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Linguistic Strategy in Online Digital Communication: A Pragmatic Study

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Abstract: ***This study pragmatically examines the linguistic strategies used in online digital communication. It is crucial to comprehend how humans create meaning, navigate goals, and communicate social behaviour in digital time due to the rapid expansion of online platforms and interactions. The study aims to highlight the significant role of linguistic strategies in online digital communication, and identify the different strategies in online communication with different intended meanings, and analyze the selected online digital communication according to the pragmatic theory. This study uses the theoretical framework of pragmatics to explore the pragmatic characteristics, purposes, and consequences of language tactics in online digital communication. The study utilizes a qualitative theoretical framework by collecting accurate data from real online platforms and channels and using pragmatic analysis tools to transcribe the data. The study explores how meaning is constructed and negotiated, focusing on the pragmatic elements of linguistic tactics such as implicature and politeness by adopting the practical theories of Searle's (1979) Speech Act Theory and Gricean's Theory of Implicature and Cooperative Principle (1975). As a result, the study finds that language techniques differ across various digital communication platforms and emphasizes context's influence on online conversation. The results enhance our comprehension of how people develop linguistic techniques in online digital communication and have consequences for successful communication, social engagement, and digital literacy in modern digital settings.***

Keywords: ***Linguistic Strategies, Digital Communication, Pragmatic Study, Gricean, Austin& Searle.***

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the current era of technology, internet communication becomes an essential component of our everyday existence. The Internet fundamentally transformes how we engage in communication, and digital platforms have facilitated our ability to establish connections with individuals across the globe (Kiruthika, 2023). Nevertheless, the transition from in-person to digital communication introduces fresh obstacles, particularly in the language and communication domain. Linguistic methods in online digital communication have gained significant importance due to their pivotal function in promoting efficient communication and preventing misinterpretations.

A recent study by Meena et al. in 2024 reveals the presence of complex patterns of linguistic change in digital communication. The text emphasizes the appearance of new vocabulary, the adjustment of established language rules, and the influence of technology on communication methods. Furthermore, the study examines how cultural, social, and contextual elements impact the dynamics of digital language. Even though many studies focus on linguistic aspects of online communication, linguistic strategies play an essential role in online digital communication because digital technology is widely adopted and non-verbal signals are absent, which can lead to misconceptions and misinterpretations. Language and communication development in the digital age can be better understood by understanding these strategies. In this regard, a pragmatic methodology will study linguistic techniques in online digital communication, including emojis, emoticons, turn-taking, interruptions, and abbreviations.

Additionally, this study examines the linguistic methods employed in online digital communication, explicitly emphasizing pragmatic elements. Thus, pragmatics is the field of study that focuses on how language is utilized to accomplish communication objectives within social settings. Pragmatics is essential in comprehending how language is employed to express and negotiate meaning in digital contexts, particularly online digital communication. Therefore, the study aims to enhance understanding of linguistic methods in online digital communication, providing insights into effective communication strategies and practical implications for improving language and communication skills.
Conclusively, the study explores linguistic strategies in online digital communication, utilizing a pragmatic methodology to enhance understanding of language usage in digital settings.

2. RELATED WORK

The study on linguistics strategy in online digital communication has examined different facets of computer-mediated communication (CMC) and its influence on learning, interpersonal relationships, and brand communication. In his 2007 paper, Hsi examines the difficulties and viewpoints surrounding the study of digital fluency in educational tasks, highlighting the importance of addressing ethical and practical concerns. Fitzpatrick et al. (2010) examine the pragmatic aspects of online interactions, emphasizing the significance of

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creating meaning and having shared belief systems in computer-mediated communication (CMC). In this study, Vandergriff (2013) examines the application of computer-mediated communication (CMC) cues, such as emoticons, by proficient foreign language learners, focusing on the pragmatic aspect.

