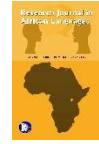




Morphosyntactic analysis of Asante's family names



Research Article



Published in Nairobi, Kenya by Royallite Global in the *Research Journal in African Languages*, Volume 3, Issue 1, 2022.

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Article Information

Submitted: 25th January 2022

Accepted: 19th March 2022

Published: 12th April 2022

Additional information is available at the end of the article



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Abstract

This paper sought to address family names among the Akan of Ghana and considers naming as an important aspect of the Akan society. It looks at Akan names within the preview of linguistics anthropology. The data were collected through interviews, questionnaires and documents from school register and electoral commission register. The descriptive method was used to analyse the data. The study shows that names are words that can generate morphological aspects such as compounding, affixation, nomination, reduplication as well as syntactic aspects such as sentences and phrases form from them. Names such as Asafo - Agyei, Frimpong Manso, Boatemaa are under the study of morphology aspect such as stem, compounding, affixation, reduplication, nomination.

Keywords: Akan, compounding, family names, morphology, morphemes, syntax



How to Cite:

Sarfo, S., Armoo, A. K., Serwaa-Nkrumah, A., & Isaac, B. (2022). Morphosyntactic analysis of Asante's family names. *Research Journal in African Languages*, 3(1). Retrieved from <https://royalliteglobal.com/african-languages/article/view/755>



Public Interest Statement

The paper addresses family names among the Akan of Ghana and considers naming as an important aspect of the Akan society. The paper looks at Akan names within the preview of linguistics anthropology. It considers names as not being arbitrary labels but sociocultural tags that have sociocultural functions and meanings. The paper discusses the typology of Akan names. These include (1) day names, (2) family names, (3) circumstantial names, (4) theophanous names, (5) flora and fauna names, (6) weird and reincarnate names, (7) achievement names, stool names, religious, occupational, etc. (8) insinuating and proverbial names, (9) bodily structure and (10) kinship etc.

1.0. Introduction

In logical and philosophical sense, a name designates or denotes a different element of human experience, such as an individual or a collective entity. As a result, names are purely descriptive (Rey 1995, p. 26). In the absence of social contexts, some philosophers and linguists have attempted to characterize names logically. Because names are merely arbitrary labels applied to specific signified entries, the signifier and the signified may or may not share certain intrinsic qualities. Human beings are distinguished by their family names, which also reveal their origins. Tutu Addo, Nyameyie, Sunkwa, Ōben, Obimpe, Afriyie, Boama Bremawuo, Prempɛ, Nketia Agyensam, Sunkyere, Adepa, Adu are some of the most common names given to new born children in Ghana to give them individuality (Agyekum 2010). Because name is so essential, researchers have approached it in a variety of ways. Agyekum (2006) has worked on how Akan receive names (Obeng 1988, Ansu Kyeremeh 2000, Agyekum 2006, Adomako 2017, Owu- Ewie (n:d) The Akans are the largest ethnic group in Ghana. According to the 2020, national population census, 49.1% of the Ghanaian population is Akans and about 44% of the population speak Akan as non-native speakers. The Akans occupy the greater part of the southern sector of Ghana. Akan is spoken as a native language (L1-first language) in ten of the sixteen regions in Ghana namely, Ashanti, Eastern, Western North, Western, Central, and Bono, Bono East, Ahafo, Oti, Savanna Regions. They are sandwiched by the Ewes in Volta Region of Ghana (*see Figure 1 showing the map of Ghana and the Akan areas*). The Akans are made up of various dialects that are mutually intelligible. These are Asante, Akuapem, Akwamu, Fante, Akyem, Agona, Assin, Denkyira, Twifo, Wassa, Kwawu, Bron and Buem. Some Bron speakers are found in Cote d' Ivoire. Akan is studied from primary school up to the university level.



