

SYNTACTICAL CONSTRUCTION DIFFERENCES OF ENGLISH AND WAWONII LANGUAGE: A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to analyze the syntactical construction differences between English and Wawonii language using a contrastive analysis approach. To carry out this analysis, a descriptive qualitative has been used to investigate the syntactical structure of the English and Wawonii language. In gaining the English syntactical construction data, this study used article journals and online books that centralized on English syntactical construction topics. Meanwhile, in eliciting the Wawonii syntactical construction data, this study employed a non-probability sampling that was drawn purposively. In other words, the data was collected through participant observation and in-depth interviews with seven (7) informants of Wawonii language speakers. The 7 informants were the leaders of each district in the Konawe Archipelago, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia, which were known, have better comprehension of Wawonii language syntactical construction features. The results of this contrastive analysis study showed that English and Wawonii language have differences in the sense of one word in Wawonii form indicates one sentence form in English, possessive construction form, plural form, comparative sentence form, question formation form, verbal sentence form, negative sentence form, and simple past tense form. This study contributed into the sociolinguistics field in order to enrich the speakers (or foreigners) of English and Wawonii language syntactical structures.

Keywords: Contrastive Analysis; English Language; Grammatical Construction; Morphology and Syntax; Wawonii Language.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language structure is language features that are well-constructed in communication. The more well-constructed the language, the more effective used in communication. The study of language structure has been discussed by many scholars nowadays in the level of curiosity of the uniqueness of the structure differences used among language users (Niharika & Rao, 2019). In specific linguistic term, one of the studies of language structure is acknowledged as the study of syntactical construction that deals with how sentences are formed that indestructible. In communication, the syntactical construction discussion became one of the characteristics of language complexity, in terms of language differences form and meaning either in the same language or different language (Nettle, 2012). The difference in structure among languages also caused the emphasizing of the different meaning that the speakers less noticing on it. In particular instance, the structure language use such as the transition of subject and object, verb and subject, the presence or absence of adverb in the sentence in determining the tense of the sentence.

The syntactical construction is possessed by all languages in the world and become the primary issue in linguistics discipline. One of the language syntactical constructions that have various users in the world is English language syntactical structures, due to its existence and



domination in the world. This type of language has its own structure that the users do not consider very well in communication. The English syntactical construction are used almost people across the globe, even known as world's lingua franca (Ren, 2016; Imig, 2019; Lee & Lee, 2023). The English syntactical construction influenced some regional languages in the world that has been touched by the process of English expansion in the past. The English syntactical construction is one of commonly known. However, not just English, there is also a local language with unique and own characteristic of syntactical structures (Mirdad, Sahib, & Mokoginta, 2022). It names Wawonii language as one of the Indonesian's culture assets, located in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia, that should be preserved and studied. One of the perspective claimed that Wawonii syntactical structure is derived from Bungku-Tolaki language structure (Sain & Syarif, 2020). However, surely, the Wawonii syntactical construction has independent syntactical rule that is detected when the speakers of Wawonii language communicate each other, that many differences from other languages, including Bungku and Tolaki languages. The addressee should understand what the sender means with his statements (Farida & Muchtar, 2022).

Those two languages are different family; English was from Germanic language, then Wawonii language was derived from Austronesian language. By this consideration, it is assumed that they have probability to be different structures used in communication. This case brings the researcher to study the English and Wawonii language, which are different language. The researcher is curios on the universality of grammatical structures in a linguistics field. The preliminary study showed that in English, the syntactical pattern constructed in SVO (Subject-Verb-Object) order, to convey the speakers' idea and meaning, but in Wawonii language a pattern is in different structure, it can be used VSO (Verb-Subject-Object) model. This is the main reason for the researcher to excavate the phenomena of differences of both languages in the sense of syntactical construction. To cut the analysis deeply, the researcher applied contrastive analysis as a suitable approach that compares two different languages family that emphasized on syntactical construction.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Syntax

