Pragmatic Presupposition of Galatians 2:20

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ABSTRACT─ *The study examines pragmatic presupposition of Galatians 2: 20, a notable verse of the Scriptures written by Paul, an Apostle. The study aims to investigate that aspect of meaning which is derived not from the formal properties of words and constructions but from the way in which utterances are used and how they relate to the context in which they are uttered (cf. Leech & Short, 1987). The study shuns a superficial analysis by adopting a pragma-stylistic framework. Speech acts, presupposition, inference and mutual contextual beliefs (MCB) were used to interpret the meaning of the text.*

As evident from the study, there are several approaches to understanding a text, however, in order to read and interpret in the light of what the text is saying, that is, in terms of its intended purposes, a pragmatic approach becomes inevitable. The analysis has provided more intellectual insights into the theory of language variation and variation in usage. It has also enhanced the frontiers of pragmatics and cognitive linguistics.

Keywords: stylistics, semantics, pragmatics, presupposition, Paul and context.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language happens to be the most important medium employed by human beings to communicate and socialise with one another. Language is employed to discuss a wide range of topics that cut across all facets of human endeavour such as politics, agriculture, education, journalism, religion, etc. In principle, language, written or spoken, can be employed to express anything and everything, either real or imagined. Language usage is not limited to particular topics, views or ideas but includes any message that man can ever conceive.

Man, through language, has the ability to create symbols, ascribe meanings and interpret messages. These very qualities distinguish him from the lower animals and give form and character to his existence. Language enables man to affect and influence the people around him as well as the society in which he lives. Through language, people have been mobilized or influenced, wars have been fought and special consideration granted, power has been broken, shattered or perpetrated.

Language has a powerful influence on people and their behaviour. Religion is one social activity where language is employed and utilized in very creative ways. Indeed, the belief held by Austin (1962) that man actually does things with words is probably of more relevance to religion than to any other field of human endeavour in the sense that in religion some special social acts or realities are only accomplished not by physically acting or doing them but by uttering them. It is worthy of note that religious language, when viewed from a linguistic perspective, presents an interesting dimension to the practical adaptability and applicability of language.

It is against this background that this research examines the pragmatic presupposition in Galatian 2:20 which says:

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and

the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

The book of Galatians is one of the New Testament books written by Apostle Paul in the Holy Bible. And like every other book of the Bible, it contains sentences/utterances adjusted to meet certain stylistic and/or pragmatic requirements of that context of situation. This will become evident in this study.

2. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The main thrust of this paper is to explore the pragmatic context surrounding the utterance of Galatians 2:20 by Apostle Paul to the Galatians. Language is a formidable tool for information dissemination, education, and persuasion. To this end, language use is a major instrument in religious discourse worthy of investigation.

The specific objectives of the research are:

i)   To examine the semantic content of this verse of the scriptures
ii)   To systematically and objectively describe the pragmatic presupposition behind this utterance
iii)   To further confirm and amplify the connection between semantics and pragmatics brought to the fore through this verse of the scriptures.

It is our hope that a study of this nature will not only provide more intellectual insights into the theory of language variation and variation in usage, but that it will also enhance the frontiers of pragmatics and cognitive linguistics.

3. SEMANTIC VERSUS PRAGMATIC INTERPRETATION

Pragmatics is the study of meaning in context (cf. Leech 1983; Levinson 1995). Indeed, pragmatics has been variously defined by scholars as follows:

Leech and Short (1987:290) say:

The pragmatic analysis of language can be broadly understood to be the

investigation into that aspect of meaning which is derived not from the   formal properties of words and constructions, but from the way in which   utterances are used and how they relate to the context in which they are   uttered.

According to Wales (1989:365), 'pragmatics is the study of language use which is concerned with the meaning of utterances rather than a grammatical sentence or proposition'. Again a more germane definition as far as this study is concerned by Yule (1996:1) says, 'pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader)'. A more recent definition considers pragmatics as the study of meaning of words, phrases and full sentences and that it is more concerned with the meaning that words convey when they are used or with intended speaker meaning as it is sometimes referred to (Wisniewski, 2007).

