

The Attitudes of EFL Learners on Using MALL in English Online Classrooms

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Abstract. In the era of easiness because of the development of modern things correlated with language, almost all human life aspects should include those. Nowadays, only some people know how to access technology, including EFL learners. Besides, this research aims to identify EFL learners' attitudes toward using MALL for online English classes. Technology's role and learners' ability to utilize it are significant after the global pandemic was announced, which drove all education activities to be fully online. One of the subjects that can significantly benefit from technology is English since almost everyone worldwide enhances its technology. This study used a descriptive qualitative method with a questionnaire adopted from Jebur and interviews conducted with 52 EFL learners at Tidar University who had completed a two-year English online course due to the pandemic outbreak. The result shows that most EFL learners' positive attitudes are visible toward using mobile phones in English online classes. It can be a benefit in some cases, yet it needs another media that could depend on each learner's preference. In conclusion, teachers should be aware of each learner to provide authentic media for particular class purposes. However, this research would benefit the newest data to the readers or researchers in this specific field to make further improvements.

Keywords: attitudes, EFL learners, English class, MALL

1. INTRODUCTION

In December 2019, Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China, reported its first pneumonia cases. Starting in 2020, COVID-19 officially spread worldwide until it reached Indonesia on March 2, 2020 (Biofarma, 2021; WHO, 2020). Simultaneously, some science aspects such as language, technology, and education have significant evolvement. People who can master them instantly will have more advantages. The reason is that language—especially English—is a component of communication nationally or internationally. Meanwhile, technology is defined as a thing with the power to help people to be more straightforward with matters like connecting to each other. In addition, Law 20 of 2003 states that education is an action to develop human potential regarding religiosity, personality, morality, self-control, intelligence, and skill to benefit society. Unfortunately, those all should adapt to a new condition after WHO (2021) pointed out that COVID-19 is a severe zymotic with serious symptoms that can spread through droplets around the air and surface. Without the health protocol, this case can make the viruses contagious massively. Then, the Indonesian government, like the one under the outbreak, decided to have online learning. Some policies appear to adapt to this evolving condition from Circular Letter No. 2 of Year 2020, about the prevention and handling of COVID-19 in Kemendikbud, and Circular Letter No. 3 of Year 2020 about the prevention of COVID-19 in education institutions

till reach 2022 Joint Decision Letter 4 Ministers on guidelines for learning implementation during COVID-19 (Kemendikbud, 2020; Raharjo & Aranditio, 2022).

Dealing with moving conventional classes to online classes, MALL (Mobile-Assister Language Learning) emerges as a new shortcut and trend in the modern era by utilizing the smartphone for language learning applications. It can be said as an opportunity since, according to Jha (2020) that Gen Alpha is a generation glass that masters touchscreen devices quickly; they can understand how to operate smartphones quicker than other previous generations—validated by the enhancement of smartphone users from 20.7% to 61.7% (370,1 million users) when Indonesia only had 277,7 million people counted in 2022 (Suara.com, 2021; Widodo, 2022). It means that the smartphone is so popular and handy to use whenever and wherever people want; then Widodo (2022) supported the government's step to conduct online learning. Nevertheless, with poor control, the students will presume the smartphone for other purposes, like playing the game on social media, which is unsuitable for learning progress. Therefore, language teacher needs to exploit MALL as well as they can. They need to keep trying although they may even be still struggling with ICT literacy, such as operating the tool and finding the right application because of the school's lack to provide IT (low-quality internet connection and inappropriate computer) also (Indriani, 2020; Ryn & Sandaran, 2020).

As a general knowledge, language has four basic skills; some researchers demonstrated that the students could assess technology assistance with a better outcome. Firstly, Al-Ahdal & Alharbi (2021) stated that MALL makes students learn something smoother related to their intimate connection to each other, especially here in assessing the students' English vocabulary. The researchers emphasized the importance of motivation or interest and process, such as how most children begin touching language from simple to complex, developing interpersonal skills, having involvement with meaning, and reaching the real world only after applying it. Furthermore, the results indicated that using MALL in collaborative learning significantly changed the students' vocabulary, group performance, and postintervention. Supported by Keezhatta & Omar (2019), MALL has a vital role in English teaching and learning four basic skills like reading. Unfortunately, many teachers are still holding onto their traditional teaching methods, which are contrary to students' interests and expertise, which is so important to evolve, as mentioned before. This research proved that MALL made a good impact on reading comprehension with vocabulary recognition and retention—even though English is not in favor of learners' parents in Saudi Arabia—as Al-Ahdal & Alharbi (2021) stated. Dealing with different skills may result in different outcomes, such as when Vigneshwari (2022) stated that most students understand English well yet still find speaking a weakness because it involves so many aspects to utter something perfectly. However, using MALL—podcasting tools and vocabulary development application—could significantly improve it. Taking some of the research results above, MALL significantly increases students' English learning progress in four basic skills.

