

Maxim Flouting in *David Letterman Show*: An Episode with Aishwarya Rai

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ABSTRACT This study analyzed the maxim flouting in David Letterman and Aishwarya Rai in *David Letterman Show*. This study aims to find out which types of maxim flouting are performed by David Letterman as the host and Aishwarya Rai as the guest in the talkshow as well as to describe the reasons why the maxim flouting performed by the two. Qualitative research method was used in this study, and the data were presented in a descriptive analysis. This study dealt with a pragmatic approach and employed one of the Pragmatics theories, namely the Theory of Conversational Maxims or Cooperative Principle. Data in this study are analyzed pragmatically based on Grice's Cooperative Principle and its maxims. The data of the study were the utterances of the maxim flouting performed by David and Aishwarya. They were collected by downloading the episode of the show and watching the show. The researchers used Grice's theory called Cooperative Principles with the four types of maxims, i.e: the maxim of quality, maxim of quantity, maxim of relation, and maxim of manner to analyze the maxim flouting in the talkshow. The results showed that all four types of maxim flouting were performed by both David and Aishwarya. In conclusion, the maxim flouting happened in the talkshow were beneficial to avoid discomfort and to give more explanations.

Keywords: cooperative principles, flouting of maxims, *David Letterman Show*

INTRODUCTION People are social creatures. They need to interact with others to show their existence in their surroundings and to keep the good social interaction in life. A good relationship can be achieved through communication. Communication is sharing ideas, thoughts, messages, and feelings in commonly understandable ways. A good communication happens if the information transferred is understandable by both the involved speaker and the hearer. An effective and successful communication will also happen when the participants are active and cooperative (Yule 1996, 37). When communication between participants happens orally, it is then called conversation. The success of a conversation depends upon the various speakers' approaches to the interaction (Evidoyanti & Kustini 2012).

In linguistics, especially in the pragmatic field, there is a theory explaining how people can communicate cooperatively. It is known as Cooperative Principle. A philosopher, H. Paul Grice, was the first one to introduce the principle theory in 1975. He stated that the cooperative principle is the idea that the interlocutors involved in a conversation seek to cooperate to establish agreed meaning (Grice 1989). According to Grice, in a general cooperative principle, four maxims identify how to be cooperative (Yang 2014). Grice emphasized that societies follow these rules for proficient

communication. Cooperative Principle contributes to what is required by the conventional determination of the conversation (Yang 2014).

The basic idea behind the Cooperative Principle is that interlocutors have to try to be cooperative in conversation (Sembiring & Ghazali 2017). Maxim of quantity requires participants of a conversation to give their information as informative as required. Cutting (2002, 34) explains that a speaker is fulfilling the rule of maxim of quantity when he/she gives information by not saying more or less information than the situation demands. The second is maxim of quality, it requires participants to say something true in their conversation, and they believe that something they said in their conversation to be true. In addition, Grundy (2000, 74) explains that we should not say something that is a lack of evidence to fulfill this maxim. This means that maxim of quality concerns with the speaker being truthful. The third is maxim of relation, and it requires the participants to synchronize their talk to the topic of conversation. Cutting (2002, 35) explains that, to fulfill this maxim, speakers are expected to give information about something that is relevant to what has been said previously. Furthermore, Grundy (2000, 74) states that maxim of relevance is fulfilled when the speaker gives information relevant to the topic discussed. The last is maxim of manner. Maxim of manner requires participants to speak clearly and orderly to be understood easily (Widdowson 2007, 58). According to Cutting (2002, 35) and Grundy (2000, 75), maxim of manner is when the speakers put information briefly and orderly, the speaker must avoid the obscure and ambiguous information from the hearer.