Figure 1: A map showing the Akan speakers

These ethnic groups have customs and traditions that make them different in West Africa (Dolphyne, 2006). One custom that gives identity to a new born baby is naming ceremony. Agyeman (2003) explain naming ceremony as a custom performed for the new born baby to show his or her identity as a member of the particular family. Adjah (n.d) explains naming ceremony as the custom that is performed by a particular community to give a new born child a name. We explain naming ceremony as the custom performed to give identity to the new born baby to differentiate him/her from others. Through naming ceremony, Akans gives name to their children to give identity. Agyekum (2006) says it is because of bad behaviour that is why names are shared. Akans gives names by day names, family names, death preventive names etc. and some of the names include Mbireku, Dua, Gyima Afrane, Afrakoma, Ɔsee, Akoto, Durowaa, Ɔben, Tutu, Sunkwa, Afriyie, Prẽmpẽ, Sunkyerẽ, Obideeba, Nyameama, Owuo, Adẽ, Bayie, Konama, Poku. These names in Asante have morphology and syntactic aspect and this paper is focussing on this topic.

Research objectives

This study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. Morphology aspect of Asante's family names.
- ii. Syntactic study of Asante's family names.

2.0 Data collection designs and methods

The information for this study came from both primary and secondary sources. Since 2020, we have been compiling a list of names. We collected data from Kejetia, Market centre, KNUST campus and electoral commission voting list from Oforikrom constituency in Kumasi through interviews and questionnaires. One hundred (100) sampling of names were used to analyse the data in morphology and syntax aspect. When persons were invited to tell their versions of situations, we were able to recognize their names since we are all Akan native speakers. We also gathered some of the names from the different district education offices' school registrations and newspapers. We also consulted various works on family names written by scholars of African origin.

3.0 Statement of the problem

More works had been done on family names. The paper is based on Asante's family names morphologically and syntactically. The family name that the father gives to the new born baby has morphology and syntactic structure. These names are grouped in death prevention and survival name, day name, family name, circumstantial name, flora and fauna names and physical structure names. There is bound morphemes or affixes, free morphemes and formation of words (names) by combining bound morphemes and free morphemes in the names. The syntactic structure doesn't spell out from this Asante's family names. Therefore, the paper researched Asante's family names using morphology and syntax. This paper fills the gap with morph syntactic analysis of Asante's family names.

4.0 Literature Review

4.1 Morphology

Mattews (1991) says morphology is the study of languages or linguistics that deals with properties and functions of sentences. Aronoff (1993) further says morphology is the explanation on the arrangement of morphemes in the study of language. Hocket (1995) continues to say that morphology is arrangement of morphemes to form words and arrangement of words to forms sentences. This is seen in his book: *A course in Modern Linguistics*. Akpanglo-Nartey (2002) goes further to say morphology is also knowledge on words which is very important. He says it studies on words and words arrangement. Bauer (2003) also add that morphology is the study of how morphemes are arranged to form sentences. Fronkin & Hyamas (2007) also explains morphology as the study of how words are arranged to form sentences. Anfin (2009) also add that morphology is a word from Greek ‘morph’ meaning ‘su’ and ‘logos’ meaning knowledge. Morphology is knowledge on words. Obeng (1998) says in his works ‘Akan Death-Prevention names’ that some death-prevention names are only stem without affixes. These are Kaya, kuntu, moosi, Dankate, Donko. He also says that some have prefix and suffix and examples are:

Death-prevention names	Prefix	Suffix
Ɔwo	Ɔ-	-
Akroma	A-	-ma
Owuo	O-	-o
Ohia	O-	-a
Mframa	M-	-ma
Otope	O-	-

Agyekum (2006) explains in his works that, in Akan some of the family names of female are derived from male names by adding affixes such as ‘-wa, -bea/ba, -ma, -aa’ to them. Example

Masculine	Feminine		
	Asante	Akuapem	Fante
Ofori	Oforiwaa	Oforiwa	-
Ado	Adowaa/Adowa	Adobea	Adowa
Agyekum	Agykumwaa	-	-
Frempon	Frepɔmaa	Frempona	Frempona
Akyeampɔn	Akyeampɔmaa	-	-
Asare	Asare	Asabea	Esarewa

Ansu-Kyeremah (2000), Dolphyne (2006), Adomako (2017) also add that Akan female family names are derived from some male counterpart names by adding suffixes. Ansu-Kyeremah (2000) says these affixes or morphemes are ‘a, aa, wa’. Dolyphyne (2006) continues to say that these affixes are ‘wa, ba’. Adomako (2017) further says that ‘wa, ma, ba, bea’ are affixes to derive female family names from male names in Akan. In his work ‘morphophonological analysis of Akan female family names formation’ says in Asante some female family names have only ‘wa, ma’ as the feminine suffix which I disagree because ‘aa’ is also included. Names like ‘Fosu, Owusu, Poku

end with high back rounded vowel [u] takes feminine suffix 'aa' as it begin labial-palatalised sound. The above explanation from the scholars proves that morphology is the studies of arrangement of morphemes to form words and its property can be seen in Asante's family names.