However, this research tends to observe EFL learners' attitudes during online learning by assessing MALL as the primary English classroom media for completing four essential skills. The researchers also would like to establish a habit of using a mobile device daily to link some applications they use to English learning activities. In the case of many types of research done with technology impact on a particular skill, as described above, this research will focus more on

observing the perception aspect objectively and subjectively to make the result more valid and broad. The attitude is behavior evaluation from inside stimulus-response cycles that can change people's status negatively or positively with a particular thing (Jebur, 2020; Strauss, 1945; Wolf et al., 2020). Considering that the environment creates attitude, there can be a link between psychology and the social aspect. This case is the correlation of learners' mobile phone use with how they assess English. From this context, MALL is something that learners should deal with and adopt a new attitude toward since most teachers still prefer to use the traditional method. This research will provide more viewpoints for the EFL teachers to do or avoid something related actual condition of EFL learners. Moreover, this research will give other readers and researchers the newest data.

2. METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach to seek phenomena practiced by humans, objects, conditions, and thought systems (Nazir, 2005) with quantitative data as a compound. That is why there is an excellent connection to using this approach to identify the EFL learners' attitudes through mobile phones for English learning practice. Moreover, the participants in this study were determined with purposive sampling, yielding 52 students from two EFL classes in the sixth semester with more than two years of experience in online learning at Tidar University. According to Black (2012), purposive sampling minimizes wasting time or money since it can attain a representative sample for a particular objective. At the same time, the participants' numbers based on Sugiyono (2015) stated the good number of around 30 to 500 participants. This study used the questionnaire modified from Jebur (2020) with the same study field to get the necessary data. Moreover, the researchers grouped the questionnaire from participants' private data and their experiences using mobile phones as their English learning devices for two years since the pandemic outbreak, which predicted a different attitude before and after the pandemic. After obtaining the data, the researchers described the data from the tabulation process before making the final statement and concluding the research result.

3. RESULT

The result of the research is to verify the aim of this research about EFL learners' attitudes towards using MALL for English learning activities. Nevertheless, before heading to learners' results, the researchers ensured that the learners used mobile phones for daily tasks, especially for social activity, besides using another device like a computer. Moreover, Table 1 summarizes some activities that utilize mobile phones.

Table 1. Mobile Phone Use for Daily Task EFL Learners Centralization

Rank

Item No

Items

Participants

Percentage

1

1

Calling and sending a message

50

96.2%

2

5

Accessing the internet

49

94.2%

3

4

Taking notes and pictures

44

84.6%

4

7

Listening to songs online or in a mobile phone player

43

82.7%

5

2

Reading something

40

76.9%

6

6

Posting to a social network (e.g., WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter)

40

76.9%

7

11

Using educational apps

40

76.9%

8

9

Watching and downloading videos

37

71.2%

9

8

Using an offline dictionary (for meaning or pronunciation)

34

65.4%

10

10

Playing and downloading games

31

59.6%

11

3

Recording something

28

53.8%

12

12

Chatting with natives

26

50%

13

13

Interacting with native to improve my linguistic knowledge

23

44.2%

14

14

Interacting with natives to exchange cultural knowledge

19

36.5%

Table 1 shows that almost all participants use mobile phones for various daily social activities besides educational purposes, like calling and sending messages (96.2%) and accessing the internet (94.2%). The considerable numbers have been arranged based on the most participants to the least, where some educational purposes are included, such as using the educational application (76.9%) and offline dictionary to assess meaning and pronunciation. Furthermore, there is still a high rate of EFL learners using mobile phones for taking notes and pictures (84.6%), listening to songs online or on a mobile phone player (82.7%), reading something (76.9%), posting to the social network (76.9%), watching and downloading videos (71.2%), playing and downloading games (59.6%), and recording something (53.8%). Besides, related to English as an international range language shared with EFL learners, the data shows that the students did not use mobile phones for language learning improvisation with native help purpose. Only 26 learners (50%) used mobile phones to chat with natives, while not many used them for improving linguistic (44.2%) and exchange culture (36.5%) knowledge. In brief, the data indicates that most learners used mobile phones for almost all daily social activities for various purposes, starting from general, entertainment, education, and language learning.

