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Rethinking English Sufficiency: Multilingual Practices and Communication Repair in Tourism Interaction

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Abstract

English frequently serves as a shared communicative resource in international tourism, but its availability does not necessarily ensure effortless intercultural interaction. This study examines perceived English sufficiency, multilingual resources, and communication experiences among international visitors and foreign residents in Bali. An exploratory convergent mixed-methods secondary analysis was conducted using 46 respondent records from a student-led field project. English was the most frequently reported communication resource (89.1%), followed by Indonesian (52.2%), translation applications (19.6%), Balinese (6.5%), and gestures (4.3%). Five communication-related items were assessed using a four-point evaluative scale, with categories 3–4 representing positive evaluations. Positive ratings were recorded for English sufficiency (69.6%), communication difficulty (52.2%), and language-related misunderstanding (47.8%). Spearman correlations revealed positive associations among evaluations of communication difficulty and misunderstanding, English sufficiency and communication difficulty, and perceived benefits of learning Indonesian and interest in learning it. Qualitative field notes documented varied communication experiences and the relevance of supplementary linguistic, digital, gestural, and interpersonal resources. The integrated findings suggest that effective tourism communication involves multilingual adaptation alongside English as a shared language. These findings informed CLEAR-Bali, a preliminary communication repair heuristic requiring further empirical evaluation.

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INTRODUCTION

International tourism creates recurring contact among speakers who differ in first language, cultural assumptions, communicative style, and familiarity with local practices. In these encounters, English frequently functions as a lingua franca (ELF), providing a shared communicative resource among speakers with diverse linguistic backgrounds. Contemporary ELF scholarship emphasizes negotiated intelligibility, pragmatic effectiveness, and flexible meaning-making rather than conformity to a single native-speaker norm (Jenkins et al., 2018; Marlina & Xu, 2018; Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018). This functional orientation is particularly relevant to tourism because interactions may range from brief transactional exchanges to socially and culturally consequential encounters.

Bali provides a relevant context for examining this issue because English is highly visible within its tourism economy while coexisting with Indonesian, Balinese, and other languages. Studies involving tourism workers, hospitality employees, and local tourism communities have documented the continuing importance of English alongside challenges involving vocabulary, listening, accent variation, local terminology, and context-specific service communication (Damayanti et al., 2024; Widhiastuty & Murdana, 2023; Ariyati, 2022; Malini et al., 2022). Linguistic-landscape research likewise demonstrates the symbolic and economic prominence of English within Bali's multilingual tourism environment (Khazanah & Kusumaningputri, 2021). The relevant issue is therefore not simply whether English is available, but whether its availability consistently makes interaction easy and what additional resources speakers mobilize when shared understanding becomes uncertain.

International evidence further suggests that communicative availability and communicative ease should not be treated as equivalent. Internationally mobile speakers may recognize English as an important resource for transnational communication while continuing to encounter differences in linguistic expression, proficiency, pragmatic expectations, and interactional norms (Gallagher, 2024). Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) explains such encounters through speakers' adjustments to language and communicative behavior in response to interlocutor, identity, and situational demands (Giles, 2016). Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) similarly extends communication beyond grammatical correctness by emphasizing interpretation, mediation, and relational appropriateness across cultural differences (Byram, 2021).

Taken together, ELF, CAT, and ICC provide complementary perspectives for understanding tourism communication as a negotiated and adaptive process. ELF foregrounds negotiated intelligibility within linguistically diverse encounters; CAT explains how communicators adjust linguistic and interactional behavior to

changing circumstances; and ICC highlights the role of cultural interpretation and relational appropriateness. These perspectives provide a conceptual basis for examining why English may remain a widely available communicative resource while additional languages, multimodal resources, and repair-oriented practices become relevant when shared understanding is uncertain.

