مجلة جامعة دمشق للآداب والعلوم الإنسانية

اسم المقال: التوافق بين دراسة النصوص الأدبية والمنهج التواصلي لتعليم اللغة الإنكليزية لغة أجنبية
اسم الكاتب: د. عمار صندوق
رابط ثابت: https://political-encyclopedia.org/index.php/library/2909
تاريخ الاسترداد: 2026/11/02 13:48 +03

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التوافق بين دراسة النصوص الأدبية والمنهج التواصلي لتعليم اللغة الإنكليزية لغةً أجنبية

د. عمار صندوق*

الملخص

لم يكن دور الأدب في تعليم اللغة الإنكليزية لغة أجنبية مستقراً خلال السنوات الماضية. ففي ظل شيوع الطرائق التقليدية، على سبيل المثال، كان للأدب مكانةٌ مرموقة في برامج اللغة، وكان أحد أهم أسباب تعلم اللغة الأجنبية الاطلاع على الأعمال "الكلاسيكية" لتلك اللغة. ومع تطبيق طرائق التدريس التي تركز على اللغة المستخدمة في الأمور اليومية وفي ظل المنهج التواصلي تم استبعاد الأدب وعدِّه غير ضروري، ولا يملك فائدة عملية. بيد أنه في الآونة الأخيرة كانت هناك دعوات لأنْ يؤدي الأدب من جديد دوراً في تعلم الإنكليزية، وحصل ما يشبه الاعتراف التدريجي على أن الأدب يشكل مصدراً ثميناً ومهماً للمادة التدريسية الصحيحة و الموثوقة لمتعلمي اللغة الأجنبية.

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى سبر التوافق بين دراسة النصوص الأدبية ومبادئ المنهج التواصلي. ومن ثَمَّ تقترح أنواعاً مختلفة من الأنشطة والتمارين التي يمكن استخدامها في صفوف تعلم الإنكليزية لغة أجنبية. وأخيراً تم تطبيق معظم هذه الأنشطة والتمارين المقترحة على أحد النصوص الأدبية.

* جامعة دمشق كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية – قسم اللغة الانكليزية.

The Compatibility of Literature with Communicative Methodology In EFL Classroom

D. Ammar Sunduq *

Abstract

The status of Literature in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language has not been stable over the years. Under the traditional grammar-translation approach, for example, literature was given a high prestige in language programmes and was commonly assumed that a major reason for learning a foreign language was to gain access to the literary "classics" of that language. But with the advent of methodologies emphasizing the teaching of every-day English, such as - audio linguicism and the communicative approach, literature was removed from the EFL classroom and regarded as both unnecessary and of no practical use. However, in recent years there has been a call of the reinstatement of literature in the English language classroom, and a gradual recognition of its role as a valuable, even essential source of authentic material for the foreign learner. It is the aim of this paper to explore the compatibility of literature with the principles and techniques of the communicative approach, to suggest three kinds of activities and finally to apply some of them on a particular literary text.

* Damascus University College of Arts and Humanities - Department of English Language.

Introduction:

It is, at first sight, difficult to reconcile the essentially pragmatic, needs- based nature of communicative language teaching with the largely expressive, non-functional nature of language as it may be used in literature. This article is intended to show that, in the era of C.L.T., literature has a role in English language teaching. It, first, summaries the argument against, and for, using literature in the EFL classroom. It, then discusses the theoretical basis for communicative teaching, and the main principles of CLT are reviewed. It concludes with some suggestions showing how a literary text might be exploited by the TEFL teacher. It provides three kinds of activities, and applies them on a particular literary work. It should, however, be emphasized that these activities are merely suggestions which could be modified, and many more could be added.

1- The argument against using literature in the EFL classroom. The following is a brief discussion of the arguments that have been put forward against the use of literature with EFL students.

1.1. The Linguistic content:

A number of criticisms have been made against the use of literature with EFL students on the grounds of its linguistic content. One such criticism, identified by Widdowson (2002: 204), is that literature has a potentially disruptive influence since the language is not carefully controlled as in specially designed EFL textbooks. The use of literature has also been questioned on the grounds of its unusual or " deviant" use of language, that is, it is different from the kinds of language to which students have so far been exposed.

