CASE STUDY OF ESP AND TRANSLATION:
COURSE DESIGN AND STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES

Vilhelmina Vaičiūnienė

Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania

ORCID iD: Vilhelmina Vaičiūnienė   https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1326-6743

Abstract. *The article presents the course ESP and translation for the second and third-year students of Translation and Editing bachelor study programme at Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania), which is discussed from different perspectives. The aim of the paper is twofold: 1) to test the course on ESP and Translation in the humanities (main parameters, their relevance, efficiency of the tasks) against the ESP scholars' main assumptions about the ESP per se, and 2) to discuss students' experience and reflections on the course after its delivery. The course goals and objectives, as well as the scope of the course are analysed to determine the correspondence of the course according to the ESP sub-areas presented by Williams (2014, 2-3). Reflecting scholarly insights into ESP exponential growth for academic purposes over the last 20 years and the idea that hybridity is a constitutive part of specialized genres, the paper focuses on the composition of the ESP course aiming at the acquisition of certain specialized language skills focused on the field of humanities and practical translation skills. The duality of the course composition and training of specialized skills reflects the complexity of the discussed course. Web 2.0 environment and tools constitute a part of the multimodal resources of this course as well as tools for translation training. Finally, the relevance of such course, desired results and students and teacher's satisfaction are also addressed. The qualitative research perspective is applied for the collection and analysis of the data.*

Key words: *English for specific purposes, humanities, course design, translation, students' experience.*

1. INTRODUCTION

English for specific purposes (ESP) is defined as "the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language where the goal of the learners is to use English in a particular domain" (Paltridge and Starfield 2013, 2). Sarré and Whyte (2016) have formulated the definition for the field of ESP in the following way:

> *...the branch of English language studies which concerns the language, discourse, and culture of English-language professional communities and specialised groups, as well as the learning and teaching of this object from a didactic perspective* (Sarré and Whyte 2016, 150).

One more specific feature of ESP today is its communicative element which according to Williams (2014, 3) moved overall linguistics towards communication in real situations. Brunton (2009, 22) states that "ESP is today more vibrant than ever with a bewildering number of terms created to fit the increasing range of occupations that have taken shelter under the ESP umbrella." Williams (2014) seconding Brunton discusses the exponential growth of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) over the last twenty years. The reason for this growth most probably is modern world and its needs. "The most significant challenge thus is to bridge the gap between the classroom and the world of work, and understand the relationship between ESP classroom discourses, professional discourses, and professional practices" (Bhatia et. al. 2011, 144). Communication aspect of teaching any language for specific purposes is one of the utmost importance (Braud et al. 2017, cited in Whyte and Sarré 2017).

Following Sarré and Whyte's stance, the didactic aspect of ESP is within the object of research which requires scientific attention. Moreover, the content of ESP, as well as the context where it is delivered, are some of the parametres which become distinguishing elements of this field that emphasise "inescapably specific contexts" (Sarré and Whyte, 2016, 10). Apart from these, course design is a complex and challenging issue. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) argue for three main approaches to course design: a) language-centred course design, b) skills centred course design, c) earning centred approach.

The aim of this paper is twofold: 1) to test the course on ESP and Translation in the humanities (main parameters, their relevance, efficiency of the tasks) against the ESP scholars' main assumptions about the ESP per se, and 2) to discuss students' experience and reflections on the course after its delivery.

Since the conducted research applies a qualitative research perspective, the qualitative comparative and descriptive methods have been used for the data collection and analysis.

2. METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

The research was conducted at Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania), between the years 2021-2023. The course *ESP and Translation in the humanities* was delivered for students of *Translation and Editing* (T&E) study programme. As stated above, the paper addresses two issues: i. the analysis of the course in relation to approaches found in research literature, ii. students' evaluation of the course. The issues are approached from different methodological perspectives. The first one discussed in the paper is mainly based on the comparison between theoretical assumptions of ESP and course design, whereas the second is analysed with a view to the case study methodology. Finally, I attempt to measure the compliance of theoretical approaches of ESP to practical implementation of them from the student's perspective. Multiple scholarly papers claim that the learner-centred approach based on the learner's needs is one of the most common features of ESP research (Guerid and Mami 2017; Widdowson, 1978; Dudley-Evans, 1997, etc.). However, the course under discussion was tailor-made with the view to the curriculum of T&E study programme and the projected competences aiming at training translators (discussed in section 3).

