



EFL Students' Perceptions of Google Docs Feedback in Folktale Translation Revision: A Narrative Inquiry

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ABSTRACT

Feedback plays an essential role in helping students improve translation quality, particularly in digitally mediated learning environments. Although previous studies have widely examined digital feedback in academic writing, limited research has explored how EFL students perceive and use feedback in Google Docs when revising culturally rich texts, such as folktale translations. Addressing this gap, this study investigates EFL undergraduate students' perceptions of Google Docs feedback in folktale translation revision through a narrative inquiry approach. The study involved three undergraduate students enrolled in a translation course at a state university in Central Java, Indonesia. Data were collected through narrative frames, semi-structured interviews, and artifact documentation, and analyzed using thematic narrative analysis. The findings reveal that students perceive Google Docs feedback as an essential support for improving translation quality, particularly in lexical choices, clarification of meaning, and culturally appropriate translation decisions. The study also indicates that students respond to feedback cognitively, affectively, and conatively in different ways depending on the clarity of the feedback, emotional readiness, and level of participation in collaborative revision. In addition, students encountered several challenges, including difficulties understanding indirect feedback, selecting culturally equivalent expressions, managing workload and time constraints, and dealing with technical issues in online collaboration. This study contributes to the growing discussion on digital feedback literacy in translation learning by demonstrating how students interpret and apply feedback during translation revision in collaborative digital environments.

Keywords: *google docs feedback, student perceptions, translation revision*

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INTRODUCTION

Feedback plays an essential role in language learning, particularly in writing and translation activities, as it helps students identify errors and improve the quality of their work. In translation learning, feedback becomes more essential since students are required not only to understand linguistic aspects but also to convey meaning and cultural elements from the source language into the target language. Previous studies have shown that feedback can significantly improve the quality and accuracy of students' translations (Yu et al., 2020; Xu et al., 2024). With the development of digital technology, the feedback process has evolved into a more interactive and collaborative process. Google Docs, as one of the most widely used digital platforms, allows users to write, edit, and comment on the same document simultaneously, enabling direct collaboration between lecturers and peers. Previous research has also demonstrated that Google Docs supports the development of students' writing skills through continuous feedback and collaborative interaction (Alharbi, 2020). Furthermore, the use of Google Docs for collaborative writing and peer review has been found to enhance students' engagement, interaction, and participation in writing (Nugraha, 2023; Alsahil, 2024; Estiningtyas, 2024).

Despite these benefits, previous studies on written corrective feedback indicate that students often experience difficulties understanding and effectively using feedback during revision. Although written feedback can support the improvement of writing skills, students may still struggle to interpret and apply the feedback appropriately when revising their work (Suseno, 2021). Similarly, pre-service English teachers have

also encountered challenges in engaging with written corrective feedback in digital learning environments (Amalia, 2023). In translation learning, the revision stage is particularly crucial because students are required to make various adjustments, including revising word choices, clarifying meaning, restructuring sentences, and removing unnecessary elements (Adha et al., 2024). This process becomes more complex when translating folktales, since they contain historical and cultural values that need to be preserved in the target language (Neri, 2021; Li & Li, 2024; Polikarpov & Latysheva, 2023). In addition, folktales can serve as valuable educational resources by helping students understand social and cultural values (Lwin & Marlina, 2018; Handayani & Amelia, 2021). Recent studies have further highlighted that technology-based feedback can improve students' writing quality by making feedback more accessible and supporting idea development in digital learning environments (Fathimatuzahro & Rizkiyah, 2025; Putri et al., 2025).

