The Use of CLIL to Teach English and Subjects Related to Teaching Practice at UNAE, Ecuador

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ABSTRACT:
The National University of Education (UNAE) is a higher educational institution that trains teachers for the different regions of Ecuador. The National and Foreign Languages Pedagogy Major was opened at UNAE on April 2018 and its primary goal is to form future English teachers for the whole country. These teachers must graduate with a C1 level of communicative competence in English and they have to develop the professional competencies that characterize a twenty first century foreign language teacher through their nine semesters of teaching practice. In order to develop these competencies, most of the subjects from the first to the last term of the major are taught in English and CLIL is the pedagogical approach to achieve this goal. The use of CLIL in the training process of these teachers is the **object of study** of the research that is presented in this paper and the **overall aim** is to propose a methodological tool to develop the required level of communicative competence in English together with the desired professional competencies. A qualitative **approach using intervention strategy** was used to accomplish the declared goal. Literature review, observations and the conduct of interviews to experienced teachers of English were used to determine the influence of the methodological tool to the integration of subjects in a specific semester. To reach the overall aim, the authors propose a 10-element methodological tool to teach the contents of the teaching practice related subjects in English at UNAE.

Key words: CLIL, C1 level of English, professional competencies

INTRODUCTION:
On November 18, 2013, the "El Telégrafo" released an information that in 2014 three thousand eight hundred eighty-six million dollars would be invested for English Language teacher training. Retrieved in 2014 from http://www.telegrafo.com.ec/economia/masqmenos/item/un presupuesto-que-sustenta-la-matriz-productiva.html
In the field of English language teacher training, Ecuador has made attempts to improve the teacher's competencies by means of the program, "Go Teacher". Through this program, the National Secretariat of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (SENESCYT) and the Ministry of Education, "attempted to improve the teachers' levels of English through an immersion period in English speaking countries during a period that would allow them to interact with the culture; practice the English language; and, learn new foreign language teaching methodologies" http://programasbecas.educacionsuperior.gob.ec/ensena-ingles/. However, the number of teachers trained in this program is far from reaching the demands of the country. At present, the number of English teachers is not enough, and this is exacerbated with the requirement of the 2016 Curriculum that mandates schools to offer English in public institutions for students to learn this foreign language from Year 2 of General Education until the last year of High school or "*Bachillerato*"
The National University of Education (UNAE), one of the four emblematic Ecuadorian universities, aims to:
"*To contribute to the training of human resources of the educational system for the construction of a democratic, free and fair society, generating excellence educational models, characterized by a scientific approach of rights and inter culturalism*" (Pérez Gómez, 2015, page.1) as its

mission. The mission implies the formation of a new education professional who could respond to challenge the mission poses.

When referring to the new teacher that the Ecuadorian society currently needs, Dr. Angel Pérez Gómez, Ph. D., president of the Academic Committee of the Management Commission of UNAE, emphasizes the foundations of the Pedagogical Model of the University that, *"Teacher training for these demands requires a radical transformation of the traditional approaches. It is necessary to train expert professionals in the respective knowledge domains. They must be competent and committed to provoke, accompany, encourage and guide the learning of every citizen lifelong"* (Pérez Gómez, 2015, page.11).

UNAE wants to break free from the traditional training or formation paradigms in teacher training and proposes a new training process where the students are the protagonist of their own learning. To accomplish this, 40% of the curriculum is professional teaching practice block, 60% of theoretical formation is carried out through face to face learning, and 30% of it is supposed to be through an on-line teaching learning process. Throughout the whole educational process, the students are accompanied by a personalized tutor.

To be coherent with what is stated in the Pedagogical Model, the UNAE curriculum design is organized based on the following principles: *relevance of the practical component in the curriculum; theory only as a tool to understand; question and design practice; the use of the on-line space as a privileged platform for the transmission; production and cooperative expression of the contents of learning, proposals and projects for intervention and priority to social commitment* (Pérez Gómez, 2015, pp. 12 and 13).

In order to put into practice the Pedagogical Model of the UNAE under the above mentioned principles, the different curricular designs of the degree programs are pedagogically organized into training units, in terms and academic periods and problematic nucleus.