1.2. The cultural content:

Another problem with the use of literature is that individual works often reflect a cultural perspective unfamiliar to EFL students, thus creating a problem in conceptual understanding (Mckay, 1992: 529).

Also, since students themselves will approach the literary work with their own cultural assumptions they may interpret it in a way contrary to the writer's intended meaning (Wright: 1988:102).

1.3. Relevance to students' needs:

In order to address this question, it is necessary to look more closely at the sort of people who are studying EFL. As a generalization they may be divided into two groups: those learning English for "specific purposes" (ESP) and those learning form more general purposes. Thus, it is as the critics argue, difficult to see the relevance of literature to ESP students specific language needs because literature is not representative of the types of reading material most ESP students would normally need to understand. On the other hand, Widdowson (1993:6) defines GPE as "… essentially an educational operation which seeks to provide learners with a general capacity to enable them to cope with undefined eventualities in the future". Since many of these GPE students have no eventual goal in sight for learning English, literary texts may have little to offer to them as well.

The foregoing arguments do not, however, justify the removal of literature from EFL teaching since many of the objections can be overcome by the careful selection of texts.

2- The advantages of using literature in the language classroom. There are many advantages to be gained by introducing literature in the language classroom. The following points give support to, and extend, this claim.

2.1. Valuable authentic material:

An advantage of using literature is that a literary text offers an authentic context in which characters, situations and events can be a reality closely approximating to everyday life. Indeed, literature creates its own reality, and the picture given by the sober factual encyclopedia (Smith, 1992:227). Authenticity is an important factor in communicative

methodology, as will be indicated later, and this further justifies the use of literature in a language class.

2.2. Cultural enrichment:

By culture is meant a way of life, a way of thinking and being. To learn a language and to speak it well is to know the culture of that language. Literature enacts the culture from which it stems.

2.3. Language enrichment:

In dealing with literature, students are required to look at literary language in order to discover the fullest meaning of a piece of a literary work. It is insufficient simply to consider the superficial meaning of the language because such meanings are often partly adequate. Literature differs from non-literary discourse like newspaper articles, official letters and instruction guides in which meanings tend to be given directly through the language used. In a literary text the message is never conveyed directly.

2.4. Literature can increase students motivation:

Literature may have motivational value in that it allows students to respond at an emotional level, and to express their feelings in a way not possible with most other types of text which might be used in the EFL class. Literature often demands from the language student an affective response. Thus, its inclusion in the language syllabus ensures that the students affective needs are not neglected. This again may be a motivating force and lead to more reading by the student.

2.5. Literature encourages extensive reading

Reeves (2005:22) writes of the importance for foreign language learners, as for first language learners, of extensive reading in order not only to gain familiarity with lexis and grammatical structures, but also to develop the skills of speed reading and 'reading at length', that is, maintaining enough concentration to read a long text. An essential element in extensive reading, he contends, is 'enjoyment'. Literature may be just the material to provide this for many students.

In conclusion, there are stronger arguments for than against the use of literature in a language class. And if literature has all these advantages, there is no reason why it should not form an integral part of the language learning syllabus.

3- Background to communicative language teaching:

The 20th century has been an era of rapid change. Parallel to developments in science and technology, new ideas in every walk of life come into existence with apparently increasing frequency. In language teaching , as in other fields, new movements often begin as reactions to old ones. Thus, audiolingualism stemmed from the discontent with traditional formal methodologies. However, in the 1960s, many of those who once whole-heartedly followed the doctrine of stimulus-response associations sooner or later lost their faith in this method (Blair, 1992).

It goes without saying that Chomsky's work has been most influential in the understanding of the psychology of language learning. In his objection to Skinner's theory of verbal behavior, he claimed that learning is not a habit structure. Chomsky's notion of a generative grammar shifted attention from utterances themselves to how these utterances are produced (Yalden, 2003:5).

Thus, there has been growing support for the view that communication has to be seen as a major objective of learning a language. In other words, instead of acquiring some structural skill the learners are to acquire what Hymes (1971) referred to as 'communicative comptence'. Hymes coined this term and argued against Chomsky's view of linguistic competence and linguistic performance. His suggestion is that "There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless". (Hymes, 1971: 15).