4.2 Syntax

Syntax is the arrangement of words to form phrase, clauses and sentences that gives meaning (Akpanglo-Nartey, 1988). Kagar (1991) also adds that grammar is the most important aspect of language. Sekyi-Baidoo (2002) goes further to explain that syntax gives understanding because it brings meaning of words. Tallerman (2005) says syntax is the arrangement of words to form phrases, clauses and sentences that makes meaning. Haegeman (2006) also says language consist of words and its meaning. Obeng (1998) says that a sentence sounds meaningful and it means that it has noun phrase and verb phrase. Because of that it has three division; command, statement and question or interrogation. Statement sentences from Akan death-prevention names are:

Names	Statement Sentence	Glossary
Asaaseasa	Asaase asa.	Land is finished.
Onibie	Onni bie.	One who does not have some.
Ababio	(wo) aba bio.	You have come again.

He explains that statement sentence has noun and verb or noun, verb and adjunct.

Again, he says Akan death-prevention names that give command sentences are

Names	Command sentences	Glossary
Yinka	Yi nka!	Stink.
Yikwandaho	(wo) yi kwan da ho!	You pave way on it.
Sieamono	(wo) sie amono!	You bury fresh.

These are sentences because they have the structure of sentences that is subject, verb and adjunct. The last one is interrogative sentences in 'kosanba' names. Examples are Beyeeden?, Pewoayeden?. It means we use it to ask question. He says that the motive of a sentences must reveal whether it statement, question or command. The scholar further explains that simple sentence is a sentence that reveals one intention and it can be a word which is a verb.

Owu-Ewie (n.d) says Fantse family names reveals simple sentence. He says it reveals one intention to show that it has one verb. He goes further explains that simple sentence has doer (subject), verb, receiver (object) and in syntax (S.V.O., S.V.A). It can also depend on only verb. Examples are

Names	Sentences	Glossary
Nyametease	Nyame te ase.	God is alive.
Towmekyen	(wo) tow me kyen.	You throw me away.
Kafodzidzi	Ɔkafo dzidzi.	The debtor feeds.

This proves that syntax deals with arrangement of words to form phrases, clauses and sentences that provide comprehension. The syntactic arrangement can also be conformed in Asante's family names.

1.0. Analysis on Asante's family names

Among the Akans the father gives name to the baby at the eight day. The name is a family name or the name of a loved one. Apart from day name and birth name, Akans gives name through physical structure so they have physical structure names, family names, circumstantial names, flora and fauna names.

Examples of names

Addo	Adom
Ansa	Frimpɔmaa
Boaten	Kyeiwaa
Nketia	Kusi Boadu
Adiyaa	Frimpɔn Adu Gyamfi
Bosompra	Sikayena
Amankwaa	Obimpe
Agyapɔn	Obinim
Danso	Sunkwa
Gyasi	Matemasie
Ofori	Sɛmerekka
Adu Poku	

This section worked on the morphemes and sentences that can be seen in the above names in morphology and syntax. Apart from this it revealed the types of sentences that can be seen in the names such as: simple sentence, compound sentence and sentence functions such as: statement, question / interrogatory, command and phrases form in Asante's family names.

Morphological analysis of proper names (family names)

Bruce (2009:103) says morphology is branch of the language that deals with arrangement of words and Akpanglo (1988: 71) also says morphology is the study of morphemes. Morphology is the branch of language that deals with morphemes / affixes of words, reduplication of words and word formation.

a) Lexemes Or One Morphemes (stem)

Some of the names have only one lexeme or morpheme according morphology.

