

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE USE OF GOOGLE TRANSLATE

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the perceptions of undergraduate students in the Early Childhood Teacher Education Study Program (PG PAUD) of Universitas Pendidikan Muhammadiyah (UNIMUDA) Sorong of the use of Google Translate (GT). Ten graduate students were selected as research participants. The instruments used were questionnaire and interview. The questions ranged from the student's perceptions of the frequent use of GT, agreement or disagreement of using GT, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of using GT. Through qualitative-descriptive analysis, it was known that most respondents indicated a high dependency on Google Translate in completing their writing. The results revealed that all participants used GT quite often and they were confident. Even though using GT has several disadvantages, students still believe this to have more advantages than disadvantages. After knowing the students' perception of the use of GT in this study; it is expected that GT can be better utilized in the future.

Keywords: Students' perception, Google Translate, Undergraduate students

INTRODUCTION

Every undergraduate student of the Early Childhood Teacher Education Study Program (PG PAUD) cannot be separated from the activity of writing paper and reading hundreds to thousands of papers. They do not only read it, but also analyze and criticize them for their research. Therefore, sometimes students need a machine translation to save time in completing a paper.

Translation is a process in which a source language (SL) is translated into the target language (TL) in different stages until it becomes a qualified translation result. Today, many machine translators are emerging to help us to translate any text. Google Inc., the Google's development work, introduced Google Translate (GT) by the end of 2008. Google Translate helps us to automatically translate texts or web pages from one language into another language.

Nowadays, many students of the Early Childhood Teacher Education Study Program (PG PAUD) of the Universitas Pendidikan Muhammadiyah (UNIMUDA) Sorong use this so-called machine translator. They are dealing with scientific or academic texts and they need Google Translate to help them in understanding the texts. Even so, they do not know the quality of the results.

Despite the easy access to the program, several students still find some problems in using it. The condition leads to different perspective of the use of Google Translate in the teaching and learning process. Johnson in Alnujaidi (2017) proposes that perception is an external factor that focuses on an individual's point of view, understanding, belief, and reaction to an innovation.

Therefore, the study aims to describe the students' perception of the use of Google Translate.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Perception relates closely to attitudes. Perception is the process through which organisms interpret and organize sensation in order to create a meaningful world experience (Lindsay & Norman, 1977). In other words, people receive a stimulus and then interpret it into something relevant to them based on their previous experiences. This interpretation may differ substantially from the reality.

The awareness of a person and the acceptance of stimuli play an important part in the process of perception. Receptivity to stimuli is very selective and can be limited by the existing beliefs, attitudes, motivation, and personality of a person (Assael, 1995). Individuals choose the stimuli that meet their immediate needs (perceptual vigilance) and ignore those that can cause psychological anxiety (perceptual defense).

Broadbent (1958) used his filter model to address the concept of perceptive vigilance. Broadbent argued that, on one hand, due to limited capacity, a person must selectively process information and therefore provide information from two different channels (i.e. delivery methods, such as visual and auditory), the perceptual system of an individual processes only what it considers most relevant. However, perceptual defense creates an internal barrier that limits external stimuli through the process of perception if they do not conform to the current beliefs, attitudes, motivation, etc. of the individual. This is called selective perception. Selective perception occurs when the processing of external stimuli is limited by selectively interpreting what he or she sees on the basis of beliefs, experience or attitudes (Sherif & Cantril, 1945).

Google Translate is a Google Inc. automated machine translation service. It translates one written source language directly into another (Boitet et al. 2009). Google translation uses the translation of statistical machines (Brown et al. 1990) using linguistic modeling, the theory of statistical decisions and matching probabilities (Ney 1995) to determine the translation most commonly used. Google Translate 's most popular system included the phrase-based model with small text chunks and rearrangements (Koehn, Och, and Marcu 2003), hierarchical phrase-based models (Chiang 2007) and hierarchical and syntactic models (Zollmann and Venugopal 2006). These three models achieved similar translation quality, but hierarchical and syntactic models showed more advantages in Chinese to English (Zollmann and Venugopal 2006).

Google Translate provides billion translations a day for 200 million users (Shankland 2013) and offers apparently better performance than other publicly available machine translation tools (Seljan, Brkić and Kučič 2011). It is for cheap and instant access to general information about the original texts for moderate quality translation (Anazawa et al. 2013).

