

## A DIAGNOSTIC STUDY OF LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND ERRORS MADE BY THE STUDENTS IN ENGLISH AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL

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### INTRODUCTION

Diagnosis means identifying the difficulties and errors done by the students of secondary schools in English language learning. They are intended primarily to ascertain what learning still needs to take place. In language skills testing, one can be reasonably straight forward. One can be fairly confident of one's ability to create tests that will tell whether someone is particularly weak in say speaking, reading and writing in English language. Diagnostic testing is a lengthy process in comparison to other testing tools. A diagnostic test is a test used to diagnose or reveal an individual's weakness and strength in a certain course of study (Hughes 2003, p. 50). Diagnostic test is helpful to identify the use of faulty, round about or incorrect procedures, the use of elementary processes where these could have been replaced by advanced processes.

Monroe (1965) suggested two major aspects of diagnosis in teaching. They are (1) determination of the extent to which educational objectives is achieved, (2) Identification of factors that may be interfering with the optimum growth of the individual. Diagnosis is an understanding of perfect situation in terms of its causes what brought it about or in terms of what it will cause.

Diagnosis is essentially the task of locating more specially those factors which bear more causal relation to the progress of learning of pupils. The essence of educational diagnosis is the identification of some of the use of learning difficulties and some of the potential education educational asserts so that by giving proper attention to these factors more effective learning may result (Satish, 2012).

The branches of English Language Development and literacy incorporate reading, pronouncing, writing, speaking and listening. As a result, English language development

educators must combine audiovisual technology, cultural immersion, and text to enforce the tenets of language and maximize comprehension and consequential fluency. English Language Development for English and non-English speakers demand patience and perseverance. Often, literacy has to be tailored to individuals who may find it difficult to either acquire a second language or be proficient in her own. For the instructor, simplifying language use in the classroom, slow speaking and making essential connections can encourage an English language student.

### **Characteristics of English Language**

Many definitions of language have been proposed. Henry Sweet, an English phonetician and language scholar, stated: “Language is the expression of ideas by means of speech-sounds combined into words. Words are combined into sentences, this combination answering to that of ideas into thoughts”. The American linguists Bernard Bloch and George L. Trager formulated the following definition: “A language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group cooperates”.

A number of considerations enter into a proper understanding of language as a subject:

1. Every physiologically and mentally normal person acquires in childhood the ability to make use, as both speaker and hearer, “of a system of vocal communication that comprises a circumscribed set of noises resulting from movements of certain organs within the throat and mouth.
2. Different systems of vocal communication constitute different languages; the degree of difference needed to establish a different language cannot be stated exactly. No two people speak exactly alike; hence, one is able to recognize the voices of friends over the telephone and to keep distinct a number of unseen speakers in a radio broadcast. Yet, clearly, no one would say that they speak different languages.
3. Normally, people acquire a single language initially – their first language, or mother tongue, the language spoken by their parents or by those with whom they, are brought up from infancy. Subsequent “second” languages are learned to different degrees of competence under various conditions.
4. Language, as described above, is species-specific to human beings. Other members of the animal kingdom have the ability to communicate, through vocal noises or by other means, but the most important single feature characterizing human language (that is, every

individual language), against every known mode of animal communication, is its infinite productivity and creativity.

5. In most accounts, the primary purpose of language is to facilitate communication, in the sense of transmission of information from one person to another. However, sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic studies have drawn attention to a range of other functions for language. Among these is the use of language to express a national or local identity (a common source of conflict in situations of multi-ethnicity around the world.

Language interacts with every aspect of human life in society, and it can be understood only if it is considered in relation to society.

### **Importance of English Language**

English is the only language which is widely spoken all over the world. English language is a common language and is spoken in many countries as well. So it is considered as a universal language. We are living in the world of globalization, so English is also often used as the official languages almost all over the countries in the world. So, English language has a great importance in the world's globalization.

### **Review of Literature**

Devaki and Ramaswamy (1990) in an independent study by the Central Institute of Indian Languages studied the relationship between cognitive style and errors in Second Language learning.

The sample consisted of eight male adults studying an advanced course in Tamil after completing the basic and intermediate courses. Witkin's Embedded Figures Test (EFT) and a specific language test were used as tools to collect relevant data.