The notion of syntax is a property of human language, or it is used to mean the study of the syntactic properties of languages (Tallerman, 2014; Miyagawa, 2022). Explicitly, Syntax is the science of sentence (Tesnière, 2015) or the study of syntax is studying of how languages organize into the sentences including the classification of words, the order of words in phrases and sentences, the structure of phrases and sentences, and the different sentence construction (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2018). In other words, the syntax has to do with how words are put together to build phrases with how phrases are put together to build clauses or bigger phrases, and with how clauses are put together to build sentences (Miller, 2016; Joseph, 2017). In particular, syntax is the study of sentence patterns of language that covers syntactic categories and syntactic structure rules (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2018). In addition, syntax is something like a set of principle by which words can be combined into phrases and





well-formed sentences (Suzuki, & Zuberbühler, 2019). In this case, the syntax is the system of rules and categories that allow words to be combined to the form of sentences. The sentence of language has several features including subject, verb, and object that primary arrangements of the sentences (Burton-Roberts, 2021; Coopmans, Mai, Slaats, Weissbart, & Martin, 2023). Therefore, syntax means sentence construction or how words group together to make phrases and sentences.

2.1.1. Syntactic Rules

The Rules of syntax combine words into phrases and phrases into sentences. The rules of syntax define the correct word order for a language. As line with Iksora et al., (2022) suggested that a syntax error in a language is a mistake in using a language that involves organizing words and phrases that do not make sense. It also specified the grammatical relations of a sentence such as subject and object. A sentence is insisted grammatical when the words occur in the right order and it is ungrammatical when the word order is incorrect. The rules mean the correct words order of a language like Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) Model. In addition, the rules of syntax specify the grammatical relations of a sentence. Relied on SVO model, Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (2018) determined that the sentence is claimed as grammatical when the words occur in the right order, as an instance in the following sentences:

The child found a puppy	(Grammatical)
The found puppy a child	(Ungrammatical)

These two sentences showcased that the word order is a fundamental aspect of syntactic knowledge due to it should capture the SVO word order such as the subject (S) "the child", comes before the verb (V) "found", which comes before the object (O) "a puppy".

2.1.2. Syntactic Categories

A syntactic category is a family of expressions that can substitute for one another without loss of grammatically. Then, a syntactic category consists of lexical categories and phrasal categories. The lexical categories include noun (N), preposition (P), adjective (Adj) and adverb (Adv) (Cassani, Chuang, & Baayen, 2020). On the other hand, the phrasal categories include noun phrase (NP), verb phrase (VP), adjective phrase (AdjP), prepositional phrase (PP), and adverbial phrase (AdvP) (Emonds, 2015).

2.2. English Language

English language is one of the languages that almost people use in the world. In other words, English language is widely spoken today in sections of Europe, Americas, Asia, Africa, Australia, New Zealand and several islands in Atlantic and Pacific oceans. English was originally the first dominating language in the past event when British Empire invented the world (Mulready, 2013; Hino, 2018; Haefeli, 2021). Particularly, over the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries, the Jutes (Modern-day Jutland and Denmark), Angles (Schleswig and Denmark/Germany), Saxons (Holstein and Germany), and Frisians (Modern-day Friesland and Netherlands/Germany) brought Germanic languages to Britain (Ellis, 2014; Trudgill & Hanna, 2017; Roper, 2017). Then, in medieval times, this Germanic language had replaced the original





Celtic language of Britain in nearly of England as well as in southern and eastern Scotland. In the sixteenth century, English remained a language spoken by a relatively small number of people in the world and confined geographically to the island of Britain.

In the late sixteenth century, the expansion began with the arrival of English speakers in the Americas, North America (United States and Canada), Bermuda, Bahamas, Caribbean, and the importation of English from Scotland into the Northern areas of Ireland (Pennington, 2012; Trudgill & Hanna, 2017). Subsequently, in the seventeenth century, English still penetrated southern Ireland, and it was during this time the Cornish also disappeared from Cornwall and Norn from Orkney and Shetland. In eighteenth century, English language was making serious inroads into Wales and Highland and the island of Scotland. While, in nineteenth century, a large scale colonization into Australia and at slightly late date in New Zealand, South Africa, and Falkland island of St Helena and Tristan da Cunha, which also acquired English speaking population (Trudgill & Hanna, 2017).

