Improving the Arabic Writing Skills of Students through the Application of Contextual Learning Methods at Dayah Irsyadul Abidin Qurani

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Abstract: To achieve this goal, this study tries to test the effectiveness of the use of contextual teaching approaches on the Arabic writing skills of students in Dayah Irsyadul Abidin Qurani at the Tsanawiyah level. This study uses a quasi-experimental approach with 15 students in grades 7 and 8 as subjects. Data were obtained from writing tests (pre and post-treatment), observation of the learning process, interviews with teachers and students. The assessment instrument uses the rubric of assessing writing skills in terms of vocabulary, sentence structure, and paragraph coherence. The analysis technique used is qualitative descriptive analysis. The results of the pre-test showed that many students had a weak writing style, lacked diversity, paragraphs were lower than 36 and incoherent, the bandwidth to sentences about pronoun structures was 2 and 4, essential omission was responded to 10, and substantive paraphrasing played a role of 98. After four contextual sessions of nine sessions that addressed descriptive, narrative, dialogue, and personal letters, the average length of the cooperative paragraph had increased. Students do it easily and smoothly in an average of 25–40 words to 60–80 words. In each paragraph that is composed, a paragraph to write as an idea is flowed in writing. The vocabulary used to start using and connect is also relevant words in everyday conversation, with the right expression temperature for the child and personal experience. With this pedagogical certificate, students are able to write well after having experience in writing.

Keywords: Contextual teaching, writing skills, Arabic, students, pesantren.

INTRODUCTION

The ability to write in Arabic is one of the most important and productive skills in learning the language, especially in the context of Islamic boarding schools. In traditional Islamic education, these skills serve as the primary means of articulating ideas, copying the work of scholars, and responding to contemporary issues from an Islamic perspective (Manshur et al., 2021). Nowadays, with globalization and the increasing need for modern Islamic literacy, writing skills have become a fundamental requirement, especially for students to remain competent in the academic and digital markets of learning Arabic (Rinjani & Khotimah, 2024). However, in the field facts, a number of students, including those from Dayah Irsyadul Abidin Qurani, have difficulties with writing skills in Arabic (Elmubarok et al., 2019). These difficulties arise from a profound inability to form sentences, a lack of vocabulary related to written language, the use of technology in writing, and the lack of

ability to convey their thoughts as coherent paragraphs (Sri, 2021). This demonstrates inadequate mastery of technical skills, a highly fragmented approach to learning, and an inability to guide students in a practical and contextual way.

The limitations of writing skills are more complicated because the Arabic teaching and learning process in most Islamic boarding schools still deals with memorizing and understanding classical texts orally (Mustofa, 2019). Learning to write is not a priority, and often only needs to be included in the overall learning framework (R. S. Siregar, 2025b). In fact, even the writing skills of students are not able to develop in parallel with the ability to speak and read, even though these three abilities should be very related and need to be developed simultaneously (Aisyah et al., 2023). Without context, learning is increasingly monotonous and feels like a flat road asphalt. The impact of this weak writing skill is significant. In this case, students become far from explaining their thoughts logically and in a structured way, either in halaqah or even in the digital world which of course requires activities in the form of good and correct writing (Nisa & Rizki, 2021). In the context of da'wah, students will experience a loss of contribution limits to spread understanding around the Arabic language through written media. In the academic aspect, students have difficulty in compiling papers, reports, or other scientific papers that are part of learning assessment (Kuraedah, 2015).

Skills in writing have not been obtained at the basic education level, so it will automatically become a tool of dayah struggle in pursuing higher education that pays attention to writing communication skills (Ahyar, 2018). Speaking may not be difficult, but it is difficult to put together a formal letter, article, or simply an opinion in Arabic that can be understood in writing. Here it is clear that the ability to write is more than just language, but it also requires thinking, expertise, and professionalism. In the context of literature review, many studies related to teaching writing skills in Arabic have been carried out in various formal institutions such as madrassas and universities (Herman et al., 2024). However, not many discuss in depth about the Islamic boarding school, dayah, or the culturalism of learning. The teaching approach used in Islamic boarding schools tends to be didactic, in other words, more pragmatic and less sophisticated than its secular counterparts, so it requires greater adjustment to the needs of students (Setiawati, 2022).

