

Implicature, Technique, and Function of Humor on Instagram Memes

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, humor is a phenomenon that emerges and is enjoyed by social media users. On social media, humor develops in a new form of communication namely “internet memes”. In addition, internet memes with humorous nuances come with certain ideas and functions intended by the meme maker. This study furthermore attempts to examine the themes or ideas of memes, conventional implicatures, humor creation techniques, and the functions of internet memes uploaded by @memecomid Instagram account. This research is a qualitative descriptive study; which data was collected by screen capture technique. The data were subsequently analyzed using qualitative descriptive method and pragmatic approach in exploring the implicature or implied purpose as well as the function behind the meme creation. It was shown in the study result that social phenomenon memes are presented using humor allusion and definition techniques. Moreover, the function of social phenomenon memes is solidarity which includes sharing experiences, obtaining advantage of shared experiences, ridiculing without hurting, and psychologically addressing life common problems with humor to soothe the psyche. What is more, social phenomenon memes are created to share behaviors or social problems experienced by most people. Consequently, the memes will seem ridiculous and humorous without hurting anyone.

Keywords: humor creation technique, humor function, implicature, social phenomenon memes

INTRODUCTION

Humor can be defined as one of the human needs in living life. Humor can meet the human need to entertain themselves in order to maintain self-reliance. Entertainment, of course, is needed to refresh yourself from the affairs and problems of life that suppress your psyche and mind. Humor as a form of entertainment can help refresh the mind and calm the mind (Pramono, 1983). Humor can also be present in the form of implied satire and can also be used as criticism but has the nuance of laughter (Rahmanadji, 2007).

Today, humor is a phenomenon that appears and is loved by social media users. Social media is a means of social interaction that has the speed of spreading social content and information between one user and another, or from one group to another. On social media, humor exists in a new form of communication called “internet memes” (Taecharunroj & Nueangjamnong, 2013). Internet memes are shared from one account to another, rearranged, modified, imitated by other social media users.

Memes change from one event to a shared social phenomenon through a process of imitation, copying, mimicking, remixing, or repackaging. A meme has a motive behind its emergence and creation. The emergence of memes may coincide with issues that are currently being discussed either on social media or in one's life, whether they contain social, political, or

economic issues that are presented in the form of humor or something that has a funny nuance or creates amusement. However, internet memes carry more social issues than other issues (Taecharungroj & Nueangjamnong, 2013).

The emergence of memes certainly has the intention to be conveyed by the author. In this case, memes have a hidden purpose behind the visualized discourse. Implicature is a matter that discusses the meaning behind the discourse. The implicature will reveal what the creator of the meme actually means and definitely relate it to the context (Rina et al., 2020). Even though memes carry social issues in pictures and writing, it is not easy to identify the intent and purpose of memes being made and spread on social media. Therefore, this study will examine the purposes and functions contained in the humorous meme discourse.

Researchers found several studies on internet memes and implicatures, including one by Azizi and Triana (2018). The study describes the types of implicature in memes uploaded by the Instagram account I.Q. Shahab to find the message that meme creators want to convey to users of Instagram social media accounts or, more generally, users of all virtual worlds. This study found that the most dominant type of implicature is the conventional type of implicature.

Another study conducted in 2020 shows that the emergence of memes is dominated by social context (Rina et al., 2020). This study aims to explain the implicatures in internet memes using Grice's theory and a semiotic and pragmatic approach in which the research results will be based on a review of the context. The results of this study indicate that conventional implicatures are the most common types of implicatures that appear in internet memes. In addition, there are six categories of ideas to be conveyed through internet memes, namely, 1) masculinity, 2) personal experience, 3) solitude, 4) social phenomenon, 5) false analogy, and 6) sarcasm. Moreover, a similar study on conventional implicature memes using a local newspaper, the *Radar Tegal* newspaper, as the subject finds that conventional implicatures in memes aim to broadcast information, educate, and influence demonstrations, human trafficking, and terrorist events (Hikmah et al., 2021). Apart from that, memes in newspapers as a visual form are expressions of response to an event.

In addition, a work focusing on the meme phenomenon in social media (Nugraha et al., n.d.) examined the phenomenon of memes on social media Instagram using a virtual ethnographic approach. The results of this study explain that memes are a phenomenon of conveying messages in a new form where meme creators combine verbal and nonverbal language or expressions. The meme phenomenon is where users convey messages in a new form by combining verbal language with nonverbal communication (expressions).

