

**THE "ANGLICIZATION" OF THE ROMANIAN LANGUAGE IN THE  
GLOBALIZATION ERA. A THREAT TO THE IDENTITY OF THE  
LANGUAGE OR A NORMAL PHENOMENON IN ITS EVOLUTION? /  
L'ANGLICISATION DE LA LANGUE ROUMAINE A L'ÈRE DE LA  
GLOBALISATION. UNE MÉNACE À L'IDENTITÉ DE LA LANGUE  
OU UN PHÉNOMÈNE NORMAL EN ÉVOLUTION ? /  
ANGLICIZAREA LIMBII ROMANE ÎN ERA GLOBALIZĂRII. O  
AMENINȚARE LA ADRESA IDENTITĂȚII LIMBII SAU UN  
FENOMEN NORMAL ÎN EVOLUȚIA SA ?<sup>1</sup>**

*Abstract: The Romanian language today faces a real offensive of the English language. There are fears that this intense process of influence endangers the identity of the Romanian language and its speakers' linguistic consciousness. The complex influence exerted by English on Romanian is therefore seen as a threat. But English is the language of globalization, ICT, science and research, knowledge, international organizations and relations. The communication skills in English of the Romanian native speakers are a must in the Knowledge Society and the Age of Globalization. It is natural that English influence Romanian, through information and communication. The English language loans enrich Romanian and increase its capacity of covering the reality, continuously changing, its force to name and express aspects of the surrounding world. The contact with English, which places Romanian at the forefront of communication, by increasing its capacity to express a fast progressing civilization, also favours a process of acculturation, necessary in the world of the unity in diversity and of the New Humanism. "Anglicization" should not be seen in a negative sense, but as a positive phenomenon in the dialectic becoming of the language, a continuous process that ensures the adaptation, the actuality, the expressive force and vitality of Romanian.*

*Key words: Romanian, English, anglicization, anglicisms, globalization, communication, language skills, language development*

**1. The Romanian language, under the "siege" of the English language**

Romanian language is currently experiencing a phenomenon of intense influence from English language. The influence of English on Romanian is not new. Historically, it significantly manifested in the interwar period, in an era of economic and cultural development of Romania and cosmopolitan openness. It was suspended after the Second World War, with the establishment of communism, and virtually canceled in the toughest years of the beginning of the new regime of the ideological dogmatism, when ideology would not show but one lighthouse: the Soviet Union, the Russian language, the Soviet culture. After the ideological thaw, leaving the political and ideological dogmatism, the communist regime in Romania initiates the partial opening of the country to the Western culture and civilization. The new guidance has a polemical sense, of detachment from the Soviet model and affirmation of a national direction, based on independence and sovereignty, concepts dear to

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<sup>1</sup> Sorin Ivan, Titu Maiorescu University, Bucharest, The Education Tribune Director, Romania, sorivan@gmail.com.

the Romanian nationalist communism. In the new context, English language heavily enters the Romanian space, by its studying in schools, in the secondary and higher education, through movies and music. After the fall of communism in Romania, the ideological and cultural barriers fall as well, and the country is open to Europe and to the USA, as most ex-communist countries. In the new political, social, economic and cultural conditions, the English language finds a fertile ground in the Romanian space and in the Romanian language. There is, in this context, a psychological explanation too: after five decades of oppression and totalitarianism, after a long period of restraint and seclusion, with closed borders, a historic frustration manifests itself by the people's desire of getting closer to West, to the free world. And the language of liberty, under the pressure of the American model and of the fascination exerted by the USA, is English. In the last two decades, English has been ever more present in the Romanian space and its influence on the Romanian language has been continuously growing.

Currently, the phenomenon of English influencing Romanian reaches unprecedented levels. Judging by its magnitude and impact of English on Romanian in vocabulary, we can speak of a process of "anglicization" of Romanian. Metaphorically, of course, but not only. It is an objective fact, indisputable, which can be seen in the fundamental areas of the social, professional, public and private existence. And its effects must not be neglected.