However, much of the previous research has focused on the use of digital feedback in general academic writing contexts, particularly collaborative writing and peer-review activities. Limited attention has been paid to how students interpret and use digital feedback during translation revision, especially in culturally nuanced texts such as folktales. In translating folktales, students are required not only to revise linguistic aspects but also to consider cultural meaning and appropriate translation choices. Furthermore, previous studies have mainly examined feedback from pedagogical and linguistic perspectives, while students' personal experiences and perceptions during the revision process remain underexplored. To address this gap, this study investigates EFL undergraduate students' perceptions of Google Docs feedback in revising folktale translations through a narrative inquiry approach. This study contributes to the discussion of digital feedback in translation learning by highlighting how students cognitively, affectively, and conatively interpret and apply feedback during collaborative translation revision in digital environments.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative narrative inquiry design to explore students' perceptions of feedback on Google Docs during the revision of folktale translations. This approach was selected since narrative inquiry allows researchers to examine individuals' experiences through the stories they construct from their personal learning. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) explain that narrative inquiry focuses on understanding personal experiences within particular social and temporal contexts. Similarly, Barkhuizen et al. (2014) state that narrative research uses participants' stories as data to explore and interpret lived experiences. Therefore, this approach enables the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of how students interpreted and utilized feedback during the translation revision process.

The study was conducted in an English Language Education program at a state university in Central Java, Indonesia. The participants were six undergraduate students enrolled in a translation course who had experience using Google Docs to receive and respond to feedback during the revision of folktale translations. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives (Creswell, 2014). Narrative inquiry emphasizes the depth and richness of participants' experiences rather than large sample sizes (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Therefore, the relatively small number of participants allowed the researcher to explore students' experiences in greater depth and obtain rich, reflective narratives.

The participants were categorized into three groups based on their level of participation in the Google Docs feedback process: active, semi-active, and inactive. Each category consists of two participants. This categorization is intended to provide a clearer understanding of the different ways students engaged with feedback during the revision process.

The following criteria were used to select the participants: (1) undergraduate students enrolled in the English Language Education program, (2) students who were taking a translation course during the fifth semester, (3) students who had completed a folktale translation assignment using Google Docs, (4) students who had received feedback through the Google Docs comment feature, and (5) students who were willing to

participate in the research process. Based on these criteria, the selected participants were expected to provide rich narratives about their experiences using Google Docs feedback during the revision of folktale translations.

Three main instruments used in this study are narrative frameworks, semi-structured interviews, and artifact documentation. The primary instrument was the narrative framework, which consists of incomplete sentences that participants completed based on their personal experiences. This instrument helped participants organize and reflect on their experiences in receiving and utilizing Google Docs feedback during the folktale translation revision process. According to Barkhuizen (2011), narrative frameworks provide participants with opportunities to express their experiences in a more structured and reflective manner.

To gain deeper insights into participants' experiences, semi-structured interviews were conducted after participants completed the narrative frameworks. The interviews enable the researcher to further explore participants' perceptions, emotional responses, and experiences of revision regarding Google Docs feedback. Rubin and Rubin (2005) explain that semi-structured interviews enable researchers to ask follow-up questions and obtain more detailed information about participants' experiences. In addition, artifact documentation, in the form of screenshots of Google Docs revision activities, was collected to support the narrative and interview data. These artifacts provided direct evidence of how participants interacted with feedback and revised their translations throughout the collaborative revision process.

Data collection, conducted in three stages, included completing narrative frameworks, conducting semi-structured interviews, and collecting artifact documentation. In the first stage, participants completed narrative frameworks in Google Docs to describe their experiences of receiving and applying feedback while revising folktale translations. This process allows participants to present their experiences in a reflective and organized manner (Barkhuizen, 2011).

After the narrative frameworks were completed, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain deeper insights into participants' experiences and perceptions. Depending on participants' availability, the interviews were conducted either face-to-face or through online platforms such as WhatsApp and Google Meet. During the interviews, the researcher also asked follow-up questions to clarify and further explore participants' responses (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

The final stage involved collecting artifact documentation as screenshots from Google Docs revision activities. These artifacts were used to examine how participants responded to feedback and revised their translations throughout the collaborative process.

The data were analyzed using thematic narrative analysis. The analysis began with repeated readings of the narrative frameworks, interview transcripts, and artifact documentation to gain a comprehensive understanding of participants' experiences. After the data were reviewed, the researcher conducted an initial coding process to identify significant statements related to students' perceptions, emotional responses, and revision actions in response to feedback on Google Docs. Similar codes were subsequently grouped into broader categories to identify recurring patterns across participants' narratives.

These categories were further developed into themes representing students' cognitive, affective, and conative responses, as well as the challenges encountered during the revision process. Throughout the analysis, the researcher continuously compared data obtained from narrative frameworks, interviews, and artifacts to ensure consistency across data sources.

