

## A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Swear Words Used by The Members of *Kaka Botek* Futsal Club

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article history	This study entitled aims to identify and analyze the types, functions, and motives of swear words used by the members of <i>Kaka Botek</i> Futsal Club in Kupang. The research employs a qualitative descriptive method, focusing on natural communication among club members during futsal activities. The data were collected through interviews, observation and documentation, then analyzed using Miles and Huberman's model which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that the members of <i>Kaka Botek</i> Futsal Club use various types of swear words categorized into expletive, abusive, humorous and auxiliary. The functions of these swear words include expressing anger, disappointment, surprise, admiration, humor, and familiarity, motivation, showing that swearing is not always negative but can serve as a tool for social bonding and emotional expression. The motives behind their use are psychological (as emotional release), social (to build intimacy or express solidarity), and linguistic (to emphasize speech or add humor). In conclusion, the use of swear words among the members of <i>Kaka Botek</i> Futsal Club plays a significant sociolinguistic role in shaping group identity, maintaining solidarity, and expressing emotions in a culturally accepted and context-dependent manner. The study highlights that swear words, within informal sports communities, can serve as a natural and meaningful form of communication rather than merely an impolite expression.
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### 1. Introduction

Language is a means of communication between members of the community in the form of sound symbols produced by the speech organs. Language is also a tool of self-expression and serves as a tool to show their identity as well (Rabbiah, 2018). Language is a powerful tool that shapes our interactions and reflects our identities. It not only facilitates communication but also reveals the nuances of our social relationships and cultural backgrounds. The use of different languages reflects our personalities and social relationships, as the way we speak can foster a sense of community or highlight status

differences. In casual settings, we often employ informal and familiar language, including swear words, to express emotions like anger or pleasure, which can strengthen interpersonal connections and create a comfortable atmosphere. However, the acceptability of such language varies by context; what is appropriate in one group may not be in another. By examining informal language, we gain insights into how culture and social context influence communication and interactions among individuals.

Among the various forms of informal language, swear words are one of the most interesting to analyze. These words, although often considered impolite, have more of a function in everyday communication. Swear words are often associated with negative emotions such as anger, frustration, or disappointment. However, they can also be used to convey positive sentiments like excitement, enthusiasm, or even love. For instance, a person might use a swear word to express their excitement or joy when something good happens. This challenges the common perception that swear words are only used for negative purposes, demonstrating their versatility in human communication (Sabanti et al., 2024).

Swear words are used not only when the speakers are angry, but also when they are happy. Language usage is more modern in the modern era, and people use swear words more frequently in their daily language (Putri Widyanti, 2023). The use of swear words in everyday communication reflects emotions and indicates broader social dynamics, serving as a sign of social status and group identity in sociolinguistics. In informal settings, such as among friends, these words may signify closeness, while their use in formal situations can be deemed rude. Factors like age, gender, and culture also influence how individuals employ profanity, highlighting the importance of social context in understanding language's role in building relationships. Sociolinguistics encompasses the study of language character, variation, function, and use in social interactions.

*Kaka Botek* Futsal Club, as a sports community, is not only a place for competition but also an arena for social interaction rich in linguistic dynamics. *Kaka Botek* Futsal Club is one of the futsal clubs located in the city of Kupang. The club was established on April 22, 2022. From a sociolinguistic perspective, this club serves as a real example of how language is used in social contexts to shape group identity, strengthen relationships among members, and express emotions. The use of swear words within this club becomes part of a communication pattern that reflects closeness, solidarity, and spontaneous expression during daily interactions, especially in high-pressure situations like practices or matches.

According to the initial observations of the researcher, the use of swear words in *Kaka Botek* Futsal Club is not merely a form of coarse language; rather, it has important social functions in building and maintaining social bonds among members. In this informal and familiar context, swear words serve as a means of expressing feelings such as excitement, frustration, or motivation, while also affirming status and membership within the group. Members frequently use these expressions during matches and practices, which not only enhances camaraderie but also creates a lively atmosphere that fosters teamwork. Therefore, this phenomenon is highly relevant for analysis using a sociolinguistic approach to understand how language, particularly swear words, plays a role in social interactions and identity formation within sports communities like *Kaka Botek* Futsal Club.