2.3. Wawonii Language

Wawonii is one of the ethnic groups located in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. This ethnic group is not just a tribe but also used a different language from others namely Wawonii language. This ethnic group area consists of seven sub districts; West Wawonii, North Wawonii, Northeast Wawonii, East Wawonii, Southeast Wawonii, South Wawonii, and Central Wawonii. Based on lexicostatistic perspective, Wawonii language is a member of the Bungku-Tolaki language (Sain & Syarif, 2020). Additionally, according to Mead (1998), historically the Wawonii language was a combination of varieties of languages such as Bungku, Kulisusu, Tolaki, Moronene, Torete, Muna, and Binongko languages.

Notwithstanding, Wawonii language is an independent language that becomes lingua franca for people who live in Wawonii island for years until nowadays. One of the evidence is that this kind of language is included in elementary school subject as one way to maintain and conserve this language. In addition, this language also used in other activities such as performing a custom ceremony and in cultural activities, as Mead (1998) determined that the Wawonii language is still widely used spoken by its speech community in more quest and government offices on the Wawonii island. Moreover, this language has its own syntactical construction used that is detected when the speakers communicate each other (Mirdad, Sahib, & Mokoginta, 2022).

2.4. Contrastive Analysis

According to Gast (2013) a contrastive analysis is more widely used focused on the linguistic system such as micro linguistics such as grammar and lexicon, then macro linguistics phenomena such as discourse structure, sociolinguistics, cross-cultural pragmatics, and contrastive rhetoric. As line with Muchtar (2022) claimed that construction grammar seeks to describe how a language's grammatical organization works at all levels, including morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and discourse level. In other words, Al-Khresheh (2016) determined that contrastive analysis is purely linguistic approach which maintains that CA is nothing more that contrasting. In particular, Gast (2013) further explained





that a contrastive study is defined as the approach to investigate the difference between pairs or small sets of languages against the background of similarities and with the purpose of providing input to applied discipline. In addition, Lado (1957) propounded that a contrastive analysis is a method for comparing the elements of two different languages that can be useful for studying two or more languages. Besides, James (1980) supported that a contrastive study adopts a language concept that is divided into three manageable areas; phonology, grammar, and lexis. The expert withal explained that a contrastive study is made of the descriptive categories of languages such as unit, structure, class, and system.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive and contrastive qualitative research methodology for collecting, interpreting, analyzing, and determining the potential outcomes of the study. In other words, this kind of method is an effort to investigate the phenomena of human's background, cultures, languages, and experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this sense, the object of this research was English and Wawonii language that focused on syntactical construction differences. To gain the English syntactical construction data, this study used article journals and online books that centralized on English syntactical construction topics. Meanwhile, the researcher utilized participant observation and in-depth interview instruments in gaining Wawonii syntactical construction data. In observation process, the researcher involved himself in society's casual conversation to seek the data of syntactical construction of Wawonii language. The participant observation instrument was effective to investigate the language structure phenomena. In interview, the researcher recruited seven (7) informants relying on non-probability sampling way; they are leaders of each district in Wawonii Archipelago, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. The informants were recruited due to have common comprehension on Wawonii syntactic features. This study analyzed the data adopted Keshavarz's (2015) contrastive analysis hierarchy (CAH) as an ideal procedure for comparing two different subsystems or languages. The hierarchy entails; data selection process, data description process, data reduction (verification) process, and data displaying (comparing) process.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Data 1

One Sentence Form Equals One Word;	
English Construction =	Where are you going?
Wawonii Construction =	Lakoa?

The data 1 showed that in English, when speakers ask others where they head up to is constructed in standard form like "*Where are you going*?", this construction is a sentence form, but in Wawonii language this construction solely constructed such "*Lakoa*?" to represent the same semantic role "*Where are you going*?". The "Lakoa?" is a kind of syntactical construction that is used in politeness way as this construction is used generally by all level ages.





