

Ellipsis in Persian: Verb Phrase Ellipsis or Argument Ellipsis?

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1. Introduction

- (1) Ali ketâb na-xarid, vali Maryam [ketâb] xarid.
Ali book NEG-bought, but Maryam book bought
(lit.) 'Ali didn't buy books, but Maryam bought.'

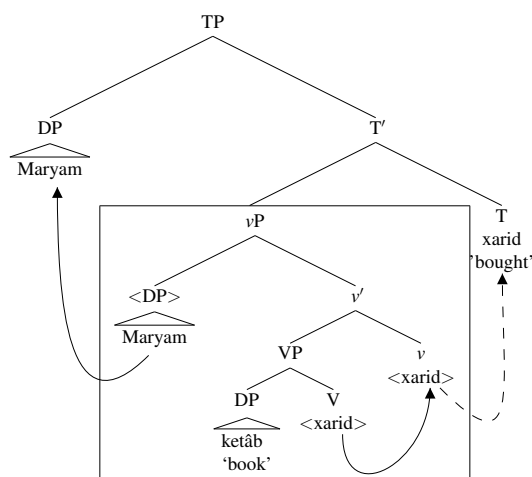
Compare (1) to the Hebrew example in (2).

- (2) a. Q: Ha'im Tamar kanta kafe?
Q Tamar buy.PAST.3SG coffee
'Did Tamar buy coffee?'
b. A: Ken, hi kanta.
yes, she buy.PAST.3SG
'Yes, she bought (coffee).'

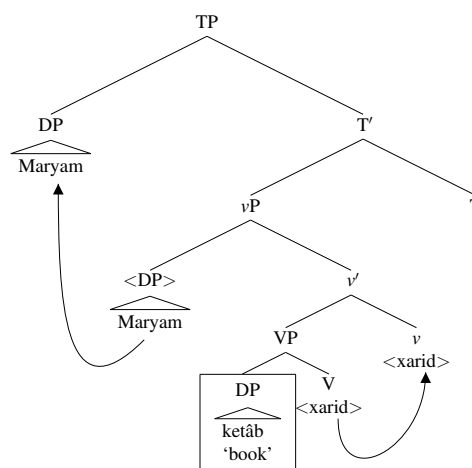
(Goldberg 2005:36)

(3)

a. Verb-stranding VPE (VVPE)



b. Argument Ellipsis (AE)



2. In this talk:

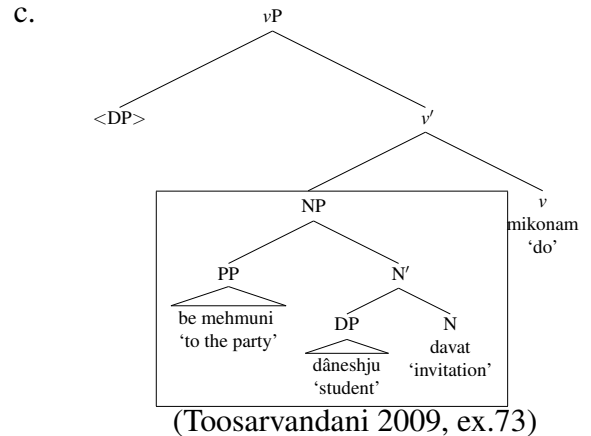
- What are the characteristics of VVPE?
- What are the characteristics of AE?
- We will show that we have VVPE in Persian.
- We propose that the verb survives ellipsis by moving to a FocP, above vP, in the TP level; and the E feature (Merchant, 2001) on F licenses the elision of its complement, vP.

3. Verb-stranding VP Ellipsis (Toosarvandani, 2009, 2015)

- Following Complex Predicate (CPr) structure proposed by Folli, Harley and Karimi (2005), Toosarvandani proposes the structure in (4c) for the example in (4b).
- Verb starts off at *v*, followed by the deletion of its complement, i.e. Non-Verbal element (NV) and internal arguments; hence, *v*-stranding VPE.

(4) (Toosarvandani 2009, ex.33)

- a. Nilufar be mehmuni dâneshtju [_{CPr} davat
 Nilufar to party student [_{CPr} invitation
 ne-mi-kone].
 NEG-SUBJ-do.3SG]
 ‘Nilufar doesn’t invite students to the party.’
- b. vali man [~~be mehmuni dâneshtju davat~~]
 but I [~~to party-student invitation~~]
 mi-kon-am.
 SUBJ-do-1SG
 ‘But, I do (invite students to the party).’