3.1. Principles and techniques of communicative methodology:

There are certain principles and techniques of the communicative approach that any teacher can easily find and effectively make use of.

3.1.1 Information gap:

In a classroom situation, an information gap occurs when one student possesses information which another does not. Bridging the gap creates the exercise. In the process of the exercise, the student who possesses the information needed by the other conveys this information to the other students. Purposeful communication will then have taken place.

3.1.2 Choice and uncertainty:

When communication is taking place, the people involved have a choice of what to say and how to say it. The speaker has a choice of what ideas he wants to express at a given moment and what linguist forms are appropriate to express them. The listener, because of the choice open to the speaker, always has doubts about what the speaker will say. Thus, the elements of choice and uncertainty should be incorporated in the exercises given in a language classroom.

3.1.3 Feedback:

According to Morrow(2001), when two people are communicating the initiator normally has an objective in mind such as asking for advice or inviting the interlocutor to a party. What the initiator says will be designed to reach that objective, and what the interlocutor replies will be evaluated in the light of this objective. Therefore, a controlled exercise where students are told what to say when their turn to speak comes ignores this aspect of communication and fails to give practice in using language for real purposes.

3.2. Some techniques:

Along with the principles mentioned above, a teacher using the communicative approach needs certain techniques in order to make the classroom activities more interesting. Experts in the field regard problem-solving, role-play and simulations as the most motivating ones. They generally agree that such activities provide some degree of authenticity so that the students find themselves in purposeful situation.

4- Some practical activities for using literature:

In general terms, the aim of these activities is to put fresh momentum into the teaching of literature to EFL students, to stimulate students' desire to read and encourage their responsiveness and to maintain interest and involvement by using a variety of student-centred activities.

The activities consist of three types: warm-up, during-reading and post-reading activities. They are given in bare outline as most of them will be put into practical shape using an excerpt from "Emma" by Jane Austen.

4.1 <u>Warm-up activities:</u>

- introduction to the author.
- discussion of the title of the text.
- language work
- questions: general, and specific, questions on the text to be read.
- the use of relevant pictures as visual prompts.
- using the theme

4.2. During-reading activities:

- comparison of different texts
- arrangement of jumbled cut-out paragraphs
- language work
- choose the prediction
- comprehension questions

- summary of passages
- summary comparison
- modified close procedure.

4.3 Post-reading activities:

- questions
- debates
- just a minute
- role plays
- improvisation
- discussion of the title of the text
- essay writing

5- Application of the activities:

Because of limitation of space, the present section attempts to apply some of the above-mentioned activities on an excerpt from "Emma"(See Appendix l).

5.1. <u>Warm-up activities:</u>

They include anumber of separate activities.No strictsequence is envisaged.

1. Students are provided with the title of the novel 'Emma'and an introduction to the author, Jane Austen:

Jane Austen was born in 1775 and died in 1817. To begin with, she did not first write for publication, but later became a famous novelist. Her interest was in the ordinary cultured life of the time, and she describes it in absorbing detail. However, her novels provide a searching critique of the fashionable modes of thinking and feeling. She is widely known as the mother of the English nineteenth-century novel.

2. A picture of twoyoung girls and a luxurious house isshown to students. Students are asked a number of questions such as:

- Why do you think the first girl is very sad?
- What makes the second girl so happy?
- Which of them do you think lives in such a house?

3. Students are told to work in small groups A, B, C and D to discuss and answer the following questions:

a- What do you think Emma is like?

b- Can you predict the main theme of the novel ?

c- What do you. think will happen in the novel?

On completion of this task, students form different groups with a member from group A,B,C and D making up each new group.

Students exchange answers and fill in the following table for question (a):

	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
Emma				

Students exchange ideas for questions (b) and (c).

N.B. Students are encouraged, of course, to use their imagination to answer the questions given above.

4. Students are provided with a glossary:

mistress: a female master who is at the head of a family household.

governess: a woman who is employed by a family to live with them and educate their children.

solitude: being alone, loneliness.

thoroughly: completely

mood : state of mind

5. Students workin small groups A, B, C and D.The teacher writes a number of words on the board and students have to find the meanings of the words, and state whether each one is a verb, a noun, an adjective or an adverb by referring to the text anddiscussion in their individual groups. The line number in which the word is found is given in brackets.