The various definitions above appear to be saying the same thing; thus pragmatics studies how context influences our interpretation of utterances and that the scope of pragmatics is different from that of semantics. Semantics according to Leech and Thomas (1990) deals with meaning as a dyadic relation between a form and its meaning whereas pragmatics has to do with meaning as a triadic relation – the relation that holds among the form, meaning and context. Pragmatics does not rely only on the words and sentences used (i.e. linguistic meaning) in an utterance; it also takes into account the contextual variables which impinge on meaning. Pragmatics is that aspect of linguistics which attempts to analyze how it happens that often more is communicated than what is said. Pragmatics is 'a relatively newer area of linguistics than semantics consisting a cluster of approaches which cohere around the preoccupation with the contextual constraints on meaning' (Finch, 2000: 149).

Wisniewski (2007) says pragmatics is unlike semantics which deals with the objective meanings of words that can be found in dictionaries. Pragmatics is more concerned with the meanings that words in fact convey when they are used in context, or with intended speaker meaning. Pragmatics examines the devices used by language users (ex. deictic expressions or anaphora) in order to express the desired meaning and how it is perceived (Wisniewski, 2007).

Semantic meaning involves 'what is said' while utterance (i.e. pragmatic meaning is 'what is meant'. Thus, pragmatic meaning as the contextual meaning takes cognizance of other meaning elements like context of situation, time and period, the occasion, the setting/scenario, etc. It is a platitude that what a sentence means generally more often than not, does not determine what a speaker means in uttering it. Sometimes, knowing the sentence meaning isn't enough to know what someone is saying in a particular occasion of use. For example, 'she is the sister's co-ordinator of her fellowship' can't be deemed to be true or false without knowing to whom the pronoun 'she' is referring to. This shows that we have understood completely the proposition expressed by the utterance and this makes the information provided by the sentence meaning to be ambiguous at times.

Linguistic semantics aims to account for what is linguistically encoded, while a pragmatic theory will explain how more detailed interpretations are derived on the basis of semantic representations. Grice (1975) distinguishes between different types of meaning and argues that the communicative intention of the speaker is discoverable through inferences

made possible by his maxims of cooperation. This argument led to the distinction between sentence meaning and utterance meaning. Utterance meaning is like inference in which we 'build' interpretations of what we read/hear by using more information than is actually supplied in a text. An utterance has to follow some pragmatic principles for a proper and reasonable interpretation of such an utterance. One of such principles and of central concern here is presupposition.

Pragmatics scholars have come up with various frameworks aimed at accounting for all possible interpretations of meanings in context. Such concepts and frameworks include: speech acts, presupposition, implicature, inference, pragmatic act, mutual contextual belief (MCB's), co-operative principle (CP), face maintenance (FM), and so on. A few of these concepts will be useful in analyzing our text since the over-riding principle here is to contextualize the text in order to exhume the meaning in the mind of the writer. Speech acts, presupposition, inference and mutual contextual beliefs (MCB) are important for the interpretation of the meaning of our data here. Hence, these concepts will form part of this study.

Speech acts theory argues that when language is used, certain acts are being performed. Three types of acts which utterances can be said to perform are: **a locutionary act** – the act of saying something that makes sense in the language; 'consisting in a combination of a phonic act (production of actual noise), a phatic act (production of certain words in a certain syntactic order), and the rhetic act (communication of a specific message)' (Halion, 2003 in Adetunji,2009); **an illocutionary act** – act of 'meaning' performed through the medium of language: *warning, promising, requesting, stating,* and so on; and a **perlocutionary act –** the effect the illocutionary act has on the listener: such as *misleading, persuading, convincing,* and so forth. A particular illocutionary act could be successful or not. The factors that determine whether a particular illocutionary act succeeds are termed felicity conditions or appropriacy conditions (cf.Dada, 2012).