Compared to previous studies, the current research deals with linguistic strategies in online digital communication by applying two main pragmatic theories in analyzing the data: the speech act theory, the theory of implicature, and the cooperative principle. The data in this study is real e-mails and chatting in English to be analyzed naturally and to give objective results. The results of this study enhance the information about the linguistic strategies different speakers can use in other contexts.

2.1 Linguistics Strategies

Kurniti (2017) states that language is a kind of communication utilized to convey information, concepts, and emotions among individuals. It is a linguistic system that facilitates communication via the use of words and the arrangement of words into coherent sentences. However, language enables individuals to enhance their understanding and acquire information about various subjects. In this sense, digital communication has become essential to everyday contact with others (Lee, 2020).

It is worth saying that globalization is frequently cited as a catalyst for the growing interconnectedness of communication networks. According to Seargeant and Tagg (2014), globalization significantly impacts our social and cultural relationships, and advancements in communication technologies primarily drive this transformation. The advent of new communication technology has profoundly impacted language users, altering how they engage with people and establish social connections. The limits of geography, culture, and language are now more fluid and less divisive than in the past. It is no longer necessary to share ethnic and cultural backgrounds to establish a sense of community.

Likewise, linguistic strategies in digital communication pertain to the deliberate decisions individuals make while utilizing language to express meaning and accomplish objectives in online settings (Dovchin, 2020). Emojis, abbreviations, colloquial language, jargon, and slang are strategies used to enhance the tone and personality of plain text. Non-conventional English is used to indicate cultural or social context, while humor and irony are used to connect and mitigate seriousness. Hyperbole and exaggeration highlight points, whereas rhetorical elements like metaphor, simile, and allusion create a perception of depth and complexity. Therefore, linguistic strategies in online digital communication involve using language effectively to achieve objectives in digital settings, including standard techniques used on the internet as follows:

1. The use of emojis and emoticons serves the purpose of expressing emotions and attitudes in digital communication. Emojis can enhance the tone and personality of plain text, facilitating the recipient's comprehension of the sender's intended message (Walther & D'addario, 2001).
2. Abbreviations and acronyms are frequently employed in digital communication to conserve time and space. Emojis can represent words, phrases, or sentences and are commonly utilized in text messaging, social networking platforms, and online forums.

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3. Colloquial language is employed in digital communication to establish an atmosphere of informality and familiarity. Establishing a relationship with the recipient can enhance the personal nature of the communication (Fattah& Salih, 2022).
4. Utilization of specialized terminology and informal language: Specialized terminology and informal language is employed in digital communication to foster a sense of group identification and shared knowledge (Faber& Lopez-Rodriguez, 2012). They can be utilized to ostracize non-members and promote camaraderie among individuals within a specific organization.
5. Humor and irony are employed in digital communication to establish a connection and mitigate the severity of a message (Parry, 2023). They can convey a message or alleviate conflict and can be incredibly impactful in online communication, where gestures and facial expressions are absent.

These linguistic tactics are employed in diverse types of online communication, including email, social media, text messaging, online forums, and blogs. They can be utilized to accomplish many objectives, such as fostering connections, asserting dominance, and influencing people.

2.2 Online Digital Communication

Digital communication refers to transmitting data or information by digital signals over a point-to-point channel, also known as data communication or transmission. However, online communication refers to using digital media over the Internet to exchange, retrieve, or receive information, allowing people to connect and transact with one another. Online communication refers to any form of communication conducted through the Internet (Saravanan& Ramachandran, 2022). Thus, as our reliance on the internet increases, online communication becomes just as significant as offline communication. Criticism has been directed at the old way of operation in construction, which is seen as stagnant and focused solely on executing contracts.

In addition, digital communication encodes information and transmits it as discrete signals. The signals are electronically transmitted to the recipients. It refers to transmitting data, either digitized analog signals or digital bit streams, across communication channels that can be point-to-point or point-to-multipoint (Sahota, 2022). These channels might consist of several sorts. Some examples of communication channels include storage channels, fiber optics, computer buses, and wireless communication channels.