## **2. The "Imperialism" of English in the globalized world**

Nowadays, English is spoken all over the globe, the communication language of the planet that transcends the linguistic diversity and makes communication possible at the global level. This reality has been attained through a process of territorial extension of the language, with the economic, political, military, cultural, scientific, technological expansion of the English and American civilization. The Hollywood movies, music, radio, satellite television have contributed, in the last half century, to the popularization of English internationally. The advancement of science, technology, scientific research in all fields, which had made the U.S. and UK leading countries worldwide in the progress of humankind, had also a major role in the planetary dissemination of English. In the last two decades, computer technology and the Internet have sustained the global expansion of English. Today, in every part of the planet, in Europe or in Africa, in Tibet or in the Andes, in China or in the Tierra del Fuego, people of different nationalities and languages understand each other in English, spoken from elementary to advanced levels of proficiency. We can talk, in these circumstances, of the "imperialism" of English at planetary level.

An extremely important factor favouring the expansion of English in the entire planet is the process of globalization. Looked in its huge complexity, in key areas such as economic, financial, commercial, social, political, cultural, the globalization process is a way of cooperation and integration of nations, economic and political systems, cultures and civilizations in a network of planetary collaboration. In the context of this huge diversity, we need a common communication instrument. Given its geographic extent and prestige – based on the English and American civilizations it expresses –, English has become, naturally, the language of globalization. The planetary linguistic diversity, a huge Tower of Babel of humanity, has been brought to a linguistic common denominator by the adoption of English as a communication instrument. It is an adoption both formal, at the level of states,

international institutions and organizations, and informal, in the inter-institutional and interpersonal communication.

The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a universal support for globalization. The Internet, perhaps the greatest invention in the last half century, revolutionary for the human existence, is the global means of information and communication that puts all the people in a common network. Given that the Internet language is predominantly English, this language takes advantage of a means of dissemination on the entire globe scale. In these circumstances, the process of globalization takes place at the virtual level too, from two perspectives: as a support of the processes related to the politic, economic, institutional globalization, and, at the same time, as a way of communication and information, of networking and socializing among individuals, organizations, institutions outside the formal and institutional process. Through ICT, globalization occurs as a natural, inevitable process, when technology helps humanity to cancel geographical distances, overcome borders, transcend the diversity of all kinds, linguistic, cultural, social, economic, political, etc. Globalization is also made therefore with the help of internet tools like Google, Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail, Facebook, Twitter, etc. Globalization, *googlization*, *internetization*, here is an association which shows the direction of evolution of this global process, with the support of computer technology. Again, the language of this process, of ICT, Internet and Google is English.

In this context of high complexity, which includes the global expansion of the models made by the British and American civilizations, the rapid development of information and communication technology, globalization, all of them having English as an expression and communication vector, humanity faces, at linguistic, social and cultural levels, an *Anglophone and Anglophile explosion*. The English language influence is not exercised, of course, only on the Romanian language. In the context of globalization, this influence is global. It manifests on most of the languages spoken in the states that are an active part of this process, and takes place in various degrees of extension and intensity according to each language, culture, mentality and civilization. Some languages, strongly rooted in the cultures, civilizations and mentalities they express, are more resistant, more reluctant to the external influences, less permeable to the offensive of English. One example is French, the language of a great culture and civilization, which openly manifests the pride of what it represents. Others, in exchange, are more open, hungry for innovation, participation in the international communication flow. At the same time, the influence of the English language does not occur to the same extent in a conservative country, faithful to a set of traditional values at spiritual, cultural, social, political levels, and in one of the European Union, integrated into a geopolitical and economic system, in a space of collaboration and communication, of the unity in diversity. Romania is part of it and shares the values of the New European Humanism, in which multilingualism and multiculturalism are ways of integration in the European diversity. The English language has a privileged status in the European Union, as the language of communication in the context of a large linguistic diversity. In these circumstances, and in those specified above, in a historical perspective, the influence of English on the Romanian language is a complex one, acting on linguistic, cultural, social, economic, etc. coordinates.

### 3. English words in the Romanian vocabulary

The influence of English on Romanian manifests itself in the vocabulary area. In the recent decades, but especially today, a large number of English terms has come into the Romanian language, covering fundamental areas of existence and activity. English terms have entered and enter in most of the areas: computer science, ICT, administrative, economic, social, cultural, media, scientific, medical, technical, educational fields, everyday activities, in public and private life, etc. Important to note is that the process of English influencing the Romanian language is in full progression.