Group A:	blessing	(3)
	affectionate	(7)
	in consequence	(8)
Group B:	tendency	(25)
	disadvantage	(27)
	companion	(53)
Group C :	intelligent	(53)
	society	(77)
	origin	(89)
Group D:	selfishness	(94)
	inclined	(96)
	intellectual	(65)

On completion of this task students form new groups with a member from group A,B,C and D making up each new group. Members of each group exchange information so that every student has the meaning of all words. Students then add the newly-found meaningto the glossary provided.

Students are invited once more to predict the content of the text from the words they have just been discussing. Students give their opinions and discuss.

6. **Students are giventhe following questions to bear in mind while reading the text:**

a-Why was Emma the mistress of the house?

b-What are the reasons for Emma's loneliness?

c-What does the father dislike?

d-What did Emma want to do very soon?

On completion of a reading of the text, students work in pairs to answer the above questions.

5.2. <u>During-reading activities:</u>

1- Students work in pairs. Divide the text into five sections as follows:Lines 1-23, Lines 24-38, Lines 39-58, Lines 59-77, Lines 78-124.

Between each section insert the following instructions:

Before section 1-The text is about a young girl. Read the firstpartof the text to find out the reasons for Emma's happiness. Do not stop to worry about any unfamiliar words.

After section1- Read section 2 to find the consequences of Miss Taylor's marriage on Emma.

After section 2- Another character is introduced. Read thissection to find who he/she is?

After section 3-What are the reasons for Emma's loneliness?

After section 4-Howwould you describe the character of thefather?

Some of the answers could be written on the board for furtherdiscussion.

2- Students are told to skim through the text and take downwords which give an idea of, or describe, the setting of the novel. Students work in pairs to compare and discuss the words taken down.

3- Students work in groups of around four. They are giventhe following instructions:

a-Arrange the jumbled paragraphs A,B,C,D, E, F, G, H of the text in the correct order .

b -After arranging the paragraphs in order, write the order on theboard according to the letter at the back of each cutting.

c- Compare the different orders provided. Give reasons for yourchoice.

What were the clues or links that told you that the paragraphsshould bein the order you have chosen ? Specify the words orphrases which provide the clues or links.

N.B. The teacher may provide students with the order of the firstand last paragraphs only if students have difficulty in starting.

4- Studentsare split into 3 groups A, B, and C. Tasks forthe groups:

-Group A: Read lines (1-38) carefully.Produce, in discussionwith other members of your group, a summary which consists onlyof a few sentences. Give this section an appropriate title.

-Group B: Read lines (39-77) to do the same.

-Group C: Read lines (78-124) to do the same.

On completion of this task, students form new groups with a member from Group A,B and C making up each new group. Members ofeach new group exchange summaries to reconstitute the whole text. Students are told to fill the following table:

Summary from Group A	Summary from Group B	Summary from Group C

The main summary points are then written on the board.

Students are told to work in pairs for all the coming tasks.

5- Find synonyms or near-synonyms for each of the wordslisted below:

blessings (3), excellent (12),evils (24) ,sorrow (29), deep (58), gentle (94)

Do you think the author made the right choice of words or wouldany of the synonyms have been better?

- What does each of the following mean?

-ruin (27), promise (39), change (59), equality (50), fill (76), poor (104)

7- Fill in the spaces with the right preposition. Refer tothe text if necessary.

-Miss Taylor was very fond . . . .both daughters, but particularly Emma.

-I was....the wedding-day of Miss Taylor that Emma first sat inlong, sad thought.

-Miss Taylor was interested....all Emma's affairs.

-Emma was now ingreat danger of suffering....intellectualsolitude.

-Mr.Woodhouse was obliged to part....Miss Taylor too.

8- Form other parts of speech from the words given in brackets to fill in the spaces:

-Emma had lived nearly 21 years in the world with very little to her.(sad)

-She seemed to....some of the best blessings of life. (unity)

-Emma had a....to think a little too well of herself. (tend)

-There was a close....between Emma and Miss Taylor. (friend)

- Emma has remained....throughout the evening. (cheer)

-Mr.Woodhouse is not a....person in the full sense of the word. (self)

9- Finally, the teacher writes on the board..."she would have been a great deal happier if she had spent therest of her life with them".