The primary characteristic of digital communication is the ability to select the timing and recipients of communication, even if they are located in a different geographical region. In addition, the message is transferred instantaneously regardless of the recipient's location. This velocity is commendable, although it may also be detrimental simultaneously (Yarema, 2022). Although information can be transmitted quickly, it sometimes composes regretful content. Another notable aspect is that verbal communication is prioritized over non-verbal cues in digital communication. Similarly, contact is frequently concise, substituting the lengthier and more significant in-person contact.

Additionally, video chats and teleconferences are the only forms of communication that enable the interpretation of gestures, body language, and tone of voice as if they were in-person talks. However, there are still constraints, as this needs to have the authentic

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experience of interacting with actual humans (Irani, 2019). All individuals, as well as contemporary enterprises, institutions, and organizations, rely on this system to facilitate communication among themselves. In this scenario, the information originates mainly from a computer keyboard or mobile device and is transmitted digitally. A single individual can operate this system. Thus, this method of communication diminishes the need for human resources and is the most cost-effective means of communication currently available. Finally, the participant needs to understand the language that people use. So, there is a need to shed light on the pragmatic aspects of this way of communication.

2.3 Pragmatics Theory and Online Communication

Scott (2022) explains that communication is contingent upon the context, necessitating the interpretation of signals based on the circumstances in which they are created and comprehended. It applies to several forms of communication, including face-to-face, distance, spoken, signed, written, and non-verbal communication. However, to understand an individual's intentions, it is essential to consider both the context and the individual responsible for the statement. Pragmatics studies communication within a given environment, examining physical surroundings, previous conversations, facial cues, and vocal intonation (Scott, 2022). Researchers analyze deictic expressions and figurative language like metaphor and irony, analyzing the consequences of speakers' statements. Communication involves transmitting factual information and engaging with people within a social framework.

In addition, there are various types of online and digitally mediated communication. Websites and platforms are included. Barton and Lee (2013) define Web 2.0 apps as platforms enabling users to generate and share their content online. These applications emphasize social networking, participation, and collaboration as fundamental activities. In Web 2.0 contexts, users engage in both the consumption and production of online content. These features have been created or modified by users and subsequently included in the functioning of the websites. This level of innovation is achievable solely due to the active participation of people who create and consume information.

There are platforms and networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube, which have their distinct communication features. It is crucial to contrast media-based communication with in-person interaction to comprehend the impact of technology on the creation and understanding of speech; Baym's paradigm encompasses seven aspects crucial for comprehending online contexts: reach, replicability, storage, mobility, temporal structure, interactivity, and social cues (Baym, 2016).

Finally, pragmatics examines how sentence meaning can be altered by word order. It enhances communicative competence by emphasising the suitability of language in social situations and its role in the interaction between speakers. Pragmatic communication competence is effectively using appropriate tactics to convey the speaker's intended meaning in real-life situations. It highlights the significance of language in attaining communication goals and communicating the speaker's intended meaning (Houck& Gass, 1999).

2.3.1 Speech Act Theory and Communication

Nordquist (2020) illustrates that speech act theory is a branch of pragmatics that examines how words convey information and perform actions. However, Oxford philosopher J.L.

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Austin first established the theory of speech acts in his work "How to Do Things With Words," which was later expanded upon by American philosopher J.R. Searle. The analysis considers the extent to which utterances are considered to conduct illocutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. Therefore, speech act theory is a research subject for numerous philosophers and linguists who want to get a deeper comprehension of human communication.

A unique mode of engaging with individuals on the Internet has emerged. Users can engage in collaborative efforts, exchange, and document various forms of media, all within the confines of their web browsers, without requiring significant technical proficiency. Compared to the field of Speech Act Theory, work is scaneed for moreuistics that addresses explicitly the Internet. The primary and crucial aspect for linguists is the vast reservoir of linguistic data readily available for analysis. Websites started integrating various tools directly into their web pages, frequently at no cost, instead of requiring users to purchase, download, and install software for tasks such as spreadsheets, photo editing, and word processing (Sovinsky, 2009).

