze explicit parameters of the text throughout history, if any. Since the formative environment of several texts was public and recital, the extralinguistic parameter must be investigated by socio-rhetorical scholars who can trace social, cultural, artistic, literary, and liturgical events[21]. (Robbins, 1984: 13)

5.2 Analysis of the target text
In the multimedia process, the analysis of the target text goes beyond the "science of translation[22]". (Nida 1964). It draws on many non-translational disciplines, including orality, literariness, media, audience research, and game theory[23] (Hodgson & Soukup 1997: 37-131; Gronbeck, Farrell, Soukup 1991). Again, the reasons for this are rooted in electronic texts and in the technology that influences the perception and interrelationship of the three parameters mentioned above. An example might be useful at this point. Part of the extralinguistic parameter in the silent text is the flow of images implied by words or stimulated by a performer in his performative environment. Implicit images are in the imagination. Stimulated images, while real, are not necessarily related to words and can form their context. In both cases, implicit and explicit, the images are secondary to the ideal and/or affective content of the language parameter. In an e-text, for example, written words are usually absorbed into a soundscape, while implicit or explicit images come to life on a screen in a landscape of images. Since the eye takes precedence over the ear – Benjamin Franklin invented bifocals to hear better – attention passes from word to image.

This reality gives new meaning to the old proverb: "A picture is worth a thousand words." In the multimedia context, this means that the visual is ahead of the auditory. This reality is economically true for multimedia manufacturers who invest more money in their visual systems than in their hearing systems. This change has profound implications. For the translator, it means being able to successfully bridge the gap between the sacred narrative world and the secular narrative world so that the visual component is faithfully connected to the verbal source. On the producer's side, it is discovering a common aesthetic rhythm interconnecting the flow of narrative images with the flow of verbal and musical sounds so that the sounds, words, and images of a video, for example, can be experienced as a unified performative event. For the audience, this means being literate enough in words, sounds, and images to be able to play a video and understand the meaning of its versatile content.

From the previous description of the source-target analysis, it can be deduced that this process is complex. A traditional model oriented towards the impression of an individual translator or even a small group of translators doing this type of work is obsolete.

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[17] Smith, I.R. and C. Verevis. (2017), *Transnational Film Remakes*, Edinburgh: (eds) Edinburgh University Press.
[18] Chion, M. (1988). *The Canvas with Holes*. *La Parole au Cinéma*. Paris: Editions de l'Etoile.
[19] Nida, Eugene A. (1964). *Toward a Science of Translating*. Leiden: Brill.
[20] Larue, J. (1970). *Guidelines for Style Analysis*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
[21] Robbins, V-K. (1984). *Jesus the teacher. A socio-rhetorical interpretation of Mark*. Philadelphia: Fortress.
[22] Nida, Ibid
[23] Hodgson, R & Soukup P-A. (1997). *From One Medium to Another*. *Basic Issues for Communicating the Bible in New Media*. (eds). Kansas City: Sheed & Ward and American Bible Society.

In a multimedia environment, translation can only be done with the help of many researchers and experts. Over the years, virtual "electronic communities" of academics and experts have been created. Multimedia tools that were originally means of producing and transmitting multimedia texts have become important tools for research and communication.

6. Contextualizing a multimedia translation
The word "complex" amply describes the multimedia translation process so far. The new multimedia text needs context. Nevertheless, placing multimedia texts on the Web is not without its problems since this powerful medium is primarily oriented towards information and commerce with music, art, prescribed movements, and other sacred texts in the context of the target audience.

Vocabulary can be learned in context, and idioms can be better understood using the additional informative layers that accompany images and sound. The prosodic characteristics of spoken languages, such as intonation and inflection, can be taken into account when viewing and listening to dialogue exchanges. The inferential sense, on the other hand, can be exploited using paralinguistic elements that accompany facial expression, mime, kinesis, quality, and tone of voice. Indeed, inference and preview can also be formed by working on narrative levels. From there, summarizing, rephrasing, and paraphrasing can be practiced to produce effective subtitles. Thus, the clarity of the written text can be sought when the readability of subtitles, for example, is consciously addressed. Therefore, exchanges do not only take place in a vacuum but always take place in a given context which, in the case of audiovisual translation, is a concrete situation in time, captured and frozen by the camera[24] (Cornu, 2014). The fact that target viewers have the same access to the program's visuals as source viewers, and in the case of subtitling and voice-over even to the same soundtrack, has broad implications for how translation can be done.

Studying only the linguistic dimension of this process will not yield satisfactory results. However, from a linguistic point of view, the obvious first step is the translation of programs into different national languages if the content is to be intelligible to the target audience. But the semiotic complexity of audiovisual productions will determine the nature of the strategies implemented and the solutions found. Translating only the linguistic component without taking into account the value of the other semiotic dimensions of the film would certainly be a recipe for disaster. Thus, culture, cultural identity, and pragmatic functioning in their more or less explicitly localized forms ooze from all semiotic and pragmatic systems of multimedia content. In particular, the translation of humor, dialect, compliments, swear words or taboo language must be considered in this context not only for their very localized meaning, both in time and space, but also to be always anchored in the source audiovisual text with a pragmatic and semiotic meaning that goes far beyond the purely linguistic dimension[25] (Nornes, 2007). In short, as is the case in other areas of translation, translators must pay particular attention to language first. However, to ensure a successful triangular marriage between words and acoustic and kinetic information, the latter must undertake a very precise analysis that examines the audiovisual situation, the relationships established between the images, the interaction of the characters, and the individual verbal strategies. In brief, an awareness of the semiotic complexity of audiovisual production would be required.