This theory in this research is grounded in sociolinguistic theory, which views language as a social practice shaped by interactions between linguistic behavior and social structures. Sociolinguistics, as part of macrolinguistics, examines how language use is influenced by factors such as age, gender, social status, cultural background, and situational context. Language variation is understood as a natural outcome of these social influences and provides a basis for analyzing how speakers select particular linguistic forms, including swear words, to express identity, emotion, and social relationships. Swear words, often perceived as taboo or impolite, are theoretically explained as complex linguistic expressions that serve psychological, social, and communicative functions. Based on Jay's classification, swearing is categorized into expletive, abusive, humorous, and auxiliary types, each reflecting different intentions and interactional contexts. In addition, theories on the functions and motives of swearing emphasize that such expressions are used to convey emotions, build social bonds, and fulfill psychological needs, demonstrating that swearing is a contextual and multifunctional language practice shaped by cultural norms and community dynamics.

## 2. Research Method

In this study, the researcher used qualitative research method. Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self (Dewi, 2022). Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings,

attempt to make sense of, or interpret phenomena, in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Njie & Asimiran, 2014). This approach was particularly effective for exploring subjective experiences and cultural contexts. By focusing on individual perspectives, qualitative research can reveal broad insights. Ultimately, this method enriched understanding of complex social dynamics and human behavior.

This research adopted Rahardjo's (2011) data collection instrument, which consists of observation, interview, and documentation. Observation was conducted prior to the interviews to obtain a real picture of field conditions and to understand the interaction patterns, communication styles, and social dynamics among members of the Kaka Botek Futsal Club during training, matches, and activities outside the club. Interviews were carried out using open-ended essay questions to gain in-depth information about participants' experiences and perspectives related to the research focus. Documentation, in the form of photographs and recordings of club activities, was used to support and validate the observation and interview data, as well as to capture nonverbal aspects such as expressions, movements, and group solidarity.

This research employed the qualitative data analysis technique proposed by Miles and Huberman, which consists of three interactive and interrelated stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out continuously by selecting, focusing, simplifying, and categorizing raw data through coding and thematic grouping to highlight key information. Data display involved organizing the reduced data into clear and systematic forms, primarily descriptive narratives, to facilitate understanding of patterns, relationships, and themes. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on careful interpretation of the displayed data and were continuously verified through reflection, review of field notes, and peer discussion to ensure that the findings were grounded in the data rather than the researcher's assumptions.

### **3. Research Findings and Discussion**

#### **Research Findings**

##### **1. Types of Swear Words Used by The Members of *Kaka Botek* Futsal Club**

The findings of this study are derived from observations of training sessions, friendly matches, and casual interactions, as well as interviews with eight members of the Kaka Botek Futsal Club. Based on Jay's (2008) classification in Jdetawy (2019), swear words identified in this community were categorized into expletive, abusive, humorous, and auxiliary swearing. The results show that swear words are not merely expressions of anger or

impoliteness, but function as a natural part of daily communication that reflects emotional expression, social relationships, group identity, and shared humor. Their use is strongly influenced by interpersonal closeness, cultural background, and the informal context of interaction, often serving positive social functions such as strengthening solidarity, maintaining camaraderie, and creating a relaxed atmosphere.

The classification and examples of these swear words, along with their meanings and functions, are summarized in the accompanying table.

**Table 1 Types of Swear Words Used by The Members of Kaka Botek Futsal Club**

Nu.	Categories	Description	Swear Words	Context
1	Expletive Swearing	Used to express spontaneous emotions such as anger, shock, frustration, or disappointment. It is not always directed at a specific person, but rather functions as an emotional outlet.	<i>Sialan</i> (damn) <i>Goblok</i> (stupid) <i>Setan</i> (devil) <i>Anjing</i> (dog)	Used to express anger, surprise, or frustration during a match or practice, without targeting a specific person
2	Abusive Swearing	Directed at another person with the intention of insulting, humiliating, or attacking them verbally. This type is considered the most offensive and impolite.	<i>Bangsat</i> (bastard) <i>Tuli</i> (deaf) <i>Buta</i> (blind) <i>Pengecut</i> (coward) <i>Bencong</i> (sissy) <i>deka (gagap)</i> (stutterer)	Used to directly insult or criticize a teammate or opponent
3	Humorous Swearing	Used in a joking or playful way, especially among close friends or teammates. Although the words	<i>Patung</i> (statue) <i>langke (pohon beringin)</i> (banyan tree)	Used as playful nicknames or jokes among teammates,