In line with the narrative inquiry approach, participants' experiences were also reorganized through a restorying process. This process involved reconstructing participants' narratives chronologically to better understand how they interpreted feedback, responded emotionally, and applied revisions during translation learning, while maintaining the original meaning of their experiences.

To enhance the credibility of the findings, the researcher applied data triangulation by comparing information obtained from narrative frameworks, semi-structured interviews, and artifact documentation. The consistency of participants' responses across these different sources was examined to strengthen the interpretation of the findings. In addition, member checking was conducted by allowing participants to review

several interpretations of their responses to ensure that the findings accurately represented their experiences and perspectives. This process helped minimize misinterpretation and strengthen the study's trustworthiness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents a study examining undergraduate students' perceptions of feedback on Google Docs during the revision process for a folklore translation. The findings were derived from narrative framework responses, interview transcripts, and supporting artifacts collected from six undergraduate students involved in the translation revision activity using Google Docs. The results address two research questions: (1) how students perceive Google Docs feedback during the revision process; and (2) the challenges they face when using this feedback.

Students' Perceptions of Google Docs Feedback in Revising Folktale Translation

1. Cognitive Aspect

The findings reveal that students cognitively perceived Google Docs feedback as an essential source of guidance during folktale translation revision. Most participants stated that feedback helped them identify translation errors, clarify meaning, and improve translation quality. Lecturer feedback was considered more effective because it provided clearer explanations and more specific revision guidance, whereas peer feedback primarily served as a space for collaborative discussion. However, peer feedback sometimes created uncertainty since students were unsure about the correctness of translation choices. AS1 explained:

"Friends' feedback is usually used for discussion first, but sometimes we are both confused about which translation is correct. Lecturer feedback is clearer because it gives direct explanations and final confirmation." (AS1)

This finding indicates that students cognitively process feedback as guidance for making translation decisions and reducing ambiguity during revision. From a cognitive perspective, these findings support Walgito's (2004) theory, which explains that perception involves individuals' cognitive processes in interpreting stimuli based on understanding and prior knowledge. In this study, feedback serves as a stimulus encouraging students to critically evaluate lexical choices, translation accuracy, and cultural appropriateness before revising their work. Unlike previous studies on digital feedback that mainly focus on general academic writing, this study indicates that translation revision requires more complex meaning negotiation, as students have to consider both linguistic accuracy and cultural representation simultaneously. Peer feedback encourages collaborative discussion, yet students still rely on the lecturer's feedback as the final authority for validating translation decisions and ensuring accuracy.

2. Affective Aspect

The findings underscore that students experienced varied emotional responses during the feedback and revision process. Most participants viewed feedback positively since it supported improvements in translation and increased their confidence during revision. However, semi-active participants sometimes experienced anxiety, confusion, and feelings of being overwhelmed, especially when many comments were provided simultaneously or when feedback was indirect and difficult to interpret. SAS1 stated:

"I was happy because the feedback helped improve my translation, but sometimes I felt overwhelmed when there were too many comments or when the comments were unclear." (SAS1)

These findings demonstrate that students' emotional responses to feedback are not always stable and are influenced by the clarity and amount of feedback they receive. This finding aligns with Mitchell's (1982) perspective that affective responses reflect individuals' emotional reactions toward particular situations or

stimuli. In this study, feedback not only influences students' cognitive processes but also affects their emotional readiness to engage in revision activities. Clear and supportive feedback increases students' confidence and motivation, while unclear feedback creates uncertainty and emotional pressure during the revision process. This finding extends previous research on digital feedback by showing that emotional responses in translation revision are closely tied to the complexity of interpreting meaning and cultural expressions, rather than to mere grammatical correction.