Based on the different views of speech act theorists, all utterances constitute speech acts of one kind or another (cf. Finch, 2000). Thus, taxonomies of speech act types provided by theorists vary in details. Direct speech acts provide a match between sentence meanings and speaker meaning. In direct speech acts, to Wisniewski (2007), certain grammatical structures are associated with corresponding functions, as in the interrogative structure '*Do you drink tea?'* the function is questioning. However, indirect speech act will not be so direct. For instance, *it's cold in here* can be categorized as declarative in a direct speech act; whereas, its indirect meaning is 'can you close the window?' (cf. Dada, 2010). According to Wisniewski (2007), when the interrogative structure is used to fulfil a different purpose as in '*Can you close the window?'* where it clearly is not a question about ability, but a polite request, such a situation is described as an indirect speech act. The present data is explored for both direct and indirect interpretations.

According to Wisniewski (2007) what the producer of a discourse correctly assumes to be known by the text's recipient is described as a presupposition. He states further that although some of the assumptions might be wrong, most of them are usually correct and they make the exchange of information smooth.

Another act involved in the analysis of discourse so as to make an association between what is said and what must be meant is **inference** and it is often used in connection with anaphora. **Anaphora** is subsequent mentioning of a formerly introduced item, as in the following sentences: *'He went to a shop', 'It was closed'.* When *shop* was mentioned for the second time the pronoun 'it' was used to refer to it (Wisniewski, 2007). These notable comments of Wisniewski as presented above on the analysis of discourse so as to make an association between what is said and what must be meant will form the basis of our analysis here.

In order to ensure a sharp focus and a robust decoding of the text, in addition to the pragmatic features itemized above, the Mutual Contextual Beliefs (see Bach and Harnish, 1979, Lawal 2003, Dada 2012) were also incorporated to provide an in-depth analysis of the data. MCBs are like 'presupposition' and 'implicature' in that they all rely on background information. Lawal (2003:153) says that 'MCBs centre around the speaker's intention and the listener's inference'. He states further that 'a speech act is performed with the aim that the listener needs to put certain facts together to decode the speaker's intention. These facts, which are well-known to both interlocutors are referred to as MCBs.

Lawal's model identifies six hierarchical contexts of an utterance: linguistic, situational, psychological, social, sociological and cosmological. The linguistic context is language itself. The situational context refers to the topic of discourse plus the factors of the physical event including concrete objects, person and location. The psychological context is the background of the mood, attitudes and personal beliefs of the language user. The social context has to do with the interpersonal relations among the interlocutors. The sociological context is concerned with the socio-cultural and historical setting. The cosmological which has to do with the ultimate context covers the language user's world-view. The different contexts/competencies enunciated above form the bed- rock of this analysis).

4.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study shuns a superficial analysis of a text that can only be understood the very way it was penned by adopting a pragma-stylistic framework. Pragmatics, the contextual use of language, was incorporated in order to capture the totality of the dimensions of the meaning of the data and this happens to be our main focus in this study. The framework aims at contextualising this text within its pragmatic presuppositions. Meanwhile, a stylistically designed text can only be interpreted pragmatically in that a semantic approach will definitely fail to capture the intended meaning of the writer which may or may not be overtly structured in the text. Besides, a semantic analysis of the text under analysis cannot but be superficial and contradictory.

This text had to be extracted from the *Holy Bible* because of its great pragma-stylistic significance. It is our hope that a study of this nature will not only provide more intellectual insights into the theory of language variation and variation in usage, but that it will also enhance the frontiers of pragmatic and stylistic theories.

5.   FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data and the analysis of this study are in sections. Section 5.1 is on data presentation while section 5.2 is on the discussion of the data.

5.1   The Data

The data below was sourced from the book of Galatians, chapter 2 verse 20 of the King James Version of *The Holy Bible* by The Zondervan Corporation. The text reads thus:

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live;
yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:
and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of   God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

5.2 The Discussion

Utterances can be decoded based on their pragmatic, semantic and stylistic (i.e. morphosyntactic and phonological) compositions. In view of the foregoing, the present discussion will revolve round stylistic composition/interpretation, semantic composition/interpretation and the pragmatic composition/interpretation of the data.