6.1 Placing a multimedia translation on the web
Even though ritual space and the web use many of the same elements, the texts, images, sounds, and movements of the former cannot be easily translated into the latter. The ritual space is centered on human performance within the limits of "real" space and time. While cyberspace, in other words, the universe of the Web, is centered around "virtual" space and time, that is, "in essence or indeed, but not in fact". What is needed are auditory and visual analogs for the various elements of cults, of true rituals that dynamically translate their function and meaning for the virtual and electronic environment. All of these contain paralinguistic and/or extralinguistic codes that can be analyzed and translated to establish a ritual context in cyberspace that mirrors traditional ritual worship. This, in turn, can provide an environment conducive to a rich multimedia presentation. Multimedia translation can be particularly challenging because it involves translating several different elements simultaneously. For example, in subtitling, the translator must translate the dialogue spoken in the video, but he also needs to consider things like the timing of the subtitles, the tone and style of the dialogue, and any on-screen text that may need to be translated.

7. Multimodal texts
While the current explosion of communications may be tempting, research on the study of current diachronic evolutions and trends and contrastive studies will reveal that in the use of different modes within a text in which what is seen as semiotic and what is seen as pragmatic changes over time. To return to the role of language in today's multimodal textual production, The form it takes is not only semiotic but also pragmatically determined and influenced by various models[26] (Gambier, 2000). Consequently, the prominence or enslavement of its role (or that of one of the models) cannot be presupposed. This fact brings us back to translation, film adaptation, and probably to different degrees in other forms of multimodal translation. There is not only a source

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[24] Cornu, J.-F. (2014) *Le doublage et le sous-titrage: Histoire et esthétique*, Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.
[25] Nornes, A.M. (2007) *Cinema Babel: Translating Global Cinema*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
[26] Gambier, Y. (2000). *Translation: an object with variable geometry*? In S. Petrilli (ed.) 57–68.

text and a target text, but rather, other source texts where the models impose themselves or are consciously imposed by the signmaker contributing to the final form of the target text and all its modes.

If we look at film subtitling rather than film adaptation, this last point may seem less clear. The source text is now a finished movie; the target text is "the same" movie with added subtitles. Yet, what determines the shape of subtitles? Not only the verbal mode of the source text nor simply the technicalities of space and time imposed on the translator. Subtitles also apply the concept of the television channel of the language of subtitles related to their conception of the intended viewer. In addition, if the film is a documentary, it is usually adapted to the documentary concept of the channel that will broadcast the translated version. This may involve cutting scenes, rewriting and speaking in tailored commentary (based on different standards of suitability about acceptability), and subtitling certain passages (e.g. interviews, interviews). All these interventions will determine the role of the verbal mode in the target text both quantitatively and qualitatively. The dominance of one model over another will be determined by the overall objective of the project leader. However, not all of them can be reduced to pragmatics. Some parts of a message will be – we assume – more effectively carried by images, others by words, and the limit of division should not be taken for granted.

8. An interdisciplinary approach

When it comes to multimedia translation, several challenges need to be overcome. For example, maintaining the integrity of the original content while ensuring cultural and linguistic appropriateness requires a delicate balancing act. Additionally, the translation process may involve multiple steps and professionals, such as translators, audio and video editors, and subtitlers, which can make the process more complex[27] (Gambier, 1992). As technology continues to evolve, we can expect multimedia translation to become even more sophisticated and effective. We believe, on the one hand, that the nature of multimodal or even multimedia texts does not need to force translation specialists to abandon their reliable methods. On the other hand, the study of such texts and translations requires interdisciplinary approaches in which the know-how of the other discipline is used. We have demonstrated the usefulness of applying some concepts from a branch of socio-semiotics concerned with the production of multimodal texts that can be easily incorporated into existing methods in translation studies. In addition, joint projects with specialists from different fields allowing all participants to draw on their methodology, are required. In addition, we reviewed the standards and models underlying the production and translation of texts concerning captioning more specifically.

9. Conclusion

We have shown through this study that it is important to restore the implicit and explicit parameters of a silent source text so that a multimedia translation faithfully communicates the original and multidimensional meaning of a source text. Moreover, this article contributes to demonstrating the usefulness of applying some concepts from a branch of socio-semiotics concerned with the production of multimodal texts that can be easily incorporated into existing methods in translation studies. Therefore, the interdisciplinary approach required should therefore be based not only on knowledge acquired from various branches of linguistics but also from that of the media and sociology studies. Indeed, translation in a multimedia context poses three problems in audiovisual linguistic transfer, namely the relationship between images, sounds, and words, the relationship between foreign language(s) and target language, and finally, the relationship between code oral and written code, requiring re-examination of the standard of writing in situations where messages are ephemeral; this type of translation is selective with adaptation, compensation, reformulation. It is also a practice in full development since technologies allow the emergence of new modes of translation, but working conditions are affected by this constant evolution. The specialty of multimedia translation, by drawing from several fields within the framework of interdisciplinarity, is led to a call on linguistic engineering, particularly in the management of the corpus, resources, and multilingual tools, by training technicians or specialist researchers in the language industry. In addition, multimedia translation opens doors to para-translation professions such as project managers, terminologists, and multilingual communication-writing specialists.

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