The cooperative principle theory is a guideline to achieve a successful conversation or interaction, but misunderstanding in the conversation sometimes happens between the speaker and hearer. The misunderstanding happens when the hearer does not get the speaker's meanings (Cutting 2008). Some people also tend to flout the maxims in their conversation, and they have a certain purpose of doing it (Birner 2013). Based on Grice maxims, there are several criteria of flouting the maxims. They are flouting maxim of quantity, flouting maxim of quality, flouting maxim of relation, and flouting maxim of manner (Khosravizadeh & Sadehvandi 2012). Maxims flouting means to make an utterance that is contrary to any plausible belief one might hold that the literal meaning of the utterance cannot reasonably be considered to be what is intended (Birner 2013). By flouting the cooperative maxims, the speaker wants the hearer to get the most significant meaning and understanding. It is expected that the hearer can unveil certain meaning or message behind the literal utterances. The four types of maxim flouting are as follows:

1. Flouting of quantity maxim
Flouting of quantity maxim happens when a speaker who flouts seems to give too little information or too much information.
2. Flouting of quality maxim
According to Cutting (2002, 37), a speaker who flouts the maxim of quality generally says something that does not represent what they think. The other ways of flouting the maxim of quality are hyperbole, metaphor, irony, and banter.
3. Flouting of relevance maxim
A speaker flouts the maxim of relation expresses what they think by using words that do not have any relation to the previous utterance. This kind

of maxim flouting lets the hearer to imply something that relates the speaker's utterance to the utterance uttered before.

4. Flouting of manner maxim

Cutting (2002, 39) says that the speaker who flouts the maxim of relation expects the hearers to be able to imagine what the utterance did not say and make the connection between their utterance and the preceding one. Furthermore, he explains that speakers who flout the maxim of manner usually want to avoid the inclusion of a third party.

Flouting maxim can be found in daily conversation, movie script, TV talkshows, and also dialogues. Some studies have investigated the cooperative principles focusing on violating and flouting maxims. For example, an investigation was conducted on the violation and flouting of the four maxims used by male and female participants in an American talkshow called *Ellen DeGeneres Talkshow* (Zebua, Rukmini, & Saleh 2017). Another research was also conducted to analyze maxims flouting performed by the characters in the *Seven* movie and why the characters flouted the maxims (Ibrahim, Arifin, & Setyowati, 2018). The study conducted by Zebua, Rukmini, and Saleh analyzed the four maxims which were more or less violated or flouted by all the characters for creating a humorous situation. Based on the analysis, it is revealed in the finding that the male mostly did the flouting than violating while the female mostly violated the maxim of relevance dominantly. Another finding relevant to this present study is in the study conducted by Ibrahim, Arifin, & Setyowati. These researchers revealed that in *Se7en* movie, the characters flouted all the types of maxim, and maxim of relevance is the most flouted. The characters tend to flout the maxim as a distraction and wanted to persuade the listeners to find the hidden meaning of what the speakers say. What differs this study with the previous studies discussed is, this study does not analyze what motivation and purpose that led the characters to flout the maxim while the previous studies do. The previous studies investigated the characters' purposes to flout maxim. Moreover, motivations that influenced the characters to flout the maxims; competitive, collaborative, and conflictive were also discussed in the relevant previous studies. In the present study, the reason behind maxim flouting is discussed.

In this present study, the researchers chose to find out and analyze maxims flouting in a popular American TV talkshow named *David Letterman Show*, particularly in an episode where an Indian actress named Aishwarya Rai was the guest star. The researchers chose to analyze maxims flouting in this talkshow since the guest star is a non-native American. Nevertheless, she speaks fluent English since India uses English as a second language. However, despite her English speaking fluency, Aishwarya and the host of the show, David Letterman, have very different cultural backgrounds which affects their way of talking and responding and favoring their arguments during the talkshow. This difference in cultural background, however, does not affect their whole conversation. The talkshow ran well, and overall both the host and the guest star comprehended each other due to their understanding of the context.

A study conducted by Ayasreh & Razali (2018) also showed a similar illustration in which Bashar Al-Assad convey meanings in his favor during his interview with the ARD channel. In this study, Bashar Al-Assad, the Syrian leader, was interviewed by Jürgen Todenhöfer, a journalist from Germany.

From the interview, it is noticed that Assad flouted the maxim because he wanted to show to people that the situation in his country was under control. Since he is a leader, he flouted the maxims confidently in order to gain public support. From this study, Bassar seems blatantly flouted the maxims during the interview because he thought that he would convince people. This could be his way of favoring his arguments.

It is interesting how the conversation between Aishwarya and David went smoothly, and they seemed to understand each other well, although, in some parts of the talkshow, it can be seen that both of them showed the maxims flouting. Therefore, it is important to see closely and analyze the conversation between David and Aishwarya in this talkshow. Based on the explanation above, the researchers formulate the research problems as follows:

1. What types of maxims are flouted by the host and the guest star in the talkshow?
2. What are the reasons for flouting maxims performed by the host and the guest star in the talkshow?