Prior research has established the importance of English in tourism communication while revealing persistent linguistic and interactional challenges across different settings (Malini et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2023; Thongphut & Kaur, 2023; Fajrina et al., 2024; Vida-Mannl, 2024). In Bali, Malini et al. (2022) identified the communicative needs of hotel and restaurant employees, highlighting difficulties involving vocabulary, foreign accents, and appropriate linguistic expressions. Similarly, Fajrina et al. (2024) documented how tourism service providers in Aceh encountered linguistic barriers and relied on basic English and Indonesian to communicate with international visitors. From the tourists' perspective, Lee et al. (2023) demonstrated that English as a lingua franca (ELF) experiences involve communicative accommodation that shapes tourism experiences and motivations for language learning. Extending beyond language needs and experiences, Thongphut and Kaur (2023) identified repetition, explication, and reformulation as strategies for maintaining intelligibility in hospitality encounters, while Vida-Mannl (2024) demonstrated how pragmatic strategies facilitate communication between international tourists and local tourism personnel. Collectively, these studies indicate that successful tourism communication depends not merely on English proficiency but also on contextual adaptation, pragmatic flexibility, and collaborative meaning-making. However, their analytical emphases differ: studies of local service providers primarily address occupational language needs and barriers, whereas investigations of tourist experiences and naturally occurring interactions emphasize communicative accommodation or specific pragmatic strategies. Although these perspectives provide complementary insights, they do not jointly examine how international visitors and longer-stay foreign residents perceive English sufficiency while simultaneously experiencing communication difficulty, language-related misunderstanding, and the need for additional linguistic or semiotic resources. This leaves a specific empirical gap concerning the relationship between perceived English sufficiency and interactional challenges, particularly within Bali's multilingual tourism environment. Addressing this gap, the present study integrates quantitative patterns and qualitative accounts to examine how English functions alongside multilingual resources and repair-oriented practices in everyday intercultural communication.

Specifically, the study addresses three interconnected research focuses: (1) the communication resources mobilized by international participants during everyday interactions with local people; (2) the relationship between perceived English sufficiency and interactional challenges; and (3) the perceived role of multilingual adaptation in supporting intercultural understanding, social integration, and culturally respectful interaction.

This study contributes to tourism communication research by reframing English sufficiency as a contextual and interactional phenomenon rather than a binary indicator of communication success. By integrating quantitative patterns with qualitative explanations, the study examines how English functions as a central communicative resource while multilingual flexibility, accommodation, and repair-oriented practices remain relevant when interaction becomes challenging. In doing so, the study shifts attention from English competence alone toward a broader understanding of adaptive communication processes in intercultural tourism encounters.

METHODS

This study employed an exploratory convergent mixed-methods secondary analysis design to examine perceived English sufficiency, communication difficulties, and multilingual adaptation in tourism interactions. This approach enabled quantitative patterns and qualitative accounts from an existing fieldwork dataset to be examined as complementary sources of evidence. The quantitative and qualitative components were analyzed separately before their findings were integrated to develop a more comprehensive understanding of participants' communication experiences (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The exploratory orientation was appropriate because the study sought to identify associations among communication-related variables and interpret contextual experiences rather than establish causal relationships or evaluate a predetermined intervention.

The dataset originated from a student-led field project conducted in Bali and was documented in an Excel workbook containing quantitative and qualitative worksheets. The quantitative dataset comprised 46 respondent records collected by four student teams through a purposive sampling approach. The original fieldwork targeted international visitors and foreign residents in Bali, including individuals with short-term tourism experiences and longer-term engagement with local communities. Although the workbook contained demographic information concerning nationality, age, residence status, and length of stay, these variables were not consistently standardized across the records. Consequently, the present analysis focused on communication-related variables and did not conduct

demographic subgroup comparisons. Detailed recruitment locations and standardized documentation of the original sampling procedures were also unavailable. Personal identifiers were replaced with participant codes when reporting respondent-level evidence to protect confidentiality.

The quantitative instrument contained five communication items measured on a four-point scale (1 = poor, 2 = less satisfactory, 3 = fairly good, 4 = good), where categories 3 and 4 indicated positive evaluations and 1 and 2 represented less favorable ones. The items assessed participants' English sufficiency, difficulty communicating with locals, language-based misunderstandings, perceived benefits of learning Indonesian, and interest in learning Indonesian. Higher numerical scores consistently reflected more favorable evaluations rather than greater problem severity. An additional non-mutually exclusive multiple-response item tracked participants' communication resources such as English, Indonesian, Balinese, translation apps, and gestures. Together, these measures addressed perceived communicative accessibility, communication challenges, and orientations toward multilingual adaptation.