3. Conative Aspect

The conative aspect of perception was reflected in students' behavioral responses after receiving feedback through Google Docs. The findings reveal that students did not passively accept comments but actively engaged in revision activities, including reviewing suggestions, discussing feedback collaboratively, searching for supporting references, and making revision decisions based on their own evaluation. AS2 explained:

"After reading the comments, I discussed them with my group members, searched for references, and then revised the translation based on our final decision." (AS2)

This finding demonstrates that feedback functions not merely as corrective input but as a stimulus that encourages students to participate actively in reflective revision practices. Students are required to evaluate translation alternatives, negotiate meaning collaboratively, and justify revision choices before implementing corrections. In the context of folktale translation, this process becomes more complex because students must balance linguistic accuracy, cultural representation, and contextual appropriateness simultaneously during revision.

These findings support Jakobi's (1990) explanation that the conative aspect refers to individuals' behavioral tendencies and actions in responding to particular stimuli. In this study, students' responses to feedback are reflected through active revision behavior and collaborative problem-solving during translation improvement. However, the findings also reveal differences in engagement levels among participants. Active participants tend to respond more critically and independently, seeking additional references and evaluating feedback carefully, whereas inactive participants rely more heavily on the lecturer's confirmation before making revision decisions. This finding suggests that the effectiveness of feedback is closely related to students' willingness and readiness to engage actively in the revision process. Furthermore, the study extends previous research on digital feedback by showing that feedback engagement in translation revision involves not only behavioral participation but also collaborative meaning negotiation and independent decision-making in culturally complex translation tasks.

Challenges in Revising Translation Using Google Docs Feedback

1. Challenges in Understanding Feedback

The findings of this study reveal that one of the major difficulties students encountered during the feedback process was understanding indirect feedback. Several participants reported that feedback delivered through vague questions or indirect instructions often caused confusion, as they were required to identify the intended correction independently before revising their translations. AS2 expressed strong discomfort toward this type of feedback:

"I don't like feedback delivered in a way that encourages thought without directly providing the answer. That type of feedback just confuses me." (AS2)

Similarly, SAS1 explains that although indirect feedback encourages deeper thinking, it still requires additional effort to interpret and apply the correction appropriately:

"Feedback that asks us to find the answer ourselves does require clarification. It's not that I dislike it, but rather that feedback requires us to search and determine the answer ourselves. Nevertheless, I still understand this kind of feedback, and it makes me think further." (SAS1)

These findings indicate that indirect feedback increases students' cognitive burden because they must interpret the meaning of the comments before making revision decisions. In the context of folktale translation, this challenge becomes more complex since students are not only revising language structure but also negotiating lexical choices and cultural meaning simultaneously. As a result, unclear feedback often slows down the revision process and requires additional clarification through discussion or self-directed research.

This finding supports Carroll and Swain's (1993) explanation that implicit feedback requires learners to infer corrective meaning independently because the correction is not stated explicitly. Consequently, learners may experience confusion when they lack sufficient certainty or cognitive readiness to interpret the intended message accurately. In this study, the effectiveness of feedback was strongly influenced by its clarity, as students tended to respond more confidently and efficiently when revision directions were explicit and easy to understand. Furthermore, this finding suggests that although indirect feedback may encourage reflective thinking, excessive ambiguity can reduce students' confidence and hinder the efficiency of translation revision activities.

2. Linguistic Challenges in Revising Translations

The findings indicate that students experienced greater difficulties in lexical and cultural aspects than in grammatical correction during folktale translation revision. Most participants considered grammar less problematic, as they already possessed sufficient grammatical understanding and could revise grammatical structures independently, without relying heavily on the lecturer's feedback. AS1 explained:

"Usually, we're quite confident in grammar because we feel we have a good understanding. Lecturers also rarely provide feedback that specifically addresses grammar. I've developed the awareness to revise grammatical aspects independently. For example, when I create a too-long and complex sentence, even though it's grammatically correct, I realize it's difficult to read. Thus, I usually revise it myself to make it more concise and clear." (AS1)

This finding indicates that students' primary concern during revision is not grammatical accuracy but rather the challenge of selecting appropriate lexical choices and preserving cultural meaning in the target language. Participants state that certain cultural expressions can not always be translated directly, as a literal translation risks losing the original cultural identity and contextual meaning. AS2 stated:

"There are certain words that could actually be translated, but are ultimately retained because they have become integrated with cultural identity. For example, the word 'raja' is generally translated as 'king', but in certain contexts it is more appropriate to retain it, as it has become integrated into the name and its cultural meaning. If translated directly, there is a concern that this cultural meaning will not be conveyed." (AS2)

These findings demonstrate that folktale translation revision involves more complex meaning negotiation than merely correcting grammatical structures. Students are required to evaluate lexical equivalence, preserve cultural representation, and consider contextual appropriateness simultaneously before making revision decisions. In line with Baker (1992), lexical problems in translation often involve semantic gaps, metaphorical meaning, and culturally specific expressions that may not have direct equivalents in the target language. Similarly, Ramli (2019) explains that inappropriate lexical choices may lead to misunderstanding and distortion of meaning in translation.