One of the approaches that is quite effective to address the above issues is contextual learning. This method relates the subject matter to the context of students' lives to achieve more significant and useful learning outcomes. In the context of teaching Arabic writing, this can be done by motivating students to write about experiences, activities, or current issues that they understand (Nababan & Sipayung, 2023). This will give a nuance in the writing process, not only focused on grammar. Although it is felt to be effective for various disciplines, the application of contextual learning methods in Arabic language teaching at the dayah level is still very few. There are still few studies that directly analyze the impact of these methods on students' writing abilities in the context of pesantren (Kadir et al., 2024).

It is very important to conduct an in-depth study on the application of contextual teaching techniques in improving students' Arabic writing skills in Dayah Irsyadul Abidin Qurani. This research has practical value for Arabic teachers in Islamic boarding schools and enriches literature in the field of Arabic language teaching. Thus, this research is not only motivated by practical needs in the field, but also by the academic need to fill in the gaps in the existing literature. This research will seek to explore the effectiveness of contextual teaching in developing students' writing skills in pesantren in addition to

studying the sustainability of this approach in the instructional system in pesantren in pesantren.

METHODS

This study uses a quantitative method with a quasi-experimental design type. The choice of this quasi-experimental design is due to the lack of control over independent variables in the pesantren educational environment, as well as the need to consider the natural context of the classroom. Using this method, researchers can observe the effect of the application of contextual teaching methods on improving students' ability to write in Arabic more flexibly (Rachmad et al., 2024). The quasi-experimental design was adopted because it was impossible for the researcher to randomly assign the subject completely as in a real experiment. The subjects are naturally formed in a single class unit, and treatment is given to all the members of the class under investigation. This allows research to remain relevant and realistic with the prevailing education system in Islamic boarding schools.

The subjects in this study were students from Dayah Irsyadul Abidin Qurani at the Tsanawiyah level, especially from grades 7 and 8 with a total of 15 participants. These students were selected because they had received basic Arabic instruction and were at the stage of developing productive skills including writing (maharah kitabah). Their characteristics reflect the actual needs of the pesantren that is the focus of this study (Syahroni, 2022). The selection of subjects is carried out purposively because it is assumed that they are of the appropriate age and have the necessary skills to be subjected to contextual learning treatment. In addition, the teachers in this class are also willing to cooperate in implementing teaching as designed by researchers that help in realizing interventions that are maximally efficient.

The main data collection technique that is the focus of this study is through Arabic writing skills tests that are carried out before and after applying contextual teaching methods. This test is designed to assess students' level of achievement in writing simple texts in Arabic in terms of sentence structure, vocabulary used, and sentence coherence. The pre-test is carried out without any treatment applied to assess students' basic writing skills. After several teaching sessions with students using a contextual teaching approach, they were given a post-test to assess a significant improvement in writing skills.

In addition to tests, data is also collected through direct observation during classroom lessons. Observations aim to document ongoing teaching and learning activities, student participation, and their responses to contextual teaching. The researchers noted aspects such as student interaction, overall participation in class, creativity in writing, and writing about real life using different contexts. Observation is equipped with observation sheets that have indicators of contextual learning activities. It includes the use of daily experiences, group work, discussions, and reflection. From the results of observations, the researcher obtained supporting data that can be used to interpret the effectiveness of the method applied, in this case the process, not just the results.

The next data collection was to conduct interviews with Arabic teachers and several students who participated in the learning. The purpose of this interview is to gain a deeper understanding of the opinions of teachers and students regarding learning using a contextual approach. The interview begins with questions that lead to comfort, understanding, and motivation to learn to write. The questions in the interviews are semi-structured, which is an opportunity for the researcher to explore the informant's issues further. The data from the interviews provide a qualitative dimension that enriches the

quantitative analysis obtained from tests and observations. In addition, interviews can be said to be effective in finding out the supporting and inhibiting factors that occur during the learning process (Syahputri et al., 2023).

In conducting this research, the instrument used to measure students' writing ability is the assessment rubric. This rubric covers several elements of important value in writing skills such as the use of appropriate vocabulary, sentence structure or nahwu and sharaf, complementarity between sentences and paragraphs, and the suitability of the content with the context of the given question. The rubric has been prepared in a likert scale of 1-5 for each different aspect, this makes it easier to assess and compare the results of the initial test and the final test. For the purpose of achieving the established writing competencies, the relevance of this rubric has been validated in relation to the Arabic language by linguists and learning practitioners.