Nu.	Categories	Description	Swear Words	Context
		may sound harsh, the intention is not to offend but to strengthen solidarity and humor.	<i>rigit (keriting)</i> (curly-haired)  <i>kaba (kerbau)</i> (buffalo)  <i>Buaya</i> (crocodile)  <i>Tuyul</i> (goblin)  <i>ela (babi)</i> (pig)  <i>kepala batu</i> (stubborn-headed)  <i>l*e (ko*tol)</i> (dick)	not intended to seriously offend
4	Auxiliary Swearing	Functions as an intensifier or emphatic expression in a sentence. It is not the main insult but is used to add emphasis or emotional tone.	<i>Sialan</i> (damn)  <i>Setan</i> (devil)  <i>Anjing</i> (dog)  (depending on context)	Used to emphasize a statement or strengthen emotional expression in a sentence

After reviewing the overall classification, this section explains how each type of swear word functions within the communication of the Kaka Botek Futsal Club.

### 1) Expletive Swearing

Expletive swearing (e.g., *sialan*, *goblok*, *setan*, *anjing*) is mainly used to express spontaneous emotions such as frustration, anger, surprise, or disappointment and is often directed at situations or oneself rather than at others, serving as a natural emotional outlet without causing conflict.

## 2) Abusive Swearing

Abusive swearing (*e.g., bangsat, tuli, buta, pengecut, bencong, deka*) is directed at teammates but, within the team context, functions more as correction, reprimand, teasing, or motivation rather than genuine insult, helping to maintain focus, discipline, and performance.

## 3) Humorous Swearing

Humorous swearing (*e.g., patung, langke, rigit, kaba, buaya, tuyul, ela, kepala batu, l\*e*) appears as playful nicknames or teasing based on physical traits, habits, or behavior, strengthening solidarity, familiarity, and group identity through informal interaction.

## 4) Auxiliary Swearing

Auxiliary swearing involves words such as *sialan, setan*, and *anjing* used as intensifiers to emphasize emotions or statements, adding expressive force without functioning as direct insults. Overall, these patterns show that swearing in the Kaka Botek Futsal Club is highly contextual, multifunctional, and socially meaningful, supporting emotional expression, cohesion, and effective communication within the team.

### Functions of Swear Words Used by The Members of *Kaka Botek Futsal Club*

Table 1 1 Functions of Swear Words Used by The Members of Kaka Botek Futsal Club

Nu	Function	Description	Context
1	Anger	Expressions of anger or frustration towards oneself or a situation	“ <i>goblok, kepala batu, sialan</i> ; ‘When I fail to catch the ball in the goal, I swear ‘ <i>goblok</i> ’ because I’m upset with myself.’”
2	Regret/Disappointment	used to show disappointment or regret when making a mistake in the game	<i>sialan, bangsat</i> ; “ <i>Sialan</i> I missed the goal!”
3	Surprise	said as a quick reaction to something unexpected	<i>anjing, astaga</i> ; “Oh <i>anjing</i> , that almost hit my face!”
4	Annoyance	used to show mild annoyance at a teammate’s action	<i>lae</i> ; “ <i>Eh lae, can’t you stay quiet? Listen to the coach first!</i> ”

Nu	Function	Description	Context
5	Familiarity or Humor	used for joking, giving nicknames, or having fun with teammates	<i>rigit</i> ; "I have a nickname for IF7, 'rigit,' because she has curly hair."
6	Admiration	used to praise or show admiration for a teammate's skill or action	<i>anjing</i> ; "Anjing, your shot was really good!"
7	Motivation	used to motivate or encourage teammates	<i>lae</i> ; "Hey lae, come on dude, don't be weak, play a bit faster!"

