

## Problems of Teaching Arabic Language to Non-Native Speakers and its Methodological Solutions

**Salahuddin Mohd. Shamsuddin**

Prof. Dr., Faculty of Arabic Language,  
Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali, Brunei Darussalam

**Siti Sara Binti Hj. Ahmad**

Assoc. Prof. Dr., Dean: Faculty of Arabic Language,  
Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali, Brunei Darussalam

### ABSTRACT

Teaching Arabic to non-Arabs in non-Arab Islamic countries, especially in South-East Asia, is different to Arabs in their Arab countries. Arab environment differs to the non-Arab environment, because Arabic is taught in the Arab countries as a national language, while it is not taught in non-Arab Islamic countries as a foreign language. We sanctify Arabic as the language of the Holy Qur'an, the language of Muḥammad the Prophet and the language of Islamic heritage written in the standard Arabic. We study Arabic for the religious purposes. Therefore, we try to study some issues related to Arabic textbooks in South East Asia to see the differences between the teaching Arabic in its native environment and Malay environment and the appropriateness of teaching methods in Arab environment to the nature of students of Arabic in Malay environment. This paper aims to search the solution of the problems related to the teaching Arabic, its challenges and obstacles that impede its education in this region are similar. However, the methods of teaching Arabic must be developed by the modern linguistics and advanced theories of teaching, and their suitability for teaching Arabic language, so that it can regain its suitable place among the world's languages.

**Keywords:** Arabic; education; problems; solutions; textbooks; environment

### DEFINITION OF ARABIC LANGUAGE AND ITS ADVANTAGES

The Holy Qur'an is the primary source of the true Islamic religion. It is a source of laws and provisions. Arabic language of the Qur'an is in the utmost degree of fluency and statement. Each word of its verses and their expressions is the most fluent and has a rhetorical characteristic. Today there are many dialects of the spoken Arabic language in the Arab world, but standard classical Arabic is understood by all from Yemen to Maghreb. This is a miracle of the Holy Qur'an.

Another advantage of the glorious Arabic is the existence of the prophetic Hadiths. Muhammad the messenger of Allah said: "I am the most fluent among the Arabs and non-Arabs". He further said: "I am granted the comprehensive words". It is a remarkable miracle that the blessed tongue is the one from which the noble Prophet pronounced the words of revelation and the verses of the Qur'an and the words of the prophetic Hadiths, but their tone and nature are quite different. Anyone who learns the Arabic language knows the differences between the verses of the Holy Qur'an and the prophetic Hadiths. These are the religious advantages of Arabic language.

The third advantage is its literary importance. When the songs appeared, the poems sang, the books of poetry and prose, and the stories were written in Arabic, many languages of the world

were in a deep sleep. Indeed the word poetry and poet is taken from Arabic in many Asian languages such as Urdu, Persian, Turkish, etc., and poetic rhyme and weights are also taken from the Arabic vocabulary. In fact, the vocabulary, such as the style, colors, fluency, eloquence, smoothness, arts, and all literary and poetic purposes are all due to the Arabic language because they originated in their bosom. In fact, the songs or art of the poetry appeared first among the Arabs, and they were not known by the poetry then, but were known as the songs [1].

The fourth advantage is related to its linguistic aspect. It is the advantage of the Arabic language that it includes the briefness and redundancy, but its summary is not the abbreviated abstraction or redundancy. It is the tedious redundancy, the abbreviation and redundancy here in the sense that one can express its purpose in two or 100 words. The most powerful language in the world in terms of the influence in the soul, and the most beautiful as the rhetoric statement, as English is today a universal language, but it is known as its clear statement.

One of the linguistic advantages of Arabic is also that the vocabulary changes in its forms in addition to the attribute, such as there are multiple words for the expression of love, but they have different degrees to explain the one emotion. In addition, the camel or the sword has more than one hundred words in Arabic, as well as there is a particular word, which is: "To come" and "to return after" for coming to the resources of water and going back from them, but it is used now for the "Import" and "Export".