Finally, viral humor memes on Facebook were studied (Taecharungroj & Nueangjamnong, 2013) by analyzing the communication process of memes on Facebook as a social media account with the most users. The results of this study indicate that, related to virality, most memes are presented in a self-defeating style. This is because the recipient or reader of the meme may have the same experience as the meme creator, so they also share the uploaded meme. This research also found no relationship between a particular type of humor and the number of users who share the uploaded meme.

What distinguishes the current research from the previous studies described above is that this research examines the same object of study but different topics. The same object of study is the implicature of humorous discourse on memes uploaded on Instagram social media. In comparison, this research topic is about the themes/ideas/ideas of memes, humor creation techniques, and their functions. In contrast, previous studies analyzed these topics separately and formed a pattern. This study tries to find patterns of interrelationships between meme themes, humor creation techniques, implicatures, and their functions.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

HUMOR THEORY

There are two general indicators that indicate the experience of humor, namely linguistic and non-linguistic indicators. The existence of laughter as a humorous reaction is a non-linguistic indicator. Expert opinion says that laughter is the main indicator of humor, but it is not only laughter that indicates humor, there are other things such as smiling, grinning, and sighing that can be indicators of the experience of humor (Meyer, n.d.). Another opinion says that humor can be observed through the system of cognition and symbols. If the laugh indicator is considered unscientific, then the indicator for humor must be equated so that it is accepted by all audience cognitions. Therefore, this study uses the theory of Berger who introduced the Three Majors of Humor Origin (Berger, 1993).

Initially, relief theory comes from the point of view of psychology. This theory of humor is called the theory of disengagement. Humor is produced because of the tension that is released by someone. This theory argues that humor is created to reduce tension in situations that put pressure on the communicator and partner (Meyer, 2000). This is regardless of whether the effect is laughter, smiles, or awkward laughter, humor created in certain situations to reduce tension or the problem at hand is an application of disengagement theory.

From the perspective of the incongruity theory, people laugh at what surprises them, is unexpected, or is odd in a non-threatening way (Berger, 1993). Incongruity theory is also called discrepancy or bisociation (Rahmanadji, 2007). Bisociation is combining 2 events that cannot possibly happen at once. In this discrepancy theory, there are two unusual events that occur. Furthermore, the expert opinion says, "This is the incongruity theory of humor which argues that all humor involves some kind of a difference between what one expects and what one gets" (Berger, 1993). This incongruity theory emphasizes cognitive aspects to identify. The reason that was loaded was that there was something that happened beyond expectations. This theory holds that the interlocutor will experience or recognize a discourse as humor if it can record, understand, and categorize inappropriate changes (Meyer, 2000). This is contrary to disengagement theory which emphasizes psychology and superiority which emphasizes emotion.

Finally, superiority theory is used when the speaker or creator of humor feels superior to the other person. This theory views that there is an element of disdain in humorous discourse because of the power of the communicator. Humor is intended to laugh at the interlocutor who is in a degraded position (Rahmanadji, 2007). Related to this, some experts say that this theory holds that humor is something that is ridiculous, violates the rules, is ugly, and tempts opponents to provoke anger or feelings of dislike (Rahmanadji, 2007).

TECHNIQUES OF HUMOR CREATION

Berger introduces several humor creation techniques. Humor techniques are categorized according to the elements that compose them (Berger, 1993). There are four categories of humor creation techniques, namely language, action, identity, logic. Each of these categories has humor creation techniques. Researchers focus on creating humor based on linguistic aspects. Berger introduces 15 humorous techniques in terms of language. In this study, the researcher did not include exaggeration, tall tales, comic lies and misunderstanding

techniques, this is because these two techniques can only be found in a direct conversation (Berger, 1993). The following are the technique of creating humor from the aspect of language (Berger, 1993): (1) Allusions; (2) Bombast and Rhetorical Exuberance; (3) Definitions; (4) Exaggeration, Tall Tales, Comic Lies; (5) Facetiousness; (6) Infantilism; (7) Irony; (8) Literalness; (9) Puns, Word Play, and Other Amalgamations; (10) Repartee and outwitting; (11) Ridicule; (12) Sarcasm; (13) Satire