The major findings of the study comprised: (1) The higher the degree of Field Independence, the lower was the tendency to make global errors, and vice versa. (2) The higher the degree of Field Independence, the lower was the tendency to under-generalize or over-generalize. (3) The lower the level of Field Independence, the greater was the proneness to errors.

Man-lai, Pui-yin and Chau-Ping (1994) made an analysis of the collocation errors in delexical verbs by the first year students of Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

Assignments written by the subjects were used to collect data. The study gives the frequencies of errors in use of each verb along with the probable causes or reasons.

Chen (1996) studied gender differences in errors in English in the business writings of Taiwanese students. Error rates in percent for all measured categories of errors were calculated and comparisons on the bases of sex were made.

Sunvani (2002) reported that intelligence; SES, domicile and type of school had a significant effect on the achievement of students in English grammar.

Kamel (2003) made an investigation into the errors in written English committed by the second year women students of colleges in Saudi Arabia and found morphology, pattern, grammar and vocabulary as the major areas of errors.

Samra (2003) looked into the errors in the writings of Arabic speaking grade 9 students. Data were collected by means of 200-250 words essays on a given topic written by the subjects of the study.

The study gave percentages of errors in different categories and in different classes of errors and compared the percentages of transfer and developmental errors.

### **General Objectives of the Study**

The study is undertaken with the following objectives.

- To identify the learning difficulties and errors in English.

### **Specific Objectives of the Study**

1. To study whether there is significant difference between boy and girl students of 9<sup>th</sup> standard secondary schools with respect to total errors and its components in English.
2. To study whether there is significant difference between 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and aided secondary schools with respect to total errors and its components in English.
3. To study whether there is significant difference between 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and unaided secondary schools with respect to total errors and its components in English.

### **Hypothesis of the Study**

**Hypothesis-1:** There is significant difference between boy and girl students of 9<sup>th</sup> standard secondary schools with respect to total errors and its components in English i.e. Spelling errors, Explanation errors, Grammatical errors, Symbolic errors, Sentence composition errors, Linguistics errors, Comprehension errors and Knowledge errors.

**Hypothesis-2:** There is significant difference between 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and aided secondary schools with respect to total errors and its components in English i.e.

Spelling errors, Explanation errors, Grammatical errors, Symbolic errors, Sentence composition errors, Linguistics errors, Comprehension errors and Knowledge errors.

**Hypothesis-3:** There is significant difference between 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and unaided secondary schools with respect to total errors and its components in English i.e. Spelling errors, Explanation errors, Grammatical errors, Symbolic errors, Sentence composition errors, Linguistics errors, Comprehension errors and Knowledge errors.

### **Tools Used for Data Collection**

Achievement test cum diagnostic test in English – constructed and developed by the investigator by using the steps of the standardization of test. It consists of 50 items which represented with the due weightage assigned to the aspects of the study. Test has significant values of reliability and validity quotient. Test covers the coverage of the content for the students of secondary school level. The test intends to identify the errors in English which is consisting of different components such as spelling errors, explanation errors, grammatical errors, symbolic errors, sentence composition errors, linguistic errors, comprehension errors and English knowledge errors.

### **Sample of the Study**

The present study involves 140 students of 9<sup>th</sup> standard, which is drawn by using random stratified sampling for the schools different management located in and around Tumkur city.

### **Limitations of the Present Study**

The present study involves the sample from few schools from in and around of Tumkur city. It intends to identify the learning difficulty in reading, writing and speaking. The present study is a diagnostic study.

### **Design of the Study**

The present study is normative survey and is an attempt to find out the difficulties in learning English by secondary school pupils from in and around Tumkur city.

### **Data Analysis and Results**

Data were carefully processed, systematically classified and tabulated, scientifically analysed, interpreted and rationally concluded. To achieve all the above said hypotheses, the unpaired t test was applied and the results are presented in the following table.