The test results obtained were analyzed in a quantitative-descriptive method. To analyze the improvement of participants' writing skills, a comparison was made between the average pre-test and post-test scores. The analysis is processed in a simple statistical manner, namely by calculating the average difference, percentage, and existing increase. The effectiveness of this contextual learning method is measured based on the averages obtained. Through observation and interviews, data was obtained and then analyzed qualitatively-descriptively. The data was grouped and categorized based on codes with the theme of learning motivation, student difficulties, and perception of methods. The explanation of the results of the analysis in the form of a narrative is prepared to show the learning flow in more detail (R. S. Siregar, 2025a).

From the learning outcomes and learning process, which is implemented through qualitative descriptive methods combined with quasi-experiments, it shows the use of product-based learning to pay more attention to exploring understanding in the local environment. This research gives more value because it does not only assess from the product side, but also explores the impact of the application of contextual methods (R. S. Siregar, 2024). Data triangulation was finally carried out with tests, observations, and interviews to increase the validity of the findings. If the three data sources provide a consistent picture of improved writing skills and positive responses to contextual methods, it can be concluded that this approach is feasible to use as an alternative to teaching Arabic in Islamic boarding schools.

To ensure the reliability of the results, the researchers conducted tests of the instrument that will later be formally applied. The trial was conducted on students outside the main subject of the study who had similar characteristics with the aim of identifying whether test questions, rubrics, and interview questions could be formulated satisfactorily. Feedback from these experiments provides important clues that require adjustments to the diction of the questions and other instruments. One of the key elements that affect data analysis is non-academic elements that can affect student learning outcomes, such as motivation, learning environment conditions, and previous experience in writing. Therefore, during interviews and observations, researchers also documented the affective and social dynamics of the class as a whole. These factors provide useful insights when trying to interpret the results of a change in test scores (Santoso et al., 2022).

During the teaching period, the researcher worked closely with the Arabic teacher to develop a contextual learning plan. This is packaged in a Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) that covers everyday issues such as drafting a letter to a friend in Arabic, describing

daily activities in written form, and writing a narrative about one's life experiences. These tasks are designed to meet student expectations. The designation or also known as the activity that takes place in the learning intervention is carried out four times with each session lasting 90 minutes. In each session, learning is focused on one short scheme of discourse without prioritizing the context of the students, and the writing of the students for each session is carried out in a simpler context. The position of the researcher is as an observer and facilitator, while the person in charge of teaching is the teacher as a practitioner in the classroom. This learning model aims to accommodate a natural educational process in the pesantren (Subhaktiyasa, 2024).

Students at each meeting have written products that are produced by carrying out analysis at the end of the meeting. The products produced by the students were analyzed by considering not only the scores achieved from quantitative but also a number of aspects such as narrative. For example, the researcher listened to whether the students were able to convey ideas in the expected order, with a diverse vocabulary, and follow the correct sentence structure in Arabic. The analysis found that students developed skills in writing. It should be underlined that in the pesantren area, mastery of Arabic takes precedence over the aspect of understanding the book known as tafaqquh fiddin (R. S. Siregar, 2025a). Thus, the context presented in the book serves as a whip to shift learning from the didactics of mastery of memorization and raw translation into the use of communicative language in the classroom.

In the interview session, the students were given the task to measure their perception of learning activities with real-world applications. Most of them claim that they can complete writing assignments because of their relationship to the subject matter. The teachers also noted that students became more involved in asking and solving problems related to real-life situations. With this, the contextual teaching context in the framework of this research that focuses on writing skills is approached comprehensively with respect to classroom dynamics. A mixed approach in which quantitative and qualitative data are combined ensures that the findings are not only numerically credible but also practically meaningful, especially in the teaching of Arabic in Islamic boarding schools.

RESULTS

At the beginning of the study, students were given a test of their Arabic writing skills before being taught using contextual teaching methods. The purpose of this test is to evaluate their basic skills in creating sentences and paragraphs. Most students experience challenges in forming sentences that are grammatical (Nahwu) and limited to the use of everyday vocabulary. Some common mistakes found are the mismatch between fa'il and fi'il (subject and verb), as well as improper jar letters and failure to use isim maushul which indicates an alarming lack of understanding of basic Arabic sentence structure. This proves that even though the structure is basic, students still have little or no understanding of it when writing.