BROWN AND YULE'S PRAGMATICS AND IMPLICATURE

Researchers assume that making memes always relates to the context or things that are behind the creation of memes by creators. Researchers use a pragmatic approach to describe the context of a meme. Pragmatics examines what speakers mean in their utterances. Pragmatics views that language or speech can be interpreted outside of what is said. In this case, the listener or interlocutor (speech partner) has the freedom to make interference related to what the speaker means (Yule, 1996). It was explained that Pragmatics examines the meaning or intent of speech based on context. This leads to the term hidden meaning or known as implicature. Implicature discusses the meaning of speech that is not said or outside of what is said. Yule defines implicature as a "basic assumption" of a conversation and that implicature will appear when speakers do not comply with the cooperative principle in communicating (Yule, 1996). Yule divides the types of implicature into 4 types, generalized conversational implicature, particularized conversational implicature, scalar implicature, and conventional implicature (Yule, 1996).

Conventional implicature is general and conventional implicature. This type of implicature is derived from the meaning of the word and is not related to any context (Hikmah et al., 2021). This opinion is reinforced by Yule in his writing which says, "They (conventional implicatures) don't have to occur in conversation (Yule, 1996). In addition, they do not depend on special contexts for their interpretation".

This study analyzes the meaning contained in memes where the research data is not in the form of conversation. Generalized conversational implicature, particularized conversational implicature, and Scalar implicature are types of implicature that appear in a conversation or interaction event between speakers and speech partners (Yule, 1996). This is reinforced by Chaer & Agustina (2010) which states that conversational implicature occurs because there is a connection between the speaker's speech and the interlocutor where the link appears literally but can be understood non-literally or impliedly. So, for research purposes where the data is in the form of memes (a form of communication in the form of images and captions), researchers focus on conventional implicatures.

HUMOR FUNCTIONS

As explained, that memes appear because they are made by meme creators. Meme creators intend to convey messages, convey thoughts, channel expressions or other purposes. In addition to analyzing the implicature contained in memes, this study also analyzes the function of the appearance of an Instagram meme. This study refers to several functions of humor proposed by Hay (2000). Hay divided the function of humor into three main categories, namely, solidarity, psychological, and power (Hay, 2000). Furthermore, he divides the three function categories into several solidarity, psychological, and power.

The solidarity function is intended that humor can increase solidarity between members of a particular group or community. Humor to build solidarity can be identified from the strategies used by humor makers. There are four humorous strategies to emphasize solidarity including to share, to highlight similarities or capitalize on shared experiences, to clarify and maintain boundaries, and to tease (Hay, 2000).

The communicator deliberately shares his experiences with the interlocutor so that the interlocutor knows it. The first strategy is done to increase solidarity between the two. Additionally, the speakers created humor to share the funny experiences the two had. The communicator aims to increase solidarity by emphasizing the similarity of experiences, ideas, and interests between participants (Hay, 2000). Furthermore, humor is intended to explain ties or membership in a particular group and show the boundaries of who is not a member. This is objected to increase solidarity among group members. The tease strategy has two effects, namely strengthening solidarity and expressing the closeness of the relationship, and is also aimed at showing or emphasizing the power of the teaser compared to the interlocutor (Hay, 2000). This function is aimed at strengthening solidarity and expressing close relationships.

In psychological functions, there are three strategies applies namely to defend, to cope with the contextual problem, and to cope with a non-contextual problem. Humor here serves to defend oneself from criticism of the other person. Speakers tend to give explanations to their interlocutors to save themselves (Hay, 2000). Humor in the second function is intended to overcome the awkwardness of social problems or awkwardness in a certain context. This is done to defend oneself in a conversation (Hay, 2000). Moreover, the humor in the last psychological function is aimed at addressing more general issues such as life. The function of this humor is to help the audience overcome life's problems.