The National and Foreign Languages Pedagogy Major was opened at UNAE on April 2018 and its primary goal is to form future English teachers for the whole country. These teachers must graduate with a C1 level of communicative competence in English and they have to develop the professional competencies that characterize a twenty first century foreign language teacher through their nine semesters of teaching practice.

The Basic Training Unit of this major covers the first four terms, the first two terms prepare the students to respond to the problematic nucleus - What subjects, contexts and socio-educational systems? This question is related to the knowledge that the students have to acquire so that it could be completed with what do they learn for, and the answer would be in the skills and professional competencies that the student have to develop during this time.

In order to prepare the students in solving this problematic nucleus in this major, the academic subjects that the students receive should be aimed at the development of communicative competence in English as well as the development of the professional competencies. This is a departure from the traditional trend in English teaching and pedagogical formation. Based on this orientation, the curriculum for the new major considers two subjects related to teaching practice. These are - "**Integrating Subject. Educational and Political Systems"** which integrates all the other subject matters in the term based on the students' teaching practice by reflecting on what they observe in the teaching practice, and the theorizing aspect of the teaching practice - **Diagnostic Approach of the educational policies in Basic General Education and High school.** The Diagnostic Approach subject aims to diagnose cases, problems and situations in their teaching practice experiences in order to write a Knowledge Integrating Project in English. These two subjects are taught in English since the first semester of the degree program. Hence, the content and language integrated learning (CLIL) methodology plays an important role in order to develop communicative competence in English and contribute to the development of professional competencies at the same time.

As emphasized in the preceding paragraph, the teachers will graduate from the PINE degree program with a C1 level of communicative competence according to the Common European Framework of Reference. This is equivalent to a Proficient user or effective operational proficiency who can demonstrate the following competencies:

- Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning. (Council of Europe, 2014: 24)
- Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. (Council of Europe, 2014: 24)
- Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. (Council of Europe, 2014: 24)

- Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices. (Council of Europe, 2014: 24).

Now regarding the professional competencies of the future graduates from the PINE degree program, they have to develop the competencies stated in the UNAE pedagogical model which necessitate that they exhibit and show competent performance by means of their capacities to: comprehend and diagnose situations; processes and educational systems; to design, evaluate the curriculum in a personalized way; to design and construct contexts and learning communities; and to learn to regulate themselves and to develop professionally along their lifetime (Álvarez, 2017 Pt. Cit: 16-18).

The expected outcomes in the syllabi of the three subject matters contribute to the aforementioned competencies.

In English A1, the students are expected to:

- understand and use daily expressions and very basic phrases to explain concrete needs.
- introduce different people and give personal information
- ask questions about details such as where do you live, who do you know and the things he or she has
- interact in a simple way in conversations and with other people in English
- reinforce the competencies and skills to proceed to a higher level in learning English.

In the "Integrating Subject. Educational and Political Systems", the students are expected to:

- reflect on the teaching of English in the English language teaching (ELT) classrooms
- know and evaluate the educational policies in the English as a foreign language context
- analyse the possible challenges of the contemporary society, taking the digital era into account, the sociocultural crisis of values as well as globalization and its influence on education
- understand and plan programs to solve the challenges of the immediate socio-educational environment in the English as a foreign language teaching learning process

In "Diagnostic Approach" to the educational policies in Basic General Education and High school, the students are expected to:

- diagnose educational problems: phenomena, subjects, contexts and educational systems in ELT
- know and understand public educational policies and their relationship with the phenomena, situations, processes and educational systems particularly in ELT
- diagnose the incidence of public policies in situations, processes and educational systems in ELT
- observe and find out how the ELT process develops in institutional units of the Ecuadorian educational system
- characterize the contexts, subjects and educational phenomena that intervene in the ELT process.

The contents of the subject matter English A 1 provide the students with a very basic level of communicative competence in the language while the expected outcomes of the subject matters - Integrating Subject, Educational and Political Systems and Diagnostic Approach to the educational policies in Basic General Education and High school demand a higher foreign language level to incorporate the integrating thread of the term: Diagnostic Approach to Public Policies in Education and Good Living (problems in the educational institutions in the dimensions of academic organization and infrastructure) in order to write their Knowledge Integrating Project in English and present it orally in English. Based on the authors' experience and research, CLIL is the preferred methodology to achieve the expected outcomes and to develop the desired competencies that future English teachers are expected to achieve as graduates of UNAE.