**Table-1: Results of t Test Between Boy and Girl Students of 9<sup>th</sup> Standard Secondary Schools with Respect to Total Errors and its Components in English (N=240)**

Variable	Gender	n	Mean	SD	t-value	P-value	Signi.
Total Errors	Boys	14	15.65	5.30	3.2316	<0.05	S
	Girls	99	13.46	4.96			
Spelling Errors	Boys	14	2.08	0.96	4.1646	<0.05	S
	Girls	99	1.61	0.71			
Explanation Errors	Boys	14	2.00	0.79	3.0035	<0.05	S
	Girls	99	1.70	0.73			
Grammatical Errors	Boys	14	1.96	0.83	0.2532	>0.05	NS
	Girls	99	2.01	2.27			
Symbolic Errors	Boys	14	1.91	0.75	2.4146	<0.05	S
	Girls	99	1.68	0.75			
Sentence composition Errors	Boys	14	2.01	1.01	2.7278	<0.05	S
	Girls	98	1.68	0.77			
Linguistics Errors	Boys	14	1.82	0.79	1.4198	>0.05	NS
	Girls	99	1.68	0.78			
Comprehension Errors	Boys	14	2.04	0.84	4.0390	<0.05	S
	Girls	99	1.61	0.77			
Knowledge Errors	Boys	14	1.98	0.81	2.3598	<0.05	S
	Girls	99	1.71	0.96			

From the results of the above table, it clearly seen that,

- There is a significant difference between boy and girl students of 9<sup>th</sup> standard secondary schools with respect to total errors (t=3.2316, p<0.05) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. It means that, the boy students of 9<sup>th</sup> standard secondary schools have higher total errors as compared to girl students.
- There is a significant difference between boy and girl students of 9<sup>th</sup> standard secondary schools with respect to component of total errors i.e. spelling errors (t=4.1646, p<0.05) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. It means that, the boy students of 9<sup>th</sup> standard secondary schools have higher spelling errors as compared to girl students.
- There is a significant difference between boy and girl students of 9<sup>th</sup> standard secondary schools with respect to component of total errors i.e. explanation errors (t=3.0035,

$p < 0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. It means that, the boy students of 9<sup>th</sup> standard secondary schools have higher explanation errors as compared to girl students.

- There is significant difference between boy and girl students of 9<sup>th</sup> standard secondary schools with respect to component of total errors i.e. grammatical errors ( $t = -0.2532$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected. It means that, the boy and girl students of 9<sup>th</sup> standard secondary schools have similar grammatical errors.
- There is a significant difference between boy and girl students of 9<sup>th</sup> standard secondary schools with respect to component of total errors i.e. symbolic errors ( $t = 2.4146$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. It means that, the boy students of 9<sup>th</sup> standard secondary schools have higher symbolic errors as compared to girl students.
- There is a significant difference between boy and girl students of 9<sup>th</sup> standard secondary schools with respect to component of total errors i.e. sentence composition errors ( $t = 2.7278$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. It means that, the boy students of 9<sup>th</sup> standard secondary schools have higher sentence composition errors as compared to girl students.
- There is significant difference between boy and girl students of 9<sup>th</sup> standard secondary schools with respect to component of total errors i.e. linguistics errors ( $t = 1.4198$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected. It means that, the boy and girl students of 9<sup>th</sup> standard secondary schools have similar linguistics errors.
- There is a significant difference between boy and girl students of 9<sup>th</sup> standard secondary schools with respect to component of total errors i.e. sentence comprehension errors ( $t = 4.0390$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. It means that, the boy students of 9<sup>th</sup> standard secondary schools have higher sentence comprehension errors as compared to girl students.
- There is a significant difference between boy and girl students of 9<sup>th</sup> standard secondary schools with respect to component of total errors i.e. knowledge errors ( $t = 2.3598$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative

hypothesis is accepted. It means that, the boy students of 9<sup>th</sup> standard secondary schools have higher knowledge errors as compared to girl students.