Data	2
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Possessive Form;	
English Construction =	Putri's book (S+O)
Wawonii Construction =	Bobono Putri (O+S)

The data 2 unfolded that in English, the possessive sentence form put the subject in the beginning, then the object in the last, like "*Putri's book*" the subject is "*Putri*" and the object is "*book*", meanwhile in Wawonii construction it is conducted in reverse form; the object is in the beginning "*Bobo*" and the subject at the end "*Putri*", the "*no*" that stick in the "*Bobo*" form means "*s*" in English "*Putri's*", that indicates the mark of possessive marking.

Data 3

Comparative Form;	
English Construction =	Dina is smarter than Mary
	(S+to be+Adj+er+than+O)
Wawonii Construction =	Pintaraosi Dina kai Mary
	(Adj+osi(er) +S+kai (than) +O)

The data 3 presented that in English, the comparative form is set by following the SVO model adding two features of comparative form; "er" and "than" to compare two different things like "Dina is smarter than Mary" is constructed Dina (Subject) + is (to be)+ smart (Adj)+ er + than+ Mary (object). Meanwhile, in Wawonii comparative form is built starting by adjective followed by comparative mark then subject in the middle, then also comparative mark, followed by object et the end of the sentence, such as "Pintaraosi Dina kai Mary" Pintara (Adj)+Osi (Comparative mark)+ Dina (Subject)+kai (Comparative mark)+Mary (Object).

Data 4

Plural Form;	
English Construction =	Dina has two books
	(S+Aux+O)
Wawonii Construction =	Da orua bobono Dina
	(Det+O+S)

The data 4 showed that the English and Wawonii syntactical construction are different in the sense of plural form. In English used an "s" as the plural form, and also tend to use S+Aux+O model, such as *Dina* (*Subject*) + *has* (*auxiliary*) + *two books* (*Object*). Meanwhile, in Wawonii construction can be started determiner to directly determine the quantity of the object, and the only thing that determine the quantity is just the word "orua" means "two" such as the form *Da* (*Determiner*) + *orua* (two) + *bobono* (*Object*) + *Dina* (*Subject*).

Data	5
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Question Formation Form;	
English Construction =	Have you eaten? (QW+S+V3)
Wawonii Construction =	Mongka kom? (V+S)





The data 5 unveiled that the English and Wawonii languages are different in the sense of question formation. In English sentence like in the data "*Have you eaten?*" is constructed by starting with question word mark and involve V3 like *Have (Question Word) + you (Subject)* + *eaten (V3)*. Meanwhile, in Wawonii construction is not used question word but put the verb in the question word slot then followed by subject such as *Mongka (V) + kom (Subject)*.

Question Formation Form;	
English Construction =	Where are you going? (QW+to be+S+Ving)
Wawonii Construction =	Kolakom Maina? (V+S+QW)

Data 6

The data 6 showed another different in question formation form. Particularly, the English and Wawonii language are different is the construction "Where are you going?" In English, this sentence still located the question word in the beginning of the sentence such as Where (Question Word) + are (to be) + you (Subject) + going (Verb ing). On the other hand, in this sense, Wawonii construction used verb to start the construction followed by subject, then question word in the ending of the sentence, such as Kolako (Verb) + kom (Subject) + Maina (question word).

Data 7

Verbal Sentence Form;	
English Construction =	I am going to the office. (S+to be+Ving+Conj+Det+Adv)
Wawonii Construction =	Kolakongku Ai Kantoro. (V+S+Det+Adv)

The data 7 presented that the English and Wawonii language are withal different in the sense of verbal sentence form. In English sentence such presented in the data showed that the construction still located the subject to start the sentence which means the agent, and to determine the continuous tense used to be form. It constructed like I (Subject) + am (to be) + going (Verb ing) + to (Conjunction) + the (determiner) + office (Adverb of place). In contrast, the characteristics of Wawonii sentence construction put the subject in the middle bounding with the verb, the verb started the sentence, and ending by adverb of place, it can be divided into some parts such as Kolako (Verb) + Ngku (Subject) + Ai (Determiner) + Kantoro (Adverb of time).