Marsh (2012) emphasizes that every kind of language learning in which a target language is used for teaching students non-linguistic content can be called CLIL. As a result, CLIL becomes an umbrella term for all dual-process educational contexts (Coyle, 2007:97).

Moreover, Mehisto et all (2008) as cited by Attard Montalto, S et al. (2014), CLIL is an approach which involves the development of social, cultural, cognitive, linguistic, academic and other learning skills, which in turn facilitate achievements in both content and language.

According to (Harrop, E. 2012:57), "CLIL is very popular at present at the international level". This author analyzes the following statements: CLIL leads to a greater level of linguistic competence; CLIL increases motivation; and, CLIL is appropriate for students who have different skills, CLIL enhances inter cultural comprehension.

For (Eurydice 2015:7), the aim of CLIL is to develop proficiency in content as well as in foreign language, teaching not *in* but *through* **the** foreign language.

Based on these theoretical precedents and other that are elaborated in this paper as well as in the actual research carried out, the authors elaborated the following general and specific objectives.

Overall aim: Propose a methodological tool to develop the required level of communicative competence in English together with the desired professional competencies for a twenty first century foreign language teacher.

Specific aims:

1. Determine the fundamental competencies following the 10-element methodological tool.

2. Apply precise methods and techniques to achieve the competencies.

3. Elaborate the 10-element methodological tool for content and language integrated learning of the subjects – Integrating Subject. Educational and Political Systems and Diagnostic Approach to the educational policies in Basic General Education and High school together with English A1.

To reach the overall and specific aims, the authors propose a 10-element methodological tool to teach the contents of the teaching practice related subjects: Diagnostic Approach and Integrating Subject in English to the first term students of the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages Students Majoring in English at the National University of Education.

METHODOLOGY:

A qualitative **approach using intervention strategy** was used to accomplish the **overall aim.** The intervention strategy was based on action research. It started with the literature review that allowed the authors to identify the scientific foundations in the use of CLIL to teach English and the teaching practice-related subjects. Then, there was an application phase that first started with the integration of the fours Cs: communication, cognition, content and culture proposed by Coyle et al (2007). These allowed the students to start learning to communicate in English, to develop their linguistic skills - speaking, reading, writing and listening comprehension and to relate the acquisition of the contents related to the subjects in question with the Ecuadorian culture but it was not enough to for the students to achieve the expected outcomes of English A1, Integrating Subject. Educational and Political Systems and Diagnostic Approach to the educational policies in Basic General Education and High school. Then, the second application phase, was based on the five "Cs" proposed by   in "*The CLIL Guidebook":* **content, communication, cognition, community and <u>competence</u>.** This phase allowed the students to learn the contents of the subject matters, Integrating Subject. Educational and Political Systems and Diagnostic Approach to the educational policies in Basic General Education and High school in English while they communicated integrating the four linguistic skills with other high order thinking skills such as explaining, diagnosing, evaluating, etc while they integrated the findings from the observations in the teaching practice community to the contents of the subject matters in English. This integration enhanced their communicative competence and helped them achieve the expected outcomes for the A1 level of communicative competence stated in the CEFR. However, the researchers were not completely satisfied with the results and decided develop a third phase of action research introducing the other five essential elements of CLIL: **scaffolding, learner autonomy, interaction, evaluation and scenario** to complete the methodological tool These elements were also taken from Attard Montalto, S et al. (2014).

These findings were obtained from the classroom discussions of observations made by the students in teaching practice. Examples of the observation templates can be seen in annexes 1 and 2.

Based on the three phases of the action research carried out the researchers from April to August 2018, they elaborated and conducted an interview to experienced teachers of English to determine the influence of the methodological tool to the integration of subjects.