It should be noted, as an overall value observation, that most of the terms are adopted and used in their original form. Ilinca & Tomescu (2013:73) remark: « En général les emprunts lexicaux venus de l'anglais ces dernières décennies ne sont pas adaptés au roumain du point de vue lexico-phonétique et graphique. Ce phénomène s'explique par le fait que l'anglais est devenu la langue la plus utilisée dans les milieux professionnels roumains et par le fait que la technique et la science progressent très rapidement, la langue ayant besoin de plus de temps pour assimiler et adapter les termes renvoyant à des nouvelles réalités »<sup>1</sup>. Yet, language continually innovates at morphological level, developing, for example, out of the English verbs, new, "Romanian" verbs, often with an exotic lexical and semantic air. In this case, we can say that English verbs are "Romanized". This phenomenon happens with some of the nouns as well. Currently, there is a significant number of anglicisms in Romanian language, therefore an inventory of them is difficult to make, especially that we talk of an ongoing process. To shape a meaningful picture of the phenomenon, we list some of the terms mostly used in different areas.

In **computer science**, Romanian language abounds in English terms, given that computer language is English. Here are a few of them, among the most used, in random order: *computer, PC, laptop, notebook, desktop, server, internet, wireless, site, online, offline, email, facebook, blog, net, messenger, skype, twitter, chat, mouse, software, hardware, stick, folder, attachment, print, power point, slide, user, shortcut, receiver, provider, scanner, ebook, hacker, copy-paste, switch, update, upgrade*. Of English verbs like: *to share, to download, to cancel, to set, to form, to scan, to shift, to upgrade, to update*, new verbs were formed in Romanian, through an innovative process of adapting them to the Romanian system of conjugation: *a șerui, a downlada, a cancela, a seta, a formata, a scana, a șiftui, a upgrada, a updata*. The number of the terms is, of course, much higher.

The **administrative area** is also populated by countless anglicisms, imposed by the adoption of institutional concepts, models and approaches enshrined by the Anglo-Saxon and American civilization internationally: *manager, management, marketing, leader, leadership, board, meeting, summit, briefing, stakeholder, survey, benchmarking, developer, facilitator, brainstorming, think tank, team work, team building, workshop*, etc. Here too, some English

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<sup>1</sup> "Generally, the English lexical borrowings which have entered the Romanian lexicon during the last decades are not adapted from lexical, phonetical and graphical point of view. This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that English has become the most used language in professional areas and by the fact that technique and science progress very rapidly, language needing more time to assimilate and to adapt the terms referring to new realities."

verbs - *to optimize, to prioritize, to manage* - have been Romanized: *a optimiza, a prioritiza, a manageria* etc. The list is, again, much longer.

The **business area**, in the same institutional and linguistic logic, has an emphasized Anglo-American colouring through the words adopted in Romanian: *business, businessman, trader, dealer, broker, developer, exchange, know-how, income, outcome, discount, cash, cash flow, leasing, card, brand, branding, rebranding, ratecard, offshore, market, retail, lobby*, etc.

Other areas, such as **media** or **tourism**, are also infused by anglicisms: *mass-media, multimedia, talk show, live, breaking news, thriller, rating, story, cover, lead, script, layout, off the record, spot, copyright*, or *booking, charter, check in, check out, low cost, last minute, voucher* (come from French, but with English pronunciation) etc. The **sports area** is dominated by numerous English terms, by the origin of many sports.

Beyond the specific areas, the most extensive and comprehensive range of manifestation of the influence of English on Romanian is the **daily life**, at the level of the **public or private existence**. This area abounds in English terms: *job, office, full-time, part-time, training, trainer, speaker, show, deadline, cool, trend, trendy, brand, cocktail, ok, stress, feedback, master, weekend, hobby, fast food, miss, mister, pub, star, skill, bodyguard, fresh, fashion, casting, top model, modelling, style, stylist, make up, lifting, design, look, must, stand by, smart, target, gadget, player, recorder, CD, DVD, sms, bluetooth, device, showroom, SUV, PR, super-market, hyper-market, mall, shopping, second hand, jogging, fitness, flash, biking, snorkelling, skateboard, skateboarding, snowboard, snowboarding, week-end, happy-end* etc. Here, we also have the universal CV, a Latin phrase (*curriculum vitae*), with English pronunciation, globally consecrated by the British and American civilizations.