2.3.2 Theory of Implicature and Cooperative Principle

Grice explores his philosophical methodology in analyzing ordinary language, a subfield of linguistic philosophy that investigates the usage of natural language in everyday contexts. Ordinary language philosophy (OLP) is distinct from ideal language philosophy (ILP), as it specifically concerns the language employed in natural and formal sciences. However, advocates of ideal language philosophy contend that everyday language frequently suffers from ambiguity, lack of clarity, and misguidedness, whereas formal languages are characterized by conciseness and structural coherence (Lalic, 2020).

Grice was a member of the ideal language philosophy movement at Oxford, where he applied comparable approaches but critiqued OLP's inclination to not differentiate between semantic and pragmatic implications. His objective was to devise a methodology for language that would encompass many types of language analyses. One of Grice's objectives was to put forth a theory that could ascertain the cause behind the incorrect usage of a particular utterance, to differentiate between situations where an utterance is inappropriate due to the state of affairs in the world and situations where there is a different cause for its inappropriateness Moeschler, 2023).

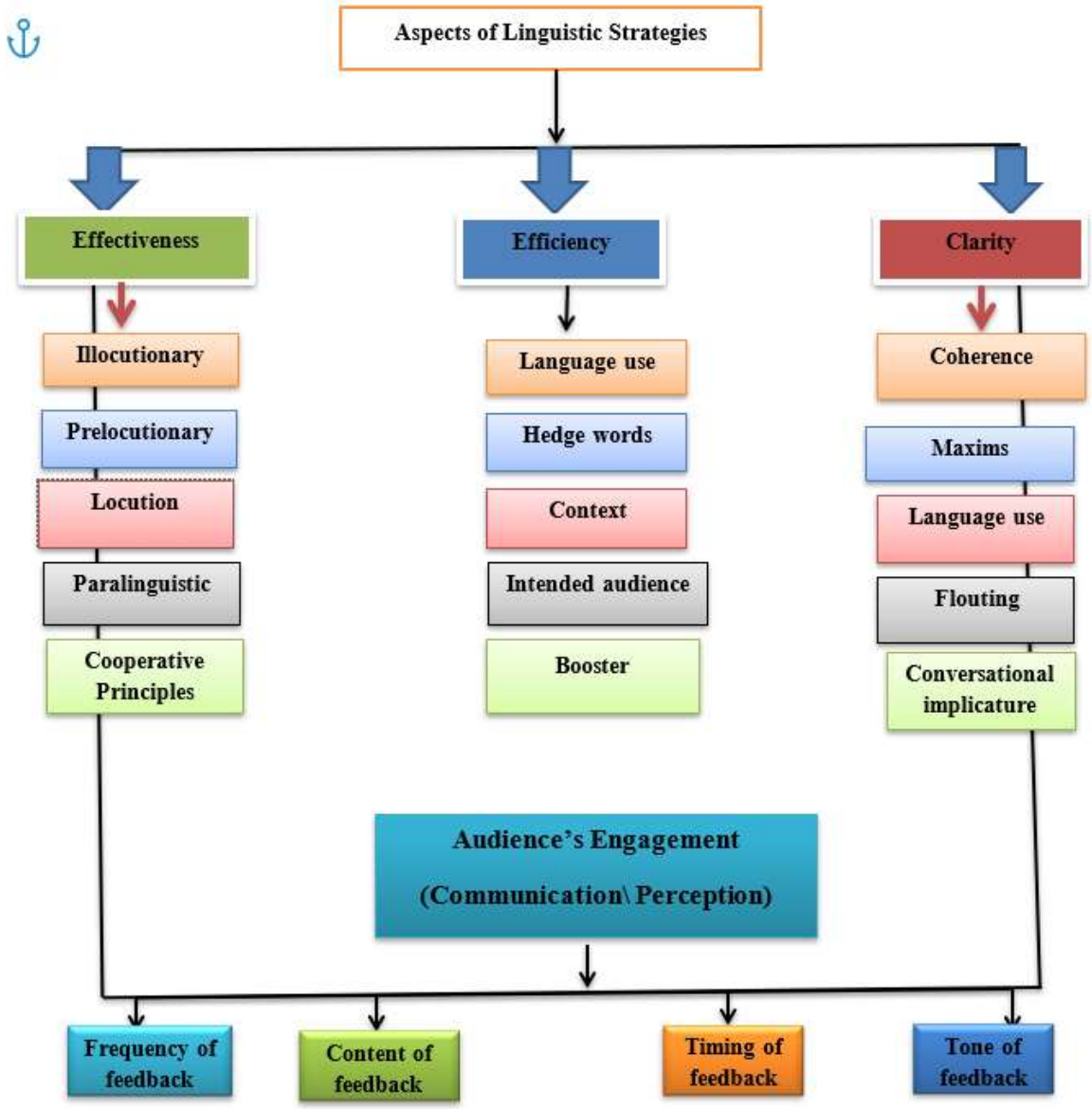
3. METHODOLOGY

This study is qualitative specific data from real emails and chatting in English. Pragmatically, the speech act theory is used to create a theoretical framework for analyzing the data. The study shows how online digital communication employs linguistic strategies.

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Figure 1: The Theoretical Framework based on the Pragmatic Speech Act Theory.



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4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Informal Chatting Between Two Friends:



https://www.quora.com/Are-there-any-free-online-English-chat-groups-for-English-practice

