

The Impact of Vocabulary Building on Improving Students' Speaking Skills in Class IX Riyadhussalam Islamic Junior High School

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ABSTRACT

English, as an international language, plays a crucial role in global communication. However, speaking proficiency, particularly in Indonesia, remains a challenging skill to acquire among students. This study aims to explore the influence of vocabulary development on the speaking skills of 16 ninth-grade students at Riyadhussalam Islamic Junior High School. This study revealed that students faced speaking challenges due to insufficient vocabulary. They struggled to express thoughts and often mispronounced or misspelled words. This research investigates whether enhancing vocabulary significantly affects students' speaking skills. It employs qualitative and quantitative methods, utilizing interviews, pre-test, post-test, and questionnaires. Interviews with teachers assessed initial speaking instruction conditions, while pre- and post-tests measured students' speaking abilities before and after vocabulary intervention. Questionnaires gauged student responses to the vocabulary development program. The study involved vocabulary practice in speaking activities such as sentence construction, discussions, conversations, and simulations.

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INTRODUCTION

English is an international language used as a means of communication between nations. According to J. C. Richards and Rodgers (2014), English is the number 1 international language in the world which is often used at every meeting between countries in global competition, mastery of international languages is an important factor. Language skills, especially English, are a very important aspect in developing talent to enter the world of work. Therefore, students must be prepared to become qualified people and equipped with

useful skills, especially in terms of language proficiency. English has four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. English lessons have four aspects of learning, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing aspects (Naiborhu, 2019). Of the four skills, speaking is the most difficult skill for students to master, especially in Indonesia. According to Naiborhu (2019), of the four language skills, learning speaking skills is less able to run as it should. This is caused by several factors, including lack of motivation,

opportunity, and an environment that supports learning to speak. The ability to speak is very dependent on student input activities (such as reading and listening) so that each student has different speaking skills even though they are given the same material during teaching and learning activities. Student learning activities are influenced by various factors, such as motivation, maturity, student relationship with teachers, verbal ability, level of freedom, sense of security and teacher skills in communicating (Kuncoro, 2017).

One important aspect of speaking is vocabulary. Vocabulary is a collection of words used to convey meaning in communication. Generically, vocabulary is the knowledge of meanings of words (Hiebert & Kamil, 2005). In addition, according to Hatch and Brown (1995), vocabulary is a list or set of words for a particular language or as a set of words that individual speakers of language might use. Vocabulary is a basic element in language that affects a person's speaking ability. According to Kuncoro (2017), in honing speaking skills, adequate vocabulary mastery is needed. According to Keraf (2007: 21), vocabulary is a tool for channeling ideas / ideas which means that the more vocabulary mastered, the more and more smoothly the idea is conveyed. The role of vocabulary is very important in the language learning process. The

quality, quantity, and depth of a person's vocabulary are the best personal indicators of intellectual development. Vocabulary and speaking skills have big correlation. The correlation is the more acquired vocabulary mastered by students, the more possibility of fluency in speaking (Sutriani & Afna, 2018). Vocabulary building is the process of expanding and deepening knowledge about vocabulary, both in terms of number, type, and use. According Mayer (2021), Building a rich vocabulary is an essential component of language proficiency and plays a vital role in self-expression, understanding others, and overall communication. Vocabulary building can help students become more confident and effective communicators. By expanding their vocabulary, students can express themselves more clearly and precisely, making it easier for others to understand their ideas and opinions (Staff, 2019). Vocabulary building can help students improve their speaking skills by enriching vocabulary, understanding the meaning of words, mastering word pronunciation, and applying words in appropriate contexts (Harmer, 2001).

Preliminary observations made by researchers at Riyadhussalam Islamic High School, found that ninth graders have low speaking skills. The information was obtained from an interview with a grade 9 English

teacher at Riyadhussalam Islamic High School. One of the causes is the lack of vocabulary of students. A lack of vocabulary can be a barrier to effective communication in English. In fact, research has shown that a limited vocabulary range can hinder learners' progress in various subjects, including history and geography (Adams, 2018). Students often find it difficult to find the right words to express their thoughts and opinions. Students also often mispronounce or spell English words. In addition, students are less accustomed to using newly learned vocabulary in speaking activities such as making sentence patterns, discussing, conversing, and simulating conversations.