Instrument validity was assessed by aligning questionnaire items with the theoretical framework and research objectives. Items measuring English sufficiency, communication difficulty, and misunderstandings reflected communication experiences, while those on Indonesian learning benefits and interest indicated multilingual adaptation orientations. The research team clarified the four-point scale; establishing categories 3 and 4 as positive evaluations across all items, because original verbal descriptions were unarchived. However, this clarification did not establish psychometric validity, as archived records lacked evidence of expert validation, pilot testing, or reliability assessments. Consequently, the five items were treated as individual exploratory indicators, supporting transparent secondary data analysis while acknowledging retrospective evaluation limits (Ruggiano & Perry, 2019).

Quantitative analysis began with descriptive statistics to summarize the distributions of the five communication-related variables. Means, standard deviations, medians, and quartile boundaries were examined to describe central tendency and response variability. Although the variables were ordinal, means and standard deviations were retained as supplementary descriptive measures, while medians and quartiles provided information more directly aligned with the ordered response categories. Responses in categories 3–4 were classified as positive evaluations, corresponding to fairly good and good, whereas categories 1–2 represented less favorable evaluations. This classification was applied consistently across the five items, including those addressing communication difficulty and language-related misunderstanding. Frequencies and percentages were calculated

for the multiple-response communication item using the total number of respondent records as the denominator. As participants could report multiple communication resources, the corresponding percentages were not expected to sum to 100%. The overlap between positive evaluations across selected communication-related variables was also examined descriptively to identify patterns occurring within the same respondent records.

Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient (ρ) was employed to examine exploratory associations among the selected ordinal communication variables. This nonparametric approach was considered appropriate because the variables were measured using four-point ordered response categories, for which equal intervals between categories could not be assumed. The analysis focused on three relationships corresponding to the research objectives: communication difficulty and language-related misunderstanding, perceived English sufficiency and communication difficulty, and perceived benefits of learning Indonesian and interest in learning the language. Spearman's rho was used to assess the direction and strength of monotonic associations between these variables without requiring normally distributed responses or linear relationships. Because higher scores consistently represented more favorable evaluations, positive correlations were interpreted as indicating that favorable evaluations of one communication-related dimension tended to accompany favorable evaluations of another. Nevertheless, these associations did not imply that the dimensions were identical or that positive evaluations necessarily reflected the absence of communication challenges. The resulting coefficients were interpreted alongside their statistical significance levels, taking into account the exploratory nature of the analysis. Given the relatively small sample, purposive sampling procedure, and observational nature of the data, the associations were not considered evidence of causal relationships or population-level generalizations.

The qualitative component consisted of respondent-level summaries recorded by student interviewers under structured prompts concerning communication experiences with local people, perceptions of local-language learning, and related aspects of cultural adaptation. The original workbook organized these materials into fields such as Conclusions, Keywords, and Solutions, which provided condensed descriptions of participants' experiences and the interviewers' interpretations. These materials were treated as mediated qualitative evidence because they represented interviewer-recorded summaries rather than verbatim interview transcripts. Consequently, the analysis distinguished descriptions of reported experiences from suggested solutions or interpretations whose attribution to individual participants could not be independently established. Methodological research indicates that structured

notes and condensed qualitative records can support meaningful analysis when their provenance, analytical procedures, and limitations are explicitly acknowledged (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018; Nevedal et al., 2021; Kowalski et al., 2024; Brown et al., 2025). However, because the original fieldwork did not implement a formally documented rapid qualitative analysis protocol, the available materials were not treated as equivalent to verbatim interviews or recordings of naturally occurring interactions.

Qualitative analysis followed a semantic thematic analysis approach involving familiarization with the available respondent summaries, identification of relevant meaning units, development of descriptive codes, and organization of related codes into broader interpretive themes (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The analysis focused on participants' reported use of English and additional communication resources, experiences of communication difficulty, and perceptions of the relevance of local-language learning to everyday interactions and cultural understanding. Related information concerning cultural adaptation and social participation was considered when it contributed directly to the research objectives. Themes were developed by examining recurring meanings across the available records while remaining attentive to contrasting experiences and variations in the completeness of information. Because the qualitative dataset contained condensed interviewer-recorded statements rather than complete transcripts, analysis was restricted to meanings explicitly represented in the documented material. It did not attempt to reconstruct conversational sequences, infer unrecorded communicative behavior, or establish interactional repair mechanisms that could not be directly observed. The resulting themes were therefore interpreted as patterns within the available qualitative evidence rather than comprehensive representations of all participants' communication experiences.