Stylistic composition/interpretation

Stylistically speaking, the text has a compound-complex structure in that it has 3 main clauses and 5 subordinate clauses as follows:

Main clauses:

I am crucified with Christ

(But) Christ liveth in me

I live by the faith of the Son of God

Subordinate clauses:

Nevertheless I live

Yet not I

And the life which I now live in the flesh

Who loved me,

And gave himself for me

The structure is seen as a compound-complex one because of the multiple use of co-ordinating conjunctions: **yet, but** and **and.** Subordinating conjunctions employed in the text are: **nevertheless, which** and **who.**

Other stylistic meaning inducing techniques deployed for use in the composition of the text include the use of **capitalization, pronouns, punctuation marks** and **concord.**

Capitalization: capitalized letters here involve **I** (personal pronoun), **C** (of Christ), **S** (of Son) and **G** (of God). In grammar it is normal to write I and the G of the Almighty God of the Christians in capital letters all the time. Hence,

there is no aberration in this text with respect to these uses of capitals including the S of Son and C of Christ with both words referring to Jesus Christ, the second person of the trinity, i.e. God the Son. In other words, every word capitalized initially here is more or less a personal noun or pronoun.

Pronouns: the pronoun types featured here are: personal pronoun, 'I', 'me', reflexive pronoun, 'himself' and the relative pronoun, who. I, as used here is referring to Paul, an Apostle, while the who is referring to Jesus Christ, otherwise known as Son of God. The background information for these is contained in Galatians 1;1 as follows, 'Paul, an apostle (not of man, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)'. The subsequent uses of the personal pronoun, I, after Galatians 1:1 only create anaphoric reference within the text. The pronoun, me, also refers to Paul. That is, me is I in the objective case. In turn, who a relative pronoun has an antecedent noun, Son of God, within the structure thereby creating cohesion within the text.

Punctuation marks: the text is notable for its liberal use of punctuation marks in that it contains only 44 words yet, has 2 colons, 1 semi-colon, 3 commas and 1 full stop. With this inventory, the text is no doubt rich in the use of punctuation marks. All the marks, except the period, were used as clause linkers in spite of the provision of lexical linkers. Nevertheless, these punctuation marks were applied appropriately to make understanding of the text easier as it creates both linguistic and syntactic harmony within the text. They enhance continuity and reasonable divisions into units of thought, thereby ensuring textual cohesion.

Concord: in all there are 8 clauses here with 7 main verbs: **crucified, liveth (lives), live, live, live, loved,** and **gave.** One of the clauses, '*Yet not I',* is verbless. It is observed that the clauses expressing God's past actions towards mankind through Christ were written in the past tense whereas, the other clauses containing God's provision for now were written in the present tense to capture the relevance of this promise to the present dispensation. Thus, the harmony displayed in the use of tense.

Semantic composition/interpretation

The content of the text under consideration seems contradictory from the semantic point of view. Invariably, how can somebody crucified with Christ come round to say nevertheless, I live. Yet, the very fact that Paul was alive preaching the gospel at this particular point in time means that he could not have been referring to physical death and resurrection at this point in his life. Meanwhile, a good writer/speaker is sensitive to the need to adjust relevant parts of his sentences/utterances to meet certain stylistic and/or pragmatic requirements of that context of situation thus the semantic interpretation of this text which is 'dead and alive' must be abandoned at this stage for the stylistic/pragmatic motivation for the employment of words in this English discourse to come alive.

The basic gospel that Paul goes to such lengths to clarify and safeguard throughout the book of Galatians is that the only way a person can be justified before God is by faith in Jesus Christ (Galatians2:16). Thus, when Paul speaks of being 'crucified with Christ', he means far more than this commonsense understanding of the word 'crucified' in view of the fact that the verb is a very crucial element in grammatical constructions and even in discourse.

Pragmatic composition/interpretation

The Bible itself is a holy book. Thus, its teachings require a systematic study; more so because Christ spoke mainly in parables. What is more, Apostle Paul spoke out of revelations. Therefore, to understand the Bible, we need a lot of spiritual understanding and maturity.