Based on the above background, researchers are interested in examining the effect of vocabulary development on improving students' speaking skills. This study aimed to find out whether vocabulary development had a significant impact on the speaking skills of 16 grade 9 students at Riyadhussalam Islamic High School. This study also aims to reveal the process and results of applying vocabulary development in speaking in class. This research uses qualitative and quantitative approaches. Using a qualitative approach, the process and results of implementing vocabulary development are described and analyzed in detail and holistically.

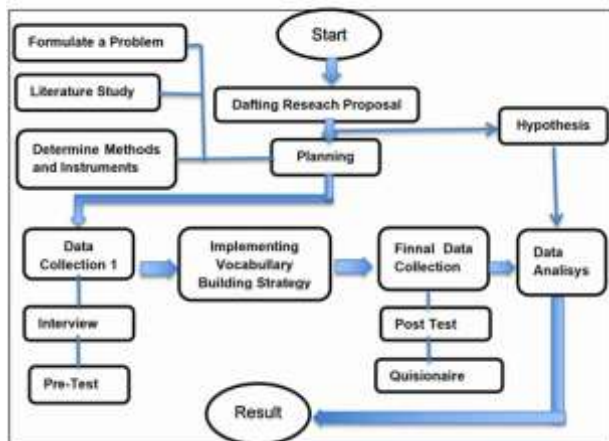
A quantitative approach is used to test research hypotheses using numerical data and statistical methods. The instruments used in this study were interviews, tests (pre-test and post-test, and questionnaires. Interviews with teachers are used to determine the initial conditions of learning to speak in class. Pre-test and post-test are used to measure students' speaking skills before and after vocabulary application. This test is carried out to assess or obtain information about language learning outcomes achieved by students, which will indirectly provide information about various aspects of teaching implementation (Djiwandono, 1996b: 6). Questionnaires are used to test students' reactions to the implementation of vocabulary development. The application of vocabulary formation is done by providing opportunities for students to practice using the new vocabulary they learn in speaking activities such as: making sentence patterns, discussing, having conversations, and simulating conversations.

METHOD

This study used a mixed methods approach to obtain overall data. The approach consisted of qualitative instruments (interviews) and quantitative instruments (pre-test, post-tests, questionnaire) (George, 2023).

We used qualitative measures in the form of interviews with teachers to gain insight into students' initial understanding of speaking skills and vocabulary. Duque-Aguilar (2021) argues that Teachers' Assessment Approaches Regarding EFL Students' Speaking Skill. While the quantitative instruments used are pre-test and post-test to assess student changes and questionnaires to measure students' perceptions of their speaking skills and vocabulary development (Sheppard, 2020).

Chart 1. Research Flowchart



The following research procedures are carried out: (1) Interview with teachers to get preliminary information about students' abilities. (2) Pre-test to measure students' initial speaking skills, provide an initial overview of students' speaking skills in English before they engage in vocabulary building programs. A pre-test is a useful tool to measure students' initial speaking skills and provide an overview of their speaking skills in English before they

engage in vocabulary building programs (Campos, 2023). In this test students are asked to talk about the topic to be given within 1 minute using English as best as possible to convey their ideas and opinions about the given topic.

The topic that the researcher gave was, "Describe Your Favorite thing or person". The aspects assessed, namely: (a) The ability to speak fluently. (b) Proper selection of words and phrases. (c) The ability to structure sentences correctly. (d) The interrelation between the ideas conveyed. (3) Application of vocabulary building with the method of practicing with new vocabulary. (Ortiz, 2023), Providing opportunities for students to practice using new vocabulary is an effective way to reinforce their learning. Speaking activities such as making sentence patterns, discussing, having conversations, and simulating conversations are great ways to practice using new vocabulary. There are 2 activities in the application of vocabulary building, namely: (a) New Sentence Patterns: This activity involves introducing new vocabulary related to a particular topic and guiding students to use that vocabulary in sentences. The teacher will introduce new vocabulary related to a particular topic (e.g., hobbies) and guide students to use that vocabulary in sentences. Students are then asked to create sentences using the new