Examples

- Addo → Addo + zero morpheme
- Ntim → Ntim + zero morpheme
- Frema → Frema + zero morpheme
- Siaw → Siaw + zero morpheme

Prempe → Prempe + zero morpheme
 Nti → Nti + zero morpheme
 Pepra → Pepra + zero morpheme
 Apau → Apau + zero morpheme
 Baa → Baa + zero morpheme
 Antwi → Antwi + zero morpheme
 Bafoɔ → Bafoɔ + zero morpheme
 Adwubi → Adwubi + zero morpheme
 Ansa → Ansa + zero morpheme
 Dua → Dua + zero morpheme
 Ankoma → Ankoma + zero morpheme
 Sefa → Sefa + zero morpheme
 Awua → Awua + zero morpheme
 Afram → Afram + zero morpheme
 Birago → Birago + zero morpheme

Yule (1997, p. 76) reveals that lexical morphemes stand on its own and it has two types; noun phrase and verb. The above names (nouns) are lexemes because it can stand on its own. Bound morphemes cannot stand on its own unless it is attached to free morpheme. The names are well mentioned with the consideration of the pitch.

b) Affixation (names with bound morphemes)

Bound morphemes can be seen in Asante names Examples are ‘wa’, ‘bea’ ‘ma’, ‘ba’ (Dolphyne 2006) though these bound morpheme female names are derived from the male names as Adomoko (2017) has said. There are morphemes that are always suffix eg. (... ma), (... wa) (... bea), (...a) Through in morphophonemic rules female names are derived from the male names.

Rule 1. Male name like Boaten take morpheme or suffix (... ma) because male family name that ends with nasal sounds [n] had suffix ‘...ma’ due to the manner of articulation eg Boaten → Boatemaa

Rule 2. Male name that ends with rounded vowel [u] takes the suffix ‘a’ for the female counterpart e.g. Opoku → Pokuaa

Rule 3. Male name that has intervocalic sound takes “wa” for the female counterpart e.g. Oduro → Durowaa

Roach (1985 : 108) says assimilation deletion is as a result of arrangement that changes the place of phoneme and brings changes in the word.

Male name	Morpheme (suffix)	Female name
Boaten	..... maa	Boatema
Ɔpɔn	..... maa	Pɔmaa
Sapɔn	..... maa	Sapɔmaa
Anin	..... ma	Anima
Boahen	..... maa	Boahema
Owusu	..... aa	Owusua
Opoku	..... aa	Pokua
Fosu	..... aa	Fosua
Amoako	..... aa	Amoakowa
Wiredu	..... aa	Wiredua
Yɛboa	..... aa	Yɛboaa
Boama	..... aa	Boamaa
Nketia	..... aa	Nketiaa
Appea	..... aa	Appeaa
Safo	..... waa	Safowaa
Mafo	..... waa	Maafowaa
Takyi	..... waa	Takyiwa
Ɔsɛɛ	..... waa	Sɛɛwaa
Oduro	..... waa	Durowaa

We should note that the suffix (...a) (..... ma), (..... wa) that change male name to female name is lengthened by the Asantes as indicated in the table above

c) Nominalization

Dolphyne (2006), says prefix and suffix are used to attach to a stem to become a noun (name)

Verb + Noun phrase	Prefix	Noun
Gye + man	a	Agyeman
Gye + nsam	a	Agyensam

Verb + Adjectival phrase	Prefix	Noun
Di + yaa	a.....	Adiyaa
Firi + yie	a.....	Afiriye

Verb + Verb	Prefix	Noun
Boa + gye	a.....	Aboagy

Verb	Prefix	Noun (name)
Sɔ	a	Asɔ
Sere	an	Ansere
Ko	a	Ako

d) Compounding

i) Two names combined to form one name

Appah & Yvonne (2008: 153) says combination of two or more names is a way of forming names.

Two names forms one name

Name 1	Name 2	One name
Asieduaa	Boaten	Asieduaa Boaten
Sefa	Afriyie	Sefa Afriyie
Sefa	Afrifa	Sefa Afrifa
Kusi	Boadu	Kusi Boadu
Amankwaa	Dua	Amankwaa Dua
Fosuaa	Asante	Fosuaa Asante
Frema	Sapɔn	Frema Sapɔn
Ampa	Agyekum	Ampa Agyekum
ɔten	Abrefa	ɔten Abrefa
Boakye	Ansa	Boakye Ansa