The grammar of Arabic language is also wider and more comprehensive so that it almost absorbed the whole language, but it does not mean that it does not need to be developed, because the speech is renewed. These grammatical rules in Arab appeared to the feature of the existence of speech that appeared until the age of codification of Arab grammatical rules. While there is no basis for masculine and feminine in many languages of the peoples and nations in the world. However, Arabic speakers distinguish between them by the arrow. In Arabic there are many weights for the feminine and the broken plurals, for the collective nouns and collective plural, as well as there are some certain formulas for the preference and variation, although a single word indicates many meanings, as the meaning of that word varies in the plural form, such as the word in meaning of the same and in the meaning of breath varies because of its plural form.

One of the advantages of Arabic is that every word consists of three letters, although if the word is a verb, it is divided into ten sections for more letters. As well as there are some other derivatives derived from the other verbs. If someone has knowledge of these formulas he can know the meanings of fifty of the words derived of that article by knowing the formulas of derivation from some certain article in Arabic. This is an advantage for the Arabic language alone, not for the other languages.

Arabic was the language of science in the Middle Ages where it quoted what Muslim scientists have created in the nature, chemistry, mathematics, astronomy, etc. Indeed, Arabic is a cultural container has a large-scale, profound-impact and deep-rooted history [2].

It is worth mentioning that Arabic is the language of the Bedouin, but its advantages are that the language of the Bedouins is more explicit and more reliable. When this language emerged from its nomadic environment in the Arabian Peninsula after the rise of Islam, and mixed with the other languages of the other peoples, colored them, and its character had a notable impact on them, such as Farsi language, which began to be written in Arabic letters, still holds about 50% of its vocabulary from Arabic origin. Seventy per cent or more of the names used in Urdu

language are borrowed from Arabic as well as Turkish language is also not different to the other languages influenced by Arabic. It also contains thousands of Arabic words, and (Hausa), which is the language of North Africa or the language (coastwise), it has borrowed also a lot of Arabic vocabulary. The Arabic words used in the languages of Asian nations and peoples have become an integral part of those regional languages, yet they are known as Arabic, because there are no sources of derivation in these local languages [3]. We briefly can say that there is no language in South Asia and South-East Asia, but is influenced by the Arabic language in a few or many.

After this... There is no need to define Arabic language, but it is worthy to say that it is narrated to us by the scholars of the language, and it is mentioned by the Qur'an and the prophetic Hadiths. It is the result of the combination of the languages of the peoples that inhabited the Arabian Peninsula. No one knows exactly the time it represented in its image known to us, nor for all the reasons that led to the integration of the languages of some of these peoples in some, because the composition and formation of a language needs to a century. It is known by some of the stone monuments and the narratives irrigated in the southern and northern parts of the Arab island that there were some distinct languages were fully different to Arabic that were narrated to us. Those languages were removed, but their shadows stayed for us to be seen sometimes in some of the recent Arabic dialects and expressions and their derivatives and synonyms [4].

However, Arabic is an ancient language spoken by 480 million people inside and outside the Arab countries. It has a broad culture and civilization. It is a living and contemporary language. Arabic is a global language with an international presence. The reason for learning this language by non-native speakers is due to several motives, including political, economic, religious, cultural, educational, tourist, and communicative reasons. All of these reasons are motivated by the self-factor that drives non-Arab intellectuals to learn the language to know about the diverse culture, thought and heritage of the Arab world [5].

The Arabic language is one of the components of the Arab-Islamic culture, and it is the way to raise the Arab Islamic nation and its sovereignty. The nations do not rise and develop unless they keep their language. Arabic language has contributed to the rise of humanity as it has contributed to various sciences such as mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, medicine and the others fields of arts and literatures.

### QUESTIONS

There are many questions related to the books of teaching Arabic to non-native speakers, and the method of teaching, including:

- What is condition of the validity of Arabic language textbooks used in the governmental and non-governmental educational institutions?
- How appropriate is the method of teaching in the prescribed books with the language skills?
- How appropriate is the method of teaching in the prescribed books with the specified time period?
- How diverse are the methods of teaching to the environmental differences?
- What are the difficulties and challenges faced by the students in the fluent language practice without hesitation in this region?

### IMPORTANCE OF THE SEARCH

There is no doubt that the contents of Arabic language textbooks for the native speakers or non-native speakers are very important elements of the process of teaching. The author of

Arabic language textbooks in the educational institutions in Southeast Asia be can benefited by the results, suggestions and recommendations of this study. Therefore, this study came to clarify the problems and provide the solutions in this field by highlighting the quality of the contents of the textbooks for teaching Arabic in this region.