Lots of machine translations are freely accessible on the web. However, the most used and popular one is Google Translate (Aiken and Balan, 2011; Korošec, 2011). Based on the research done by Aiken et al (in Aiken and Balan: 2011), Google Translate has shown the best accuracy among other machine translations. Google Translate provides translations among a large number of languages so that it has more language-pair combinations compared to other MT systems. Moreover, it is confirmed that although Google Translate shows good

translations between European languages, it gives relatively poor translations involving Asian languages (Aiken and Balan: 2011). However, it is not uncommon that most lecturers prohibit their students from using Google Translate. Actually, language learners, particularly the native speakers and translator candidate of Asian languages, must be aware of the errors appear on the translation produced by Google Translate.

In September 2010, Google has conducted a survey designed for GT under the question of “For what purpose(s) did you use Google Translator today?” This survey aimed language learners. In the results, the participants revealed that they used GT to “understand a foreign word; read a foreign webpage, email or article; learn to write and speak in foreign language; and write a long piece of text in foreign language as well as verifying the text in foreign language correctly” (García & Pena, 2011, p. 472). On Baker’s (2013) research, it is also found that students use GT when they recognize that they are not really good with their English. Additionally, Sukkhwan (2014) research also found that their participants agreed that GT could be helpful for their EFL learning.

Therefore, Kharbach (2016) wrote that students can also use GT to know the meaning and also the pronunciation of a word. In addition, a survey conducted by Clifford, Merschel, & Munné (2013), as cited in Case (2015) found that the majority of Roman languages students at Duke University believe that using GT gave them benefit for their studies, especially in learning new vocabulary. Moreover, Sukkhwan (2014) said that GT is commonly used for vocabulary learning, writing, reading, and translation. It is also stated that GT can be used as assistance to boost students’ confidence in writing, while Baker (2013) mentioned that GT can be helpful in reading.

Based on Josefsson’s (2011), as cited in Sukkhwan (2014) study, GT was found to be more supportive in terms of providing the currently updated technical terms, phrases and collocations compared to a dictionary. Besides, Kumar (2012), as cited in Sukkhwan (2014) has done a survey to 60 EFL students on their dependency on MT in learning English and the result is 75 percent of them comprehend the concepts taught in English Language Teaching classrooms by using GT. Pena’s (2011), as cited in Baker (2013) survey on the GT advantages in language learning indicated a similar result. In the result, students’ positive experiences were revealed such as, “fast effective way to learn new vocabulary, gives you a guide as to what to write” (p. 20).

However, Clifford et al. (2013), as cited in Case (2015), said that GT has no advantage for learning process, in that it will only result in the students’ dependency; it is not accurate; and it make students missed alternative words that are usually found in printed dictionary. Pena’s survey (2011), as cited in Baker (2013), also indicated a disadvantage of GT in language learning. The results encourage the students to fix the translation made by GT because it is not always correct. Medvedev (2016) also found that GT often lost the grammar and accuracy when it comes to long texts. Sukkhwan (2014) mentioned that sometimes GT is not appropriate to be used in language learning because it produces incorrect translations. Harris (2010), as cited in Baker (2013), an EFL teacher in Japan, also wrote that the result of the use of GT is the loss of a “valuable opportunity of learning the language functions” (p. 19). Bahri and Mahadi (2016) stated that GT do not have any advantages in reading. Baker’s (2013) research also mentioned that GT is not helpful in writing. Additionally, using GT in learning language will lead both learners and teachers into plagiarism.

As Jolley and Maimone (n.d.) pointed out, the use of GT can be ethically acceptable, depending on how it is used. Baker (2013) revealed three viewpoints of students' anxiety: "anxiety about ownership, anxiety about online translators' accuracy, and (...) confidence in its permissibility" (p. 56). Besides, her student participants agreed that it is unacceptable if students use GT for the whole essay because the result will be very messy and it will lead to plagiarism. It is also mentioned that GT is unacceptable if students use it without any teachers' permission.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was classified into a descriptive qualitative research because the data of the research were described in words rather than in numbers, and were evaluated through perception of students. The main point of this research was to study students' perception in using Google Translate (GT).