Of which type of conditional sentence is the above an example?Give two examples of your own.

… I wish she were her again

What do you call this construction?

Can you give some other examples of your own ?

5.3. Post-reading activities

1- Divide the class into groups of three. Each group memberis askedto look at one of the main characters and consider to what extent the list of words they are given describe their character. The words are as follows:

Emma: adventurous, extrovert, strong-willed, over-confident,day-dreamer .

Miss Taylor: affectionate, quiet, patient, loyal, lenient.Mr. Woodhouse: narrow-minded, introvert, rich, generous, conservative.

Each group member shares his answers with the others.

2- This activity can be done individually or in pairs.The four characters described in this extract have different personalities and ways of looking at the world. Without looking atthe text, write a sentence about each one which seems to you tosum up his or her character.This is followed by a class discussion of some of the answers.

3- Students work in pairs to fill in the following table.Which of these 5 qualities of the protagonist are stressed mostin the text. Place a number (1,2, 3,4,5) under each quality to indicate the order ofemphasis:

	kindness	confidence	caring	wealth	beauty
Emma					

Cite words from the extract to justify your choices.On completionof this task, the different ordersof thefivequalitiesof the protagonist are written on the board for comparison and discussion.

4- Students are told to recall the questions given in 5.1. Insmall groups students discuss and answer these questions.

5- This activity centres on the dialogue between Emma and her father at the end of the extract (104-124). In a role-play, two more able students are asked to act this dialogue out, extend itand suggest alternative utterances for agiven utteranc einthe dialogue. This can be repeated with a number of pairs.

6- Students work in pairs. They take any long sentence offour lines or more from the excerpt and re-write it to produce asmany as single clauses as possible,e.g. Lines 1-5, 18-23.

7- To look more closely at the style, this activity could bedone either individually or in pairs with students reporting backto a larger group.

-How is this excerpt narrated?

-Whose point of view does the reader identify with?

-What does this make you feel towards Emma and the rest of thecharacters?

-Can you find any instances of colloquial English in the excerpt?Account for your findings, whether positive or negative.

8- At this stage, the teacher organizes a debate or a paneldiscussion. This provides students with the opportunity toexpress their personal opinions. The teacher starts the discussion by raising such open-ended questions as:

-What feelings did the text arouse in you?

-Did you like the text as a whole ? Why /why not?

-Is the text effective as the opening of a novel?

-How would you like to be brought up?

-How are you going to bring up your children?

-Do you accept your parents'opinions or do you trust your own?

-What are your attitudes and feelings towards the protagonist?

-What do you think of the suitability of the title ? Can you suggest an alternative?

9- Because this excerpt does not reveal one of the mainthemes of the novel,i.e. match-making,the teacher discusses thistopic with students first. He then asks the class. Why does Emma speak so enthusiastically about Miss Taylor's marriage?

It is hoped that a perceptive student will infer that it was Emma who arranged this marriage The teacher asks the class again:

-What do you think becomes of Emma ?

-Can you predict the ending of the novel ?

10- Students asked to write a composition of about 250 – 300words on arranged marriages. Finally, they are encouraged to readEmma in their leisure time to discover the complete story.

Having completed these tasks, learners should be more awareof how a literary text achieves its artistic effects. They shouldalso, by the performance of co-operative, text-related tasks, haveused the target language in a communicative, authentic way.

Conclusion:

This paper has set out defending the use of literature in the language classroom with the communicative approach. Literatrue may provide the affective, attitudinal and experiential factors that will motivate learners to read. The paper has then attempted to provide some practical ideas concerning the use of a particular literary text in the language classroom. It is hoped that this paper will help teachers who lack background knowledge and experience of the methodology, to exploit literary texts in the new way. It is not claimed that this paper has exhausted all beneficial activities. Doubtless practicing teachers can pursue many of their own ideas along these lines and others.

Appendix 1

"Emma" by Jane Austen

Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and richwith a comfortable home and happy character, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of life; and she had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to sadden her.

She was the youngest of two daughters of a most affectionate and generous father; and she had, in consequence of the marriage of her sister, Isabella, been mistress of his house from a very early time. Her mother had died too long ago for her to remember her love at all clearly; and her place had been n11ed by an excellent woman as governess, who had nearly equaled her mother in affection.