vocabulary creatively. (b) Discussion and Conversation: This activity involves grouping students in pairs or small groups to have discussions on specific topics that involve the use of new vocabulary. Students will be grouped in pairs or small groups to have discussions on specific topics that involve the use of new vocabulary. They were asked to ask questions, share opinions, and discuss using the vocabulary they had learned. (4) Post-test to measure improvement in speech. Assess the development of your speaking skills in English after going through the process of applying vocabulary building. In this test, students are formed into small groups and asked to make a conversation about the topic that will be given within 2-5 minutes by using English as well as possible. The topic given by researchers in this post-test is: "Favorite Hobby or Activity". The aspects to be assessed, namely: (a) The ability to speak fluently. (b) Proper selection of words and phrases. (c) The ability to structure sentences correctly. (d) The interrelation between the ideas conveyed. (5) Filling out questionnaires by students to evaluate their experience in learning. Survey questionnaires collect additional information about students' demographics and K-12 education experiences (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.). Before the students filled out the questionnaire, the researcher introduced the purpose of filling

out this questionnaire to them. We give clear instructions on how to fill out the questionnaire.

After performing the above steps, the results of the interviews with English teachers were summarized in a narrative format, and the pre- and post-test data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods to assess the significant differences in speaking skills. will be done. The data from the survey was analyzed and graphed to visualize data on students' opinions regarding the use of vocabulary building methods and how helpful they thought this method was in improving their speaking skills. At the end of the study results, the significant percentage change in scores before and after applying the strategy is also displayed in the form of a graph.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research used a mixed-methods approach consisting of qualitative instruments (interviews) and quantitative instruments (pre-test, post-test, and questionnaire) to obtain overall data. With Qualitative Instruments in the form of interviews with teachers before the pre-test to gain perspective on students' speaking skills and initial understanding of vocabulary and Quantitative Instruments in the

form of Pre-test, post-test, and questionnaires after the post-test to measure changes in students' speaking skills and their perception of vocabulary improvement.

In this study, researchers provided vocabulary building methods to improve speaking skills. When designing a research study, researchers collect data through interviews, pre-tests, post-tests, and questionnaires. First, the researchers interviewed Miss Tina Al Munawaroh, a ninth-grade English teacher at an Islamic junior high in Riyadhussalam. According to Miss Tina, the speaking skills of the grade 9 students at Riyadussaalam Islamic Junior high School are still quite low. The reason is the poor vocabulary of the students, especially students of class 9 SMP Islam Riyadhussalam. She also believes that the main reason for the decline in vocabulary skills of 9th grade students in English learning, where the vocabulary is low, may be that the curriculum does not place much emphasis on vocabulary development, that is, the students lack motivation to learning or instructional methods that may not be optimal for building vocabulary.

Image. 1 Data Collection Interview Activitie



The researchers then conducted a pre-test to check the students' initial speaking skills and provide an initial overview of the students' speaking skills in English before participating in the vocabulary building program. Pre-test is very important to measure this initial ability. The purpose is to see how much progress students have made in their development and knowledge in the learning process, especially in the acquisition of speaking skills. If the initial knowledge is known, it is possible to measure how large the increase is. In this test, students are required to speak within one minute to convey their thoughts and opinions on the given topic, using as much English as possible. The question given by the researchers was "Describe the things and people you like". The researcher plots the data on a graph to show pre-test reading comprehension results.

Image. 2 Data Collection Pre-test Activitie



From the pre-test results remained for 9th grade students at Riyadhussalam Islamic Junior High School. Based on the speaking specifications, this study takes four assessment aspects: the ability to speak

fluently, the correct selection of words and phrases, the ability to structure sentences correctly, and the interrelationships between the ideas conveyed. Sixteen students were assessed on various aspects of their English skills.

This assessment includes an assessment of speaking skills (SS), word and phrase selection (SWP), sentence structure ability (SSA), and communication of ideas (CI), as well as an overall and average score for each student will appear. SS speaking skill scores ranged from 42 to 68. The highest score was achieved by student 9 (68) and the lowest score was achieved by student 7 (42). Scores for SWP word and phrase selection ranged from 45 to 62. The highest score was student 8 (62), while the lowest score was student 7 (45). Scores for the ability to construct SSA sentences ranged from 43 to 60. The highest score was received by student 9 (60) and the lowest score was student 16 (43). Scores for communicating CI ideas ranged from 43 to 60. The highest score was received by student 9 (60) and the lowest scores were student 5 (43) and student 16 (47). The total score for all students was 3317 points, with an average score of 51.8. Minimum Completion Standard (KKM) is 60. Based on the data provided, it appears that some students were unable to achieve this

KKM in several assessment aspects, including: B. Speaking skills (SS), word and phrase selection (SWP), and sentence structure skills (SSA).