After examining the general overview presented in the table, this section elaborates on the functions of swear words as they appear in the interactions of the Kaka Botek Futsal Club members. The findings show that swearing serves multiple emotional and social functions rather than merely conveying impoliteness. Swear words are used to express anger, regret and disappointment, and surprise, particularly in response to mistakes, unexpected situations, or intense game moments, functioning as spontaneous emotional outlets that help players regulate stress. They are also used to express annoyance in a mild and non-hostile way, helping maintain focus and discipline during training. Furthermore, swearing plays an important role in expressing familiarity and humor, strengthening camaraderie through teasing, nicknames, and informal greetings. In some cases, swear words are employed to show admiration by intensifying praise for good performance. Beyond these functions, the study identifies motivation as an additional function specific to the sports context, where swearing is used to encourage teammates, boost morale, and stimulate energy and confidence. Overall, these functions demonstrate that swearing within the team is a contextual and multifunctional communicative strategy that supports emotional expression, social bonding, and team performance.

## 2. Motives of Swear Words Used by The Members of *Kaka Botek Futsal Club*

According to the classification of motives proposed by Andersson (in Perrmadi, 2017), the motives for swearing can be divided into three categories: psychological motives, social motives, and linguistic motives.

## 1) Psychological motives

The psychological motive, which deals with a person's emotional expression. The use of swear words in this category is related to the players' emotional reactions when experiencing anger, disappointment, or frustration during training or matches. Several participants admitted that they tended to swear when they failed to perform as expected. For instance, one of them said that he often uttered words such as "*goblok*" or "*sialan*" to himself when he missed a goal or made a mistake. Others mentioned that they cursed when they failed to block the opponent's attack or made unintentional errors. These expressions indicate that the swearing was not directed at others but rather served as a form of emotional release. It functioned as a psychological mechanism to reduce stress and frustration, allowing the players to calm down and regain focus after a mistake.

Informant 8 stated:

"When I fail to catch the ball in the goal, I swear like *goblok* or *kepala batu* because I'm upset with myself."

*"Kalau gagal tangkap bola di gawang, saya maki 'goblok' atau 'kepala batu' karena kesal sama diri sendiri."*

Another informant mentioned:

"When I make a wrong pass or concede a goal, I just say '*sialan*'. It's not anger toward someone, I'm just frustrated."

*"Kalau Saya salah oper, langsung keluar kata 'sialan'. Tapi bukan marah dengan orang, hanya kesel saja."*

From the interview excerpts above, it can be seen that words such as *goblok*, *sialan*, and *kepala batu* are used by players as reflexive expressions of frustration or annoyance with themselves. These words are not directed at others but serve as a psychological mechanism to release emotions and reduce tension after making a mistake. Thus, swearing in this context functions as a strategy for players to manage stress, calm themselves, and regain focus in order to perform more effectively on the field.

## 2) Social motives

The second is the social motive, which is closely related to interaction and communication among the team members. In this case, swearing is used as a social tool to build intimacy, solidarity, and humor within the group. One informant explained that in their club, the use of swear words was considered normal because it helped strengthen the bond among male members. For example, a player mentioned that he called another member

“*buaya*” (crocodile) because his often talked to his girlfriend during training or matches. Others also used nicknames such as “*langke*” (banyan tree) for a tall and strong teammate, and “*tuyul*” (goblin) for a shorter one. Even words like “*pengecut*” (coward) or “*bencong*” (sissy) were used jokingly to motivate their teammates after losing a game. These findings show that swearing serves as a symbol of closeness and togetherness among the members. It creates a sense of belonging, strengthens team spirit, and represents a shared masculine identity rather than hostility or insult.

Within the *Kaka Botek* Futsal Club, swear words are often used jokingly to strengthen relationships and build a sense of humor during communication.

Informant 6 stated:

“I have a nickname for IF7, *rigit*, because she has curly hair.”

“*Saya punya panggilan buat informant 7, ‘rigit’, karena rambutnya keriting.*”

Another informant said:

“Sometimes we call someone ‘*buaya*’ if he’s too busy talking with his girlfriend on the field.”