Ten undergraduate students of class 1 A in the Early Childhood Teacher Education Study Program (PG PAUD) of Universitas Pendidikan Muhammadiyah (UNIMUDA) Sorong were selected as research participants, based on their perception of the frequently, agreement or disagreement, advantages and disadvantages in using GT.

The questionnaire and interview were used as the research instrument. The questionnaire was prepared by the researcher by adapting ideas from the instruments of previous studies (Paramaswari J., Maryam H. & Ilangko S. 2014; Susanto, Riana Devi. 2017) and modified according to the objectives of this study. In preparing the questionnaire, caution was exercised to ensure the standard and quality of the questions. Every questionnaire contains 9 questions about the frequent use of GT and 10 questions asking about the agreement or disagreement of using GT, and the interview consisting of 5 questions related to the advantages and disadvantages of using GT. The questions of the interview include: (1). Do you use Google Translate (GT)? (2). How do you use Google Translate? (3). How do you feel when using Google Translate? (4). Do you think that GT gives advantages? If so, what are they? (5). Do you think that GT gives disadvantages? If so, what are they?

The data were collected through several stages: (1) making the questions for the questionnaire and interview; (2) distributing the questionnaire to and conducting the interview with the participants (students); (3) asking the participants to fill in the questionnaire; (4) collecting the questionnaire that had been answered; and (5) interviewing all the participants.

After the data collection procedures had been completed, the data were analyzed in order to answer the research question. For analyzing the data, the researcher had several data analysis techniques such as: (1). reading and analyzing all responses, (2). sorting the data, (3). organizing, coding and analyzing the data in order to make the research themes, and (4). elaborating the analysis of the data to get the findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Referring to the purpose of this study that was to describe the students' perception of the use of Google Translate, this part delivered the findings and discussion of this study. The findings were based on the questions answered by the students. The questionnaire provided the options adapted from the Likert scale ranging from 1 – 5. The questions range from the

perception of the frequent use of GT as well as the student's agreement and disagreement of using GT.

The data presented in this research were taken from the undergraduate students of class 1 A. The students were asked to check (√) to the answers that are closest to their opinion. Table 1 below shows the percentage of the frequent use of GT.

Table 1. The percentages of frequently-used GT

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often	Have Used The Feature	Frequent Use
	N	R	S	O	VO	R + S + O + VO	O + VO
1) I use GT to check the meaning of unknown words.	0%	30%	30%	20%	10%	90%	30%
2) I use GT to check collocations. (For example, to find out which is used for a person's height. "She is short" or "She is low".)	30%	40%	20%	10%	0%	70%	10%
3) I use GT to check synonyms.	20%	20%	40%	20%	0%	80%	20%
4) I use GT to translate a phrase. (For example, "a good boy", will go to school".)	20%	40%	30%	10%	0%	80%	10%
5) I use GT to translate a sentence.	20%	40%	30%	10%	0%	80%	10%
6) I use GT to translate a clause.	20%	40%	30%	10%	0%	80%	10%
7) I use GT to translate a paragraph.	30%	40%	20%	10%	0%	70%	10%
8) I use GT to translate parts of an essay/article consisting of two paragraphs or more.	50%	30%	10%	10%	0%	50%	10%
9) I use GT to translate a whole essay/article.	50%	30%	10%	10%	0%	50%	10%

From Table 1, it can be concluded that the higher the level, the lower the tendencies of using GT and further explanations are presented below.

In the frequently use GT, there was a high tendency of the participants to use GT on word levels, excluding the collocation. As much as 90% of the participants were experienced

in using GT to check the meaning of unknown words, 80% to check synonyms and 70% to check collocations. Around 30% (20% often and 10% very often) of the participants had a high frequency of using GT to check the meaning of unknown words and 20% (20% often and 0% very often) to check synonyms.

On higher levels, the participants are unlikely to use GT for phrase and clause but more on translating sentences: 80% of the participants had an experience in using GT to translate a phrase, 80% to translate a clause and sentence. Still, the frequencies of using those features were rather low since most participants sometimes used those features except translating sentences (30%). Even though the number of those who sometimes used GT to translate a sentence is higher than those who rarely use it, there is no significant difference (20%).