The results of this pre-test revealed differences in students' performance in various aspects of English proficiency. Although the average grade (51.8) was relatively high, some students did not achieve her KKM in several assessment points. This indicates the need to focus on improving specific skills to ensure that all students meet the standards set. To be more detail, researchers shown the results in the following table 1.

Table 1. Pre-test Scores

NO	STUDENTS	ASSESSMENT ASPECT				TOTAL SCORE	AVERAGE SCORE
		SS	SWP	SSA	CI		
1	STUDENT 1	52	45	55	48	200	50
2	STUDENT 2	47	54	45	59	205	51,2
3	STUDENT 3	53	50	46	50	199	49,7
4	STUDENT 4	58	47	50	60	204	51
5	STUDENT 5	45	54	50	43	192	48
6	STUDENT 6	59	45	45	50	199	49,7
7	STUDENT 7	42	55	50	45	192	48
8	STUDENT 8	64	62	50	50	226	56,5
9	STUDENT 9	68	57	60	54	239	59,7
10	STUDENT 10	60	54	55	60	229	57,2
11	STUDENT 11	55	46	60	50	206	51,5
12	STUDENT 12	57	54	49	45	205	51,2
13	STUDENT 13	57	60	55	50	222	55,5
14	STUDENT 14	47	54	55	50	206	51,5
15	STUDENT 15	55	46	47	46	194	48,5
16	STUDENT 16	54	55	43	47	199	49,7
Averages		54,5	52,3	50,9	50,4	3317	51,8

Explanation:

SS: Speaking Skills

SWP: Selection of Words and Phrases

SSA: Structure Sentences Ability

CI: Conveyed the Ideas

The specific results of the questions are consistent with the results of interviews

with English teachers and pre-test with students. The researchers found three things to note. First, students have vocabulary problems. Poor vocabulary acquisition makes it difficult for students to choose vocabulary. Second, students find it difficult to find ideas that fit into the themes given by researchers. Third, students have difficulty constructing sentence structures. In this case, researchers try to build their vocabulary and solve problems by practicing with new vocabulary. Introduce new vocabulary related to a specific topic and help students use that vocabulary in their writing. Students work in pairs or small groups to discuss specific topics using new vocabulary. You will be asked to ask questions, share ideas, and discuss using the vocabulary you have learned.

After completing the pre-test and vocabulary development training, the researcher will administer the post-test. The purpose of the post-test is to measure language improvement. After going through the process of administering a vocabulary building post-test, we evaluate the development of English skills. The post-test results of the 9th grade students of Riyadhussalam Islamic Junior High School. In this post-test, the researchers assessed the four aspects of the previous test's assessment: the ability to speak fluently, the ability to choose the correct words and

phrases, the ability to form sentences correctly, and the ability to communicate between the ideas conveyed. We evaluated the relationship. After completing a course of study, students' progress in various aspects of English language skills is assessed. This assessment includes an assessment of speaking skills (SS), word and phrase selection (SWP), sentence structure ability (SSA), and communication of ideas (CI), as well as an overall score and average score for each student. SS speaking skill scores ranged from 65 to 82. The highest score was achieved by student 9 (82), while the lowest score of 65 was achieved by student 6, student 14, and student 16. SWP word and phrase selection scores ranged from 65 to 85. The highest score was 85 for student 8 and the lowest score was 65 for student 16. Scores for the ability to construct SSA sentences ranged from 65 to 78. The highest score was achieved by student 9 (78), while the lowest score was 65, achieved by student 16. Scores for communicating CI ideas ranged from 65 to 79. The highest score was 79 achieved by student 2 and the lowest score was 65 achieved by student 16. The total score for all students is 4570, with an average score of 72. The minimum integrity standard (KKM) is 60.