DEVELOPMENT:

As a scientific result of applying this methodology, the authors of this paper propose the 10-element methodological tool to teach the contents of the teaching practice related subjects in English at UNAE. The proposal has its theoretical antecedents in the works of Coyle et al (2007) and Attard Montalto, S et al. (2014). (Coyle et al 2007) proposes the 4 "Cs" framework. These 4 "Cs" stand for communication, cognition, context and culture. Montalto, A (2014) expands this proposal and adds "C" for competence. These 5 "Cs" framework (content, communication, competence, cognition and community) together with the categories of scaffolding, autonomy, interaction, evaluation and scenario. These are the basis for the 10-element methodological tool that is presented in this paper.

1. **Content**: Applying the constructivist model, the students build new knowledge based on their previous learning experiences though cases, problems or situations.
2. **Communication**: Withy the Content and Language Integrated Learning methodology, the teachers do not talk much as the learners do not have much language yet. Instead,

the students do group work, talk to each other and to the teacher and they use as much of the new language as possible. A CLIL teacher must always keep these questions in mind: How will my students be involved in communication? What kind of language will they use to communicate? What concept words will be necessary for them? What language and content support can I provide?

3. **Competence**: The outcomes of the lesson are described in terms of **"can do"** statements. For example: "I can relate the objectives and the policies of Objective 4 of the Good Living Plan". The CLIL teachers has to determine the "can do" statements that he/she wants his/her students to perform when the lesson is over, both in terms of the lesson contents and abilities and in terms of the new language.

4. **Community:** In a CLIL lesson, the students can relate the new learning with the world around them. They do not only learn a school subject matter, things related to the world around them. Questions such as the following should always be in the teachers' minds: *Why is this lesson relevant to my students' daily life? How can I link it to the students' Culture and Community? Is it also related to other cultures?*

5. **Cognition**: In CLIL lessons, the students no not only develop low order thinking skills but also apply the acquired knowledge to new situations, and to do this, they develop more abstract, complex and analytical skills. They quickly learn to ask questions such as: **Why? How?, What is the evidence for?,** which proves that they have developed high order thinking skills. This helps the students to research and evaluate information to solve new problems and situations.

Other five elements that are also included in the methodological tool due to their importance in the use of CLIL are: **scaffolding, learner autonomy, interaction, evaluation and teacher thinking time.**

1. **Scaffolding**: Its original meaning refers to the temporary support for people who are building. It helps them to build higher that what they can do from the ground.
In CLIL scaffolding described how teachers can help learners to do things for which they are not ready yet. This help is temporary as the teacher reduces the support as the students gain independence to do things by themselves in the same way that the builders remove the scaffolds when the building is finished. Scaffolding implies the support not only in the new language but also in the new contents. It reinforces the constructivist theory that students build their knowledge on the basis of what they have previously learned. Scaffolding can be provided by the teacher or by more proficient student(s) in the classroom, ie, peers or groups. When the student is confident enough on how to say something in the new situation, that is when they develop the four linguistics skills to communicate, they will not need any more scaffolding

2. **Learner autonomy:** One of the major objectives of CLIL is to help students do independent work, by means of problem solving developing their knowledge and competencies. How can CLIL teachers achieve this aim? Compared to Traditional teaching, teachers can still keep their role the class but controlling the students less. These are some tips to think about: the connection between students' lives and their needs and interests, encouraging group work communication, letting the students choose the content and language evaluation criteria, making classroom contracts with the students, respecting the students learning strategies and styles, using varied methodologies combined with CLIL, encouraging learner autonomy. It is very important for the CLIL teacher to train the learners how to be independent.

3. **Interaction:** Communication was one of the "C"s of CLIL originally proposed by Coyle et al (2007). It refered to the way teachers and learners communicated in the new foreign language and also to how the learners acquired the new knowledge. According to the CLIL methodology, learning is not only an internal process, but a result of an interaction of sharing knowledge and comprehension. By means of this interaction, the students construct the new learning on their previous learning experiences, as they compare and discuss new content and new language. In CLIL interaction takes place thought pair work and group work.

4. **Evaluation:** It would be impossible to talk about a methodological tool on the use of CLIL without referring to how the students are going to be evaluated. In evaluating students, it is vital to consider both the content and the foreign language students are learning. In the

Methodological guide for the use of CLIL, it is stated that evaluation with this approach differs from traditional evaluation methods.