Data	8
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Negative Sentence Form;	
English Construction =	I don't know that person. (S+do not+V1+Det+O)
Wawonii Construction =	Naku toorio maka iko mia. ((Not+S)+V+Adv+Det+O)





The data 8 revealed that the negative sentence data also became one of the syntactical differences between English and Wawonii grammatical construction. In English, the negative sentence is built by subject firstly then followed by the negative verb not to indicate the negative sentence such as I (Subject) + do not (Negative Verb) + know (Verb 1) + that (Determiner) + person (Object). Meanwhile, in Wawonii syntactical construction, to start the sentence used negative mark "na" but the "na" cannot stand alone, if it stands alone no meaning entail. Therefore, the "na" is bounded with subject "ku" became "naku" which means "I don't", it can be constructed like Naku (Not+Subject) + toorio (Verb) + maka (Adverb) + iko (Determiner) + mia (Object).

Data	9
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Simple Past Tense Form;	
English Construction =	<i>I went to your home yesterday.</i> (S+V2+Conj+Adv+Adv)
Wawonii Construction =	Lako aku iwangi rahamu. (V+S+Adv+Adv)

In the data 9 of simple past tense unfolded that English and Wawonii syntactical construction is different in this case. In English, the characteristic of simple past form is the use of V2 that agreed with adverb, and in this data also showed that the English syntactical construction began with subject in the first slot, such as I (Subject) went (V2) to (Conjunction) + your home (Adverb of Place) + yesterday (Adverb of time). Meanwhile, in Wawonii languages showed contrastively, started with verb in the first slot, and to determine the past tense is merely the presence of adverb of time, such as Lako (Verb) + aku (Subject) + iwangi (adverb of time) + rahamu (adverb of place).

5. DISCUSSION

Data on syntactic structure differences between English and Wawonii revealed the clear uniqueness of language structure model. It is evident that English commenced a sentence with a subject, followed by a verb, and that this type of sentence structure that is universally accepted as accurate. It is line with Muchtar (2021) suggested that grammar is a rule in a language; without it, the interlocutor will be unable to grasp what we intend, resulting in linguistic misunderstandings. As a matter of fact, it is implied that a language's structure is not in conformity with grammatical rules if it writing skil is inconsistent with the SVO structural stability pattern. In accordance with Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyam's (2018) theory, the SVO model is the proper grammatical order. Other languages, which naturally do not follow this SVO rule pattern as is the case in English, seem to struggle with this SVO structural rule. The results of the analysis also convincingly demonstrated that not all languages utilize the SVO model, with one notable exception being the Wawonii language, a local dialect descended from Austronesian.

Correspondingly, the structural differences between English and Wawonii started from the fact that one sentence form in English is equal as one word in Wawonii, such as the sentence "*Where are you going?*", whereas in Wawonii sentence merely took one word form as such "*Lakoa?*".





Structurally, the sentence "Where are you going?" fulfills the elements of SVO model in the form of an interrogative sentence overwhelming a question mark, a verb, and a subject. Meanwhile, the word "lakoa?" merely showed one word in the form, but with an incredibly precise meaning, and fully captures the idea of "Where are you going?" form. This is in relation of what Sain and Syarif (2018) found about the word "Meraha" in Wawonii language that meant one phrasal category in English "Making a house". Besides, English and Wawonii language are withal possessing distinction in possessive form, which is closely linked to the construction of the SVO model, as in the data 2 that English possessive sentence such as "Putri's book" is a subject and object relationship; started with the subject (possessor), then followed by the object. Meanwhile, in Wawonii construction is in the subject (possessor).

Alongside, the subsequent stark contrast is the use of the comparative form. Data 3 presented that English is still consistent with the SVO model by placing the subject at the beginning, followed by "to be" then the adjective as a comparison marker followed by the preposition "than" ending with the object. It could be stated that what is being compared is the subject and object as the main focus of meaning that is a significant comparison between the subject and object. Hence, the structure like this necessitates the subject being at the beginning of the sentence. Meanwhile, the comparative structure of the Wawonii construction showed that the center of attention of meaning is in the adjective which attempted to describe that the difference is in the area of the nature of the subject and object, namely "smart". So that, in the Wawonii structure, an adjective is placed to start the sentence, it is related with Jitpranee's (2017) study that an adjective has a function as attributive function to pre-modify the nouns. The adjective is followed by a comparative marker, subject, and comparative marker again, and ending with an object.