3.1 Predictions

The Non-Verbal (NV) element in CPrs and the internal arguments are always elided, as illustrated in (4c), unless the internal argument is extracted out of the ellipsis site.

3.2 Issues

A. NV element can remain overt, as in (5):

- (5) a. Nilufar be mehmuni dâneshtju [_{CPr} davat ne-mi-kone].
 Nilufar to party student [_{CPr} invitation NEG-SUBJ-do.3SG]
 ‘Nilufar doesn’t invite students to the party.’
- b. vali man [~~be mehmuni dâneshtju~~] [_{NV} **davat**] mi-kon-am.
 but I [~~to party-student~~] [_{NV} **invitation**] SUBJ-do-1SG
 ‘But, I do [~~invite students to the party~~].’

B. Typological Issue:

VVPE is assumed to exist in languages with V to T movement (Goldberg, 2005). Allowing *v* to strand creates a typological problem since in all languages V moves to *v*.

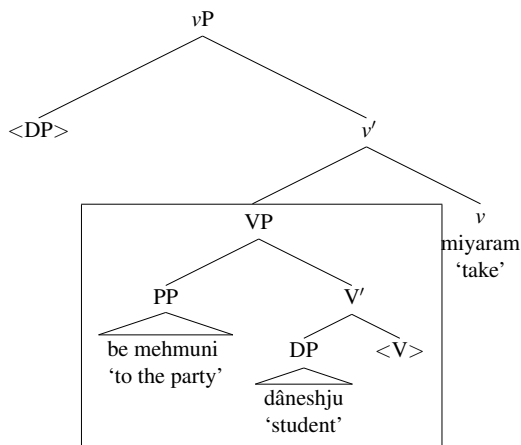
C. Issues with simple predicates:

Applying his analysis to simple predicates would anticipate the elision of VP rather than *v*P. However, in VPE, *v*P is elided, not VP, as in (7) for the sentence with a simple predicate in (6).

- (6) a. Ali be mehmuni dâneshtju ne-mi-yâr-e.
 Ali to party student NEG-SUBJ-take-PRESENT.3SG
 ‘Ali doesn’t bring students to the party.’

- b. Man [be-mehmuni dāneshju] mi-yār-am.
 I [to-party-student] SUBJ-take-PRESENT.3SG
 ‘I bring (students to the party).’

(7)

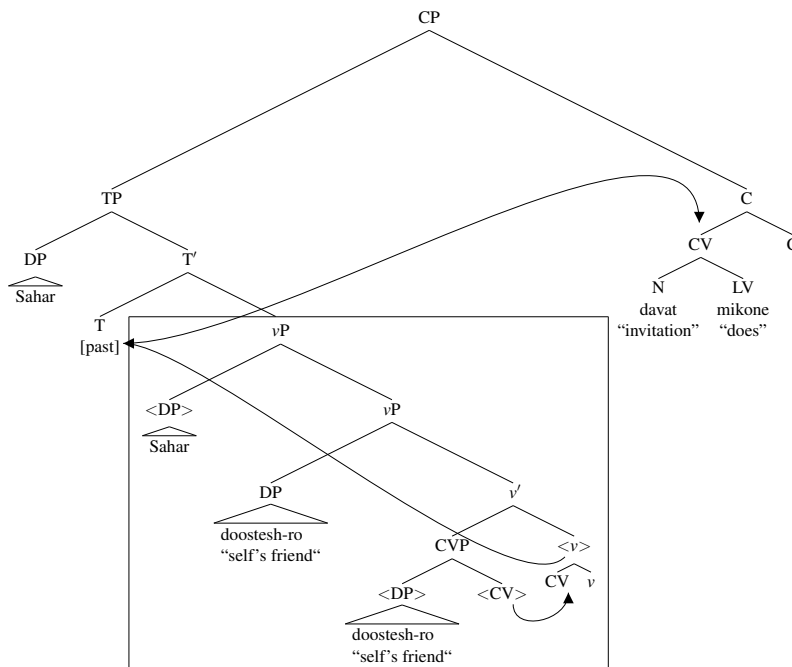


4. Verb-stranding VPE (Shafiei, 2015, 2016)

- Adapting Megerdooimian’s (2001, 2012) CP_r structure, Shafiei (2015, 2016) proposes another structure for CP_rs, where the NV and Light Verb (LV) form a single head, as she called Complex Verb (CV).