Unlike general academic writing revision, folktale translation requires students to maintain both linguistic accuracy and cultural authenticity. Therefore, lexical and cultural issues became more cognitively demanding than grammatical correction. These findings support Abdelaal (2020) and Barua et al. (2024), who emphasize that selecting appropriate equivalence and representing cultural meaning are among the most challenging aspects of translation. However, this study further demonstrates that students' revision difficulties were strongly influenced by their efforts to preserve cultural identity while maintaining clarity and readability in the target language.

3. Time and Workload Challenges in Applying Feedback

The findings underscore that students experienced difficulties managing workload and revision time during the feedback process. Participants reported that feedback was often received while they were simultaneously dealing with other academic responsibilities, making it difficult to respond to and implement revision suggestions immediately. In several situations, students delayed revising not because they rejected the feedback, but because they felt physically and mentally exhausted. SAS1 explained:

"At the time, I was putting off revising, not because of the feedback, but owing to my own situation. The feedback had been given since Sunday and was subsequently updated the next day or evening. When I looked at it, I felt tired and not ready to revise; hence, I decided to stop for now." (SAS1)

This finding indicates that the effectiveness of feedback is strongly influenced by students' readiness, workload, and emotional condition during the revision process. Excessive comments and competing academic demands often reduce students' ability to respond to feedback promptly, delaying or postponing revisions. In collaborative translation activities, time management becomes even more challenging, as students are expected to process feedback, discuss revisions, and complete translation improvements within limited timeframes. In addition to workload pressure, some participants experienced difficulties due to limited peer participation during collaborative revision activities. IS1 stated:

"I feel like my friends might be hesitant or afraid to provide feedback. I don't really know why, but ultimately they choose not to comment at all." (IS1)

This finding suggests that collaborative feedback activities are not always effective, as some group members participate passively during the revision process. As a result, students who actively revise the translation sometimes must independently shoulder greater revision responsibilities. This condition potentially reduces the collaborative benefits expected from Google Docs feedback activities. These findings support Nicol's (2010) view that feedback is a dialogic process requiring time, participation, and active engagement from learners. Similarly, Boud (2018) emphasizes that feedback literacy involves students' ability to understand, manage, and effectively use feedback during learning activities. In this study, students' ability to apply feedback was influenced not only by the quality of comments but also by situational factors such as academic workload, fatigue, time limitations, and unequal peer participation. Furthermore, the findings align with Winstone et al. (2017), who explain that academic pressure and excessive workload often reduce students' responsiveness toward feedback. However, this study further demonstrates that these challenges become more complex within collaborative Google Docs environments, where students must simultaneously manage revision demands, peer interaction, and ongoing academic responsibilities.

4. Technical and Environmental Challenges in Using Google Docs

The findings reveal that students encountered several technical challenges during the translation revision process using Google Docs. These challenges were related to device limitations, unstable internet connections, delayed notifications, and difficulties managing documents within the online collaborative

workspace. Although Google Docs facilitated collaborative revision and the exchange of immediate feedback, technical issues sometimes prevented students from accessing feedback efficiently and responding to revisions promptly.

One of the major technical issues involved limited access to appropriate devices for completing revision activities. Several participants explained that they did not always have access to laptops and therefore needed to adapt by switching to alternative devices during the revision process. AS1 explained:

"If the problem is device-related, we usually switch devices. For example, from a laptop to a phone, or borrowing someone else's phone or laptop. The most essential thing is to have a device that can access documents. If I don't have a laptop, I use my personal phone because it still has internet access. Furthermore, because the work is done collaboratively, we do need to use online workspaces like Google Drive." (AS1)

This finding suggests that students need to demonstrate technological adaptability in order to continue participating in collaborative revision activities. The revision process depends not only on students' linguistic abilities but also on the availability of technological resources that support online collaboration. In situations where primary devices are unavailable, students attempt to maintain participation by using alternative devices, indicating that technical readiness becomes an essential component of implementing digital feedback.