On discourse levels (paragraph, parts of an essay/article consisting of two paragraphs or more, and a whole essay/article), very low tendencies were indicated but not in paragraph level. It is shown by the percentage: 70% of the participants had an experience in using GT to translate a paragraph, 50% parts of an essay/article consisting of two paragraphs or more, and 50% a whole essay/article. A low tendency was indicated in translating paragraph (30%) since most participants were not experienced in it. Even though the number of those who never used GT to translate a paragraph (30%) was lower than those who rarely used it (40%), there was no significant difference (40%). In contrast, very low tendencies were shown in that more than 50% of the participants never used GT in translating parts of an essay/article consisting of two paragraphs or more (50%) and a whole essay/article (50%).

The percentage of agreement or disagreement of the use of GT will be presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The percentages of agreement or disagreement use GT

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
1. GT is very useful to me in my language class.	0%	0%	0%	20 %	80 %	100%
2. I often translate my class activities using GT in order to understand them.	10%	0%	10%	70%	10%	100%
3. I always use GT to find the meanings of words.	0%	20%	10%	10%	60%	100%
4. I find words in English have many meanings.	0%	0%	10%	30%	60%	100%
5. It is difficult for me to choose the suitable meaning for the situation given.	0%	0%	60%	10%	30%	100%
6. When I have difficulty in understanding the meaning of a word, I use GT.	10%	10%	20%	10%	50%	100%
7. GT does not give me the exact meaning that I want.	10%	50%	20%	10%	10%	100%

8. When I translate a word, I look at the first meaning given in the column.	0%	0%	20%	30%	50%	100%
9. When I translate a word, I select from the parts of speech given [e.g: verb or adj]	0%	10%	30%	10%	50%	100%
10. When I translate, I also refer to the situation given in the text.	0%	10%	20%	50%	20%	100%

Based on the above table, most respondents showed a high dependency on Google Translate (GT) in completing tasks given in the classroom. 80% of the respondents use GT to translate words for their class activities in order to understand meanings. Very often they utilize GT to search for meanings due to the multiplicity of English semantics. All the respondents agreed that the multiple semanticity of the English words has become a serious strain for them to choose the most suitable meanings for the given situations. As a result, this has led them to depend highly on GT for equivalent terms.

Most respondents concurred that they opt to select the first meaning given in the entry when they are given options of meanings. About 50% of the respondents noted that they sometimes refer to the parts of speech for their selection of meaning but majority of the respondents resorted to referring to the situation given in context when they need to find out the equivalent meaning of a word. Nevertheless, the study showed that one respondent did not make any reference to the parts of speech nor the situation to identify accurate meanings read from the text.

The table below is the students' answers and the subsequent data are the results of the interview related to the advantages and disadvantages of using Google Translate.

Table 3 The result of student answers

Students	Answers				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
S.1	Yes, I use.	I use google translate for all kinds of translations, such as words, sentences, paragraphs, etc.	I enjoy using GT, because it speeds up work to translate.	GT provides advantage, like save time to translate.	GT also has a disadvantage, because it makes the work spoiled brain, so lazy thinking to translate.
S.2	Yes, I use.	To find the meaning of words or vocabulary that I do not know or familiar with.	So so	GT provides advantage, because it helps me to find the	Nope

				meaning of words or vocabulary that I do not know or familiar with.	
S.3	Yes, I use.	To translate paragraphs and find the synonyms of word.	I feel very helpful.	GT provides advantage, because it can save time to understand a sentence or paragraph especially for EFL learner like me.	GT also has a disadvantage, because it can lead to dependency, so lazy to improve the ability of student translation.
S.4	Yes, I use.	To translate words and sentences.	So so	GT provides advantage, simple use and there is a choice of other meanings of a word.	GT has no disadvantages, it gives advantages as a instructional media.
S.5	Yes, I use.	I use when I find unfamiliar vocabulary or phrase that I have never used before. I use word by word, I have also translated paragraphs by paragraphs, especially articles that many reply takes a long time to be translated one by one, to shorten the time, I ask for help	My feeling is not confident, because the word produced by google translate is sometimes ambiguous and confusing, so it must be re-checked so that the results match the original meaning of the translated text.	Yes, GT provides advantage, although sometimes there are confusing words, but many advantages can be felt too, at least ease the task of translating a lot of text, and can also be used to	GT has no disadvantages, it is just the use must be careful and for students to be diligent learning, use GT as necessary, so users also learn and think to develop the ability to translate English, do not think instant.