In addition, deficiencies in vocabulary tend to keep their writings in the realm of boredom and focus on words that appear in Qur'anic texts that are not meant for everyday conversation. They do not tend to use words that are relevant to their daily lives, especially activities that occur at home, school, or even in boarding schools. In terms of coherence, it can be assumed that the writing of students lacks continuity in the form of relationships between sentences and quotation marks from different numbers when connecting paragraphs. Ideas deviate too often in ways that go against logic, which makes the fundamental meaning of the text difficult to understand even if the sentences

individually make sense. The average number of words in a paragraph is between 25 and 40, and in most cases only a handful of students can compose two complete paragraphs. Most writing stops at a single paragraph with an incomplete outline.

Responding to this situation, the researcher applied a contextual teaching approach in four sessions. Each session is tailored to include writing with the students' real experience, so that they not only learn how to write but also how the language can be used in real life. The first meeting was focused on understanding descriptive texts, more specifically on self-portraits of life in Islamic boarding schools. The students were directed to describe their daily activities, such as waking up, attending congregational prayers, reading, and eating together. This activity helps them in associating words with real experiences.

During the second session, students were invited to write a narrative text based on their own experiences. They wrote about their experiences of participating in the Maulid and Da'wah Safari. In this process, students are given the opportunity to discuss in groups, so they can share vocabulary and ideas. The third meeting concentrated on a written dialogue, in which students were asked to create a conversation between two figures such as Santri and a teacher or two friends. This activity helps improve conversation vocabulary and reinforce the use of direct sentences.

At the fourth meeting, students were given the task of writing a personal letter to family members at home. Drafting letters as a task encourages them to come across in a more personal and emotional way, while also paying attention to proper writing etiquette. After writing, they were asked to read their letters in class one at a time and receive feedback. After treatment, a rewrite test was performed to measure improvement with the treatment. Post-test results show improvement in almost all aspects of students' writing skills after the test. Perhaps the most significant was the profound improvements noted in the coherence and flow of the writing compared to previous drafts.

In terms of the number of paragraphs, the majority of students are able to relate two to three logically connected paragraphs. The average word count per paragraph increases to between 60 - 80. Sentences are also more complete compared to the incomplete phrases observed in the initial test. Topics also make paragraphs more varied according to the theme. Students begin writing vocabulary that is relevant to the context of their daily lives such as household items, events, and emotions, which did not previously appear in pre-test writing. Use of words with appropriate conjunctions such as "ثم", "لكن", "لذلك", and "أخيراً" begin to appear in students' written texts that demonstrate an understanding of the coherence and transition of ideas in their written work.

All analyses related to the use of nahwu show a very significant increase, this is evidenced by the students who are able to transform subjects and predicates, use plurals and muannats correctly, to mastery simple sentence structures. Some students show creativity by using direct sentences (dialogue) and descriptions of the place and time in it, something they have not done before. This proves the development of expressive and narrative abilities.

Based on the results of observations during the learning process, students become more active when writing activities are related to their personal experiences. The students seemed more motivated and excited when they wrote a letter to the family or wrote down everyday experiences that they found ordinary but interesting. Interviews with the students showed that they felt more confident in determining ideas because the topics presented were quite relevant and easy. Some students expressed the easiest sentence, "I

understand better" to compose sentences because in the process it is allowed to discuss with friends.

There is early evidence showing how group discussions become more active in learning. The Arabic teacher also admitted that the classroom atmosphere became more lively with the application of contextual learning methods. He saw that there was a more significant activeness and involvement of students in writing lessons. It is known that students who used to be passive seem to be more courageous in coming out ideas. Based on the evaluation using rubrics, the average student score increased in all aspects, especially in the field of sentence construction and coherence. Evaluations based on five aspects still show that the highest scores are obtained from the vocabulary aspect, while the grammatical aspect remains the main challenge despite some improvements. Some samples of students' writing show that they can now competently develop paragraphs with one main idea and relevant supporting sentences. This shows that they are beginning to understand the basic principles of composing well-structured paragraphs.