The data provided shows that all students met or exceeded her KKM in all aspects of the assessment this post-test. The

results of this post-test show that students' skills in various aspects of English proficiency improved after completing the learning sequence. The average scores of all students have increased, demonstrating the effectiveness of their learning. All students meet or exceed KKM in all aspects of the assessment, demonstrating significant progress in their English language skills. Researchers collect value data that can be seen from the following table 2:

Table 2. Post-test Scores

NO	STUDENTS	ASSESSMENT ASPECT				TOTAL SCORE	AVERAGE SCORE
		SS	SWP	SSA	CI		
1	STUDENT 1	72	65	75	78	290	72.5
2	STUDENT 2	80	74	70	79	303	75.7
3	STUDENT 3	73	69	66	70	278	69.5
4	STUDENT 4	68	71	70	77	286	71.5
5	STUDENT 5	68	72	65	78	283	70.7
6	STUDENT 6	65	65	67	77	274	68.5
7	STUDENT 7	75	72	67	68	282	70.5
8	STUDENT 8	73	85	78	70	306	76.5
9	STUDENT 9	82	74	70	78	304	76
10	STUDENT 10	80	70	70	78	298	74.5
11	STUDENT 11	67	70	76	72	285	71.2
12	STUDENT 12	75	67	71	70	283	70.7
13	STUDENT 13	80	65	78	75	298	74.5
14	STUDENT 14	65	68	66	67	266	66.5
15	STUDENT 15	67	68	70	67	272	68
16	STUDENT 16	67	65	65	65	262	65.5
Averages		72,3	70	70,2	73	4570	72

Explanation:

SS: Speaking Skills

SWP: Selection of Words and Phrases

SSA: Structure Sentences Ability

CI: Conveyed the Ideas

The final research step consisted of completing a questionnaire administered after the post-test to assess the learning experience after participating in the program. The survey

consists of 10 questions, each rated in three categories: "Not Important," "Important," and "Very Important." Based on the survey results, there were several questions that respondents considered important. The overall analysis shows a tendency for most questions to be considered important by the majority of respondents. However, there are differences in the importance of specific questions, suggesting that people may prioritize these questions differently. Generally, most questions are rated as important or very important. No question was consistently rated as unimportant by the majority of respondents.

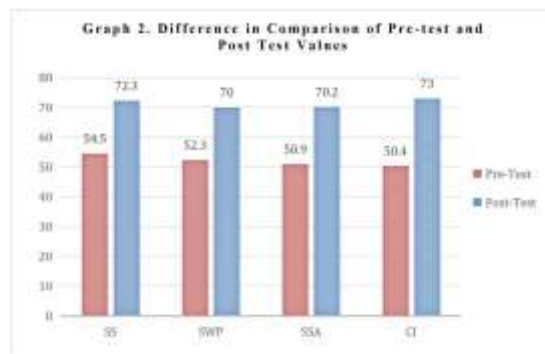
Image.3 Data Collection Post-test Activitie



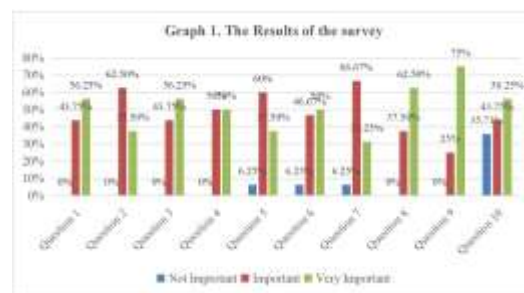
The majority of respondents (56.25%) believe that knowledge of English vocabulary significantly contributes to understanding topics such as grammar, reading, writing, and conversation (Question 1). Most respondents (62.5%) believe that good vocabulary is very important to get better grades in school English exams (Question 2). More than half of the

respondents (56.25%) believe that a wide vocabulary has a significant impact on their ability to produce correct and complete sentences in English (Question 3). Half of those surveyed (50%) believe that good vocabulary is important for conversations and discussions with teachers and classmates (Question 4). The majority of respondents (60%) believe that the vocabulary they have learned will affect their ability to write essays and explain their opinions in English (Question 5). Almost half of the respondent (46.67%) believe that having a rich vocabulary makes it easier to understand stories and read texts in English (Question 6). The majority of respondents (66.67%) recognized that a wide range of vocabulary is very important for understanding English conversation and audio/video materials (Question 7). Most respondents (62.5%) believe that a good vocabulary has a great impact on understanding instructions and tasks given in English at school (Question 8). Three quarters (75%) of respondents believe that mastering English vocabulary is important when communicating with native speakers and in international situations (Question 9). The majority of respondents (56.25%) believe that a good vocabulary is very important to increase their chances of accessing learning resources such as articles,

videos, and books in English (Question 10). The detail results of the survey are shown in