		google translate.		translate words, phrases and paragraphs.	
S.6	Yes, I use.	To translate something that is not understood or paraphrasing.	So so, when I use GT I still have to pay attention and correct the sentence because not everything translated by GT is accurate.	GT has the advantage in some parts, as we want to find the meaning of word, although not accurate, but still understandable.	Using GT makes us dependent.
S.7	Yes, I use.	To translate sentences, but more often to translate paragraphs.	I feel helpful, but I am not confident, because GT is not accurate in translating sentences or paragraphs.	GT provides advantage, because it can help our activities in learning.	GT has no disadvantages.
S.8	Yes, I use.	I use GT when I confused with a new word or forget the meaning.	So so	Sometimes yes, sometimes no. Because many grammar errors when translating long paragraphs.	GT has disadvantages depending on its use.
S.9	Yes, I use.	I use GT to translate words that are not understood. Words and sentences.	Fun and very helpful.	GT provides advantages, it is so easy and free to use because only the internet quota capital we can	GT has no disadvantages.

				translate the language that we do not understand.	
S.10	Yes, I use.	To understand the meaning of a difficult sentence.	Enjoy and feel helpful.	GT provides advantages. I can access it anytime and anywhere I want.	GT has disadvantage, sometimes lazy to learn to translate with own ability.

Advantages of using Google Translate

Based on the interview given, the students shared their positive perceptions of general advantages of using Google Translate: (1) all participants use Google Translate; (2) using GT helps in translating all kinds of translations, (3) using GT is an easier way to translate text and it saves time, and (4) using GT was very helpful in any time and any place.

These advantages were proved by the students' responses. The responses were as the follows:

S.1

I use google translate for all kinds of translations, such as words, sentences, paragraphs, etc. I enjoy using GT, because it speeds up work to translate. GT provides advantage, like save time to translate.

S.2

I use GT to find the meaning of words or vocabulary that I do not know or familiar with. GT provides advantage, because it helps me to find the meaning of words or vocabulary that I do not know or familiar with.

S.3

I use GT to translate paragraphs and find the synonyms of word. I feel very helpful, GT provides advantage, because it can save time to understand a sentence or paragraph especially for EFL learner like me.

S.4

I use GT to translate words and sentences. GT provides advantage, simple use and there is a choice of other meanings of a word.

S.7

I use GT to translate sentences, but more often to translate paragraphs. GT provides advantage, because it can help our activities in learning.

S.9

I use GT to translate words that are not understood. Words and sentences. Using GT was fun and very helpful, GT provides advantages, because only the internet quota capital we can translate the language that we do not understand.

S.10

I use GT to understand the meaning of a difficult sentence. I Enjoy and feel helpful in using GT, GT provides advantages. I can access it anytime and anywhere I want.

S1, S.2, S.3, S.4, S.7, S.9 and S.10 were the samples of students' perception of the advantages of using GT. It meant that they had positive perception of the use of GT. Thus, it can be inferred that the students take advantages of using GT. Furthermore, it saves their time to translate so they could access it anytime and anywhere. They believe that using GT was easy. They find it to be very useful and free to use. Furthermore, it saves their time to translate any text anytime and anywhere.

Disadvantages of using Google Translate

In spite of the advantages, students also find GT to be disadvantageous. They revealed that GT tend to make them lazier and dependent. Besides, it does not provide good results.

The samples of participants' responses toward the disadvantages of using GT could be seen below.

S.1

GT also has a disadvantage, because it makes the work spoiled brain, so lazy thinking to translate.

S.3

GT also has a disadvantage, because it can lead to dependency, so lazy to improve the ability of student translation.

S.5

My feeling is not confident, because the word produced by google translate is sometimes ambiguous and confusing, so it must be re-checked so that the results match the original meaning of the translated text.

S.6

When I use GT I still have to pay attention and correct the sentence because not everything translated by GT is accurate. Using GT makes us dependent.