- (8) a. Ali doost-esh ro [CP_r davat ne-mi-kone].
 Ali friend-GEN.SSG ACC [CP_r invitation NEG-SUBJ-do.3SG]
 ‘Ali doesn’t invite his friend.’
- b. vali Sahar [doost-esh-ro] [CP_r davat mi-kone].
 but Sahar [friend-GEN.SSG ACC] [CP_r invitation SUBJ-do.3SG]
 ‘But, Sahar invites [her friend].’

(9)



- She proposes that the LV moves higher than *v*, presumably to C, taking or leaving the NV behind.
- The LV can optionally pied-pipe or strand the NV. This is how the NV can or cannot survive deletion.

4.1 Predictions

- A. Verb raises out of *vP* and moves to C.
- B. NV element can remain overt.
- C. Internal arguments must be elided.

4.2 Issues

- A. Can't account for cases in which one argument survives the ellipsis.
- B. The motivation for V to C movement is unclear.

5. Argument Ellipsis (Rasekhi, 2014, 2015)

(10) a. Az in-ke Ali bâ deghat ketâb-ro be doxtar-esh dâd tajjob
 from this-that Ali with care book-ACC to daughter-GEN.3SG give.3SG.PAST surprise
 na-kard-am.
 NEG-do.PAST-1SG

'The fact that Ali carefully gave the book to his daughter didn't surprise me.'

b. Vali az in-ke bâ deghat gooshi-ro [~~be doxtar-esh~~] na-dâd
 but from this-that with care phone-ACC [~~to daughter-GEN.3SG~~] NEG-give.3SG.PAST
 tajjob kard-am.
 surprise do.PAST-1SG

'But, the fact that he didn't give the phone (to his daughter) carefully surprised me.'

(Rasekhi 2014, ex.33)

- According to Rasekhi, the Verb-stranding VPE cant account for (10) since the indirect object is elided while the direct object is overt.

(11) a. Az in-ke Ali bâ deghat ketâb-ro be doxtar-esh dâd tajjob
 from this-that Ali with care book-ACC to daughter-GEN.3SG give.3SG.PAST surprise
 na-kard-am.
 NEG-do.PAST-1SG

'The fact that Ali carefully gave the book to his daughter didn't surprise me.'

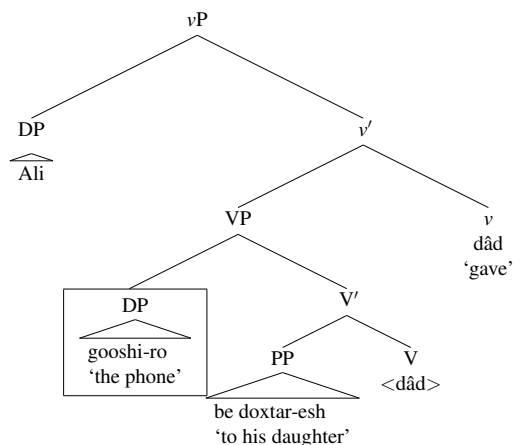
b. vali az in-ke bâ deghat [~~ketâb-ro~~] be pesar-esh na-dâd tajjob
 but from this-that with care [~~book-ACC~~] to son-GEN.3SG NEG-give.3SG.PAST surprise
 kard-am.
 do.PAST-1SG

'But, the fact that he didn't give (the book) to his son carefully surprised me.'

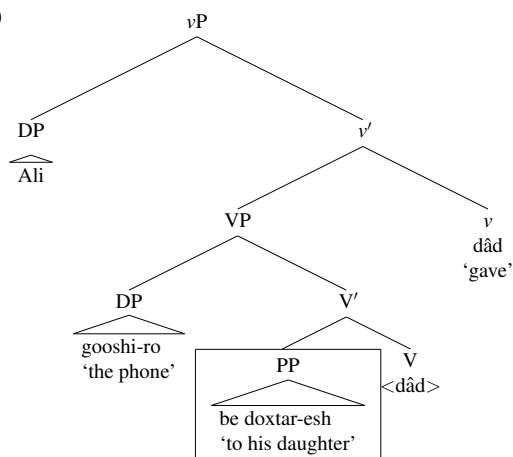
- Indirect object in (10b) and direct object in (11b) can elide independently.