Besides, there is a prominent structural difference in the sense of plural form. In English, the sentence "*Dina has two books*" have plurality characteristics as such the presence of the word "*two*" and the morpheme "s", so it can be directly classified without having to translate first. Meanwhile, the Wawonii language structure only has one characteristic of plurality, namely "orua" which means "two". Apart from that, they also place slots differently; in English, they always put the subject at the beginning of the sentence as the main actor, whereas the Wawonii speakers put it at the end of the sentence, and started the sentence with determiner to determine how many things that the subject has, it relates with Akramov and Hasanov (2022) that when the determiner appears before a word, the word's meaning is made clearer and more specific.

Moreover, the use of question structure formation; if in English it began and is accompanied by a question mark, such as the structure "*Have you eaten?*" used the word "*have*" as a question word marking and is accompanied by a third verb form, but in Wawonii form, no question words in interrogative sentences and there are no first, second, or third verb forms as in the sentence "*Mongka kom?*". The main determinant of the tense of a sentence in Wawonii language is determined by the presence of the adverb of time, it is in line with Colonna, Charolles, Sarda, and Pynte (2015) that an adverb functions to refine the meaning of a verb, a noun, or an adjective in a sentence. But even so, there is interrogative sentence form which put





the question marking at the end of the sentence, such as "Kolakom maina?" means "Where are you going?" in English. Over, and above, in the verbal sentence form level, the English is fairly aligned at this level with the SVO model, such as the data in the sentence "I am going to the office" starting with the subject, then to be, verb ing, conjunction, determiner and adverb of place. In contrast, the sentence "Kolakongku ai kantoro" starting with the verb, followed by the subject, determiner, and adverb of place. Hence, in this sense, in Wawonii verbal sentence structure, the SVO model is not used.

Apart from that, at the level of negative sentences, both English and Wawonii are also different. The structure of English in negative sentences such as "I don't know that person" still followed the rules of syntactic categories which place the subject in the beginning, then "do not" that indicated the negative marker, followed by a verb 1, then the determiner to determine the object, and ending with the object. Meanwhile in Wawonii language construction, negative sentence structures always started with the marker "*na*" meaning "*not*", but the form "*na*" must be combined in one word form with the subject "naku" meaning "I don't" so that when it is not combined the meaning changes even doesn't have meaning, as Sahib, Arafah, Manda, and Machmoed (2017) said that morpheme-break phenomena in language can influence the meaning change of the words. Apart from the word "naku" which fills the subject slot in the SVO model, the negative sentence structure is also followed by verb, adverb, determiner, and ends with an object. In drawing thing to a close that the simple past tense forms of this study was one of the syntactical differences. In English, it always begins with a subject and a verb 2 (V2) as a marker for the past sentence, and then is followed by conjunctions and adverbs of place and time to complete the meaning of the sentence. Meanwhile, the structure of the Wawonii language at the simple past tense level showed that the structure begins with a verb, followed by a subject, and adverbs of time and place.

6. CONCLUSION

The present study has convincingly demonstrated that English and Wawonii language are different in the sense of one word form indicates one sentence form in English; then, different in possessive form; another different one is the use of comparative form; the use of plural form; question formation form; then, both languages are different in verbal sentence (continuous tense) form; nominal sentence form; negative sentence forms; and forms, and simple past tense sentence form. English in all levels of the data is fairly consistent with the model of SVO syntactical construction, meanwhile in Wawonii language used object, verb, determiner, adverb, adjective, and not as the mark of negative sentence to started the sentences, and Wawonii syntactical variation have no regular verb form such as V1, V2, and V3, merely possessing V1 for all verb levels, then the presence of adverb is a must. The study incrementally offered a significant contribution in sociolinguistic development, especially when studying syntactical construction differences of English and Wawonii language. However, this research needs to be explored more in the future in other areas including morphology, semantic, dialect, and so on, in order to see new phenomena. For future researchers may also involve many more participants.





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