The text written by students after the treatment shows that they also begin to observe the correct format, such as using the terms of the greeting and the sequence of events in the story. In the interview, the teacher stated that this is a method that is suitable to be applied in Islamic boarding schools because it does not change the basic principles of learning, but rather enriches existing strategies with contextual and communicative approaches. Encouraging students to self-evaluate reflecting on their lessons (to voluntarily mark the parts they have satisfactorily completed) helps students recognize their own mistakes. At the end of each session, students are guided to reflect on their own writing and identify what they have done well and what still needs further improvement.

Overall, the findings of this study show that the use of contextual teaching approaches has a positive impact on students' writing skills in Arabic. In addition to the technical aspect, this method also has a positive impact on students' attitudes and motivation towards learning. Contextual teaching successfully bridges the gap between traditional didactic approaches in Arabic language learning and students' need to write in a way that makes sense to them. In addition, the use of this method provides room for creativity for teachers to design meaningful and engaging lessons. Teachers are no longer just conveyors of information; They are facilitators who guide students in the process of thinking and writing.

Some of the challenges faced include the diversity of students' levels of understanding in a single class and the limited time allocated to delve into each type of text. However, with the right adjustments, these challenges can be overcome gradually. The improvements that students are able to make in a short period of time point to the fact that there are promising results with the use of contextual teaching methods, especially when used consistently over time. Improved training for teachers and the provision of contextually relevant teaching materials will greatly improve outcomes. It presents a significant contribution that will help in developing a pedagogical approach to teaching Arabic in the context of Islamic boarding schools, particularly in balancing the focus on productive skills such as writing that have historically been neglected compared to reading skills. With these results, it is hoped that there will be sustainability in the application of contextual methods not only in writing lessons, but also in the teaching of other language skills. innovation in teaching Arabic in the modern era without eliminating the values of Islamic boarding schools.

In addition, there are interesting findings from the analysis of students' writing products that show their courage in trying more complex sentence structures. Previously, most students used a simple nominal clause. However, after treatment, compound verbal clauses began to appear, terms used for verb objects, as well as the addition of appropriate time and place adverbs. Another notable change is the emergence of a more personal and reflective voice in writing. In writing letters, for example, students express their longing for their parents, describe the state of the weather, and even express happiness or sadness at certain events that happen to them at the pesantren. This shows that their writing has improved not only linguistically, but also on an emotional and narrative level.

Reflection at the end of the lesson proved to be an effective method to help trainees, including students, understand their shortcomings. Some students noted that they tend to forget to change the form of the verb to fit the subject, or are still confused by some prepositions. It helps develop students' metacognitive awareness of their writing. Observation data noted that students were more interested when the writing assignment process was linked to concrete experiences and did not feel burdened. For example, when writing descriptions of daily activities, they mention places such as prayer rooms, kitchens, beds, and countryside that are familiar to them because they are located around Islamic boarding schools. Contexts like this help to strengthen the relationship between the form of language and its meaning.

Creative learning II related to orthographic and online spelling as shown is carried out in accordance with mister contractions and orthography for the writing part. Print and provide algorithms based on questions like cases. The students began to become explosive about the ability to type the shape of the scribble on and what steps they expressed as directed by the flat katapaari. The teacher said that although the grammatical aspect was quite complicated for the students, there seemed to be an improvement in one aspect. In the past, students were reluctant to write for fear of making mistakes, but now they are ready to try to write, even if it is not perfect, because they understand that their work will be discussed and improved collaboratively.

It also shows that there has been a positive shift in teaching and learning approaches that were previously teacher-centered to dialogical and reflective. In this case, students feel that they as learners have a role in the learning process, who not only receive knowledge but are also empowered to learn to write well. In this case, more students revealed that they autonomously decided to create literary works during the assessment period, prose, essays, and poems added to the notes crossed out at the bottom of classwork such as doming and harac This suggests writing by students and outside sance.

Another positive impact was the beginning of the erudition culture of students who began to build the habit of writing for non-class. Some students admit that they started writing small diaries in Arabic. It is in addition that this strategic contextual approach not only has a short-term impact but also fosters awareness of the need to write in Arabic. Through the analysis of the results above, in this paper, it can be concluded that learning to write using contextual methods is not only successful in the technical aspects of students' writing skills, but also in the formation of internal motivation and higher Arabic literacy habits. That way, there is an opportunity to change the strategy of teaching Arabic in Islamic boarding schools in a communicative, relevant and impactful direction.