Finally, humor is also functioned in terms of power. Such function is made to maintain or clarify abilities, powers, and strengths compared to the other person. Here Hay (2000) divides the strategy into this functional category where the aim is to “maintain or create power”. The function of humor in fostering conflict is to show disagreement with the opponent's arguments in a group and gives the impression of being challenging or hostile. When humor is used to control, it is identified when humor is intended to influence the audience to do something. On the other hand, humor is utilized to challenge and set boundaries. In this case, humor is intended to challenge the interlocutor and make new boundaries or opinions that are negatively critical of the interlocutor but are considered funny. In accomplishing humor function for teasing, it is directed to attack the interlocutor intentionally to emphasize the power possessed by the speaker (Hay, 2000). This function usually leverages something to sue others.

METHODS

This research is a qualitative one using a pragmatic approach. The data source for this research is the meme publication account on Instagram social media, namely memecomid.id. The data of this research are memes that contain images and monologues that have the context behind making the meme and have the message intended by the meme maker. Data is collected by documentation technique. Researchers took action to capture layers with mobile phones on memes that were uploaded to social media accounts that were the source of data. The data captured by the layer are memes that meet the research data criteria. The data were analyzed using a qualitative descriptive analysis and a pragmatic approach to analyze the implicature or implied purpose and the function of making memes. The researcher will present the findings in tabular form and explain the results of the analysis using a purposive sampling strategy.

RESULTS

This study collected 87 memes that met the research criteria previously listed in the research methods section. Researchers analyzed the themes of the 87 memes. There are 17 themes behind the creation of 87 memes uploaded by the Instagram account @memecomic.id. from December to May 2022. The most dominant category of meme themes is the theme of social phenomena, namely a total of 23 memes. Then followed by other found themes in the following order, personal experience (12), jokes (10), false analogies (9), viral terms (6), increase in fuel (5), love problems (4), Covid-19 (3), government policy (3), Indonesian films (2), scarcity of cooking oil (2), jobs (2), football (2), online games (1), law (1), Indonesia vs Malaysia (1), and new year (1). Before finding humor creation techniques according to Barger's theory (1993), the researcher chose 5 categories of meme themes that were most found, namely, social phenomena, personal experience, jokes, false analogies, and jokes.

This is based on the author's considerations and the closeness of these themes to the audience as Instagram social media users, so the authors assume that the Instagram account @memecomic.id tends to upload things that are easy for the audience to remember so that the audience can easily understand the motives for making memes and the implications that exist in memes.

SOCIAL PHENOMENON MEMES

A total of 23 memes are categorized into social phenomena based on the discourse contained in the memes. Researchers found social phenomena that were carried out by meme creators, namely memes that discussed common problems experienced by most people, such as Eid, homecoming, social media stalking habits, applying for jobs, friendships, neighbors' habits, friends' habits, etc.

TAHUKAH KAMU?



HARI MINGGU ADALAH
HARI YG BAIK UNTUK MEMOTONG KERAMIK

FIGURE 1. Do you know? Sunday is a good day to cut ceramic

The meme in figure 1 above is categorized as a social phenomenon meme because it represents neighbor activities that are felt to disturb some people who only have time to relax on Sundays, for example students and teachers, private employees, etc. A common fact featured in this meme is the sound of ceramic tiles or other noise related to building or repairing a house.

TABLE 1. Classification of humor techniques and functions in social phenomenon memes

Humor Technique	Function								
	To share experience	Solidarity To highlight similarities and capitalize on shared experience	To tease	Other (to entertain)	Psychological To defend	To cope with non-contextual problem	To tease	Power To challenge and set boundaries	Total
1. Allusion	1	7	1			1			10
2. Bombast & Rhetorical exuberance									
3. Definition	1	1					1		3
4. Facetiousness									
5. Infantilism									
6. Insult	1		1					1	3
7. Irony			2						2
8. literalness							1		1
9. Puns, word plays									2
10. & other amalgamations				1			1		
11. Repartee and outwitting						1			1
12. ridiculous									
13. Sarcasm									
14. Satire							1		1
TOTAL	3	8	4	1		1	4	1	23

From Table 1 above, it is known that the dominant humor formation technique found in social phenomenon memes is allusion. Of the 23 social phenomenon memes, there are 10 memes made using the allusion humor technique. Allusion is a humorous technique that offends students by discussing sexual issues, personality traits, behavioral characteristics, and other things that may be upsetting, embarrassing but not hurtful. Allusion discusses things that are seen as funny to be enjoyed or remembered. Allusion reminds something that has been experienced or felt by presenting it in humorous form. Berger adds that allusion is also humor to embarrass others but not to hurt but to enjoy (Berger, 1993).