**Table-2: Results of t Test Between 9<sup>th</sup> Standard Students of Government and Aided Secondary Schools with Respect to Total Errors and its Components in English**

Variable	Type of Management	n	Mean	SD	t-value	P-value	Signi.
Total Errors	Govt.	10	16.1	4.6	-1.8776	>0.05	NS
		0	3	8			
	Aided	40	17.8	5.6			
		0	8	3			
Spelling Errors	Govt.	10	2.03	0.7	-3.6240	<0.05	S
		0	7				
	Aided	40	2.63	1.1			
		0		0			
Explanation Errors	Govt.	10	2.05	0.8	-0.4933	>0.05	NS
		0		0			
	Aided	40	2.13	0.8			
		0		5			
Grammatical Errors	Govt.	10	2.29	2.2	0.0417	>0.05	NS
		0		2			
	Aided	40	2.28	0.7			
		0		5			
Symbolic Errors	Govt.	10	1.98	0.7	-0.4689	>0.05	NS
		0		8			
	Aided	40	2.05	0.8			
		0		5			
Sentence composition Errors	Govt.	10	2.08	0.7	-1.8121	>0.05	NS
		0		5			
	Aided	40	2.40	1.3			
		0		2			
Linguistics Errors	Govt.	10	1.88	0.7	-1.4236	>0.05	NS
		0		7			
	Aided	40	2.10	0.9			
		0		6			
Comprehension Errors	Govt.	10	2.06	0.7	-1.6247	>0.05	NS
		0		5			
	Aided	40	2.30	0.8			
		0		8			
Knowledge Errors	Govt.	10	2.08	0.9	-1.2730	>0.05	NS
		0		5			
	Aided	40	2.30	0.8			
		0		5			

From the results of the above table, it clearly seen that,

- There is significant difference between 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and aided secondary schools with respect to total errors (t=-1.8776, p>0.05) at 0.05 level of

significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected. It means that, the 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and aided secondary schools have similar total errors.

- There is a significant difference between 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and aided secondary schools with respect to component of total errors i.e. spelling errors ( $t=-3.6240$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. It means that, the 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and aided secondary schools have different spelling errors.
- There is significant difference between 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and aided secondary schools with respect to component of total errors i.e. explanation errors ( $t=-0.4933$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected. It means that, the 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and aided secondary schools have similar explanation errors.
- There is significant difference between 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and aided secondary schools with respect to component of total errors i.e. grammatical errors ( $t=0.0417$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected. It means that, the 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and aided secondary schools have similar grammatical errors.
- There is significant difference between 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and aided secondary schools with respect to component of total errors i.e. symbolic errors ( $t=-0.4689$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected. It means that, the 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and aided secondary schools have similar symbolic errors.
- There is significant difference between 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and aided secondary schools with respect to component of total errors i.e. sentence composition errors ( $t=-1.8121$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected. It means that, the 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and aided secondary schools have sentence composition writing errors.
- There is significant difference between 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and aided secondary schools with respect to component of total errors i.e. linguistics errors ( $t=-1.4236$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted and

alternative hypothesis is rejected. It means that, the 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and aided secondary schools have similar linguistics errors.

- There is significant difference between 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and aided secondary schools with respect to component of total errors i.e. comprehension errors ( $t=1.6247, p>0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected. It means that, the 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and aided secondary schools have similar comprehension errors.
- There is significant difference between 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and aided secondary schools with respect to component of total errors i.e. knowledge errors ( $t=1.2730, p>0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected. It means that, the 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and aided secondary schools have similar knowledge errors.

**Table-3: Results of t Test Between 9<sup>th</sup> Standard Students of Government and Unaided Secondary Schools with respect to Total Errors and its Components in English**

Variable	Type of Mgmt.	n	Mean	SD	t-value	P-value	Signi.
Total Errors	Govt.	100	16.13	4.68	6.2192	<0.05	S
	Unaided	100	12.12	4.43			
Spelling Errors	Govt.	100	2.03	0.77	5.8837	<0.05	S
	Unaided	100	1.44	0.64			
Explanation Errors	Govt.	100	2.05	0.80	4.3747	<0.05	S
	Unaided	100	1.60	0.65			
Grammatical Errors	Govt.	100	2.29	2.22	3.1529	<0.05	S
	Unaided	100	1.55	0.76			
Symbolic Errors	Govt.	100	1.98	0.78	4.2085	<0.05	S
	Unaided	100	1.56	0.62			
Sentence composition Errors	Govt.	100	2.08	0.75	5.8623	<0.05	S
	Unaided	99	1.46	0.73			
Linguistics Errors	Govt.	100	1.88	0.77	3.6898	<0.05	S
	Unaided	100	1.51	0.64			
Comprehension Errors	Govt.	100	2.06	0.75	5.4874	<0.05	S
	Unaided	100	1.48	0.75			
Knowledge Errors	Govt.	100	2.08	0.95	5.1899	<0.05	S
	Unaided	100	1.48	0.66			

From the results of the above table, it clearly seen that,

- There is a significant difference between 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and unaided secondary schools with respect to total errors ( $t=6.2192, p<0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. It means that, the 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government secondary schools have higher total errors as compared to unaided secondary schools.

