Language learning strategy instruction to raise EAP freshman students' awareness of being an independent learner

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Presentation Outline

- Research background
- Research Question
- Research methods
- Results
- Conclusion

Japanese classroom environment

- Japanese traditional classroom atmosphere: "teacher-centered" "knowledge-transferring" "test-driven"

- Post-war era: Limited time, many subjects to teach, big classroom size

- Goals of education: passing entrance exams

- Goals of English classes: teaching grammar knowledge, reading and writing

- Teacher's role/Student's expectation for teachers: "Instructor" "Authority"

(Japan Association of College English Teachers, Learning Strategy SIG, 2006)

Language learning strategies

1. Metacognitive strategies
   - Planning, monitoring, problem-solving, and evaluation
2. Cognitive strategies
   - Practice, group/classify, take notes, summarize, highlight, visualize, vocalize
3. Social/Affective strategies
   - ask questions to clarify, cooperate, self-talk, self-reinforcement, take emotional temperature, cultivate positive attitudes towards self/others

(Japan Association of College English Teachers, Learning Strategy SIG, 2006)

Research question

- Is it possible to change Japanese EFL students' attitude to be more independent language learners through language learning strategy instructions?

- What are the factors for students to feel LLSs being effective and willing to continue using?

Language Learning Strategy Instruction

- Kinoshita (2003) "language learning strategies are 'teachable' and training language learners to use selected learning strategies can have positive effects on task performance and the language learning process."

- Chamot (2005) stated that to identify some of the language learning strategies used by learners, applying various "self-report procedures" such as interviews, questionnaire, or journals is effective.

Research Method

- 18 First-year Japanese EAP students

- Intensive English course: 4 times a week, 8 weeks (April-June 2019)

- 10 different language learning strategies (LLSs) introduced

- Evaluated each LLS on its "efficacy" and "willingness to continue"

- Comments on willingness or unwillingness to continue

Language Learning Strategies Implemented

1. LLS1 Online extensive reading - to improve their reading speed and to acquire natural way of using vocabulary and grammar

2. LLS2 Pre-writing brainstorming discussion - to help students come up with different perspectives before they write an argument essay

3. LLS3 Essay outline peer-editing - to be able to write a clearly organized essay, students exchanged their essay outline with their partner and received comments on improvements.

4. LLS4 Use of Collocation dictionary - to improve their word choice errors

5. LLS5 Use of Thesaurus - to avoid using same expressions when they speak or write

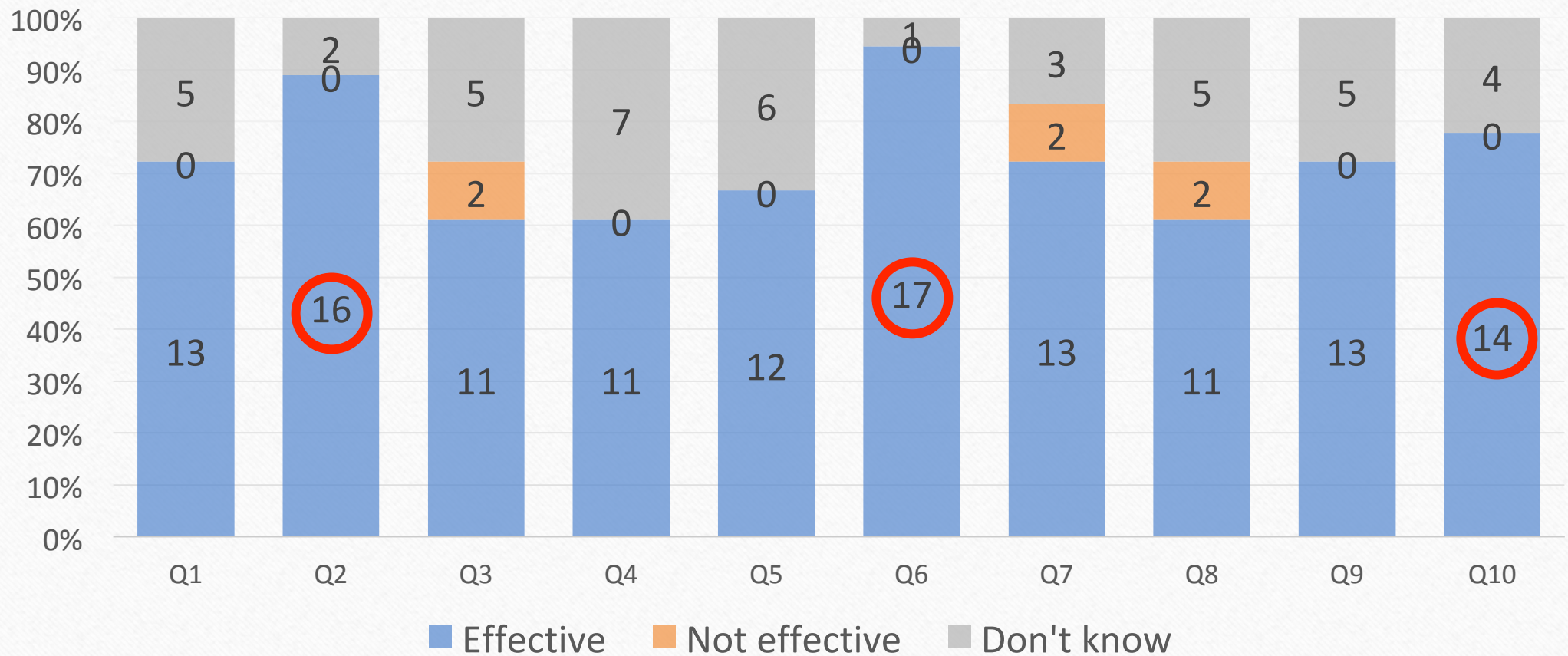# Language Learning Strategies Implemented