RESEARCH METHOD

The researchers used a descriptive qualitative design in this study. Hancock, Ockleford & Windridge (2007) said that qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena. Bodgan & Taylor in Moleong (1990, 3) stated that qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or oral words of people and behavior which can be observed. A descriptive method is a method in which the researcher not only collects the data, but also analyzes the conclusion (Surakhmad 1994, 139). Hancock, Ockleford, & Windridge (2007) stated that descriptive research is a research type that observes a situation, condition, and issue. The researchers used a descriptive method to describe and explain the study deeply. Using a descriptive method, the researchers attempted to describe types of maxim flouting uttered by the host and the guest star in the *David Letterman Show*. This study investigated the host and the guest star's utterances in the talkshow. The researchers chose an episode in which Aishwarya Rai was the guest star. Since qualitative method was applied in this study, the researchers acted as the main instrument who collected, analyzed, classified and interpreted the data.

The pragmatic approach is suitable for this study because Grice's Cooperative Principle theory that lies under pragmatic was used to solve the research problems. The objective of this study was to find out what types of maxims were flouted by host and guest stars in the talkshow. To collect the data, the researchers downloaded the talkshow video on YouTube and transcribed the video into a dialogue list and ensured that no data were accidentally left out. The theory of the Cooperative Principle was used to analyze the data. The researchers observed every utterance, which was flouted by the host and the guest star. Not only finding out what types of maxim flouting performed by both the host and the guest star. The researchers also analyzed and explained the context behind the maxim flouting occurred. It is essential to explain the context of the data because it is an essential element required in the process of analysis. The collected data were then analyzed through three steps by using Grice's theory of cooperative principle. First is finding out the maxims flouting. Second, explaining the reason why the host and the guest star flout the maxims. Third, presenting the discussions and ending it with the conclusion as the answers to the problem formulation.

RESEARCH FINDINGS The total utterances from the conversation between David and Aishwarya are 117 utterances. Based on the category of maxim flouting according to Grice’s theory of cooperative principle, 17 utterances flout the four maxims. Specifically, there are 17 utterances of maxim flouting and 100 utterances that fulfill the maxims. The percentage of each maxim flouting is various as seen on *Table*.

Table: Flouting Maxim Distribution

Types of Maxims	Quantity	Percentage
Flouting Maxim of Quantity	8	47%
Flouting Maxim of Quality	1	6%
Flouting Maxim of Relevance	1	6%
Flouting Maxim of Manner	7	41%
Total	17	100%

Based on the seventeen data of maxim flouting done by both David and Aishwarya during the talkshow, the researchers found 8 utterances (47 %) representing the flouting of maxim of quantity, 1utterance (6%) representing the flouting of maxim of quality, 1utterance (6%) representing the flouting of maxim of relevance, and 7utterances (41%) representing the flouting of maxim of manner.

Types and Reasons of Maxim Flouting in the Talkshow

Below are some examples of maxim flouting in the conversation between David Letterman and Aishwarya Rai in the *David Letterman Talkshow* along with the reasons behind the occurrences.

Flouting maxim of quantity

The maxim of quantity is flouted when a speaker intentionally provides insufficient information within the situation requires (Thomas 1995). In the following conversation, David and Aishwarya started to ask a general question. Then, he asked about Aishwarya’s thoughts about what actually she knows about Bollywood.

DAVID : From India?
 AISHWARYA : Uhm... I live in Mumbai

Before Aishwarya coming up on the stage of the show, David excitedly introduced her to the audience and briefly said that he was trying to briefly explain who Aishwarya is, what she does, and where she is from to the audience. Then, he asked Aishwarya if she is from India. Aishwarya then answered that she lives in Mumbai. In this case, Aishwarya flouts the maxim of quantity because she did not answer that she is from India. *Maxim of quantity provides adequate information as it is required. It is not giving any information more than needed (Grundy 2000)*. She mentions the city where she lives because she thinks everyone knows that Mumbai is a city in India.