Another frequently reported challenge was an unstable internet connection and delayed feedback notifications. SAS2 stated:

"The main obstacle that often arises is internet connection issues. As a result, feedback doesn't always appear immediately, and notifications aren't always received. To anticipate this, we recommend saving a copy of the document beforehand, for example by downloading it offline. By having a backup copy, feedback and revisions can still be safely accessed even if the connection is interrupted." (SAS2)

This finding demonstrates that unstable internet access disrupts the immediacy and continuity of collaborative feedback interaction in Google Docs. Delayed notifications and inaccessible comments often slow down students' responsiveness during revision activities, making the feedback process less efficient. However, students also demonstrate adaptive strategies by creating backup copies and independently managing documents to minimize technical disruption during collaboration.

Overall, these findings indicate that the effectiveness of digital feedback implementation is influenced not only by feedback quality and students' revision abilities but also by technological and environmental conditions that support online learning. Unlike traditional face-to-face revision activities, collaborative revision through Google Docs requires sufficient technical readiness, stable internet access, and effective document management strategies to ensure that feedback can be accessed and implemented efficiently throughout the translation revision process.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

This study demonstrates that Google Docs feedback plays an essential role in supporting students' revision of folktale translations through cognitive, affective, and conative processes. Cognitively, students perceived feedback as guidance that helped them identify translation problems, evaluate lexical choices, and negotiate cultural meaning during revision. Lecturer feedback was considered more effective because it provided clearer, more authoritative revision guidance, whereas peer feedback mainly encouraged collaborative discussion but sometimes created uncertainty. Affectively, students experienced dynamic emotional responses toward feedback. Clear and supportive comments increased confidence and motivation, while indirect or excessive feedback often caused confusion, anxiety, and emotional pressure during revision activities. Conatively, students actively responded to feedback by reviewing comments, collaboratively

discussing suggestions, searching for additional references, and implementing revisions based on their final decisions.

The findings also reveal that translation revision challenges extend beyond grammatical correction. Students experienced difficulties interpreting indirect feedback, selecting culturally appropriate lexical equivalents, managing workload and revision time, and dealing with technical limitations in collaborative digital environments. These findings indicate that translation revision through Google Docs requires not only linguistic competence but also cognitive readiness, emotional regulation, collaborative engagement, and technological adaptability.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the discussion of digital feedback in translation learning by extending Walgito's cognitive perspective, Mitchell's affective response theory, and Jakobi's conative perspective within the context of collaborative translation revision. The findings demonstrate that students' perceptions of feedback involve interconnected cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes during revision activities. Furthermore, this study highlights that folktale translation revision entails more complex meaning negotiation than general writing revision, as students must simultaneously maintain linguistic accuracy and cultural representation.

Based on the findings, several recommendations can be proposed for translation learning and future research. First, lecturers are encouraged to provide clearer, more explicit feedback, particularly in culturally complex translation tasks, to reduce students' confusion and uncertainty during revision. Although indirect feedback may encourage reflective thinking, excessive ambiguity can make revision more cognitively and emotionally demanding for students.

Second, collaborative digital learning environments, such as Google Docs, should be supported by effective feedback management and balanced workloads. Students need sufficient time, access to technology, and opportunities for collaborative participation to respond to feedback effectively. Therefore, lecturers should consider students' academic workload and provide structured opportunities for collaborative discussion during revision activities.

Lastly, future researchers are encouraged to explore digital feedback practices in broader translation contexts or among participants with diverse backgrounds to gain a deeper understanding of how students engage with feedback across various collaborative learning environments. Further studies may also investigate the relationship between feedback clarity, emotional responses, and revision quality in digital translation learning.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Ethical Declaration

All participants provided informed consent prior to their involvement in the study. They were informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence.

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