(12)

a. Elided DO



b. Elided IO



5.1 Predictions

- A. All arguments can be independently elided.
- B. We can have DP, PP, AP ellipsis.

5.2 Issues

- A. It is not economical when more than one argument is elided.
- B. Her study doesn't say anything about complex predicates.

6. The Puzzle

- Do we have Argument Ellipsis (AE) or Verb stranding VPE (VVPE) in Persian?
- Diagnostics for VVPE versus AE (Goldberg 2005, Toosarvandani 2009, Gribanova, 2013, Bailyn 2014)
 - **V to T movement**
 - **Adverb Interpretation**
 - **Verbal Identity**
 - **Extraction**

6.1 V to T movement

- Distinguishing VVPE from AE is difficult. Since the verb remains overt, both of these analyses seem compatible with the data.
- A Hebrew sentence in (2), repeated here in (13), can be accounted for by either VVPE or AE approaches.

(13) a. Q: Ha'im Tamar kanta kafe?
Q Tamar buy.PAST.3SG coffee
'Did Tamar buy coffee?'

b. A: Ken, hi kanta.
 yes, she buy.PAST.3SG
 ‘Yes, she bought (coffee).’ (Goldberg 2005:36)

- VVPE occurs in languages (e.g. Hebrew, Irish, Swahili) with V to T movement (Goldberg, 2005).
- In Russian, verb moves to AspP and is stranded there (Gribanova 2013).
- In Persian, verb is stranded in *v* (Toosarvandani 2009), or C (Shafiei, 2015, 2016).
- Rasekhi (2014, 2015) proposes AE for Persian due to lack of V to T movement.

6.2 Verbal Identity

- In Hebrew: the main verbs must be identical in root and derivational morphology (Goldberg 2005:160).

- (14) a. Q: (Ha'im) Miryam hevi'a et Dvora la-xanut?
 Q Miryam bring.PAST.3FSG ACC Dvora to-the.store
 ‘Did Miryam bring Dvora to the store?’
 b. A: Ken, hi hevi'a.
 yes, she bring.PAST.FSG
 ‘Yes, she brought (Dvora to the store).’
 c. A: *Ken, hi lakxaa.
 yes, she take.PAST.FSG
 (Intended) ‘Yes, she took (Dvora to the store).’

- In Persian complex predicates: it is possible to have different light verbs only if the meaning of the verb does not change (15). Otherwise, the result will be an ungrammatical sentence; for instance, in (16), the argument structure of the verb is different (Toosarvandani, 2009).

- (15) a. Q: Piran-o [_{CP_r} otu kardi]?
 shirt-ACC [_{CP_r} iron do.PAST.2SG]
 ‘Did you iron the shirt?’
 b. A: Âre, diruz [~~piran-o otu~~] [_{LV} zadam].
 yes, yesterday [~~shirt-ACC iron~~] [_{LV} hit.PAST.2SG]
 ‘Yes, I did yesterday.’ (Toosarvandani 2009:89)
- (16) a. Q: Lebâs-â [_{CP_r} xoshk shod-an]?
 clothes-PL [_{CP_r} dry become.PAST.2PL]
 ‘Have the clothes dried yet?’
 b. A: *Na, vali Rostam alân raft [~~lebâs-â ro xoshk~~] [_{LV} bo-kon-e].
 no, but rostam now went.3SG [~~clothes-PL ACC dry~~] [_{LV} SUBJ-do-3SG]
 (Intended) ‘No, but Rostam just went to dry.’

However, in Persian, verbs have to be either identical, or semantically contrastive, as in (17).

- (17) a. Bâ deghat livân-â ro be Ali **dâd-am**
 with care glass-PL ACC to Ali give.PAST-1SG
 'I carefully gave the glasses to Ali.'
- b. az in-ke bâ deghat [livân-â-rø] **na-gereft** tajjob kard-am.
 from this-that with care [~~glass-PL-ACC~~] NEG-take.PAST.3SG surprise did-1SG
 'The fact that he didn't take (the glasses) carefully surprised me.'
 (Rasekhi 2015, ex.33)

6.3 Extraction

- In VPE, extraction is possible (18).