The qualitative perspective was employed for the analysis of the research data on the course. Case study research is most often described as qualitative inquiry (Harrison et al. 2017). The comparative method was used for the analysis of the constituent components of the course *ESP and Translation,* and the analytical method was applied for the students'

interview responses. Addressing the first issue (the course design, aim, objectives, syllabus and teaching methodology employed in the course), the analysis was conducted referring to Williams (2014), Bhatia et al. (2011). The second issue, relating to students' interview responses, was analysed using a descriptive and comparative approach. Williams distinguished 16 subfields, including recent additions related to digital technologies (electronic Business English (e-BE), electronic Medical English (e-ME) of ESP. Referring to this classification *ESP and Translation in the humanities* may be attributed to the category of *English for Specific and Academic Purposes (ESAP).* This author also discusses two different perspectives from which researchers approach ESP: narrow-angle and wide-angle (Williams, 2014). I prefer to employ this "narrow-angled" perspective and present specificities of the discussed course. Referring to Williams there are two strands in ESP: major strand and minor strand. In this paper my focus is related to the minor strand or to be more precise "analysis of features of ESP and translation for humanities characterizing the subfield of ESP".

2.1. The participants and interviewees

The research data on students' evaluation of the course were collected between the years 2021-2023. The course of *ESP and Translation in the humanities* was delivered for the second and third-year students in 2021 (due to the changes in the study programme) and for the third-year students in 2023. Their responses to the questionnaire were presented in a written form and collected online. The participants filled out the questionnaire after the delivery of the course. The interview was composed of seven questions, five of them were open-ended, which asked students to express their opinion and reflect on their experience during the course. In total, twenty-five respondents completed the questionnaire: 8 respondents (second year) and 9 respondents (third year) in 2021, 8 respondents in 2023. The participants were coded by letters and a number of the academic year (2nd or 3rd) and calendar year (e.g. A, 2nd, 2021).

3. THE COURSE OF *ESP AND TRANSLATION IN THE HUMANITIES*

The present study draws from my experience as a course developer and teacher as well as students' who completed the course experience. The course *ESP and Translation in the humanities* addresses twofold objectives: 1) the acquisition of ESP vocabulary of humanities field, 2) mastery of translation skills for dealing with ESP texts (English-Lithuanian pair). There are three main approaches to a course design identified by Hutchinson and Waters (1987): language-centred course design, skills centred course design and learning centred approach (cited in Guerid, and Mami 2017). The analysed course was designed for bachelor level students of translation. This programme comprises two ESP courses: *ESP and Translation in the humanities* followed by the second course of *ESP and Translation for social sciences* (law, business, public administration, etc.) (Fig. 1). In fact, these courses were designed with the view to the rationale of the T & E programme and the projected learning outcomes the graduates of the programme should achieve. Accordingly, the preparation of the academic programme stems from the labour market demands, social needs of the society, as well as the higher education institution priorities, therefore, students' needs were not considered.

Fig. 1 ESP courses within the frame of the study programme

3.1. The course design

Williams (2014) provides a list of 9 topics related to ESP which are the most relevant today. A similar approach is expressed by other scholars. In my paper I discuss the methodology which underlies specificity of the course, the selection of topics, multimodality of teaching and learning, including a variety of online tools, such as video, audio, websites and links to specific topic, which correspond to Williams' listed topics, such as description of specialized varieties of ESP, curriculum development, material preparation, tasks (Fig. 2). In the course analysis section, I would like to overview several aspects of the course:

- Course design
- Syllabus
- Teaching methodology
- Activities/assignments

Course design including eduational objectives and specific type of learning along with teaching methods and specific activities tailor made to address the students' needs are discussed by Dou et al. (2023). All these aspects have been considered in the construction of this programme. Serafini et al. (2015) overview surveys conducted in specialised courses of ESP and present their ideas on the methodological improvements of needs analysis research, seeking to clarify certain shortcomings. However, the course under discussion was designed without conducting a needs analysis so much emphasized by the majority of scholars writing on ESP.
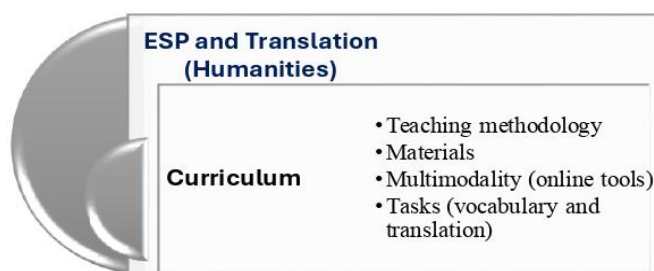
Fig. 2 Curriculum of *English for Specific Purposes and Translation in the humanities*

The objectives of the course unit focus on the following didactic elements:

- providing knowledge of English for specific purposes (linguistic and stylistic peculiarities);
- developing abilities to understand and analyse texts from the linguistic point of view;
- developing skills to translate texts from the area of humanities.

I have come across such a question: "How do ESP specialists know that what they do, results in the learning outcomes that they and their students desire?" By reflecting on scholarly insights into ESP exponential growth for academic purposes over the last 20 years and the idea that hybridity is a constitutive part of specialized genres, it is worth mentioning that the composition of the ESP course is dual: i. the acquisition of certain specialized language skills (humanities), ii. the acquisition of practical translation skills. The duality of the course indicates the complexity of it. The main idea behind the course was the integration of translation into the activities related to ESP of humanities. Thus, the dual character of the course prompted its teaching methodology. The course is challenging and intense for both students and teachers.

Bhatia et al. (2011, 143) argue: "Recent research in genre analysis clearly favours a model of ESP which focuses on the acquisition of professional expertise, which integrates discursive competence, disciplinary knowledge and professional practice in a complex and dynamic manipulation of socio-pragmatic space within which most forms of specialized communication take place." The authors claim that ESP material does not need to be narrowly defined. In fact, during this course translator trainees are taught translation skills and at the same time are involved in mastering the ESP vocabulary through a variety of language acquisition activities (reading and writing, pair and group communication, presentations, compilation of field-related glossary, studying online subject specific material, self- and pair-assessment). To quote Braud, Millot, Sarré and Wozniak (2017, 37-38): "Specific purpose language ability can be seen as a professional macro-skill comprising knowledge and competencies related to disciplinary, academic, or professional domains, and to particular modes of communication and relationships typical of each". The compilation of terms, concepts, collocations specific to each topic is a continuous, semester-length task, leading to a compilation of a glossary of approximately 500 lexical items - a tool which can be useful for students' future career as translators. Moreover, Williams (2015) distinguishes translating as a professional domain that applied linguistics and linguists are interested in as well. However, he mentions specific field of translation that is business. Conversely, ESP for humanities has not been researched yet in the way other subfields have been investigated and explored. Following Hutchinson and Waters (1987), scholars of the early stage of ESP research, a mixed approach of the course design was adopted: language-centred and skills-centred design. Linguistic target situation focused on texts and vocabulary of the humanities domain and skills-centred on performance and competence in translation.

Humanities being a broad domain is another important teaching and learning issue. Thus, one of the biggest challenges for the course preparation was the selection of the appropriate topics. The syllabus covers a number of different topics within the field of humanities (culture, communication, visual art, architecture, music, philosophy, etc.). Apart from a very specific vocabulary, mode of presentation, difficulty level, each topic involves education of culture per se (international, global, national). As for example, the topic on art involves not only understanding what art is, but also familiarisation with different epochs, artistic styles, artists from different times and countries.

Furthermore, translation activity as an important professional domain of ESP has been articulated along with professional vocabulary acquisition (Williams 2014). Yet, Williams discusses business field translation, not humanities, which is a composition of different areas of scientific and academic discourse. When it comes to teaching translation and interaction between two languages, students and teachers are faced with a big challenge. Translation assignments are more difficult to cope with, require knowledge from previous courses on

translation theory, as well as a good mastery of their native language. The most typical problems are word-for-word translation, misinterpretation of ideas or grammatical, stylistic and punctuation errors. The skills centred course design aims to get away from the surface performance data and looks at the competence that underlies the performance.