### **LIMITS OF THE SEARCH**

The study is limited to the problems of the contents of textbooks used for teaching Arabic language in the universities or colleges in this region, and to the solutions and proposals addressed by the books that were written by the authors who do not speak Arabic.

### **Objectives of the search**

This study aims to identify the solutions to the problems faced by Arabic language textbooks for the non-native speakers in terms of the quality of their content and methodology.

### **PREVIOUS STUDIES**

From those who were interested in the solutions and proposals addressed by the books that were written by the authors from non-Arabic speakers were known as the expert were Qasimi, Elias Dib and Rushdi Aḥmad Ṭu'ayma. The good books for teaching Arabic at al-Qasimi (1979: 107) are those that have a set of the following characteristics:

1. Setting of the goals
2. Suitability of the student
3. Suitability of the teacher
4. Linguistic and cultural material
5. Four language skills in a balanced manner
6. Corresponds to the method with the objectives
7. Fit the display with the educational method

"The good books at al-Qasimi are the ones that accurately describe the final behavior of learning or in other words, determine the level to be reached by the student after studying the book. These educational goals are described as the behavioral goals so that student behavior can be developed. At the same time, these objectives must be realistic and achievable in the time period specified for the program. The books must be suitable for the student in terms of the age, aptitude, linguistic and educational level and desire. The author of the Arabic language textbooks should take into account the efficiency of the teacher where he must be aware of the language skills they contain. He must be able to use the language comprehension, expression and reading. He must be able to face individual differences and to face the circumstances that necessitate the modification of some of the language materials in the books of education to suit the learners. The teacher must be familiar with the appropriate way to study the book. The educational method used in the book should be also appropriate to the objectives set by the author and is intended to be achieved. The educational material should be presented in the book in a way that will facilitate the learning process" [6].

Elias Dib defines the general characteristics that can be a common denominator for the good books or for the most of them. From these characteristics the content of the book must be inspired by the spirit of the curriculum, and must develop the national and social passion in the minds of students, and to inspire the good morals, and not be subjected to the religion, taking into consideration the appropriate educational methods, and its texts and information should be in accordance with the level prepared for it, and be rich including the colors, drawings, maps, questions and clear and useful exercises. and be printed elegant and paper should be transparent and non-white having the large letters for the beginner and in the medium for the

intermediate and advanced and the letters should be fully set in the first three years and in the necessary form in the remaining years [7].

Rushdi Aḥmad Ṭu'ayma (1985: 95) shows his interest in the teaching method in the educational textbooks through the criteria of analysis of the book of language education prepared by him, where he put ten percent of the standards on the method of teaching [8].

### **APPROACH OF THE SEARCH**

This search is based on an analytical descriptive approach, as it aims to describe the problems of Arabic language teaching in the universities and colleges in non-Arab countries. It is notable that this descriptive approach is suitable for such subjects in the fields of languages and literature.

### **PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES OF TEACHING ARABIC TO NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS**

There are problems related to the contents of Arabic textbooks for non-native speakers, as well as there are many problems and difficulties that may be faced by the people who do not speak Arabic when they try to learn it. Some of these difficulties and problems are mentioned as the following:

#### **Difficulties due to the teacher**

A person who wants to teach Arabic to non-Arab speakers may have insufficient understanding of Arabic language or does not know the methods of teaching Arabic to those who do not speak it.

#### **Difficulties due to student**

The student may lack the motivation to learn Arabic. The student may be understaffed in the effort to learn Arabic.

#### **Difficulties due to the method of education**

There are some difficulties due to the method of education such as non-observance of the individual differences among the students or rely heavily on the translation, and the use of the method of indoctrination during the educational process.

#### **Difficulties due to the method used**

The teaching curriculum used to teach Arabic to non-native speakers may be an obstacle to them when the curriculum is explained in the language of discourse spoken among non-Arabic speakers or the curriculum may not employ the morphological and grammatical rules correctly in the understanding and speaking.