This chat is a conversation between two people. The first person who looked at the conversation called Nicole, and his discussion was prominent; its effect was apparent to the recipient, Mark, as Nicole greeted Mark, which was informal with the use of emoji, which indicates that there is previous knowledge and a friendship between the two parties, where Nicole said the purpose of the conversation, which is the request and a precise question in terms of language and content. He said he had a question: "Can I ask you some questions?". The informal conversation between them is evident through emojis, the way of greeting "Hi," and the way of revealing the question.

This chatting reflects the simplicity of language used by the participants, which indicates the locution strategy of language effect. The speaker who starts this chat adheres to all the cooperative principles, which reveal the quality, quantity, manner, and relevance. The language used in this chat is suitable for both the speaker and the receiver; it also used to be ideal for the context of the speech.

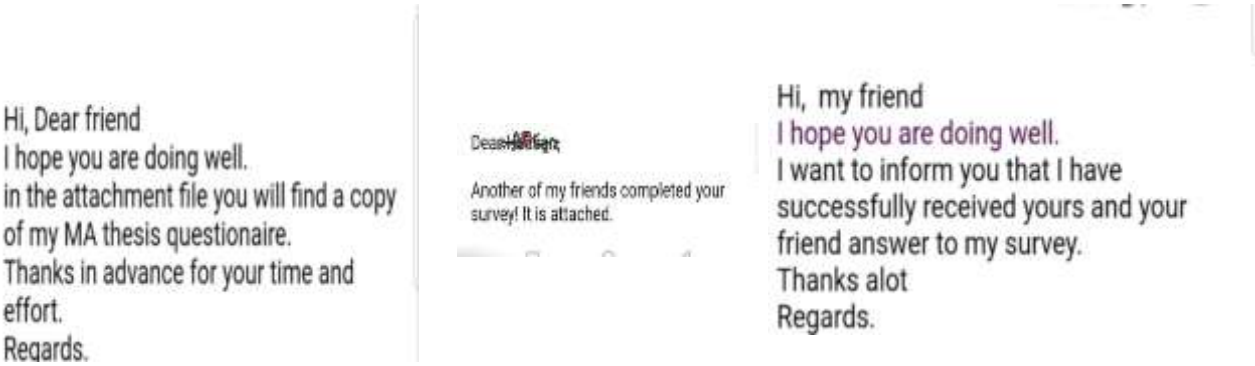
Moreover, the participants are eager to use the punctuation marks that indicate the question or the counting in this conversation. However, the communication between the participants can be seen clearly in the way of recognize intention of Nicole and the way the replay of Mark, even when Mark uses the words "James Bond" to make fun. However, the communication by the impact of language strategies is reflected in the feedback of the receiver, as well as both participants, because Nicole is sure that his participant can understand his abbreviations and these abbreviations performed two leading roles: they save the effort and time as well as cover the intended meaning. Therefore, the feedback sequences reveal Mark's response to what Nicole said. The other aspect of communication is recognizing the message's content