“*Kadang kami saling panggil ‘buaya’ kalau ada yang sibuk pacaran di lapangan.*”

In observation, it was also found that the word *lae* was used both as an expression of irritation and as a friendly greeting:

“*Oe lae, can’t you keep quiet? Listen to the coach first.*”

“*Eh lae, kau tidak bisa diam ka, dengar dulu coach omong.*”

“*Oe lae, I’m riding with you because you have a motorbike, so it’s easier.*”

“*Lae, saya nebeng dengan kau punya motor ka, supaya tidak ribet.*”

From the data presented, it is evident that swear words in the *Kaka Botek* Futsal Club are used as social tools to foster closeness, humor, and solidarity among members. Words like *buaya* (crocodile), *langke* (banyan tree), *tuyul* (goblin), *pengecut* (coward), and *bencong* (sissy) are not meant to insult, but rather to tease teammates, motivate them, or highlight personal traits in a playful manner. The use of *l\*e* as a greeting also shows how language can shift from a taboo term to an expression of friendship and familiarity. Overall, swearing in this context functions to build team cohesion, establish a shared masculine identity, and create a relaxed, humorous, and supportive environment during training and matches.

### 3) Linguistic motives

The linguistic motive, which relates to how the members perceive swearing as a normal part of their everyday communication. Most of the participants stated that using

swear words was not seen as inappropriate but rather as a natural linguistic habit in their community. They considered it a common practice that even helped them build stronger mentality and confidence. For instance, one informant mentioned that swearing during practice was part of their way to stay motivated and tough. This perception shows that swear words have lost their taboo status within the group and have instead become a marker of linguistic identity. In this sense, swearing is viewed not as an act of rudeness but as an accepted element of their communication style that reflects the social norms and cultural values within the team.

Informant 3 stated:

“I have a special nickname for Informant 4.

I call him ‘*kaba*,’ a word from the Manggarai language meaning buffalo, because he has a large body like a buffalo.”

“*Saya memiliki panggilan khusus untuk informan 4. Saya memanggil dia dengan sebutan ‘kaba’ kata dari bahasa Manggarai yang berarti kerbau, karena dia memiliki tubuh yang besar seperti kerbau*”.

And informant 1 added:

“I gave Informant 4 the nickname ‘*langke*,’ a Manggarai word meaning ‘banyan tree,’ because he has a tall and large body posture.”

“*Saya memberikan julukan kepada informan 4 dengan sebutan ‘langke’ yakni kata bahasa Manggarai yang memiliki arti ‘pohon beringin’ karena informan 4 yang memiliki postur tubuh besar dan tinggi*”.

Based on the data, the use of swear words and nicknames in the *Kaka Botek* Futsal Club also serves a linguistic function. Members perceive these expressions as a normal part of their everyday communication rather than as offensive language. Words like *kaba* (buffalo) and *langke* (banyan tree) are used to describe teammates’ physical traits and have become accepted nicknames within the group. This shows that swearing and playful labeling have shifted from taboo expressions to markers of linguistic identity, reflecting the team’s shared norms, cultural values, and informal communication style. These linguistic practices strengthen familiarity among members while reinforcing a distinctive group language that is recognized and accepted internally.

## Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the swear words used by members of the *Kaka Botek* Futsal Club serve a dual function: as expressions of emotion and as a means of social communication. This phenomenon supports Jay’s theory (Jay, 2000) which states that swear

words are not merely intended to insult but also act as channels for emotional release and tools for strengthening group solidarity. According to Jay, swearing serves several main functions, including emotional release, humor and social bonding, identity marking, intensifying expression, and the violation of language taboos, the meanings of which depend on the social context.

In addition, the use of words *setan*, *tuyul*, *patung*, *langke* reflects the influence of local cultural context on communication practices. For example, *langke* and *kaba*, derived from the Manggarai language, illustrate how regional language is integrated into team interactions to humorously and intimately describe members' physical traits or behaviors. This aligns with the sociolinguistic concept that language variation refers to differences in language use among different groups of speakers, including variations caused by factors such as region, social class, relationships, and gender (Labov, 1973) in (Ferdiansa et al., 2024).