The difficulties faced by the students in teaching Arabic to non-native speakers are not all language difficulties, but partly due to the following reasons:

The unwillingness of students to learn Arabic, and this shows their lack of seriousness. Some students are unable to absorb new lessons especially if the quantity is increased. Some of them are older learners. Frequent concerns of learners and lack of time to study. Some students do not memorize the Holy Qur'an. Some students are unable to pronounce the sounds of Arabic letters because they have some problems in pronouncing Arabic words. Some students are failure to perform the exercises assigned to do at their home. Some students had a weak experience of learning Arabic, which affects them when they re-learn this language.

The difficulties that come from the mother tongues of learners are summarized as follows: Arabic is a language of expression, and expression is a problem for non-Arabic speakers. Difficulty in pronouncing some of the verb in the learners for the difference of the middle letter

of the verb. The student cannot distinguish between the attached sounds that have applied the sounds of the same type of the verb. Lack of a clear approach that governs some certain linguistic phenomena such as broken plural. There is a similarity between the letters either in the pronunciation or in the writing. Multiplicity of the synonyms in Arabic leads to the educational disorder among the students. There are some difficulties in understanding the rhetorical issues and the similarities to each other. There are some sounds that appear in the pronunciation, not in the writing and some letters are written and but not pronounced. There are some Arabic characters that are not set in the form in some printed materials.

There are difficulties related to the teaching of Arabic language, the language and the teachers have some causes include as follows:

Some Arabic teachers use the vernacular language in their teaching. Duality of the language, which is appeared in the classical Arabic language, which is taught by them and the colloquial language, which is practiced by them outside the school environment. The scarcity of specialists in teaching Arabic to non-Arabic speakers. Lack of the moderation in the religious thought of some teachers and its reflection on the students. Some teachers teach with their personal passions and do not care of the objectivity in the teaching. They do not work with the spirit of the community, which helps a lot in solving the linguistic difficulties of the learners. Inefficiency of some teachers as they use the traditional methods of teaching Arabic as a second language. Lack of gradation in the presentation of linguistic information. Unification of the teaching method between native and non-native learning people. Some Arab teachers explain in their colloquial languages or dialects that do not conform to the classical Arabic. Ineffective use of the intermediate language is sometimes used frequently when it is not needed or used when it is needed. Textbooks take care of the philosophy of language, not the language itself. The presentation of linguistic material within the books in a traditional way without highlighting the aesthetics of linguistic texts. Books may contain a lot of difficult words that have not been studied before in the previous levels by the student. Lack of the scientific agreement on an educational language curriculum, taking into account the methodological bases for the development of such books. Lack of interest by the linguists to develop the educational language materials to be ready for the language laboratories. Standardization of the textbook for the beginners although the level of junior students varies, some of them have an Arabic linguistic background, and some of them lose this background, but do not have any knowledge about the Arabic language and systems. Avoiding the tendency of learners to read, the choice of language content when it is written must be preceded by a field survey to explore the tendencies of the learners. Ignoring the level of the students in the preparation of the curricula, which leads to the difficulty of some and the ease of others. Non-inclusion of the language curriculum on the system of practicing language in live situations. Lack of ready-made educational materials, such as language teaching units. Non-availability of supplementary reading books. Lack of teaching sources in teaching Arabic to non-Arabic speakers. Lack of accuracy in determining the linguistic level of learners when they start to enroll in Arabic teaching institutes for non-native speakers. There is mixing between different levels of learners. Some teachers have complained at one of the institutes of Arabic education that the students at the junior level vary in their level of language and skills they know, including those who speak Arabic but they cannot read, and some of them can read some words but they cannot speak in Arabic, and some of them understand the Arabic easily, but they are unable to speak or read it and so on.

## **ISSUES OF TEACHING ARABIC TO NON-ARABIC SPEAKERS**

### **Mistakes of Learners**

Richards has been exposed to some of these issues, indicating the consequences of neglecting consideration of students' mistakes [9]. He says: It has been found that books on language

education are little concerned with addressing the mistakes of learners, and how to correct them. It seems to be due to the lack of a particular importance and neglect of these errors, but recent applications of linguistic and psychological theories have added to the study and learning Languages some new dimensions to rely on the study of errors, classification and analysis, and the development of Arabic language programs in the light of them. The study of errors is important in order to guide the curricula and the teacher to those areas in which the student faces difficulties and errors in order to give them special attention to address them. Such studies lead to predicting errors and working to prevent them and avoid them. [10]

### **Language Matching**

A linguistic or comparative analysis means a study in which the researcher compares between two or more languages, indicating the elements of similarities and differences between the languages, in order to predict the difficulties that the learners are expected to encounter when learning a foreign language. Hence, it helps in several things: Writing books and appropriate educational materials, and preparing appropriate language tests, as well as, the other areas of the educational process.