In addition to these categories of words, kept and used as such in Romanian, there is a category, quite large, of terms morphologically, phonetically and semantically adapted to the Romanian language, i.e. neologisms of English origin: *locăție* (< *location*) *facilități* (< *facilities*), *capabilități* (< *capabilities*), *subsidiară* (< *subsidiary*), *aplicație* (< *application*) – with the English meaning, *a aplica* (< *to apply for*) etc. Under the pressure of the English or American model, semantic changes occur in some cases, as in the case of the term *locăție* – used for *place*, and not for a *legal institution*, the original meaning. The term *aplicație*, following the semantic model, in Romanian has an additional, new meaning, of *request*.

The listing above is not, obviously, exhaustive. The list of English words in Romanian is much longer. Some of them transgress the specific reference field and enter the common vocabulary of the Romanian language, in everyday life. For example, *a seta* (*to set*) is a neologism taken from computer science, but used more broadly: ”*Sunt setat pe această problemă. Trebuie să o rezolv.*” (“*I am set on this problem. I have to solve it.*”)

Regarding their status, most of them are neologisms used as such, with the preservation of the graphic and phonetic original. From this point of view, several of them, depending on the context in which they are used, seem linguistic *exotisms* and sometimes even *barbarisms*. Here is, for instance, a phrase uttered by a *speaker* (a word taken as such in Romanian) at a *workshop* (idem): ”*În survey-ul de benchmarking, am constatat o mulțime de probleme.*” (“*In the survey of benchmarking, we found a lot of problems.*”). Such barbaric combinations, between Romanian and English, lead to a bizarre form of *Romgleza* with often

hilarious effects. Many words have not only entered the Romanian language, but reached the daily flow of communication and have chances to enter the common vocabulary. It is the case of such terms as: *management, manager, marketing, market, leadership*, etc. Some of them will probably bear graphic and phonetic changes under the pressure of the Romanian language rules to be fully assimilated. This is the case of some English neologisms entered in the Romanian language in the interwar period and "Romanized" in time as: *miting* (<*meeting*), *lider* (<*leader*), *fotbal* (<*football*), etc.

In the area of the *anglicisms* imported into Romanian language, there is also the *ephemerides* category, transitional, meteoric words, which could not accommodate in Romanian or, rather, which the speakers couldn't accommodate themselves with. They do not find their place in the communication process, are not assimilated by Romanian language and, being unused, disappear from the Romanian linguistic space.

#### **4. The implications of the English language influence on Romanian**

The Romanian language faces an objective phenomenon: the offensive of the English language on the background of globalization. We must see, in this context, which are its implications on Romanian. In these circumstances, there raise a number of questions. Is it a beneficial phenomenon or, on the contrary, bad for the Romanian language and its speakers? Does this offensive of the English language on Romanian represent a threat to the identity of the Romanian language? Is it a risk to the "purity" of Romanian? Is Romanian language somehow jeopardized by this influence? Are the Romanian language speakers threatened with the loss of their linguistic and national identity? Are we talking about a *real* phenomenon of *anglicization*? Is Romanian facing an "assault" from the English language? Are we dealing with a normal phenomenon in the evolution of our language? These are essential questions, whom we need to find an answer to. The discussion's stake is important because the phenomenon involves millions of speakers, their linguistic identity and, ultimately, their national identity. Of course, the discussion should also be made in the special conditions that globalization creates.

The most common attitude in the reception of this phenomenon is a critic one. Linguists, academics, or other personalities of science or public life view the phenomenon with concern, as a continuing aggression against the Romanian language. This reaction also occurs in a part of the public opinion. From this critical perspective, through the intense and continuous influence that English exerts on it, Romanian language would be in danger. The threat refers to the adoption of increasingly more English words, leading to the elimination of the Romanian terms which could express the new meanings, to the impoverishment of the language and, gradually, to the alteration of its profile and identity. Another risk would be that, under the assault of the anglicisms, the young people lose their identity.