Three names forms one name

Name 1	Name 2	Name 3	One name
Ampɔn	Boagye	Ansa	Ampɔn Boagye Ansa
Asanwa	ɔben	Mensa	Asanwa ɔben Mensa
Ntim	Safo	Asante	Ntim Safo Asante
Akyaa	ɔsee	Bonus	Akyaa ɔsee Bonus
Antwiwaa	Obiri	Yeboa	Antwiwaa Obiri Yeboa

Two names with hyphen that forms one name

Name 1	Name 2	Formed one name
Frimpɔn	Adu – Gyamfi	Frimpɔn Adu – Gyamfi
Asiama	ɔsee – Bonus	Asiama ɔsee – Bonus
Bonsu	Ofori – Yeboa	Bonsu Ofori – Yeboa
Kofoɔ	Ampɔn – Boakye	Kofoɔ Ampɔn – Boakye
Brako	Asafo – Agyei	Brako Asafo Agyei
Gyebi	ɔkyere – Darko	Gyebi ɔkyere – Darko
Dapaa	Sapɔn – Pepra	Dapaa Sapɔn – Pepra

Name and its appellation that forms one name

Name	Appellation	Name formed
Abrefi	ɔkɔɔ	Abrefi ɔkɔɔ
Akyeampon	ɔwoahen	Akyeampon ɔwoahen
Asanwa	ɔkoaben	Asanwa ɔkoaben
Mensa	Abrampa	Mensa Abrampa

Otuo	Sereboɔ	Otuo Sereboɔ
Adwubi	Kete	Adwubi Kete
Gyamfua	Amonoo	Gyamfua Amonoo
Danso	Abeam	Danso Abeam
Antwi	Boasiako	Antwi Boasiako
Frimpɔn	Manso	Frimpɔn Manso

Agyekum (2006), Crayner (1975) and Boahen (1999) say Asante names has appellation and it forms one name. Example can be seen in the table above.

ii). Two words that is combined to form one name

Owu – Ewie (2014) say the word that is combined to form one name is grouped into two; the semantic group and the grouping itself.

Two words that have become a name	Name
Bosom + pra	Bosompra
Nyame + adom	Nyameadom
Adwa + pa	Adwapa
Dan + so	Danso
Owuo + akyi	Owuakyi
Bosom + twe	Bosomtwe
Boa + ma	Boama

Noun and noun

Noun and noun	Noun (name)
Ano + owuo	Anowuo
Asaase + aban	Asaaseaban
Owuo + akwan	Owuoakwan
Sika + asɛm	Sikasɛm

Noun and adjectival phrase	Noun
Agya + pɔn	Agyapɔn
Adwa + pa	Adwapa
ɔkyerɛma + ten	Kyerɛmaten

Noun and prepositional phrase	Noun (name)
Dan + so	Danso
Adan + mu	Adamu
Owuo + akyi	Owuakyi

e) Reduplication

A reduplication can be seen in some of Asante names.

Crystal (2007) says reduplication is a pose of repeating the stem word at word initial (prefix) and word final (suffix) to form a word. The word class does not change in reduplication.

e.g Tutu

Name and Syntax

Some of the names has subject and verb and follows *subject verb agreement SVA*

Name And Sentence Structure

Sentences are grouped into four types: simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence and compound complex sentence. These can be seen on some names. Asante names that are simple sentence. Strong et al (1996 : 500) and Wiredu (2009 : 00) says simple sentence has one main verb. It has the following structures.

1. Subject and verb (SV)
2. Subject, verb and object (SVO)
3. Subject, verb and adjunct (SVA)

Name	Simple sentence
Sikayena	Sika yε na
Menkahwee	Menka hwee
Yadeεyεya	Yadeε yε ya
Nyameyie	Nyame yie
Ohiayεya	Ohia yε ya
Mmarimahunu	Mmarima yε hunu
Obimpε	Obi mpe

Glossary of the simple sentence names

Simple sentence	Glossary
Sika yε na	Money is scares.
Menka hwe	I will not say anything.
Yadeε yε ya	Sickness is painful.
Nyame yie	God is good.
Ohia yε ya	Poverty is painful.
Mmarima yε hunu	Men are cowards.
Obi mpe	Someone does not want.