(18) Jason will eat shrimp, but squid, I know he won't [eat<←squid>]. (Schuyler, 2002)

- This means that, it is possible to extract the arguments before deleting the VP.

(19) Rostam PIRAN-O otu na-zade vali SHALVÂR-O midunam ke [~~shalvâr-ø~~ otu]
 Rostam shirt-ACC iron NEG-hit.3SG but pants-ACC know.1SG that [~~pants-ACC iron~~]
 zade.
 hit.3SG
 'Rostam didn't iron the shirt, but the pants, I know he did.'

(Toosarvandani 2009:21)

- Extraction from the ellipsis site to a position in the matrix clause, where it receives a contrastive focus interpretation is possible in Persian.

6.4 Adverb Interpretation

- In VPE, as in (20) the adverb is obligatorily interpreted.

(20) John read the book carefully but Mary didn't.
 i. *didn't read the book.
 ii. didn't read the book carefully.

- Persian does not show this property, (21).

(21) Maryam ketâb ro bâ deghat xund, vali Ali na-xund.
 Maryam book ACC with care read, but Ali NEG-read
 i. Ali didn't read the book.
 ii. *Ali didn't read the book carefully.

7. Summary

- There is no V to T movement. This is a challenge for VVPE analysis in Persian.
- Verbs have to be either identical or semantically contrastive, which is another challenge for VVPE analysis.
- Extraction of objects out of the VP is possible. This test supports the VVPE approach.
- There is no obligatory interpretation of adverbs. This test posits a challenge for VVPE analysis.

8. Proposal

- We propose that the VVPE strategy can account for all types of structures, in which one or more arguments are elided.
- Following Kahnemuyipour (2001), we propose that there is a FocP above vP in the TP level. The evidence for the existence of this FocP comes from *wh*-phrases (22), verbal identity (23) and contrastiveness (24) for the extracted objects.

- (22) a. Ali ye saat pish raft xune.
 Ali one hour ago go.PAST.3SG home
 ‘Ali went home an hour ago.’
 b. Ali ye saat pish kojâ raft?
 Ali one hour ago where go.PAST.3SG
 ‘Where did Ali go an hour ago?’ (Kahnemuyipour 2001, ex.7)

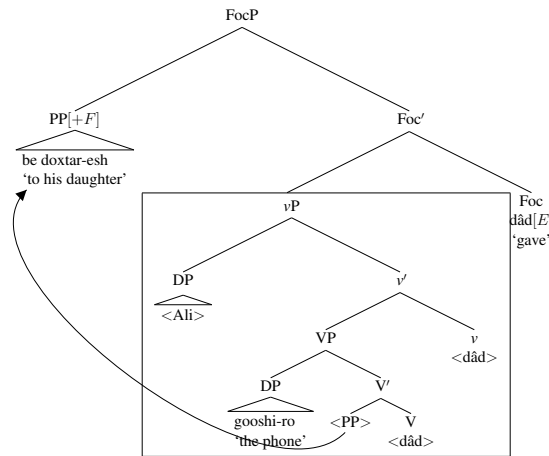
- (23) a. Bâ deghat livân-â ro be Ali **dâd-am**.
 with care glass-PL ACC to Ali give.PAST-1SG
 ‘I carefully gave the glasses to Ali.’
 b. az in-ke bâ deghat [livân-â rø] **na-gereft** tajjob kard-am.
 from this-that with care [glass-PL-ACC] NEG-take.PAST.3SG surprise did-1SG
 ‘The fact that he didn’t take (the glasses) carefully surprised me.’ (Rasekhi 2015, ex.33)

- (24) Rostam PIRAN-O otu na-zade vali SHALVÂR-O midunam ke [~~shalvâr-ø~~ otu]
 Rostam shirt-ACC iron NEG-hit.3SG but pants-ACC know.1SG that [~~pants-ACC iron~~]
 zade.
 hit.3SG
 ‘Rostam didn’t iron the shirt, but the pants, I know he did.’ (Toosarvandani 2009:21)