Based on table 1 above, it is known that the dominant function of social phenomenon memes using the allusion technique is the solidarity function at points to highlight similarities and capitalize on shared experience with a total of 7 memes.



FIGURE 2. Ready to receive inquiries from family relatives

This meme was uploaded on May 2, 2022 to coincide with Eid al-Fitr. A meme with a background in the image of two knights who seem to be preparing to face their opponents on the battlefield. The meme maker represents a situation that is likely to be faced by migrants who return to their hometowns for Eid al-Fitr and meet many neighbors. In Indonesia, the phenomenon of asking neighbors on holidays is always the topic of discussion for overseas children. Questions such as about a partner for those who are still not married, about work for those who have graduated from college, or about salary and type of work for those who are already working, and many more. The implicature contained in this meme is that questions from neighbors and family relatives will always be there and cannot be avoided and you have to prepare the best answers and mentally.

ALLUSION – SOLIDARITY – TO HIGHLIGHT SIMILARITIES AND CAPITALIZE ON SHARED EXPERIENCE

Based on the description of the context in which the meme was created, this meme was created for the purpose of demonstrating a common experience and this refers to the solidarity function, which is to increase solidarity among recipients or users of social media who have the same experience. More specifically, the solidarity function in question aims to emphasize equality or to highlight similarities and capitalize on shared experience, namely deliberately carrying and utilizing common experiences faced by anyone, especially migrants who go home on Eid. Meme creators are aware that these social facts that are known and experienced by some audiences will generate humor because they contain ridiculous events to discuss. In addition, of the 10 memes that use the allusion technique with this function, the 3 remaining social phenomenon memes in the allusion technique also show some solidarity functions at other points, such as to share (1), to tease (1), and psychological functions at points to cope with non-contextual problems (1).

ALLUSION – SOLIDARITY – TO SHARE



FIGURE 3. Girl feelings the guy who sucks at her 24/7 real darling boy

The meme was uploaded to represent the experience of the meme maker or someone's personal experience when approaching a dream girl or liking a girl who is ideal. The experience of not being responded to when approaching a girl is visualized with the glare of a street lamp which is likened to the feelings of women who are more inclined to highlight or side with images of men who do not really like them. Meanwhile, the other male image looks dark and does not get any light at all. This shows that the meme maker is trying to describe the

experience of unrequited love that is experienced by himself or other people, or other men. Differences in appearance were found in the two male images in the meme. The meme also explains that what can easily grab a girl's attention is looks, not genuine feelings.

Based on the context of making memes, this meme shows that there is a solidarity function at the point to share, namely to share experiences with the audience to increase solidarity, perhaps this is also experienced by some audiences who see uploads of this meme from both men and women.

ALLUSION – SOLIDARITY – TO TEASE



FIGURE 3. Stop scrolling, friends. State your goals that you are still fighting for

This meme is aimed at social media users, especially Instagram, who are too busy scrolling through Instagram screens and often waste time doing this. The word “kawand” here is a variation of “friend” and “scrol” may be a variation of writing according to the maker, but it is wrong because the correct writing is “scroll” which means scrolling. This meme implies that the social phenomenon experienced by active users of social media is that they often spend time and forget their goals to do homework, assignment, or other duties.

Based on this description, the word “friend” here represents solidarity as fellow users of social media. This meme aims to mock (to tease) fellow social media users who like to spend time scrolling the screen. The ridicule here by bringing up or alluding to the habits of social media users is not a mockery that is painful but entertaining. This is because the meme is presented with the Allusion humor technique which discusses funny habits to talk about. Meme makers want to increase solidarity as fellow social media users who seem to make fun of other.

ALLUSION – PSYCHOLOGICAL – TO COPE WITH NON-CONTEXTUAL PROBLEM



FIGURE 4. Instead of being insecure, you better be grateful

The meme in figure 4 shows the current social phenomenon of the younger generation. This is identified from the word “insecure” which is familiar among young people. The word

“insecure” is used when someone is at a point where they feel like a nobody when compared to other people with better life achievements. Then the word “insecure” becomes a word that is often expressed when a person feels that he does not match someone physically. For example, a girl will say, “I feel insecure when I see a body goal like that” when the girl sees another girl with a more ideal body. This is one of the many social phenomena related to the feeling of “insecurity” which is commonly felt by young people both in real life and on social media. This meme implies that many people are busy seeing their own shortcomings in terms of physical appearance and possessions and do not live life gratefully for what God Almighty has given them.