Table 2. General Attitude of EFL Learners in Using Mobile Phones for English Online Classes

NO

Items

SD

D

N

A

SA

1

I think mobile phones can assist all English learning processes intensively

1.9%

1,9%

7.7%

46.2%

42.3%

2

I think I can plan my learning better using mobile phones than without them

1.9%

1,9%

23.1%

38.5%

34.6%

3

I think a mobile phone is useful for improving English skill

0.0%

0.0%

9.6%

48.1%

42.3%

4

I installed English learning application on my mobile phone to improve my English

1.9%

3.8%

23.1%

38.5%

32.7%

5

I think mobile phones can increase motivation in English learning inside and outside the classroom

0.0%

3.8%

19.2%

44.2%

32.7%

6

I think using mobile phone can improve my time productivity since I can use it whenever/wherever I want

0.0%

1.9%

11.5%

32.7%

53.8%

7

I enjoy learning English by utilizing mobile phones

1.9%

5.8%

17.3%

40.4%

34.6%

8

I can remember everything easily if I access it from my mobile phone

1.9%

11.5%

36.5%

32.7%

17.3%

9

I will purchase a mobile phone in advance features to improve my English

9.6%

13.5%

34.6%

30.8%

11.5%

10

I will purchase paid application to improve my English

9.6%

32.7%

26.9%

23.1%

7.7%

Furthermore, Table 2 exhibits more focus data related to the research's aim to seek EFL learners' attitudes towards using mobile phones for English learning activities. In this sequence, item 1 kindly gets positive responses; most learners agreed (46,2%) and strongly agreed (42.3%), which means that the learners feel mobile phones can assist their English learning intensively. For the rest, some participants decided to strongly disagree (1.9%), disagree (1.9%), and feel that they were not helped a lot by mobile phones (7.7%). The same case happens for item 2, where the percentages of strongly disagree (1.9%) and disagree (1.9%) are minimal compared with neutral (23.1%), agree (38.5%), and strongly agree (38.5%). Item 2 points out that they feel better using mobile phones for English learning planning activities. It derives from all learners' English improvisation, where they mainly chose to agree (48.1%) and strongly agree (42.3%), with the rest tapped neutral (9.6%). Still, to support the previous points, most learners have installed the English learning application shown in item number 3. Most of them chose to agree (38.5%), strongly agree (32.7%), and neutral (23.1%) rather than disagree (3.8%) and strongly disagree (1.9%). To support the data about the comparison of using a mobile phone is even gives various

benefits than other devices, the researchers got the results 25 to 27 for MALL and CALL where some representative responses presented below:

"I think I need any other device, because sometimes handphone has a limit area makes the uncomfortable feeling also feature that in some case only accessible from computer. So I think, computer sometimes is more comfortable in English learning activity like when we practice our writing skill especially when we have to write a long text." (Learner 1)

"In my opinion, computers are also more needed, because they are more focused, while using a cellphone the focus will be divided. And I think both are inseparable devices to help each other. For myself, I use my mobile phone's hotspot for my computer internet connection." (Learner 2)

"I think mobile phone is actually enough for English learning process because mobile phone already had many platforms that support people to learn about English or even any other knowledge. However, people may sometimes prefer using computer for better sight due to different screen size." (Learners 3)

"I personally believe that nowadays using mobile phone to learn English is more popular because it is portable. Therefore, rather than expanding media, creating useful apps is more interesting to me. I even hope that there will be a computer in a form of a phone. It is because such a more effective gadget is what we mostly need nowadays, especially for learning languages." (Learners 4)