- *First, as CLIL lessons have a double aim, attention should be paid to evaluate both the content and the foreign language that is being studied. Rather than the subject which is being studied, the evaluation should focus on the objectives (aims) of the CLIL lesson including competences, knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors*
- *As specific factors about the learners are considered when the curriculum for CLIL is being designed, some of these must also be considered when preparing the evaluation. For example, duration of school instruction, age with which the students begin to study, the government official regulations, the development of the content area, the development of the specific competence in the foreign language, the development of positive attitudes towards the subject matter content as well as the foreign language.*

The evaluation of learning with CLIL is different from the traditional way of evaluating students in schools. With CLIL, the student is learning new contents at the same time that he/she is learning a new language and the teacher has to evaluate the progress in both processes. The CLIL teachers can evaluate, give feedback and encourage the students about the subject matter contents as well as to concentrate on the use of accuracy and fluency in the foreign language.

If content and the foreign language are not evaluated, the double aim of CLIL is lost. However, sometimes priority can be given to comprehension of the subject matter and some other times, accuracy and use of the foreign language is prioritized.

5. **Scenario**: The scenarios illustrate how to teach CLIL-based modules in teaching a foreign language.

ILLUSTRATION OF HOW TO USE THE 10-ELEMENT METHODOLOGICAL TOOL PROPOSED BY THE AUTHORS TO TEACH ENGLISH A1, INTEGRATING SUBJECT. EDUCATIONAL AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS AND DIAGNOSTIC APPROACH TO THE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES IN BASIC GENERAL EDUCATION AND HIGH SCHOOL USING CLI

Activities

Activity one. Content: School and classroom infrastructure and academic organization

Activity two. Communication: Description of the school, the classroom and the teacher and students' activities based on the observation they do in their teaching practice session. Observation Template 1 (Annex 1)

Activity three: Competence. Pair work discussion of the observation results declared by each student in Observation Template 1 (Annex 1)

Activity four: Cognition. The students develop high order thinking skills as they describe, analyze, compare and explain the infrastructure and academic organization problem case or situation that they identified in their teaching practice. Observation Template 7 (Annex 2)

Activity five: Community. Classroom reflection on the case, situation or problem that they identified in the community (Cooperating school where they do their teaching practice) Observation Template 7 (Annex 2)

Activity six: Scaffolding. The different level of the tasks included in Observation Templates 1 and 7.

Activity seven: Autonomy. The students develop their autonomy as they complete their observation templates in the classroom of the cooperating school while they do their teaching practice.

Activity eight: Interaction. The students first complete the observation templates individually in their teaching practice session but later they discuss their finding in pairs, in small groups and then report them to the whole class.

Activity nine: Evaluation. This is the self-evaluation part when each student evaluates how he/she completed the task assigned in the observation template. Co-evaluation and hetero-evaluation are done where the students do oral presentations and they write their Knowledge Integrated Project (Annex 2 Observation template 7)

Activity ten: Scenario. This is the classroom implementation phase when the students discuss in their Integrating Subject. Educational and Political Systems and Diagnostic Approach to the

educational policies in Basic General Education and High school classes the results of their teaching practice experiences in English

Wrap up. The students write an expository essay with the data collected during the eight weeks of teaching practice and present it orally at the end of the semester.

Procedures

The 10-element methodological tool to teach the contents of the teaching practice related subjects: Diagnostic Approach and Integrating Subject in English in the first semester of PINE Degree Program at the National University of Education illustrates teaching ideas derived from a process of scientific research carried out by the authors from April to August 2018. The methodological tool illustrates how to teach subject matter contents related to teaching practice such as school and classroom infrastructure and academic organization in English in the first term of the major while they are learning English at A1 level.

In activity 1, the tasks assigned in Observation Template 1 (Annex 1) are very simple while they become more complex in Observation Template 7 (Annex 2). The students construct their knowledge, skills, values and feelings as they observe the infrastructure and academic organization in the school where they do their teaching practice and they relate these contents to authentic school life.