Graph 1 below. Multicultural & ESOL Program Services Education Department (2007), an organization dedicated to finding strategies for language learning, asserts that vocabulary development refers to the knowledge of stored information about the



meanings and pronunciation of words necessary for communication. They recognize that language learners have many opportunities to expand their vocabulary through television, the Internet, newspapers, audio recordings, etc., but they also recognize the benefits of effective vocabulary instruction. This includes definitions and context information for the word, as well as different representations of the word. . Learn

words in different contexts and encourage students to become active participants in learning the words. Providing opportunities for students to practice using the new vocabulary they learn in speaking activities such as making sentence patterns, discussing, having conversations, and simulating conversations is an effective way to reinforce their understanding of the new words. Teachers can also determine what word knowledge students already have in their schema by asking questions about vocabulary during read-aloud experiences (Chiaro, 2023). Comparing pre- and post-test scores on the four aspects of English proficiency assessment, we found that post-test scores increased significantly compared to pre-test scores. Below is a comparison of the change in pre-test and post-test scores for each aspect.

According graph 2 above the average score of speaking skills (SS) increased from 54.5 at pre-test to 72.3 at post-test, an increase of about 32.66% from the average score at pre-test. For Selection of Words and Phrases (SWP), the average score increased from 52.3 in the pre-test to 70 in the post-test, an increase of about 33.94% over the original average score. The average score of Structure Sentences Ability (SSA) also increased from 50.9 in

the pre-test to 70.2 in the post-test, which was about a 37.90% increase over the pre-test score. Similarly, the mean score for Communication of Idea (CI) increased from 50.4 in the pre-test to 73 in the post-tests, an increase of approximately 44.84% over the original mean score. This analysis shows that all aspects of English proficiency improved significantly between the pre-test and post-test. The largest increase was in the “Communication of Ideas (CI)” aspect, which showed an increase of approximately 44.84% compared to the average pre-test result. This shows that the students' Speaking skills improved in all aspects assessed through their learning, and there was positive progress in their post-test results compared to pre-test.

CONCLUSION

The study employed a mixed-methods approach using both qualitative interviews (with a teacher) and quantitative instruments (pre-test, post-test, questionnaire). researchers gathered insights from a teacher about students' low speaking skills due to poor vocabulary and instructional shortcomings. Measured students' initial speaking skills, tracked improvements after vocabulary-building interventions, and assessed the learning experience through a

questionnaire. (1) Pre-Test Results: (a) Identified shortcomings in students' speaking skills, word selection, sentence structure, and conveying ideas. (b) Showcased specific scores in various aspects of assessment, highlighting areas of improvement needed (c) Emphasized the necessity to focus on enhancing specific skills to meet predefined standards. (2) Post-Test Results: (a) Demonstrated improvement in students' English proficiency across all assessed aspects after the vocabulary development program. (b) Highlighted significant increases in speaking skills, word selection, sentence structure, and conveying ideas compared to the pre-test results. (c) All students met or exceeded the minimum standard in all aspects of assessment after the program. (3) Questionnaire Analysis: Showcased the importance of vocabulary in various aspects of language learning, such as comprehension, exams, communication, writing, and understanding instructions. (4) Recommendations and Implications: (a) Suggested strategies for vocabulary enhancement, such as practicing new vocabulary in discussions and encouraging active participation in learning words. (a) Cited research supporting effective vocabulary instruction and the benefits of

learning words in different contexts. (b) Emphasized the substantial improvement in all aspects of English proficiency after the vocabulary-building intervention.

Highlighted significant progress in students' speaking skills and overall English proficiency post-intervention compared to pre-test scores. Reinforced the importance of vocabulary in improving various language skills and understanding different aspects of English language learning.

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