Here, Aishwarya flouted the maxim of quantity since she gave David more information than what was needed. She was given a yes/no question, yet she provided more information by telling David the city where she was living in. Aishwarya gave more information because she assumed that David knew that she is an Indian. He also introduced her to the audience by welcoming her and saying that she is a Bollywood actress. Hence, it can be seen that Aishwarya added more information to her answer only to introduce herself more and tell the exact city of India where she was living in. By

providing more information, it also helped David to ask more question about Aishwarya herself in order to know her more.

DAVID : She likes it. However, is..is that word comes from? The Bollywood?

AISHWARYA : Well I... I assume, because uhm yeah that's probably how it got identified and initially when I listened to my seniors, they're not extremely ecstatic about the fact that the way it's referred to. But now it's on the dictionary, so that's the way.

David was curious about where does the word Bollywood come from. He wanted to know if it is because of the word Hollywood. He asked if Bollywood derives from the mix of Bombay and Hollywood. Here, Aishwarya seems reluctant to admit that Bollywood indeed is the mixed of those two words. Hence, she stated that her seniors in the entertainment industry are not that excited about the fact. It can be seen that Aishwarya wants Bollywood to get well-known by its own and not because of the Hollywood term. Aishwarya's statement above flouts maxim of quantity since the response given was not clear, and it is not as informative as required. She does not answer with yes or no, so her response does not answer the question.

Here Aishwarya flouted the maxim of quantity by providing more information than what was needed. David came up with a yes/no question, yet Aishwarya did not answer a yes or a no. Actually, by saying with "I assume", she agreed with David that the Bollywood term comes from Hollywood. Aishwarya then gave more answers about how the term Bollywood was perceived by her seniors because she wanted to tell that although the term Bollywood seemed to follow the Hollywood, but they are still different, and Bollywood has its own uniqueness. It can be seen from her expression and the whole conversation where she emphasized the uniqueness of Bollywood, especially the movies. Moreover, in the dialogue above, although Aishwarya did not answer the question with a yes, she stated that the term Bollywood was already on the dictionary. Hence, people knew and could conclude that the term Bollywood was an official term, and it was derived from Hollywood.

Flouting maxim of quality

Maxim of quality suggests that the speaker needs to tell facts demanded in a conversation to create cooperative communication. Grice (1975, 44) states that when people are making a conversation, they must not say what consider to be fake or untruthful and not to say something without having adequate evidence.

AISHWARYA : So far, yeah, it's been wonderful. There's more?

DAVID : (laughing) "Yeah, there's a little more."

The show was about to end, and David asked if Aishwarya enjoyed being on the show and conversing with him. David told Aishwarya that he is happy with her presence and enjoy the conversation. David wanted to wrap up the show by saying that it has been wonderful to meet her and ask her impression. Aishwarya answered with, "So far, yeah, it's been wonderful. There's more?". Aishwarya said, "There's more?" because she wanted to tease David, and she implied maybe they could talk about the show. David answered with, "Yeah, there's a little more." Here, David's flouts maxim of quality because he gave information that did not match the fact. The show was going to end.

David flouted maxim of quality because he answered that there was something more to do as he winked at Aishwarya. Actually, David gave a false statement because he would end the talkshow, and there were no other questions left or any other clips to show. He answered with, "there's a little more" only as a joke. Moreover, David's answer also implied that he and the audience were also having a good time with Aishwarya.

***Flouting maxim
of relevance***

Maxims of relevance recommends that the utterance must be relevant to the topic being discussed. Finegan (2004) states that this maxim demands speakers to deliver their utterance in such a way that is applicable and relevant to the particular context being covered. The maxim of relevance is achieved when the speaker gives a contribution that is relevant to the topic of preceding utterance (Grundy 2000, 74).

DAVID : And do you have, do you have dreams uhm... for your...
AISHWARYA : You could be part of Hollywood as well.

During the show, David and Aishwarya talked about Aishwarya's work and achievements in the film industry so far. Then David wanted to know if Aishwarya wants to achieve another goal or become a famous superstar model. That is why he asked if she has a dream. Aishwarya did not answer the question. Instead, she teased David that he could be part of the Hollywood or entertainment industry just like her. Aishwarya's utterance implicates that she did not want to answer David's question. Aishwarya did not want to tell what exactly she wanted to achieve in the future.