The Bible stories all revolve round one idea which is: God abhors sin, therefore believers must avoid sin in order to make heaven. Involvement in sin is risky, so much so that the New Testament vividly links its consequences to death as in Romans 1:29-32 'Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; … Who know the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.' Punishment for sins mentioned here is death. Whoever commits any of these is definitely guilty and will die a spiritual death. Armed with this scriptural information, Paul was enabled to declare to the Galatians by the grace of God that ' I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live ….' In the Christendom, the obvious interpretation of this statement is: 'I (Paul) am   justified; I (Paul) am born-again; I (Paul) have the Golgotha experience; the seed of God is in me (Paul); hence I (Paul) can no longer sin.' This means that he was put into the same position as one who had never sinned. He stands before God with His sacrifice, identified with the Lamb. Every Christian is identified with the Lamb. This is one of the great secrets of the Christian Life. A Christian is supposed to identify with Christ on the cross. Paul was therefore saying, 'He not only carried my sins; He carried me to that cross.' Meanwhile, sharing in Christ's death and resurrection is appropriated only by faith, i.e., the belief, love and loyalty we have in the Son of God, who gave Himself for us (cf. John 3: 16). Because we (Christians) are in Christ, God declares u righteous, and He treats us as His Son, Jesus, the One who obeyed every commandment of the law.

The pragmatic presupposition behind this assertion of Paul is in Genesis 3:3, where God instructed man as follows: 'But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die'. Man did not heed this instruction causing man to die spiritually ever since then.

Based on the foregoing, the intended speaker meaning of the text is, 'I am alive spiritually, although now dead to sin. Every believer knows that whoever is born once will die twice (i.e. the aftermath of the incidence that occurred in the garden of Eden) while whoever is born twice will die once (i.e. only die physically, but never die spiritually). 1Peter 2:24 makes us to understand that a believer's living body (in the physical) is now actually controlled by a living spiritual body. No wonder Galatians 4:29 states that 'But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit'. In other words, it is possible to be born twice, first after the flesh, second, after the spirit (i.e. to be born-again).

To further strengthen the pragmatic meaning of this scriptural text as already being expounded here, it is helpful to review a few other related verses of the Scriptures. The way out of sin for every human being on the surface of the earth is Jesus Christ (John 14:6). According to Romans 6:6 Christ died a substitutionary death for all of us on the cross of Calvary. Romans 1:12 says that it is possible to identify with Christ, as stated already, in His death (Romans 6:6), His burial (Romans 6:4) and His ascension (Ephesians 2: 6). To identify with Christ means to accept and appropriate Christ's sacrifice on the cross of Calvary by faith. Included in God's offer of salvation to mankind through the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary is our immediate release from the prison of sin and a complete pardon of sins once we accept this offer by accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour. His substitutionary death invariably translates into spiritual death unto sin for any believer in His (Jesus) name.

Paul happens to be one of the few people of his time who could easily identify with Christ's death on the cross. Christ died physically and rose the third day. By this singular act of Jesus, Christians ever since then are deemed to have died in Christ to sin and to be alive spiritually (i.e. to now live for righteousness) in Christ Jesus. This no doubt is the true meaning (intended speaker meaning) of Galatians 2:20. Hence, to read it outside this meaning is to read it out of context.

Finally, in this section we present the other aspects of the pragmatic meaning of this text based on Searle's (1976) and Lawal's (2003) model of pragmatics.

The speech act analysis

The speech act type manifested by the text under analysis is the declarative act. The defining characteristic of this act is that it is used to state something and make it so, e.g. 'I hereby declare the election null and void'. A declarative act must, however, meet the felicity condition to be effective. Observe that expressions in this category can be prefixed with 'I declare that'. Indeed, the text can read: 'I declare that I am crucified with Christ or I declare that I am born-again'. Thus, we have classified this utterance as declarative since it manifestly declares something.