- There is a significant difference between 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and unaided secondary schools with respect to component of total errors i.e. spelling errors ( $t=5.8837$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. It means that, the 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government secondary schools have higher spelling errors as compared to unaided schools.
- There is a significant difference between 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and unaided secondary schools with respect to component of total errors i.e. explanation errors ( $t=4.3747$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) at 5% level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. It means that, the 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government secondary schools have higher explanation errors as compared to unaided schools.
- There is a significant difference between 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and unaided secondary schools with respect to component of total errors i.e. grammatical errors ( $t=3.1529$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. It means that, the 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government secondary schools have higher grammatical errors as compared to unaided schools.
- There is a significant difference between 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and unaided secondary schools with respect to component of total errors i.e. symbolic errors ( $t=4.2085$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. It means that, the 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government secondary schools have higher symbolic errors as compared to unaided schools.
- There is a significant difference between 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and unaided secondary schools with respect to component of total errors i.e. sentence composition errors ( $t=5.8623$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. It means that, the 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government secondary schools have higher sentence composition errors as compared to unaided schools.
- There is a significant difference between 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and unaided secondary schools with respect to component of total errors i.e. linguistics errors ( $t=3.6898$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. It means that, the 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government secondary schools have higher linguistics errors as compared to unaided schools.
- There is a significant difference between 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and unaided secondary schools with respect to component of total errors i.e. comprehension errors

( $t=5.4874$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. It means that, the 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government secondary schools have higher comprehension errors as compared to unaided schools.

- There is significant difference between 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government and unaided secondary schools with respect to component of total errors i.e. knowledge errors ( $t=5.1899$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. It means that, the 9<sup>th</sup> standard students of government secondary schools have higher knowledge errors as compared to unaided school.

### **Findings of the Study**

- The boy students of secondary schools have higher total errors as compared to girl students.
- The boy students of secondary schools have higher spelling errors as compared to girl students.
- The boy students of secondary schools have higher explanation errors as compared to girl students.
- The boy and girl students of secondary schools have similar grammatical errors.
- The boy students of secondary schools have higher symbolic errors as compared to girl students.
- The boy students of secondary schools have higher sentence composition errors as compared to girl students.
- The boy and girl students of secondary schools have similar linguistics errors.
- The boy students of secondary schools have higher sentence comprehension errors as compared to girl students.
- The boy students of secondary schools have higher knowledge errors as compared to girl students.
- The students of government and aided secondary schools have similar total errors.
- The students of government and aided secondary schools have different spelling errors.
- The students of government and aided secondary schools have similar explanation errors.
- The students of government and aided secondary schools have similar grammatical errors.
- The students of government and aided secondary schools have similar symbolic errors.
- The students of government and aided secondary schools have sentence composition writing errors.

- The students of government and aided secondary schools have similar linguistics errors.
- The students of government and aided secondary schools have similar comprehension errors.
- The students of government and aided secondary schools have similar knowledge errors.
- The students of government secondary schools have higher total errors as compared to unaided secondary schools.
- The students of government secondary schools have higher spelling errors as compared to unaided schools.
- The students of government secondary schools have higher explanation errors as compared to unaided schools.
- The students of government secondary schools have higher grammatical errors as compared to unaided schools.
- The students of government secondary schools have higher symbolic errors as compared to unaided schools.
- The students of government secondary schools have higher sentence composition errors as compared to unaided schools.
- The students of government secondary schools have higher linguistics errors as compared to unaided schools.
- The students of government secondary schools have higher comprehension errors as compared to unaided schools.
- The students of government secondary schools have higher knowledge errors as compared to unaided school.

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