This trend in linguistic studies is an extension of the pioneering movement led by Robert Lado when he published his book "Linguistics across the cultures", in which he offers a curriculum for the cross-language studies, showing how to use them in the teaching. This was in the 1950s. It was a practical form of benefiting by the results of linguistics in language instruction.

Robert Lado has highlighted the usefulness of comparative studies in his saying: Practical experiments have shown that the subjects developed on the basis of meaningful comparison between the mother language and the target language have produced positive and effective results in facilitating the language of the target and in the shortest possible time. Comparative studies can be carried out at several levels, including the vocal level, grammatical level, syntactic level, morphological level, semantic level, and cultural level.

This type of analysis is called pre-analysis, providing a hypothetical perception of the difficulties faced by the students at the time of learning a language. These studies are conducted by two or more languages, whether they belong to one language family or to different linguistic families. Most of these studies are based on the perception that if the language system between two or more languages is closer, the difficulties are less severe.

Foreign universities have preceded their Arab counterparts in this matter. As many studies have been conducted there to show the relationship between Arabic and other languages, for the main reason that the foreign universities have preceded the Arab universities in the establishment of sections of the Arabic language, where non-Arab students are organized, which necessitated the conduct of comparative studies contribute to facilitate the study of Arabic in these foreign countries. The Patrolling International Dissertation Abstracts include the countless researches on the linguistic correspondence between Arabic and the other languages. [11]

### **Language Tests**

In contrast to the trend of comparative studies to detect the difficulties in learning a foreign language there is another group of the researchers adopting another approach, which calls for the use of language tests as the means of detecting the difficulties faced by the students, but the starting point of both directions is different. The first trend is based on the premise that the difficulties encountered by learners at the time of learning a foreign language are due to the linguistic interplay between their first language and the foreign language. While the second

trend is based on the hypothesis that testing is the best way to detect the actual difficulties faced by the learners, of course in the light of a test that includes specific language units and specific language phenomena intended specifically to detect the difficulties in themselves.

It is possible to detect difficulties in understanding the foreign language when they are heard by the means of a listening comprehensive test. It is possible to detect the difficulties of communicating with the symbols written in the foreign language by the means of a test for the comprehensive reading, and so on in the different language skills. However, this trend has also not escaped from the criticism. There are some very important critical opinions related to this trend in the following: Language tests may be used to determine the difficulties faced by the foreign students at the time of learning Arabic, but such tests are subject to the considerable criticism. It may cost the student to rephrase a sentence, answer a specific question or follow some specific instructions, and the test can be failed to achieve its goal for some reason, as the sentence in the test contains a problem or a difficulty that the student is not experiencing with it. This, of course, intensifies the gap between the real difficulty of the student and what does the examiner imagine. The sentence contained in the test may contain a word unknown to the student or impossible to predict in its meaning from the context and thus he may be unable to complete the request. The sentence may contain some ambiguous information or measure the student's knowledge. In addition, the language tests usually measure the student's knowledge of some certain linguistic elements in the new language, but it does not claim to measure the extent that enables the student to learn the language as a whole. It does not measure his ability to know the relationship between the two languages: (Inter language).

As Corder says, the tests usually involve a number of questions that test the student's ability to write a specific answer to a specific question, but do not measure his ability to spontaneously produce this answer in the light of his knowledge of a foreign language. It may sometimes occur that the student rejects all alternatives presented as the answers to a particular question, because they do not correspond to the student's perception of what they should be in the light of his knowledge of the foreign language [12].