Instantly, it impacts other items about learners' psychological side, such as motivation, productivity, enjoyment, and ease in using mobile phones for English learning activities rather than not using them. The data shows that 32.7% strongly agree, 44.2% agree, 19.2% in the middle agree and disagree, and only 3.8% disagree that mobile phones can increase their motivation to learn English. As yet, item 6 about the ability to increase productivity shows a sequential percentage curve from strongly disagree (53.8%), agree (32.7%), neutral (11.5%), and again, the disagreement curve gets the lowest with 1.9% only. Because of that, most learners chose to agree (40.4%) and strongly agree (34.6%) rather than disagree (5.8%) and strongly disagree (1.9%) or even be uncertain about choosing either the positive or negative side of enjoyment in using mobile phones for English learning purposes. Nevertheless, the data shows a reduction when the researcher asked about possibly upgrading their devices and applications. Item 9 and item 10 highlight that most learners chose neutral (34.6%) points that they felt unsure of doing only to improve their English. Data on item 8 about using a mobile phone to improve their memory still shows the positive side with 36.7% choosing neutral marks for other things that can do it for them, then 32.7% chose to agree, and 17.3% chose to strongly agree that mobile phones increase their memory of English material. Besides, compared with negative disagreement (SD 9.6% and D 13.5%), a positive attitude gets a higher percentage, with 30.8% agreeing, while the rest strongly disagree (11.5%). Item 10 shows the data that most learners will be thinking twice about purchasing paid applications, with 32.7% tapped disagree, followed by neutral (26.9%), agree (23.1%), strongly disagree (7.7%), and strongly disagree (9.6%). This item demonstrates that high consideration stands behind the learners' decision to pay for applications even though several paid applications do not provide the necessary features. The conclusion can be stated more clearly by the interview taken from the learners as follows:

"Even though I agree that using mobile phone is much easier because I can bring it wherever and whenever, but better for me to utilize what I have had to get something first before purchasing unpredictable things like some applications' inadequate features after paid to great amount" (Learner 5)

"I am in the point of mobile phone can increase the positive insight in learning English but I consider with my financial. That's why I chose disagree with purchasing mobile phone or paid applications." (Learner 6)

"There are a lot of free application these recent days, it makes me think twice to purchase paid applications where the free applications can provide the same even better features to me. For new mobile application, I think for English learning all devices are the same, just how we can use it properly or not" (Learner 7)

In summary, there are different attitudes that each learner has toward using mobile phones. Although all learners use it as their primary resource in daily activities, as shown in Table 1, not all learners prefer to use mobile phones independently in English online classes. The reason is that the limited and inseparable aspects of mobile phones and other devices need collaboration to give outstanding contributions. Although almost all learners have a positive attitude toward mobile phones because they can assist more intensively than other devices in better planning, improving either academic aspects (give good planning and increase English skills) or psychological aspects (increase motivation, productivity, enjoyment, and ease), the percentage number sagging from positive to negative points in item 9 and item 10 about purchasing something. From the interview, the researchers could infer that it is because of some factors like the economy and knowledge. Most learners who know which free applications or how to increase their devices' capability prefer free services more. However, there are also neutral responses, signaling they still have considerable to purchase someday if necessary.

Table 3. The Use of Mobile Phones for Assessing English Skills by EFL Learners in Online Class

NO

Items

SD

D

N

A

SA

1

I use a mobile phone to install an English learning application

1.9%

9.6%

23.1%

44.2%

21.2%

2

I use a mobile phone to share, access and save English-related materials

3.8%

3.8%

26.9%

30.8%

34.6%

3

I use a mobile phone to write messages, e-mails, assignments, and other English-related materials

1.9%

7.7%

21.2%

42.3%

26.9%

4

I use a mobile phone keyboard to attain spelling

0.0%

5.8%

19.2%

48.1%

26.9%

5

I use a mobile phone to access a dictionary/translator

1.9%

7.7%

11.5%

21.2%

57.7%

6

I use amobile phone to play games for English vocabulary like crosswords and puzzle