It is exaggerated yet for us to speak of *anglicization*. The phenomenon would require major changes in the grammar structure and in the vocabulary composition, which could lead to the loss of the language identity for a new one. They should be important and profound changes that could lead to the birth of another language. We think, in context, of the process of Latinization of some of the ancient languages, which led to the birth of new languages: French, Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian etc. Therefore, we can not talk about *anglicization* but metaphorically.

What is happening today with the Romanian language is a normal phenomenon, in the process of continuous becoming of a language. In the current era, Romanian is under the influence of English. True, under a strong influence, a real assault, because it takes place in the time of information and communication technology and of all forms of media. Moreover, everything happens on the background of globalization, a time of universal cooperation and communication.

If we look diachronically, we find that what is happening today has happened in the history and becoming of Romanian language. Indeed, not at the same intensity. In the Middle Ages, the Romanian language was under the influence of Slavonic, which became the language of worship of the Orthodox Church and the language of administration. After that, for several centuries, as long as the Romanians were under Turkish domination, the Romanian language was influenced by Turkish. During the Phanariot period, the Greek language influenced Romanian. In Transylvania, German and Hungarian manifested their influence on Romanian as languages of administration. In the mid-twentieth century, the Russian language had a privileged role as the language of origin of the communist regime come from Moscow. In these cases, we talk about historical periods of administrative domination or of pressure of some political, military, religious, social, cultural patterns. Each of these languages exerted its influence on Romanian and this process of influencing and cohabitation left traces, some stronger, some less significant. None of the languages which influenced, longer or shorter, more or less intensely, Romanian language did change its profile of Romanic language, of Latin origin. It is true, after all influences, of Slavonic, Turkish, Greek and others, the percentage of words from these languages significantly increased. But the Romanian language did not become a language of Slavic, Turkish or Greek nature. Although the influence of these languages was associated with the political and economic domination - there were powerful interests to change the language, because language means identity -, Romanian language did not lose its identity.

The actual opponents of the phenomenon fear that through the „aggression” of English on Romanian, our language is endangered, that its identity is strongly threatened. But even if so, the options for English words could not be prohibited, there could not be put a lock over the words from another language. At the same time, Romanian language, like any other modern language, has its own mechanisms of selection, filtering, adoption and adaptation. The anglicisms go through a process of natural selection, by which they prove their viability or not. Any new word, English in this case, must pass the language test. Some pass it and are assimilated in language, in time, other not. In the first case, the word *leader* became *lider*, a Romanian word today. In the second one, terms as *survey* or *benchmarking*, presumably, will not remain in Romanian as such.

The identity of the Romanian language is not threatened by the profusion of English words. The identity of the Romanian language is given, fundamentally, by its grammatical structure, of Latin origin. The English words only serve to refresh and enrich the Romanian vocabulary. The richer and more comprehensive its vocabulary is, the more the language is capable of expressing and cover reality. We shouldn't forget that today's English vocabulary has more than a million words. In its structure, there are, of course, many loans, in particular from French, which, assimilated and adapted, became English. An essential element of identity of the Romanian language is its very permanent openness to innovation, its fabulous

responsiveness, the capacity of assimilation and integration, through its own mechanisms, of the linguistic loans. By this perpetual rebirth capacity, Romanian language has maintained its vitality, its extraordinary expressive ability, and its linguistic savour, remaining essentially a Neo-Romanic language, of Latin origin.

Of course, on the use of English terms, a balanced approach is required, based on a linguistic common-sense. Any abuse becomes strident and turns communication into a fake, counterfeited act. The infusion of anglicisms, and of other neologisms from French, Italian, Spanish, is like a breath of oxygen for the Romanian language, which thus refreshes and renews constantly to meet the rapidly changing reality. Language must keep up with life and the world around, and often does so with linguistic borrowings. The subjective censorship of the common sense and the objective censorship of Romanian language are the two important filters that, on the one hand, ensure the refreshment and renewal of language, and, on the other, preserve its identity, always valuing it in relation to the new language acquisition.

We live in the era of freedom and communication, of the new humanism and globalization. Language means freedom, freedom of communication, freedom of expression, access to knowledge. The influence of English on Romanian, far from endangering the identity of the language, brings a new spirit of renewal to continuously upgrade it. The challenge that evolution of civilization permanently brings to a language is to always be in actuality, to keep pace with the changes in the social, economic, scientific, cultural, educational, technological etc. areas. With English, because English is now the language of scientific progress, ICT, international communication and globalization, Romanian language synchronizes with all these developments, being always in actuality or even in the forefront of the time. Through English, Romanian *upgrades* and *updates* itself continuously, keeping pace with time and the rapid progress of humanity in the Knowledge Society, in the Age of Globalization.