3.2. Multimodality of the course

Multimodality is one more key feature of the course. Web 2.0 environment and tools constitute a part of the multimodal resources of this study subject, as well as tools for training translation skills. Williams (2014, 7), referring to other scholars, states that "… classes need to be multimodal in order to teach students the skills required in the 21st-century work environment." According to translation scholar Mary Snell Hornby "Multimedia communication creates new text types (the audio museum guide is one example), some of them multisemiotic, with the verbal signs interacting with icons, layout tricks, pictorial images and sounds as can increasingly be seen in advertising techniques" (Snell-Hornby 2006, 133). The students of ESP course discussed above are trained to translate texts using a big variety of technological tools practically daily: *Trados* translation software, *Memsourse*, memory tools, thesauruses, online reference tools and dictionaries, video, audio materials, are always at hand. Moreover, they use a big variety of online resources, interactive materials for the learning purposes, including pictures and detailed information online and offline. In that respect the course is both interactive and multimodal. The course is extremely beneficial for both teaching and learning, as it is conducted in a multimodal environment. The integration of digital media (pictures, visual elements, sounds, music), adds educational value to the course itself. One more aspect discussed by Williams that is worth of attention is "up-to-minute information in the classroom" (2014, 7) which is possible thanks to the Internet and social media. With the use of online materials and social media for the teaching purposes, come the issues of the copyright and plagiarism inevitably requiring special attention and education. Moreover, scholars argue that specially designed multimedia packages when students are exposed to authentic language use are much more worthy in comparison to traditional material (Dou, Chan and Win 2023). The new technologies provide additional opportunities to use various formats of information presentation, graphics, multimedia technology tools: the tasks must be interesting for the modern student and related to life.

4. ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES AND EVALUATION OF THE COURSE

Analytical research into the quality and pragmatic value of the course required delving deeper into students' satisfaction, experiences and opinions about the course. The participants were interviewed about the relevance of the course for their professional careers, the importance of the topics, activities, and assignments they had to perform. In our case, I worked closely with students by interviewing them about their experience of studying, and their level of satisfaction for writing, reviewing their original assignment, and reviewing former students' case analyses from the course to identify valued features of the genre.

The interview composed of seven questions was conducted online. Five questions were open ended, which asked students to express their opinion and reflect on their studying experience during the course. Students were interviewed about the topics included in the course (i.e., course contents), which of them they found the most relevant to their

future career. Students' responses were rather positive, showing their satisfaction with the topics and study materials, as well as activities they enjoyed most:

Each and every topic is equally as important and useful as it broadens one's knowledge and understanding on a particular subject." [student A, 3rd, 2021]. *"All individual topics are introduced with specific, useful and necessary vocabulary. As a student, you are acquainted with the lexicon of each specific subject, and you have an opportunity to grasp cultural context.* [student A, 3rd, 2021] *All of the topics listed above were useful reason being that research on them was necessary, it provided gaining more knowledge, learning new things, expanding vocabulary.* [student I, 3rd, 2021].

Due to the variety of the teaching resources and their presentation modes the course seemed appealing to students.

4.1. Topics and their relevance

The respondents were asked to rate the topics according to their relevance and interest. As to the most interesting topics, the topics on Applied arts (architecture, design, applied graphics) and Visual arts were distinguished out of ten topics from the point of view of extralinguistic knowledge. The mode of presentation was multimodal, we used a lot of online resources, reading materials, authentic texts, visuals, such as pictures of buildings, their styles, elements of architecture. These aspects were evaluated in students' comments as the most beneficial and capturing:

It was fascinating to learn the terminology related to it.... I am able to appreciate a wider range of styles of visual art. [student E, 3rd, 2021]
I enjoyed art studies the most because I got to research and present my favorite artist to my group mates. [student O, 2nd, 2021]
Every sphere was useful, but I would highlight English for Specific Purpose(s), Communication and Cultural Studies because of the amount of useful terminology and information we were able to examine about the subjects and the world itself. [student G, 3rd, 2023]
Everything related to visual arts. It was fascinating to learn the terminology related to it, I expanded my knowledge and understanding of this area and thus I am able to appreciate a wider range of styles of visual art. [student E, 3rd, 2021]
All topics about art and music, as we were able to find out what styles and instruments were used throughout time. [student J, 2nd, 2021]

4.2. Activities and assignments

The next group of questions (3, 4, 5) was linked to the activities/assignments performed in the class or outside it. The presented list of 10 activities (doing tasks/exercises, presentations, reading and analysis of texts, doing quizzes on vocabulary, preparing a glossary, discussions, doing translation tasks, translating longer text, analysing translated texts, assessing your group mates) revealed the students' priorities for translation activities, reading and analysis of authentic texts and making presentations as class activities. These options were marked by most of the interviewees. However, preparing a glossary (which might be a useful tool for them) was selected by just few students.