6. LLS6 IELTS pair speaking practice - to be familiar with IELTS speaking test

7. LLS7 Self-recording of their IELTS part 2 speech, listen to it at home, identify what to improve, and record it again by paying attention to the aspects of improvement

8. LLS8 Have the student's "before" and "after" recordings listened by another student to notice aspects of improvements

9. LLS9 Group skit on culture shock - to practice speaking English in a different mode

10. LLS10 Group debate on an academic topic - to be familiar with debate style of speaking
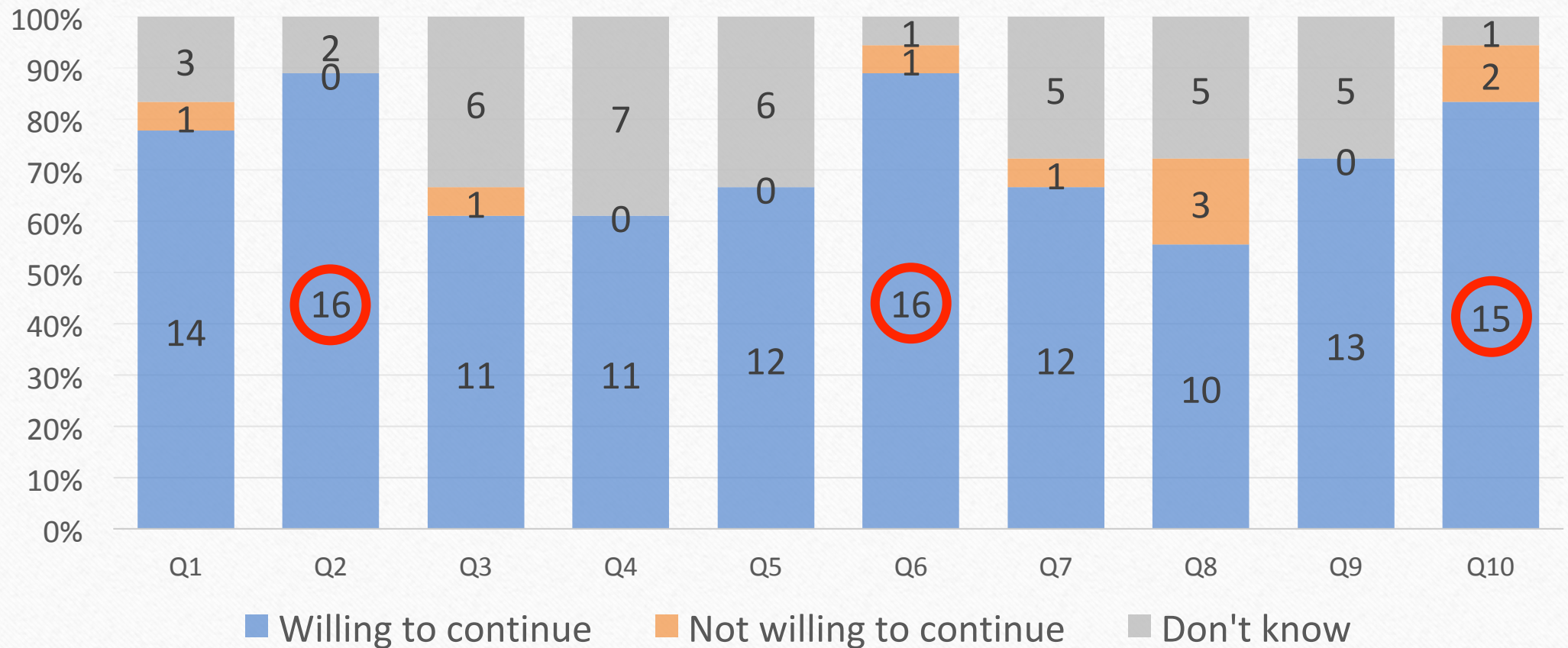
Students' evaluation on 10 strategies