##### **5. A necessary process for the renewal and enrichment of Romanian**

Language is a living organism, that continuously evolves and adapts itself to the changes in the human development process. Language must meet the communication needs in terms of the requirements and developments in the social, economic, cultural areas, it must be able to express new concepts, facts and processes. Contact with other languages, borrowings from other languages, the languages of civilizations and cultures which may have the value of models, are means of enriching the language and its evolution. Fundamentally, the evolution of a language is a natural, dialectic process, in which new words enter the language or are formed under the influence of others, and other words are phased out of use.

At the same time, influences, borrowings may not be prohibited. The evolution of a language can not be stopped, its renewal can not be prohibited in a rational society that wants to progress and integrate in the concert of civilizations. If, however, the process of its development is interrupted, the language is isolated from reality, in continuous and fast evolution, and ends up by no longer accomplishing its mission. With time, it may become a dead language, as there are many examples in human history.

The use of English words is essentially a problem of language option. If someone wants to say *cool* instead of *excelent* or *perfect*, *leader* instead of *conducător*, *teamwork* instead of *muncă de echipă*, *weekend* instead of *sfârșit de săptămână*, then he or she is free

to do so. Strictly speaking, the original terms best express the senses they cover up to the birth of others, in Romanian, which can take over their mission. The recourse to neologisms, namely the anglicisms, is, in the long run, a matter of style, of stylistics of communication and existence. In the Victorian period of Romania and in the early 20th century, Romanian aristocracy and bourgeoisie would use French as a salon language. Following the massive influence exerted by French, Romanian did not lose its identity, but instead it regained its identity of Romanic language.

The most receptive and open category to the English borrowings are young people, who assiduously use the Internet, ICT, media, have *jobs* in *multinational* companies, infused with the corporate spirit, plugged in activities transcending borders, having English as a fundamental communication support and instrument. Being, by definition, open to novelty and innovation, as *users* of English in routine activities, they speak in a Romanian language heavily infused with English terms. It is a phenomenon that, ultimately, regards the pragmatics of communication.

Inevitably, in the process, there appear linguistic excesses and abuses, many English words are exaggeratedly and improperly used or adapted, having sometimes the air of lexical barbarisms. They can be explained psychologically – a matter of mentality and snobbery –, but also by an ultra-pragmatic approach to communication. The English terms provide par excellence *shortcuts* to the signified. Always, however, Romanian, in its becoming, had been subject to such phenomena. Through its internal mechanisms, of filtration and selection, Romanian language, as well as any language, keeps what it needs and gets rid of the words that it can not assimilate. But, in exchange, it forms new ones rooting in the English etymon, to cover the reality in terms of communication. It is a process that takes time, hardly observable in the immediate actuality of language and communication.

As a general conclusion to a highly complex linguistic situation, we can say that the influence of English on Romanian is not a harmful phenomenon that threatens to alter the identity of the Romanian language and to falsify its profile. On the contrary, with the arguments above, we advocate the thesis that we have to do with a normal phenomenon in the dialectics of language evolution within a necessary process, of permanent updating and becoming of the Romanian language. Through its exceptional sensitivity to English, Romanian has access to a large-scale, comprehensive, linguistic reality, which provides the direct access to the actuality of communication in its whole complexity and in the fundamental areas of existence and civilization. By this relationship of influence and cooperation between Romanian and English, there takes place a process of *acculturation*, because, by words, we have access to concepts, ideas, institutions, approaches, realities, to the civilizations and cultures that can inspire development models. Here is how the linguistic influence process can generate benefits that transcend the scope of words and language. In this process, the linguistic, stylistic and semantic excesses, exaggerations and abuses are inevitable. Language as a supra-individual reality, through a high subtlety metabolism, retains what it needs and rejects what does not fit to it. This miraculous property of language, namely of the Romanian language, together with the necessary linguistic common sense of the speakers are the two premises of the positive value and constructive sense of the whole process.

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