Here, Aishwarya flouted the maxim of relevance since her answer is not relevant to the question asked. Instead of answering the question about her dreams, Aishwarya responded with a statement that David could be part of Hollywood as well, which means that David could be an actor or acts in a movie. By not answering David's question, it does not mean that she ignored David or the question given as she gave her answer later on. Further, Aishwarya might seem irrelevant to the question, but it does not mean that she did not understand the question given or did not want to answer it as well. Actually, they, David and Aishwarya, discussed Bollywood and Hollywood, the differences between the two terms, the kinds of movies produced by the two films industry, etc. That is why Aishwarya said that David could be a part of Hollywood since they talked about it, and Aishwarya seemed still could not get over the topic and wanted to tease David a little as well.

***Flouting maxim
of manner***

Maxim of manner requires speakers' utterance to be understandable or not ambiguous. Thus, each participant needs to be direct. Response given should not be blurry, ambiguous, or excessively wordy. In the following conversation, David asked something related to culture regarding how Indian people live when they are adults.

DAVID : And is that common in India for older children to live with their parents?
AISHWARYA : It's fine to live with your parents because uhm..it's also common in India that we don't have to make appointments with our parents to meet for dinner so...

Previously, David and Aishwarya talked about how various languages in India are; meanwhile, in America, David jokingly said that people in the US use the English language, which means there is no other language other than

English. Then, they moved on to discuss another cultural background between India and America. David was curious about why Aishwarya, an adult superstar, is still living with her parents. From David's point of view, and as an American, an adult girl like Aishwarya should have been living by herself. From Aishwarya's response, it can be seen that she has been unsuccessful in monitoring the maxim of manner by giving extremely long response for yes-no question. She also did not answer whether it is common or not. She gets the question, but she wants to convey something more about the cultural difference. She wanted David to know that there is nothing wrong with living with parents. Regarding Grice's definition of maxim of manner, the speaker should be clear, be concise, and be precise to avoid ambiguity of expression (in Yule 1996). Through her response, Aishwarya also implies that she does not live a very individual life like most Americans do.

Aishwarya flouted maxim of manner since she obscured the meaning behind her answer. As it was not enough for her to only state that it is common and acceptable in India that older children live with their parents, she added more argument. She gave a little example as a consequence of living with parents. Aishwarya wittingly stated that children in India are free to spend time with the parents without having to make an appointment, such as to have dinner. By doing this, Aishwarya did not mean to offend the western culture or people who tend not to live with parents when they get a little older. It can be seen that she only tried to make David and the audience understand and not see it as a weird thing that Indian and eastern people have that culture to live with their parents when they are in their 20s or before marriage.

DISCUSSION Based on the findings, several floutings of maxim occurred in an interview between Aishwarya Rai and David Letterman in *David Letterman Show*. There are seventeen times maxim floutings performed during the show. The highest maxim flouting performed is maxim of quantity, then followed by maxim of manner with only one point difference. Flouting of maxim relevance and quality are the least, which only happened one time, respectively. This finding resembles several previous studies conducted by Nurjannah, Daud, & Fata (2020) and Nuringtyas (2018) where the highest maxim flouting is maxim flouting of quantity.

In this current study, Aishwarya and David flouted maxim of quantity by giving more information than needed. During the talkshow, Aishwarya and David took turns, expecting the hearer to comprehend their answer/response. Although the response seems more or less, both Aishwarya and David still asked the question to dig more information from his/her interlocutor. Giving more response is not the only indicator someone flout maxim of quantity. Less information is also the cause of maxim quantity is flouted, as found in Dwi's study (2015). The speakers flouted maxim of quantity by giving less information to show that they were upset or seemed uninterested in the hearers. We can see an example below.

- A : How are we getting there?
B : We are getting there in Budi's car.

Looking at the dialogue above, it can be assumed that one of the reasons of why B gave that response is because B does not want or has no interest to have a travel with A. Flouting of maxim of manner places as the second-highest maxim flouting occurred in this study with the percentage of 41%.

There is a previous research that has a similar finding as this present study—a research conducted by Aziz, Mustafa, and A'la (2019). Out of 70 maxim flouting occurrences, 21 times maxim of manner is flouted by Alfi Character in *The Guys Movie*. In this David Letterman show, the speaker flouted maxim of manner by not being brief and using ambiguity. The speaker did it intentionally. In one example in this study, through her response, Aishwarya wanted to tease David by comparing her Indian culture with American culture. A similar case can be seen in the following example.