Preparing a glossary and doing translation tasks helped me gain most knowledge and skills because I would write all the unknown words in a glossary and translation tasks

most of the times would have those words, therefore, it was easier for me to memorize them and broaden my vocabulary and general knowledge about words. [Student M, 2nd, 2021].

Comparison between the second- and third-year students' responses indicates differences in viewpoint. The most favourite activities between the second-year students were: *reading and analysing authentic texts, doing translation tasks, translating longer texts.* The third-year students' choices were slightly different: *doing translation tasks, reading and analysing authentic texts, analysing translated texts, preparing a glossary, translating longer texts.* The choice of activities among the third-year respondents was much more extensive and reasoned:

Learning vocabulary and at least some basics of a specific area is of great importance, in order to be able to understand a text related to it and translate it properly, with as little inaccuracies as possible. [Student E, 3rd, 2021].

Students expressed their preference to translation related activities (*doing translation tasks, analysing translated texts, translating longer texts*). Although the activity of preparing a glossary was designed to teach students how to work with words/terms and collocations professionally. Preparation of glossary was one of the most important elements in the course teaching translation profession and translation skills. The results indicate that the third-year students are more aware of their future profession, therefore preparing a glossary is also among the favourite activities, although time consuming. However, none of the interviewed students chose the activity "Assessing your group mates." This finding indicates students' unwillingness to evaluate their peers.

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The respondents were asked to list the most helpful activities for their knowledge and skills acquisition. They were able to explain why a particular activity was beneficial. Among the second-year respondents activities such as doing tasks and exercises, doing quizzes and making presentations were highlighted:

.... making presentations allowed us to investigate the chosen topics even further, thus find even more new information. [Student J, 2nd, 2021]. *.... making presentations since you never know what skills you might need in the future job....* [Student N, 2nd, 2021]. *Doing quizzes and class discussions … made me think critically and focus more on the most important information.* [Student K, 2nd, 2021].

.... doing translation tasks helped me gain most knowledge and skills... translation tasks most of the times would have those words, therefore, it was easier for me to memorize them and broaden my vocabulary and general knowledge about words. [Student M, 2nd, 2021]. *.... helped gain some practical skills in my field of study.* [Student L, 2nd, 2021].
Preparing a glossary because translators work with dictionaries. [Student P, 3rd, 2023].

The most valuable tasks were presentations (in-depth analysis on the given subject), discussions (peers can make you think twice, so you get an opportunity to see the bigger picture) and, lastly, translation tasks and analysis of them (you get to apply your knowledge and test your skills.

The winners: presentations (in-depth analysis on the given subject), discussions (peers can make you think twice, so you get an opportunity to see the bigger picture) and, lastly, translation tasks and analysis of them (you get to apply your knowledge and test your skills; you also get feedback from a professional, which can be really motivating or it can feel like a pat on the back, encouraging you to pay attention to details. [Student A, 3rd, 2021].

Most of the interviewees indicated translation activities (doing translation tasks, Translation and analysis of translation, translating longer texts) as the most useful for their career path, that way revealing their responsible and mature approach towards their future career as professional translators.

The more I translate, the more skillful I become, my mind is being trained to find creative solutions to "untranslatable" words or phrases, I learn specific terminology much better, as I use it in context while translating. [Student E, 3rd, 2021].
As a future translator I think that the most beneficial activity is translating longer texts. It gave me an idea and skills on how translating process works and what you should do in order to achieve the best results. [Student K, 2nd, 2021].
Regarding tasks related to translation, I would comment its usefulness by this well-known phrase: "practice makes it perfect". I learn specific terminology much better, as I use it in context while translating. [Student E, 3rd, 2021].
As a future translator I think that the most beneficial activity is translating longer texts. It gave me an idea and skills on how translating process works… [Student K, 2nd, 2021].