Miss Taylor had been sixteen years in Mr. Woodhouse's family, less as a governess than a friend, very fond of both daughters, but particularly of Emma. Between them was the close friendship of sisters, for the gentleness of Miss Taylor's temper had hardly allowed her to use any kind of control, and Emma did just what she liked. She respected Miss Taylor's judgement, but followed chiefly her own.

The real evils, indeed, of Emma's position were the power to do as she liked, and a tendency to think a little too well of herself : these were the disadvantages which might ruin her many enjoyments. Sorrow came- a gentle sorrow- but not at all disagreeable. Miss Taylor married. It was the loss of Miss Taylor which first brought sadness to Emma. It was on the wedding-day of this beloved friend that Emma first sat in long, sad thought. The wedding over, and the people gone, her father and herself were left to dine together, with no hope of a third person to cheer the long evening. Her father fell asleep after dinner, as usual, and she had then only to sit and think of what she had lost.

The marriage had every promise of happinessfor her friend Mr. Weston was a man of goodcharacter, money, suitable age, and pleasant manners.But the want of Miss Taylor would be felt everyhour of every day. Emma remembered her past kindness - the kindness, the affection of sixteenyears - how she had taught and how she had played with her from five years old - how she haddone her best to amuse her in health - and hownursed her through the various illnesses of childhood. But the friendship of the last seven years,the equality which had soon followed Isabella's marriage when they were left alone to each other, was an even dearer memory. She had been a friend and companion such as few possessed : intelligent, useful, gentle, knowing all the ways of the family, interested in all its affairs, and especially in Emma herself - a woman to

whom she could speak every thought which came into her head, and who had a deep love for her.

How was she to bear the change ? It was truethat her friend was going only half a mile fromthem; but Emma knew that there must be a greatdifference between a Mrs. Weston, only half a milefrom them, and a Miss Taylor in the house; and inspite of all her advantages*, she was now in great danger of suffering from intellectual* solitude*. Sheearly loved her father, but he was no companionfor her; for he had been a sick man all his life,without activity of mind or body, though everywherebeloved for the friendliness of his heart.

Her sister was not so far removed by hermarriage, being settled in London, only sixteenmiles off, but was much beyond her daily reach; and many a long October and November evening must be struggled through before Christmas brought the next visit from Isabella and her husband, and their little children, to fill the house, and give her pleasant society again.

The Woodhouses were important people in thevillage. Everyone respected them. Emma knew manypeople in the place, for her father was polite to all,but not one among them could be accepted in the place of Miss Taylor for even half a day. It wasa sad change; and Emma sighed over it and wishedfor impossible things, till her father awoke, andmade it necessary to be cheerful. His spirit requiredsupport. He was a nervous man, easily saddened;fond of everybody that he knew, and hating to partwith them; hating change of every kind. Marriage,as the origin of change, was always disagreeable;and he had not yet accepted his own daughter's marriage, nor could ever speak of her without pity,though it had been entirely a marriage of love. Nowhe was obliged to part with Miss Taylor too. Hehad a habit of gentle selfishness, and was neverable to suppose that other people could feeldifferently from himself. So he

was inclined* to thinkthat Miss Taylor had done as sad a thing forherself as for themand that she would have been a great deal happier if she had spent the rest of her life with them. Emma smiled and talked as cheerfully as she could, to keep him from such thoughts; but when tea came, it was impossible for him not to say exactly as he had said at dinner: «Poor Miss Taylor! I wish she were here again. What a pity it is that Mr. Weston ever thought of her!»

«I cannot agree with you, papa; you know Icannot. Mr. Weston is such a pleasant, excellentman, that he thoroughly deserves a good wife; and you could not have wanted Miss Taylor to live with us forever, and bear all my strange moods, whenshe might have a house of her own.»

«A house of her own ! but where is the advantage of a house of her own? This house isthree times as large, and you never have any strange moods, my dear.»

«How often shall we go to see them, and they come to see us !We shall be always meeting! We must begin; we must go and pay our visit very soon.»

«My dear, how am I to get so far ? It is sucha distance. I could not walk half so far.»

«No, papa; nobody thought of your walking. We must go in the carriage.»

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