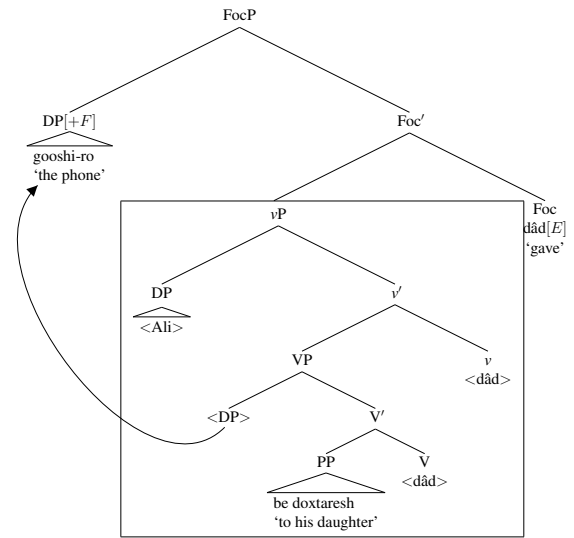
- We argue that in VVPE structure, the verb survives ellipsis by moving to the focus head, and the E feature (Merchant, 2001) on F licenses the elision of its complement, vP .
- The trees in (25) illustrate the VVPE operation in Simple Predicates including the extraction of either the DO or the IO.

(25) Simple Predicates

a. VVPE with PP Extraction



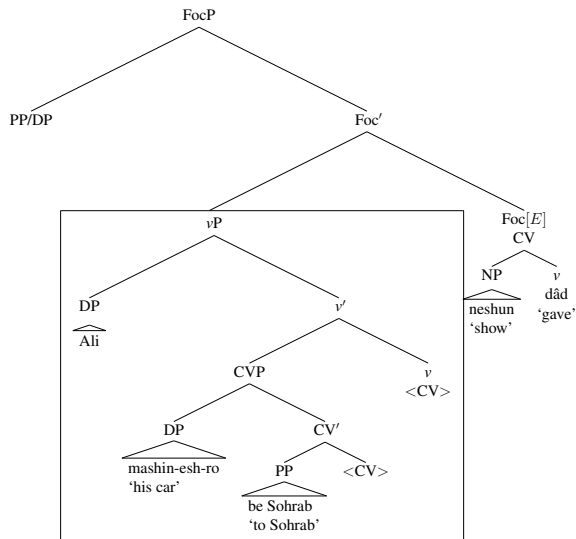
b. VVPE with DP Extraction



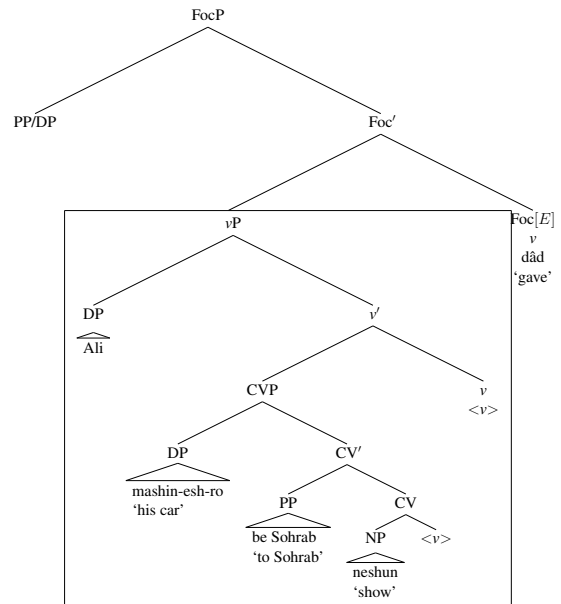
- Adopting Shafiei's (2016) analysis of Complex Predicates, we argue that the NV element can either be pied-piped, to escape elision, or stranded to be deleted with the vP, as the structures in (26) show.

(26) Complex Predicates

a. NV Survives Ellipsis



b. NV is Elided



- Our proposal is different from Toosarvandani's analysis in the way we analyze complex predicates. It also differs from Shafiei's analysis regarding the lading site of the verb.

9. Conclusion

- Our proposal can account for structures in which the verb survives while the rest of the clause is elided.
- The verb survives ellipsis by moving to the focus head in the TP level.
- Our analysis allows the arguments carrying contrastive focus to survive deletion by moving to [Spec, FocP].

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