Sikayena – sika yε na
 ↓ ↓ ↓
 S V O

Obimpe – obi mpe
 ↓ ↓
 S O

More example of simple sentence names

Name	Simple sentence	Glossary
Obimpe	Obi mpe	Someone does not like.
Nyamennaε	Nyame nnaε	God is not asleep.
Bagyina	Ba gyina	Child stop.
Asaaseasa	Asaase asa	Land is finished.
Asempaasa	Asempa asa	Good news is no more.
Obideεba	Obi deε aba	Someone’s own is in.
Nuama	Nua ma	Brother/sister give.
Nuako	Nua ko	Brother/sister fight.

sunkwa – (wo) su nkwa
 | | |
 S V O
 Name simple sentence
 Sunkwa (wo) su nkwa
 Kume (wo) ku me
 (A) diyia (wo) di yaa
 Gyebi (wo) gye bi
 Faakyεme (wo) faakyε me

Here, the subject you (wo) is null but the words (names) have that subject.

Compound Sentence Names

This sentence has two main clause with conjunction that join them together (Anderson, 2013) Murthy, 2007 and Wiredu, 2009 also confirms Anderson (2013) explanation.

Name	Compound sentence	Glossary
Matemasie	Mate na masie	I have heard and kept.
Nyaasεmhwe	(wo) nya aseμ na hwe	(you) be in trouble and see.

Complex Sentence Names

Name	Complex sentence	Glossary
Seureka	Seureka a	If I am to say
Asemtowoda	Se aseμ nto wo a, da	If you have not been in trouble before sleep.
Se Mannyawo	Se mennya wo a	If you have not been in my life
Womuaye	Ɔwo μu a, εε	If you are in, it is good.

Functions of Sentences

Sentence has three functions these are: Statement, command and question / interrogation. Owu – Ewie (2014) reveals Crystal (2003) idea about the statement. Butt, Holloway, Nimo & Segond (1999 : 27) says we have sentences that are command, question and statements (Marthy, 2000) Wiredu, (2009), Bult et al (1999)

Asante's names that are sentence and functions as statements

Name	Sentences that function as statement	Glossary
Meeba	Mereba	I am coming.
Obimpɛ	Obi mpɛ	Someone does not like.
Obideaba	Obi deɛ aba	Someone's own has come.
Sikayɛna	Sika yɛ na	Money is scares.
Mmarimahunu	Mmarima yɛ hunu	Men are cowards.
Yadeɛyɛya	Yadeɛ yɛ ya	Sickness is painful.
Asaaseasa	Asaase asa	Earth has finished.
Yɛdebɛyɛwo	Yɛde bɛyɛ wo	You will also be treated the same.
Menkahwee	Menka hwee	I will not say anything.

Asante's names that are sentences and functions as questions / interrogation

Butt et al (1999) says sentences that functions as question or interrogation is different from statement.

Name	Sentences that functions as questions	Glossary
Bɛyɛɛdɛn	Bɛyɛɛ dɛn?	What did you come to do?
Meekadeɛn	Mereka deɛn?	What are my saying?
Pɛwoayɛdɛn	Pɛ wo ayɛ dɛn?	Seeking for you for what?

Asante's names that are sentences and functions as command

Butt et al 1999 says commend has properties that are different from statement and questions. This is a sentence that shows command request and suggestions (Murthy, 2007, Wiredu 2009)

Name	Sentences that functions as command	Glossary
Sunkwa	Su nkwa!	Cry for life.
Suronipa	Suro nipa!	Fear man.
Kumi	Ku me!	Kill me.

Conclusion

The paper concluded by re-affirming a fact, Asante's names has morphological and syntactic processes. The female names are derived from the male counterpart by adding "waa", "maa" "aa" "bea" depending upon the type of name and the morphophonemic rules to apply. The names have been compounded by two, three names and even hyphened names and names with appellation are considered as compound because it bears by only one person. Again, reduplication and nominalisation are seen in Asantes family names. The name can be a lexeme or one stem. It can be a sentence including simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence. The names being sentences also function as statements, command and questions.

For example *Obimpe* is a simple sentence with SV

Obimpe – Obi mpe.

Obimpe – Someone dislike.

Obinim – Obi nim

This is also a simple sentence as it has noun phrase and verb phrase

This proves that Asante's family names have morphological and syntactic properties.

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