DISCUSSION

Studies show that the application of contextual teaching approaches substantially improves the writing skills in Arabic of students in Islamic boarding schools. At first, the students' work showed many shortcomings in sentence construction, nahwu mastery, lexical choices, and cohesion between sentences. This reinforces the idea that Arabic language teaching, which has been more focused on learning memorization and transliteration, is not effective in developing students' productive competencies, especially in writing. Simple mistakes such as subject-predicate mismatches and the incorrect use of prepositions highlight weaknesses in students' grammatical mastery that should be the basis for writing. Applying experiential learning through a contextual approach gives students the opportunity to connect language with the reality they know. (Abraham & Supriyati, 2022) This approach helps activate students' initial knowledge and connect it to the content being taught. For example, when students are asked to write about their daily activities at the pesantren, they don't just write from memory, but start composing paragraphs around their real experiences. This is in accordance with the basic principles of contextual learning that support the placement of learners in active learning centers .

The improvement in cohesion and coherence of students' writings after the intervention is evidence that this approach facilitates the skills of organizing minds to transform ideas into texts. This can be seen from the increase in the overall number of paragraphs, the range of vocabulary, and the adequate use of conjunctions (athaf and temporal adverbs). This skill is almost invisible from the results of the initial test. In this case, instruction on writing goes beyond the remediation of technical skills to include the nurturing of critical, logical, and analytical thinking. Writing personal letters and dialects between characters has proven to be very effective in motivating students' emotional and personal self-expression (Yusoff et al., 2025). This shows that language can go beyond as a formal means of communication, but also as a medium of self-expression. In addition, the letter and dialogue formats provide more opportunities for exploration of sentence structure such as the use of contextual vocabulary. This activity encourages students to reflect on pragmatics and communication ethics in Arabic.

One of the most striking features of the contextual approach is the opportunity for self-observation. Students are invited to rate their own writing, recognize mistakes, and try to correct them. This is not only an exercise in metacognitive awareness, but it also contributes to the emergence of an attitude of self-learning (Anastasya, 2024). The fact that some students have started writing diaries in Arabic shows that learning has gone beyond the classroom and has begun to cultivate a sustainable culture of Arabic literacy. Some changes in learning behaviors, such as increased participation in group discussions and the courage to write without thinking about whether or not they make mistakes, suggest that contextual learning allows for a more interactive and supportive classroom environment. This is supported by teachers' reports that the classroom atmosphere has become more lively and cooperative (Aini et al., 2024). This is a positive sign towards a shift towards a more humane and communicative pedagogy in the pesantren environment.

From an evaluative point of view, the increase in the average score of students in all aspects of writing, especially in coherence and sentence construction, is an indication that contextual methods do indeed have valid pedagogical effectiveness (N. Siregar & Siregar, 2025). Students may still have problems with grammar; However, the considerable increase in the correct use of clauses and more appropriate choice of words undeniably

proves that students have experienced a significant improvement in their competence. In a broader sense, the application of contextual kaleidoscopic Arabic writing instruction not only addresses the technical weaknesses of students' written work, but also increases their emotional attachment and motivation to learn. This approach offers good prospects for confronting pedagogical reforms in Arabic, including language teaching in pesantren that is rooted in tradition but incorporates the framework of modern experiential creativity and the active participation of learners.

CONCLUSION

The research in this study has proven that the application of contextual teaching methods significantly improves the writing skills of students studying in Arabic. Before the treatment, students had challenges with sentence structure (nahwu), vocabulary use, and paragraph coherence. After four sessions—each using practical experience as a guide—students managed to improve their phrase structure and contextual vocabulary usage, as well as their ability to construct coherent and expressive paragraphs. They become more confident, actively participate, and show a higher level of creativity in the given writing tasks. The application of this approach improves students' technical writing skills, as well as fosters stronger intrinsic motivation and a reading culture. Shifting the focus from teacher-centered teaching to a dialogue and reflection-based teaching strategy increases student participation in learning activities. These findings show that contextual teaching methods are very suitable for use in Arabic classes in pesantren as a communicative, meaningful, and sustainable strategy.

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