	Effective	Not effective	Don't know
AVG # of Ss	13.1	0.7	4.3
AVG %	72.8%	3.9%	23.9%

	Willing to continue	Unwilling to continue	Don't know
AVG # of Ss	13.0	0.9	4.1
AVG %	72.2%	5.0%	22.8%

Top 3 LLSs students said "effective" and "willing to continue" in this study

❖ LLS2 Pre-writing brainstorming discussion

❖ LLS6 IELTS pair speaking practice

❖ LLS10 Group debate on an academic topic

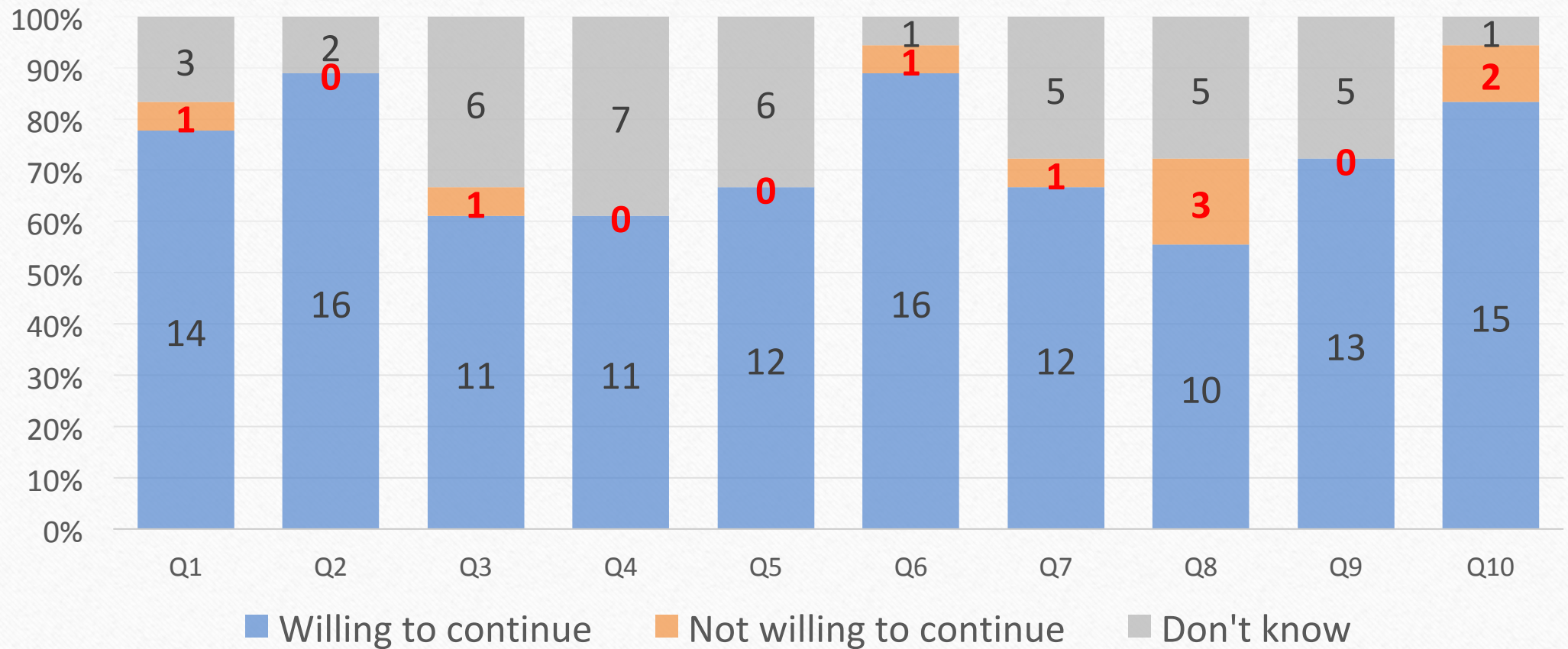# Reasons of LLSs Students stated "effective" and "willing to continue"

1. LLS2: "By listening to other students' opinions, my view for this essay topic has broadened." (Student 7) "It helped organize my opinion a lot when I wrote my essay." (Student 17)