Declarative

Illocutionary acts

a). Direct illocutionary act: This text is an 'assertive' act of 'stating'.

b). Indirect illocutionary act: The indirect illocutionary force of this utterance is that of invitation to participation. Hence, this is an indirect 'directive act'. 'I am crucified with Christ' stands as both an assertion and an appeal/admonition/urge/request/warning'. Meanwhile, due to stylistic presentation here, except the pragmatic presupposition of the text is applied, the structure may be considered of no semantic consequence, since it contains an overt contradiction.

Contexts/ Competencies

a). Linguistic: This is a compound-complex structure that requires only basic competence in English grammar. The structure contains eight clauses which is the characteristic of most compound-complex sentences.

b). Situational: The topic of discourse here is the truth of the gospel based on the fact that salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ alone; nothing else will save us. Paul, the Apostle is identified as the writer of Galatians (1:1). Paul addresses his letter to the churches of Galatia (1:2) and to the Galatians (3:1). Paul had to use much of personal information including the verse under analysis in the course of his defence of the gospel. Paul had to write the book of Galatians to counter the teaching of false teachers which placed specific emphasis on the Jewish rite of circumcision i.e. salvation by 'the works of the law'.

c). Psychological: Paul preaches Jesus to this errant flock as the One in whom the grace is grounded. His message is directly from his personal experience with Jesus Christ. 'For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ' (Galatians 1:12). Jesus according to this book of Galatians has reversed the curse of sin, law, and self (see Galatians 1:4; 2:20; 3:13; 4;5; 5:24 and 6;14). Having set Christians free from the bondage of law and sin, Jesus, through the transforming power of the Cross, created an environment where we breathe the oxygen of liberty and have the power to live above sin. The text including the whole book of Galatians started with the churches' problem (external legalism, 1:6-9) before presenting the gospel solution (the Cross and the new creation, 6:14,15).

d). Social: A relationship of father and 'little children' in the faith exists here. Paul wrote to the Galatians whom he had evangelized personally, that the new teaching was in fact a distortion of the gospel of Christ. Paul had to reassert his authority as an apostle through this letter which apparently had been minimized by the 'Judaizing' teachers. He wrote out of love and not out of anger. He loved the Galatians too much to allow them to go astray. Thus, his terse style of writing here is to warn them not to leave correct path by their additions to the gospel message.

 e). Socio-Cultural: The text in addition to the whole book of Galatians was originally addressed to the churches of Galatians (1:2) and to readers Paul expressly calls Galatians (3:1), meanwhile, the book of Galatians probably dates from A.D. 48. This means it is one of the earliest New Testament books. Although, the letter was primarily written to the Galatians, just like any other verse of the Scriptures, its timeless universal application is not in doubt.

f). The Cosmological Context: The totality of the cosmological context (i.e. world-view) which has produced the text is a universalist, anti-racist conviction which the text writer deploys all his intellectual, linguistic and creative resources to defend and promote. God's love to the world as contained in John 3;16 is not restricted to any one nation, race /ethnic group/culture or even to any spiritual elite. What is more, Paul's succinct refutation of the 'Judaizers' in this book of Galatians has transformed the lives of many globally – from Martin Luther to John Wesley.

6. CONCLUSION

By and large, the function of religious language as evident in the foregoing is to persuade people to believe in a spiritual belief system and to preserve and promote such spiritual belief within a congregation. What is more, the religious utterance analysed above is a statement expressing the belief of an Apostle of old to the Galatians and to all Bible believers of our day. Again, semantically, written and spoken words often have underlying meanings which require pragmatic interpretation.

The analysis presented above has revealed that there is no other way, either structurally or stylistically, of making the point expressed in Galatians 2:20 by Apostle Paul. Indeed, with the connector, nevertheless, the two sides of the compound-complex sentence neatly join together. The wording of this verse of the Scripture is very strong so as to assure the reader that the will of the Lord is quite settled in the mind of the writer. In conclusion, anything less than the structure of text analysed here will not convey the intended meaning of the author. Pragmatic meaning however presupposes semantic interpretation, hence, cannot and does not seek to by-pass it. As evident from this study, there are several approaches to understanding a text, however, in order to read and interpret in the light of what the text is saying or in terms of its intended purposes, a pragmatic approach becomes inevitable.

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