13.5%

13.5%

28.8%

26.9%

17.3%

7

I use amobile phone to keep English vocabulary list

5.8%

9.6%

23.1%

44.2%

17.3%

8

I use a mobile phone to listen to audio material in English

3.8%

1.9%

9.6%

42.3%

42.3%

9

I use a mobile phone for watching video material in English

0.0%

5.8%

7.7%

42.3%

44.2%

10

I use a mobile phone to check the pronunciation

5.8%

1.9%

23.1%

23.1%

46.2%

11

I use a mobile phone to speak with others in English

3.8%

7.7%

17.3%

40.4%

30.8%

12

I use a mobile phone to read English text/material

1.9%

3.8%

17.3%

38.5%

38.5%

13

I use a mobile phone to practice grammar

3.8%

3.8%

21.2%

38.5%

32.7%

Dealing with item 3 from Table 2 about the general attitude of EFL learners through mobile phones can increase English skills in online classes. Table 3 identified some positive responses through specific information and skills that most learners are more aware of being helped by mobile phones than other devices. Firstly, a positive attitude showed in the first item of the high eagerness to install an English learning application, where 44.2% chose to agree, 21.2% strongly agree, 23.1% neutral, 9.6% disagree, and only 1.9% strongly disagree. Secondly, mobile phone responses for sharing, accessing, and saving English-related material are high, with 34.6% strongly agreeing, 30.8% agreeing, 26.9% neutral, 3.8% disagreeing, and 3.8% strongly disagreeing of messaging. Still, in a rate of a positive attitude toward using a mobile phone to assess English skills, 42.3% agree, 26.9% strongly agree, 21.2% neutral, 7.7% disagree, and 1.9% strongly disagree with mobile phone use for the purpose to message, e-mail, assignments, and other English related material. Besides, again, a majority chose to agree (48.1%) here in using the keyboard to attain spelling. In comparison, the rest chose to strongly agree (26.9%), neutral (19.2%), and disagree (5.8%). For item 5 in Table 3 above, the percentage massively

increased in strongly agree choice (57.7%) about using a dictionary/translator with mobile phones. From that result, half of the learners do this activity on their mobile phones. Nevertheless, the percentage of people utilizing mobile phones in accompaniment to play games as a strategy increases the percentage of neutral as the highest choice (28.8%) rather than agree (26.6%) and strongly agree (17.3%). Furthermore, the range of negative attitudes has the same percentage not too far from the positive one, touching 13.5%. On the other hand, item 7 about utilizes it for keeping English vocabulary lists activity back in position when most learners agree (44.2%), neutral (23.1%), and strongly agree (17.3) rather than disagree (9.6%) until strongly disagree (5.8%). Additionally, item 8 shows that agree and strongly agree choices are in the same range (42.3%), which means that most learners use mobile phones to listen to audio material in English. Not only in audio, still the same from item 9 that 44.2% strongly agree and 42.3% agree in using mobile phones to watch video material in English. Moreover, item 10 shows strongly agree (46.2%), agree (23.1%), and neutral (23.1%) supported that most learners use mobile phones to check pronunciation. In contrast, the similarity to the speaking access shows that 40.4% agree, 30.8% strongly agree, and 17.3% are neutral. At the same time, the undominated choices include a negative attitude. Item 12, in a line, shows the same amount as the most picked for agreeing and strongly agreeing (38.5%) when learners use mobile phones to read English text/material. Moreover, the last item about the use of mobile phones to practice grammar shows the same significant positive trend when 38.5% agree, 32.7% strongly agree, 21.2% neutral, and 3.8% also disagree strongly disagreeing. In brief, all skills get a positive attitude connected to the mobile phone used to assess them.

Another supported by the data from the interview also concluded that mobile phones have a great advantage for English learning purposes with four different skills. Besides, the learners mentioned several skills, while others mentioned that more than one skill could be assessed with mobile phones.

"I think mobile phone can be useful for reading and writing. The reason is, when chatting with native speakers, you will definitely practice these two skills. Speaking and listening can also be practiced using western songs." (Learner 8)

"I think all skills can be improved according to how we use them. Reading, because of various text we can find, while speaking, listening, and writing because of a lot applications to help those skills like YouTube, Spotify, TikTok, Joox, Tandem, Clubhouse, HelloTalk, Wattpad, Twitter, etc." (Learner 9)