2. LLS6: "Although I can practice IELTS speaking parts by myself, I try hard to speak English without fear because I practice with my classmates." (Student 9) "It was fun to play roles of an interviewer or interviewee. Also, I didn't feel nervous. (Student 11)

3. LLS10: "By trying to find trustworthy sources and sharing thoughts with other students, I could deepen my thoughts." (Student 3) "It helps raise my confidence level." (Student 5) "Started preparing from a day before the debate, I enjoyed having a debate." (Student 11)

Comparison with literature on positive comments

- Richards and Lockhart (1996) stated that "through interacting with other students in pairs or groups, students can be given the opportunity to draw on their linguistic resources in a nonthreatening situation" (p. 152).

- Student comments on top three LLSs reflect their feelings of gaining new perspectives from working with other students, learning from each other, and being less nervous in pairs and groups compared to working as an entire class.

WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE OF EACH LLS

Reasons of LLSs Students stated "Unwilling to continue"

1. LLS8: "It is embarrassing. I would rather have my parents or teacher to listen to my recorded speech (Student 8)." "I don't see any benefits of having my classmate listen to my recorded speech. (Student 16)"

2. LLS3: "It is nice to receive comments from others but I am <u>not willing my outline to be read by others</u> (Student 13)." "It is hard to give comments, because <u>I don't want to offend my classmate</u>. In addition, by giving "wrong" comments, I would interfere my classmate's English acquisition (Student 16)."

3. LLS7: "It was hard to make a speech without any audience. I couldn't perform as usual (Student 10)." "I didn't understand the point of recording the same speech twice because in the real test, we can only try once. (Student 6)"

Comparison with literature on negative comments

- Richards and Lockhart (1996) stated that "through interacting with other students in pairs or groups, students can be given the opportunity to draw on their linguistic resources in a nonthreatening situation" (p. 152).

- These students who have made the negative comments felt "embarrassed" or insecure rather than "non-threatening" and this is the affective filter they felt through LLS3, 7, and 8.

- Influence of Japanese traditional classroom environment can be argued.

Contradiction: Pair vs Solo work

LLS3: "It is hard to give comments, because <u>I don't want to offend my classmate</u>. In addition, by giving "wrong" comments, I would interfere my classmate's English acquisition."

LLS8: "<u>I don't see any benefits</u> of having my classmate listen to my recorded speech. "

LLS4: "I can realize/notice my errors and I can learn how to express in new ways."

LLS7: "I could notice what I am lacking, what word I am repeating, and how fast/slow I am speaking."

Oxford (2003) on
language learning styles and strategies

- She argues that not all of the strategies fit for each learner.

- Learners have different learning styles:

  - Sensory preferences, Personality types, Extraverted vs. introverted, Intuitive vs. sensing-sequential, Thinking vs. feeling, Closure-oriented vs. open/Perceiving

- Students' preference should be considered but they should also occasionally be exposed to variety of activities catered to different learning styles so that they can develop beyond their comfort zone.

Realizing to be independent

- "It was a good opportunity to <u>think independently</u>." (LLS2 Student 6)

- "<u>I can realize/notice my errors</u> and I can learn how to express in new ways." (LLS4 Student 16)

- "<u>I could notice my grammar mistakes and it is a faster way to improve my speaking</u> compared to my mistakes being pointed out by others." (LLS7 Student 9)

- "By listening to my recorded speech, <u>I became able to find out quickly what I cannot do well</u>. It is very effective." (LLS7 Student 10)

- "<u>I could notice what I am lacking, what word I am repeating, and how fast/ slow I am speaking</u>." (LLS7 Student 16)

- "(By trying this strategy,) I have noticed that having too much pause and overuse of the same words/expressions <u>can be spotted by myself easily</u> from listening to my own recorded speech." (LLS7 Student 18)

Key to students' willingness to continue

Feeling of their skills improved/improving

- LLS1 Online ER: "I feel like my reading speed is improving."

- LLS2 Pre-writing group brainstorming: "It helps me express my opinion in English and understand others."

- LLS5 Use of thesaurus: "I expanded my vocabulary, so I want to continue using it."

- LLS6 IELTS pair-practice: "I can improve my skill by doing it in class."

Conclusion

- Highly rated LLSs helped students gain new perspectives from working with other students, learn from each other, and feel less nervous working in pairs and groups.

- Negative comments were made for the LLSs that they felt not practical or anxiety.

- Some positive comments reflect their realization for benefits of being an independent learner.

- Significant factor for students' willingness to continue a LLS is the feeling of their skills improved.

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