The image meme 4 is an allusion humor technique in which the meme maker alludes to common behavior or things that most people feel these days both in the real world and on social media. The word “insecure” is followed by “grateful” to give peace to the psychology of most people who are often hit by insecure feelings. Even though this offends someone's behavior or maybe psychology, it's not a painful thing to discuss. This humorous meme is included in the category of psychological functions on the point of coping with non-contextual problems. This meme conveys a message through humorous memes to the audience to calm their insecure self into being grateful.

The researcher found that the solidarity function in points to highlight similarities and capitalize on shared experience is the function most commonly found in social phenomenon memes. There are 8 memes that have a solidarity function at this point with a description of 7 technical allusion memes and 1 technical definition meme.

DEFINITION – ALLUSION – TO HIGHLIGHT SIMILARITIES AND CAPITALIZE ON SHARED EXPERIENCE

Memes with this definition technique are techniques that are also used in social phenomenon memes which also function to increase solidarity by exploiting the similarities experienced by most individuals. This meme was only found in 1 item on the solidarity function. Memes with this technique are identified when a meme presents a term that is considered difficult to appear funny and entertaining (Berger, 1993).



FIGURE 5. In the eyes of ordinary people is just prawn crackers but in the eyes of Indonesians this is a tool for scraping rice

Meme figure 5 above shows a picture of prawn crackers which most Indonesians will use these crackers to eat or scoop rice with. In general, this social phenomenon applies to every type of cracker that can be used to feed food into the mouth. The implicature contained in the visualization of the meme is to describe how crackers are treated in Indonesia not only as an

additional side dish when eating, but also as a tool for eating. That's how Indonesian people treat crackers.

The meme uses the definition technique. The humor definition technique is identified from meme discourse which describes and explains something that should be complicated and heavy, becomes light and seems funny. In this meme, the creator of the meme explains that the term “kerupuk prawn crackers” is associated with the Indonesian habit of treating crackers. The meme maker does not discuss prawn crackers made from processed prawns procedurally, but the definition of prawn crackers in the eyes of the Indonesian people. Meme in figure 5 has a psychological function in terms of highlighting characteristics and capitalizing on shared experience. This function is known from the word “Indonesian” which shows that the average Indonesian behavior is to use crackers as an alternative cutlery.

In general, when viewed based on allusion, the function of solidarity dominates social phenomenon memes. Then the power function, and followed by the psychological function. This shows that memes with the theme of social phenomena place more emphasis on gaining approval, attention, or entertaining the audience. Researchers did not find facetiousness, bombast, ridicule, and sarcasm techniques. The researcher assumes that this function is not found in social phenomenon memes due to two things, the writer lacks in collecting data and these techniques are not used in making memes that carry the theme of social phenomena.

CONCLUSION

Internet memes uploaded by the Instagram account @memecomic.id mostly upload memes that bring up social phenomena in order to have a better place in the hearts of viewers. Memes with social phenomena that cover or discuss social facts that are close to people's lives such as people's behavior, personalities that are common to most people on this day and age, especially young social users who often fill out stories in their Instagram account feeds or stories. Social phenomena that are brought up will seem funny even in the form of ridicule. Social phenomenon memes work for entertainment. Therefore, it functions socially or increases solidarity and calms the psyche of people who see the uploaded memes. Forms of satire and sarcasm are not found because social phenomenon memes do not appear to ridicule or satirize as something that needs to be criticized. Satire and sarcasm are usually found in memes containing political issues. There are no witty techniques and infantilism found because social phenomenon memes do not create something that is made up to make it seem funny, but instead makes something that already exists and seems ordinary to look funny when discussed again. The weakness of this research is that it does not clearly discuss the relationship between memes and themes other than social phenomenal themes with identified techniques and functions. This is due to the lack of data and the variety of uploaded memes, so that there is no definite pattern for memes other than social phenomena. The researcher hopes that further research will examine other meme themes that have been identified in this study in order to find other connections that can enrich research on the same topic.

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