"Listening, reading, also speaking. We can improve those skills by using mobile phone because there are so many apps on mobile phone related to those skills that we can use to improve. Besides that, we also can improve our listening skill by listen to some music on mobile phone, then for reading skill we can read some stories or maybe news in english to improve this skill. and last for speaking we can join to the international group chat on discord and other apps we can always explore to practise our speaking and also listening comprehension. I feel more focus while reading even listen and speak with using mobile phone rather than computer" (Learner 10)

"In my opinion, mobile phone can help our listening skill since we use it for listening music from Joox where we directly find the lyric to ease vocabulary as well." (Learner 11)

Looking at both questionnaire and interview data, the researchers can infer that mobile phones can help improve all English skills with various applications that appear in modern times. Therefore, some learners prefer mobile phones rather than other devices. Nevertheless, the outcome depends on each learner's learning style, with some preferring to use mobile phones over other devices while others prefer using mobile phones for specific skills. In summary, all skills received positive feedback from learners as mobile phones assisted them in assessing English in online learning activities, while negative attitudes were found a little in the current point.

4. CONCLUSION

The researchers concluded that all learners are familiar with using mobile phones for almost all activities because it is practical anywhere, anytime, and caused by the length of time when a pandemic forced technology use in academic life. It can be seen from the result that they are used in daily activities such as entertainment, education, and language learning. Moreover, the learners were identified as having a positive attitude toward mobile phone use in helping assess English in online learning, mainly focusing on four English skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing, with some modern applications/platforms' assistance. In the same way, the learners' positive attitude led to how mobile phones can improve their learning motivation, productivity, enjoyment, and ease. In comparison, there is still a slightly negative attitude among learners toward using mobile phones for English learning purposes, which teachers must likely overcome. Those negative attitudes are only in purchasing the media or application they require with certain factors, while another is about skill complicity, which sometimes causes students to prefer another device to do so. In brief, assessing English learning classes with MALL is efficient and is a significant way to improve English skills and, in likelihood, technology knowledge in the post-pandemic period. It could be a new way for teachers to face the post-pandemic in conducting online English classes without diminishing motivation or interest yet more focus on eliminating the negative attitude instead. The following research could investigate some more profound topics, like focusing on the media provided on mobile phones and even specific English skills. Nonetheless, this research is worthwhile as the newest data in a certain field for the teachers to admonish with further better teaching practices using MALL or even another technology.

APPENDIX

Table 1. Mobile Phone Use for Daily Task EFL Learners Centralization

NO

Items

1

Calling and sending messages

2

Reading something

3

Recording something

4

Taking notes and pictures

5

Accessing the internet

6

Posting to a social network (e.g., WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter)

7

Listening to songs through online or in mobile phone player

8

Using offline dictionary (for meaning or pronunciation)

9

Watching and downloading videos

10

Playing and downloading games

11

Using educational apps

12

Chatting with natives

13

Interacting with native to improve my linguistic knowledge

14

Interacting with native to exchange culture knowledge

Table 2. General Attitude of EFL Learners in Using Mobile Phone for English Online Classes

NO

Items

1

I think mobile phone can assist all English learning process intensively

2

I think I can plan better my learning using mobile phone than without them

3

I think mobile phone is useful to improve English skill

4

I installed English learning application on mobile phone to improve my English

5

I think mobile phone can increase motivation in English learning inside and outside the classroom

6

I think using mobile phone can improve my time productivity since I can use it whenever/wherever I want

7

I feel enjoy learning English with utilize mobile phone

8

I can remember everything easily if I access it from my mobile phone

9

I will purchase mobile phone in advance features to improve my English

10

I will purchase paid application to improve my English

Table 3. The Use of Mobile Phone for Assessing English Skills by EFL Learners in Online Class

NO

Items

1

I use mobile phone to install English learning application

2

I use mobile phone for share, access, and save English related materials

3

I use mobile phone for writing message, e-mail, assignment, and other English related materials

4

I use mobile phone keyboard to attain spelling

5

I use mobile phone to access dictionary/translator

6

I use mobile phone to play games for English vocabulary like crosswords and puzzle

7

I use mobile phone to keep English vocabulary list

8

I use mobile phone to listen audio material in English

9

I use mobile phone for watching video material in English

10

I use mobile phone to check pronunciation

11

I use mobile phone to speak with others in English

12

I use mobile phone to read English text/material

13

I use mobile phone to practice grammar

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