### **METHODOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS FOR TEACHING ARABIC TO NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS**

We cannot teach Arabic language to non-native speakers, but only through a scientific curriculum prepared on some clear foundations, in an organized manner and composed of specific elements defining its objectives and developing appropriate strategies for it. In addition to this, there is an efficient teacher who is considered the basis of the educational process and the extent of his role in facing the demands of the changing age, particularly the bilingualism. There are deposits of some ancient languages from many Arab countries such as Nubian in northern Sudan and southern Egypt and Kurdish in Iraq. The owners of these languages speak instead of Arabic as well as local dialects that began to spread on the Internet and social sites. This leads to the weakness of Arabic language and is a problem to teach Arabic writing to non-native speakers. Here we need to raise the efficiency of the teacher to suit the requirements of the times, and with their new roles in the changing world, and qualify him to be able to spread the Arab and Islamic culture. If he is not interested in Arab and Islamic culture and does not have a modern program that keeps pace with the technological progress, the students will learn what they learn in the classroom with the problem of double language and what they face in the outside the community. Then the teacher should crystallize the theoretical part and the methodological way to perform the necessary educational function to the fullest.

As the attention to the audio system of Arabic language and focus on the presentation of the characters during the teaching and the forms of different characters according to their



presence in the sentence, Arabic language has many voices that are not found in the other languages, so the non-Arabic speakers will find difficult to pronounce them correctly. Selection of the most common and widespread words, and the presentation of new words in some examples to indicate the positions used by them, in order to facilitate the learner to memorize and understand the meanings of words and benefit from them. Linking the new words and vocabulary with the experiences and daily life of the learner, in order to speed up and facilitate the process of learning Arabic language. Need to identify the punctuation and their uses, and despite the similarity of some punctuation and use in the different languages it is necessary to explain the meanings in Arabic because of its importance in giving the correct meaning of the text. The process of teaching Arabic to non-native speakers should be rich in various subjects, such as: The historical, cultural, literary, political and economic topics, providing learners with examples from various subjects enriches their dictionary with new meanings and uses, and improves their pronunciation and composition of sentences during the conversation. The use of audiovisual sources such as videos, audio clips, and pictures to approximate the word and meaning to understand the learner. Reliance on the principle of gradation in the teaching of Arabic language and the division of the educational process to levels commensurate with the learner and his goal. Taking into consideration the gradation in the education from the easier to the most difficult. As well as, the beginning from the oral education before the writing enhances the confidence of the learner himself and urges him to continue learning. The difficulty of the Arabic language contains a lot of grammar, expressions and words that are synonymous and contradictory. It is one of the richest languages in the world, but it does not make it difficult or impossible to learn, but to master it perfectly. Those who wish to learn it must exert more effort and time to train and master them. It will be great if the learner visits an Arab country and makes friendship with the native Arabic speakers who speak Arabic and practices talking in Arabic most of his time. This is one of the best ways to learn Arabic [13].

### CONCLUSION

It is true that "the modern linguistics should be a factor of modernization, not a factor of destruction, and we should be benefited from it to add and enrich our lesson, it should not be used for the mutilation and elimination. It is useful, for example, to update the curriculum of the language lesson, to remove this lesson from the data that is beyond the field of the language by the acquisition of some new linguistic sciences on the guidance of the modern perspectives such as the phonology, semantics and dictionaries that were not known in our lesson as the systematic or epistemological framework, with a great deal of effort and data capacity. The linguistic sciences in Arabic can also be benefited from many of the results of comparative linguistic and philological studies, to know the status of Arabic among its sisters throughout the history, and to be benefited from the results of Etymological lesson to have the true knowledge of the sources of the Arabic words and many more"[14], especially from the semantics, because the Arabs had a preference for the forerunner in the science of voices, and the creation of dictionaries. It is known that the semantics are from the sectors of modern linguistic lesson, and the field of this science is to study the linguistic meaning at the levels of vocabulary and structures, although the prevailing concept is to limit the science of significance to the study of vocabulary and its related issues. Indeed, the growth of modern semantics and the complexity of its methodological approaches - as Abdul Salam al-Masadi says- made it the pole of rotation in every linguistic research, inseparable from the theory of perception and the philosophy of meaning [15]. Hence the semantics became wider than any other science that studies the vocabulary, lexicon or terminology [16].

However, this statement does not in any way mean the elimination of any kind of linguistic knowledge among the Arabs such as Arabic grammar, morphology, semantics, and dictionaries under the pretext of renewal or keeping pace with the times. It should also be noted that any of

the modern curricula should not lead to a deviation from the standard Arabic surrounded by the historical, cultural and national conditions [17].

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