Comparison of the respondents' answers reveals no difference between the second- and third-year students' ideas about their prospects and future career. The given responses show their understanding of what professional competence is needed. However, the third-year students can reason their choices in a better-grounded manner. The responses also indicate the relevance of practicing translation which leads to the acquisition of professional translation skills, the relationship between translation and analysis in the professional settings, and the importance of feedback. The activity of preparing a glossary was created with the purpose to develop students' attention to words, their formation, search of meaning in the dictionary, as these skills are particularly important for professional translators. However, not all students perceived the value of this assignment.

4.3. Drawbacks and course improvement

Finally, two questions in the questionnaire rested on drawbacks of the course and students' suggestions for its improvement. No drawbacks were indicated as regards the selection of the topics, or activities. The respondents expressed their satisfaction. However, they had some remarks as to improving the course delivery as, for example, a word list for each topic prepared in advance. Some students' responses indicate too broad scope of the course and their anxiety to cope with all the tasks and acquisition of translation tools.

The course is so broad that I felt like we were always in the rush. [Student B, 3rd, 2021].
I wish there was more of group work such as group discussions. [Student C, 3rd, 2021].
In my view, the course material is developed very well. I honestly cannot think of anything I lacked in this course. [student E, 3rd, 2021]. *No flaws were found.* [Student A, 3rd, 2021].
I missed the opportunity to learn more about the existing translation tools that make work easier. [Student H, 3rd, 2021].

The activity of preparing a glossary was created with the purpose to develop students' attention to words, their formation, search of meaning(s) in the dictionary, as these skills are particularly important for professional translators. As regards improvement of the course, different approaches were observed between the second- and third-year students. The second-year students would prefer ready-made word lists, more feedback from a teacher, more discussions, although the course itself is mainly focused on reading authentic, professional texts, their translation and analysis.

I would suggest creating a prepared table of words in every topic that should be included in the glossary so that it would be easier for students to write them down and find descriptions... [Student M, 2nd, 2021].
.... studying in smaller groups is much more efficient, as professors can monitor their students' progress easier than working with a larger group during the same academic hours, and the students can thus make greater progress. [Student E, 3rd, 2023]
More communication with students and more feedback on tasks completed. [Student O, 2nd, 2021]
Requesting more discussion-type classes, rather than reading dry information from a book... [student J, 2nd, 2021]

The third-year students would prefer more personalisation of the course delivery, which is hardly possible, since the groups are not large in general. They also express the idea of choosing the topic individually and delving into it by making presentation or translation.

I think having students prepare presentation on different topics would save a lot of time during the course, where the entire group could focus on one topic longer, instead of having a class or two dedicated to one topic and then moving to the next. [Student C, 3rd, 2021]
I see no lack in this course, I cannot suggest any improvements. [Student E, 3rd, 21]
have smaller translation tasks in each topic and a larger one in a topic that one can pick themselves based on personal interests or opinion on what would be the most useful. [Student I, 3rd, 21].

5. CONCLUSION

ESP and Translation in the humanities is a specific course which has no analogue. Therefore, it was impossible to compare and evaluate it from the perspective of similar courses. Nevertheless, the course analysis resting on two perspectives (the theoretical perspective, and students' evaluation) revealed the relevance of the course and its possible improvement.

The course was designed with a specific aim of the programme and study outcomes. It was not based on students' needs analysis (emphasised by many ESP scholars). The findings of the conducted research revealed high level of students' satisfaction with the course in general, yet with some minor shortcomings. A language-centred and skills-centred course design seems beneficial to teaching translation students. The "narrow-angled" perspective allowed to look in depth into the specificities of the discussed *ESP and Translation* course. The interviewed students expressed their satisfaction with the course content by indicating different topics as their favourites (Visual Arts, Applied Arts, Communication, etc.) The most valued activities and assignments were the ones involving translation or related to translation. Among the drawbacks of the course pre-prepared glossary and more feedback were requested. With a view to the development of the course content and the quality of teaching, some changes might be made regarding the choice of topics and vocabulary activities.

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