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because, in all parts of this message, there is a hint of agreement in the ideas and thoughts. The response of the receiver is quick, which also reveals positive communication.
In summary, this chatting visualizes the use of linguistic strategies by the participants and the effect on the receivers, which can be seen in the receiver feedback. The sender introduces himself to make his speech clear and clarifies the objective of the chatting. The conversation's language is unambiguous and concise, and the tone is amicable and cooperative. In general, the chatting is skillfully composed and accomplishes its objective. The message effectively communicates the sender's message and request while supplying the recipient with all the essential information needed to make an informed decision.

4.2 Formal e-mails between MA student and participant.



This email is a formal type of messaging between two participants. Generally speaking, emails have no direct response, just like chatting by other means of communication. However, this matter doesn't refer to the lack of communication or the effect on the feedback. Though, the subject of this email is related to the survey.
The sender of the first email uses a clear, direct and polite way to express his intention. He uses a courteous greeting and a sense of informality by saying," Hi," which reflects his simplicity and friendliness. Thus, the purpose is to request that the receiver fill out a particular paper about a specific survey. Consequently, the perlocutionary effect of this email can be seen clearly by the receiver's response. The clarity is due to the direct, simple language that the speaker uses coherently.
Additionally, the sender uses phrases such as "I want" and "I have", which reflects his certainty. He integrates the language use with the context to keep the communication sequences between his idea and the receiver. Following the maxims of quality, quantity, manner, and relevance, all support the means of communication by language. The receiver's email can be considered feedback on his communication and the success of the sender in revealing his idea and reaching his goal using language. Accordingly, the receiver's feedback consists of consequences of thoughts and responses to each point that needs to be clarified, such as the fill of the survey and the extension of the scale in filling the survey. Even the feedback time is in a specific sequence that sheds light on successful communication using particular language strategies.

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5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study demonstrates the need to employ linguistic techniques in online digital communication, particularly in pragmatic communication. Participants utilized emoticons to express emotions and attitudes, enhancing the overall tone and subtlety of their messages. Abbreviations were employed to expediently and effectively communicate information. In this regard, nonverbal indicators, such as emoticons, emojis, and avatars, were employed to convey emotions and attitudes, guaranteeing the accurate expression of tone and subtleties. Turn-taking also was employed to improve effective communication and prevent any misinterpretations, enabling participants to alternate between speaking and replying to each other's messages. However, feedback was utilized to validate comprehension and offer supplementary information.

The study highlights the significance of considering the specific circumstances in which communication occurs, as online digital communication is distinct and necessitates distinct linguistic methods. Participants must modify their techniques to suit the online situation, as in-person communication may need to be more efficient in digital communication. The findings can guide the creation of linguistic techniques for online digital communication and enhance its efficacy in this particular setting.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This study employes a pragmatic methodology to examine the linguistic tactics used in online digital communication, particularly within social media platforms. The results indicate that participants developed several linguistic methods to communicate and accomplish their objectives effectively. Besides, the study emphasises the significance of considering the social and cultural environment in which language is used and the necessity of pragmatically analysing the linguistic tactics employed in online digital communication. The results have also highlighted the significance of contextual elements, such as the audience, purpose, and genre, in influencing the language techniques employed in online communication. Finally, the study's results have ramifications for the instruction of language and communication abilities in the era of digital technology. The findings indicate that language educators should prioritise instructing pupils on the proficient use of language in diverse social and cultural settings and the art of navigating meaning in online digital communication. Furthermore, the study's results focus on the importance of language educators being knowledgeable about the linguistic techniques employed in online digital communication and integrating these techniques into their instructional methods.

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