Therefore, the use of swear words in *Kaka Botek* Futsal Club is not only a way to express frustration or mistakes but also a linguistic tool to strengthen group identity, build solidarity, and integrate local language influence in daily communication. This shows that understanding the social-linguistic context is crucial to interpret swear words correctly and supports the view that swearing can have positive roles in close-knit group interactions.

The use of swear words among the members of *Kaka Botek* Futsal Club reflects a complex sociolinguistic phenomenon, where language functions not only as a tool of communication but also as a medium to express emotions, build social closeness, and assert group identity. Within the context of a club dominated by young male members aged between 21 and 30, the forms of swear words observed illustrate a distinctive linguistic variation typical of masculine groups, strongly tied to a culture of solidarity, spontaneity, and camaraderie. This variation also reflects the influence of a specific register shaped by sports-related communication and informal conversation, which often blends with elements of the Manggarai regional language through expressions such as *lae* (a friendly call) or light teasing such as *rigit*.

Beyond these established types, this study also identifies an additional function unique to the sports context motivation and encouragement. Phrases like “*ayo lae, jangan lembek, main cepat!*” (“come on bro, don't be soft, play faster!”) show that swearing can function as an emotional booster, energizing teammates and reinforcing team spirit. In this sense, swearing becomes a linguistic strategy to heighten collective enthusiasm and competitiveness.

Additionally, motivational expressions accompanied by swearing, such as “*ayo lae, jangan lembek!*” function to intensify the message, boost team spirit, and maintain optimal performance. This phenomenon shows that, although swearing is conventionally regarded as a violation of linguistic norms, in the futsal community, such language becomes a flexible and multifunctional communicative tool that helps team members express emotions, build closeness, and strengthen group identity and solidarity. Therefore, Jay's theory supports the finding that swearing in *Kaka Botek* Futsal Club is not merely a negative expression but an integral linguistic strategy in social interaction and team dynamics.

Overall, the findings indicate that swear words within the *Kaka Botek* Futsal Club are not purely negative or taboo expressions. Instead, they form part of a distinct linguistic register influenced by youth, masculinity, and informal social interaction. The blending of colloquial Indonesian and elements of Manggarai language reflects a dynamic and adaptive form of linguistic variation. This usage signifies a shift in meaning from taboo expressions to markers of identity, intimacy, and group cohesion.

Thus, the use of swear words among *Kaka Botek* Futsal Club members can be understood as a sociolinguistic phenomenon demonstrating the flexibility of language in shaping social relationships. These expressions serve not only to convey emotions such as anger, disappointment, or admiration but also to foster humor, motivation, and solidarity within the team. In this context, swearing becomes a symbol of togetherness and collective identity, reflecting the vibrant linguistic variation found in a youthful and dynamic sports community.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the findings, the use of swear words among the members of *Kaka Botek* Futsal Club shows important sociolinguistic implications, as it reflects social relationships, group identity, and cultural practices within the community. Based on Jay's (2008) classification, swear words are divided into expletive swearing (*sialan, goblok, setan, anjing*), abusive swearing (*bangsat, tuli, buta, pengecut, bencong deka*), humorous swearing (*patung, langke, rigit, kaba, buaya, tuyul, ela, kepala batu*), and auxiliary swearing (*sialan, setan, anjing*), which do not merely indicate impoliteness but also serve psychological and social functions. The use of such expressions has become a natural part of the members' daily communication pattern and is influenced by factors such as age, gender, group dynamics, interpersonal closeness, and cultural background, as well as by the context of interaction, tone of voice, and the relationships among members. Based on the findings from this research, the use of

swear words among the members of Kaka Botek Futsal Club mainly functions to express anger, regret, disappointment, surprise, annoyance, familiarity or humor, admiration, and motivation. These functions demonstrate that swearing within the club is not merely used to convey impoliteness, but serves as a meaningful communicative strategy that supports emotional expression, strengthens interpersonal relationships, and reinforces group solidarity. This shows that norms of politeness are relative and shaped by the values, goals, and social relationships within a community, making swearing a flexible, contextual, and multifunctional linguistic practice that reflects the internal social and cultural dynamics of Kaka Botek Futsal Club.

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