BRITTA : I haven't been tear-gassed in such a long time.

SHIRLEY : Well, you are on a new path now.

BRITTA : Oh goodie, a new path. Is it lined with credit cards, flat-screen TV? Does it go by an IKEA? Maybe I don't want a new path or any path.

In this example, Britta flouts the maxim of manner. She gives a long response implying that she is not happy with her current situation and would rather be doing what her friend does. Here, she compares her life and her friend's life.

Flouting of maxim of quality places as the least performed in this study. Similar to a study conducted by Asif et al. (2019). In this study, maxim of quality flouted in whole data is only 2 times. In this *David Letterman Show*, the speakers flouted maxim of quality because one of the speaker's statements (David) did not match the actual fact, but he still seemed cooperative. The speaker gave an untrue statement to the hearer, expecting that the hearer realized that there was no other answer he could give other than that, and he just wanted to move on to another topic. Another similar case where the maxim of quality is flouted can be seen in Thomas' (1995) example. Take a look at the dialogue below.

A : What do you do?

B : I'm a teacher.

A : Where do you teach?

B : Outer Mongolia

In the above case, B does not want A to discuss where he/she teaches, or he/she wants to be left alone. Here, A knows that B gives untrue answers, and therefore A is expected to realize and know what to do after being given such a response.

In Asif et al.'s study, maxim flouting of relevance is also the least occurred. Like maxim of quality, maxim flouting of relevance also only happened one time in Aishwarya and David conversation. During the talkshow, Aishwarya flouted the maxim of relevance not because she ignored David's question but because she wanted David to talk about what they were talking about. Aishwarya flouted maxim of relevance by giving irrelevant statements as a distraction and to persuade the hearer to find the implied meaning of the speaker's utterance. A similar case is shown in Leech (1983, 94).

A : Where is my box of chocolate?

B : The children were in your room this morning.

The answer given by B shows that B wants A to find or to know the meaning behind the answer. B does not ignore A's question. B just wants A to understand that his/her chocolate probably is eaten by the children. From the discussion above, it can be said that there are various reasons behind maxim flouting. The findings also show that sometimes a cooperative speaker can

intentionally disobey maxim as long as he/she provides enough indicators for the hearer to notice it (Cutting 2002).

CONCLUSION The results of this study found 17 utterances containing flouting of maxims. The maxim of quantity is the highest maxim flouting, which occurred 8 times (47%), followed by flouting maxim of manner, which occurred 7 times (41%), flouting maxim of relevance and quality occurred only 1 time (6%). Flouting maxim of quantity is the highest since, in the talkshow, the guest star, Aishwarya Rai, often talked actively and tends to give more explanation to her answers. People frequently give more or less information and disobey certain maxim in order to achieve certain purposes as well (Khosravizadeh & Sadehvandi 2012). In Aishwarya case, since she was a guest star from India and was invited to an American talkshow, she had to introduce herself and promote her new movie. Therefore, she provided more explanation in her answers in order to get people to know her more.

The maxim flouting of quality and relevance has the lowest percentage, which means that they occurred very little during the talkshow also has reason. Flouting the maxim of quality means that one gives information or statement that is believed to be false. Therefore, it happened only one time in the talkshow (Marlisa & Hidayat 2020), and the reason is not because David and Aishwarya intended to lie, but to create the humor. Verbal senses of humor tend to disobey those maxims to create the humor (Palupi 2006). Further, maxim flouting of quality and relevance are the least one occurred since both David and Aishwarya avoid misunderstanding. As far as both the speaker and the hearer are able to convey messages, ideas, and opinions well, sometimes the flouting of maxims is fair to have occurred (Kalliomaki 2005, Hong 2007).

There is more to be explored about the flouting of maxims with also different objectives. Thus, it is expected that future researchers would conduct a study more about flouting maxims. It is recommended for further researchers to develop a study from more various English communications and various communities in real life. Grice's theory can be used as the basic theory to develop and to analyze such a study. Moreover, through this study, it is expected that other researchers in the future could dissect the reasons behind utterances deeply.

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