In activity number 2, the students communicate in pairs and in small groups while they describe in English the school and the routine of teachers and students in the cooperating school to complete the task I Observation Template 1 (Annex 1). They integrate the four language skills when they discuss in class what they have observed in the teaching practice school.

In activity number 3, the students develop their communicative competence in English as they do pair work to discuss the observation results in their Observation Template 1 (Annex 1). They transfer what they learned in their practicum to the University classroom discussions in English.

In activity number 4, the students not only describe but they develop more complex high order thinking skills when they analyze, compare, explain and give evidences of the infrastructure and academic organization problem case or situation that they identified in their teaching practice (Observation Template 7 Annex 2). Observation Template 7 is the basis for the Knowledge Integrating Project that they have to develop and the essay that they have to write and present orally at the end of the term.

In activity 5, the students bring to the University classroom the case, problem or situation that they have identified in the cooperating school, i.e. the community where they are doing their observation when they complete task 1 in Observation Template 7 (Annex 2)

Activity 6 illustrates how students are given more support to complete the task in Observation Template 1 (Annex 1). They have to draw and write based on the drawing, while in Observation Template 7 (Annex 2), they are asked to collect data by conducting interviews, a task that demand more "language independence".

Activity 7 shows how the students develop autonomous learning as they make the classroom observations alone. They attend the cooperating school with a classmate, but they have to complete the observation template individually, without the help of the teacher.

In activity 8, when the students come to class, their findings are discussed in pairs, in small groups and then presented to the classroom. This process enhances their communicative interaction as they integrate the four language skills in the discussions. They make use of the think, pair and share (TPS) technique.

Activity 9, there is co-evaluation of content and language while the students work in pairs and give and receive feedback from their peers and hetero evaluation when their Knowledge Integrating Project results are presented to the whole class.

In Activity 10, there are two scenarios involved. First, the first scenario is the classroom where students do the observation and the University classroom where they reflect on the findings they did in the cooperating schools during their Integrating Subject. Educational and Political Systems and Diagnostic Approach to the educational policies in Basic General Education and High school classes.

CONCLUSION:
The three phases of action research process carried out by the authors allowed them to propose the ten-element methodological tool that contributed to the achievement of   the expected outcomes of the three subjects: English A1, Integrating Subject. Educational and Political Systems and Diagnostic Approach to the educational policies in Basic General Education and High school and it contributed to the development of the communicative and professional competencies of PINE students.
The findings from the observations and the conduct of interviews to experience English as a foreign language teachers proved the effectiveness of the proposed tool.

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Annex 1

Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros (PINE)
Teaching Practice 1
Observation Template No: _____   Date: _____
Name: _____   School:
_____

Time   started: _____   Time   ended:
_____

Objectives: At the end of the teaching practice experience, students will be able to:
1. Familiarize with the school's physical plan.
2. Describe the typical school life of the students and teachers.
3. Reflect on the dynamism that exists inside the classroom by determining the role of the teachers and students in the construction of knowledge.
Task 1: Draw the physical structure of the school. Use the lay-out style in presenting the details and their corresponding descriptions.
Task 2: Describe the routine of teachers and students. Attach a copy of the schedule and the subjects that students are learning.
Task 3: Construct a micro-picture of one of the classrooms you are assigned to. Share your feelings and reflections on how it feels to be inside a classroom as observer.

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Annex 2
Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros (PINE)
Universidad Nacional de Educación
Name: _____   Date: _____
Cooperating School: _____   Year/Grade Level: _____
Observation Template 7
Objectives
1.- Finalize data collection for the completion of the K.I.P.
2.- Conduct closure activity with the teacher and the students (if this is possible).
3.- Observe how English teachers conduct evaluations like written examinations.
Tasks
1. Collect data for your K.I.P. This might be the last opportunity for you to conduct interviews or visit offices.
2. Seek opportunity to express your gratitude to your cooperating teacher.
3. Request your teacher to allow you to help or assist him/her in the conduct of examinations. Describe how this important school activity is conducted in the school.
   Note: Aside from this Observation Template, look for opportunities to gather data for your K.I.P.
1. Data Collected for the K.I.P.
_____
_____
_____

2. The Administration of Evaluation in the School
_____
_____
_____

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