As seen the data above, S1, S.3, S.5, and S.6 were the samples of students' perception toward the disadvantages of using GT. It meant that they had negative perception of the use of GT. GT is unhelpful came up with several reasons. The most popular reason was that GT causes laziness and lead to dependency.

DISCUSSION

The findings about the use of GT show that the participants frequently use it to translate text of discourse level. The results support Kharbach's research (2016) that students can also use GT to know the meaning of a word. Low percentage is shown by the translation of phrases. It reflects Josefsson's research (2011), as cited in Sukkhwan (2014), in that GT is supportive for phrases. The results are interesting because students were supposed to translate at discourse level without any help. Moreover, Medvedev (2016) also found that the results of GT are not accurate when it comes to long text.

Meanwhile, on the agreement and disagreement of using GT, the finding supported Kumar (2012), as cited in Sukkhwan (2014) for his survey to 60 EFL students on their dependency on MT in learning English. He found that 75 percent of them comprehend the concepts taught in English Language Teaching classrooms by using GT. Pena's survey (2011), as cited in Baker (2013) on the advantages of GT in language learning indicated a

similar result. In the result, students' positive experiences were revealed such as, "fast effective way to learn new vocabulary, gives you a guide as to what to write" (p. 20).

Advantages of Using Google Translate

Students find GT to be advantageous. This finding supported the survey conducted by Groves & Mundt (2015), stating that GT is a free web-based machine translation and easy to use. Then, Medvedev (2016) also mentioned that GT can be used everywhere – inside and outside classroom. As what had been stated by Pena (2011), as cited in Case (2015), GT gives students a guide what to write.

Disadvantages of Using Google Translate

Pena (2011), as cited in Baker (2013), also mentioned that students need to fix the translation made by GT because it is not always correct. Since GT did not provide good models and not always correct, they thought that using it would bring negative effects to their language learning processes. They think that GT still had lots of grammar mistakes, so they might follow the wrong ones. This finding supported Harris's research (2010), as cited in Baker (2013), that the result of the use of online translators is the loss of a "valuable opportunity of learning how the language functions" (p.19). They believed that if they used GT often, they would be lazy to think and recall their knowledge even in the easiest thing. They thought that if they excessively used GT, they could not learn a language independently, in this case English; because they would always need GT's assistance. This finding supported a research by Clifford et al. (2013), as cited in Case (2015) which stated that GT has no advantage for learning process because it will only bring the students' dependency.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion of the research, several conclusions could be made as follows:

Firstly, from the frequent use of GT, the data shows that students have a high tendency in using GT at word levels, such as unknown words and synonyms, but moderate in collocations. For higher levels – phrase, clause, and sentence, they have a moderate tendency to use GT. Interestingly; the results also revealed that students also use GT at discourse levels (paragraph, parts of and essay consisting of two paragraphs or more, whole essay/article). There were several reasons for it, such as scaffolding, convenience, and confidence. Scaffolding and convenience are the most popular reason.

Secondly, from the agreement and disagreement of the use of GT, the findings indicated that most respondents showed a high dependency on Google Translate (GT) in completing tasks given in the classroom. Very often, they utilize GT to search for meanings due to the multiplicity of English semantics. All the respondents agreed that the multiple semanticity of the English words has become a serious strain for them to choose the most suitable meanings for the given situations. As a result, this has led them to depend highly on GT for equivalent terms.

Subsequently, the students shared their positive perceptions of the general advantages of using Google Translate. They include (1) all participants use Google Translate; (2) using GT helps in translate all kinds of translations; (3) using GT is easier and saves time; and (4) it is very useful and can be used anytime and anywhere.

The last, in spite of its advantages, it also has some disadvantages. GT causes laziness and leads to dependency. It also does not provide good models.

It is clear that Google Translate is generally used as an important tool in language learning among EFL students. The results revealed that all participants used GT. They used it quite often and are confident. Even though using GT has several disadvantages, students still believe that it has more advantages. GT continues to develop its features so as to provide opportunities for students to learn more about English language skills and language components. After knowing the students' perception of the use of GT in this study; it is expected that the use of GT in translating English can be better utilized in the future.

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