The final analytical stage integrated the quantitative and qualitative findings through a joint display organized around the three research focuses. Following their separate analyses, quantitative patterns and qualitative themes were compared to identify areas of convergence, complementarity, and divergence between the two forms of evidence. For the first research focus, the frequencies of reported communication resources were examined alongside qualitative accounts describing how participants used English and additional linguistic, digital, or nonverbal resources in everyday interactions. For the second focus, the associations involving perceived English sufficiency, communication difficulty, and language-related misunderstanding were interpreted in relation to participants' reported communication experiences, including situations in which a shared language was available but mutual understanding remained challenging.

For the third focus, the relationship between perceived benefits of learning Indonesian and interest in learning the language was contextualized through qualitative accounts concerning independence, social integration, cultural access, and respectful engagement with local communities. This comparison enabled the qualitative evidence to support, extend, or qualify the quantitative patterns, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive interpretation of multilingual tourism communication. Where qualitative evidence was incomplete or ambiguous, convergence between the two datasets was not assumed.

The joint display served as an analytical mechanism for developing integrated interpretations rather than merely presenting parallel summaries of quantitative and qualitative findings. Quantitative evidence provided information about the distributions and associations of recorded communication-related responses, whereas qualitative evidence contributed contextual meanings concerning how participants perceived and described their communication experiences. By examining the complementary contributions of these forms of evidence, the integration highlighted the distinction between the availability of English as a shared language and the achievement of mutual understanding in intercultural interactions. However, because the qualitative materials did not include verbatim interactional transcripts, the integrated findings were not interpreted as direct evidence of turn-by-turn conversational repair. Instead, they supported an understanding of tourism communication as an adaptive multilingual process in which English remained central while additional linguistic, digital, and semiotic resources contributed to communication. These integrated interpretations also provided an evidence-informed conceptual basis for the preliminary development of the CLEAR-Bali communication repair heuristic, which requires further empirical evaluation before being considered an established intervention (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The findings reveal three interconnected patterns in international participants' communication experiences in Bali. First, English emerged as the dominant communication resource, although participants also reported using Indonesian, Balinese, translation applications, and gestures. Second, positive evaluations of English sufficiency were accompanied by varying evaluations of communication difficulty and language-related misunderstanding, indicating that participants did not evaluate all communication-related dimensions equally. Exploratory correlation analysis further identified positive associations among these evaluative dimensions. Third, participants generally provided favorable

evaluations concerning the benefits of learning Indonesian and their interest in learning the language. The qualitative records provided additional context by documenting varied communication experiences, the relevance of supplementary communication resources, and differing perspectives on local-language learning. The findings are presented according to the three research focuses, followed by an integration of quantitative and qualitative evidence.

Multilingual Communication Resources in Tourism Interaction

The first research focus examined the communication resources reported by international participants during their everyday interactions with local people in Bali. The quantitative data indicated that English was the most frequently reported communication resource, although it was not used exclusively. Participants also reported using Indonesian, translation applications, Balinese, and gestures, suggesting that their communicative experiences involved different combinations of linguistic and nonlinguistic resources. Because the questionnaire permitted multiple responses, the reported communication methods represented overlapping elements of participants' communicative repertoires rather than mutually exclusive choices. Table 1 summarizes the distribution of these resources.

Table 1. Reported Communication Methods

Communication Method	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
English	41	89.1
Indonesian/Bahasa Indonesia	24	52.2
Translation application	9	19.6
Balinese	3	6.5
Gestures	2	4.3

Note. Multiple responses were permitted; percentages therefore do not sum to 100%.

As shown in Table 1, English was reported by 41 participants (89.1%), confirming its prominent position in communication between international participants and local communities. Indonesian was reported by 24 participants (52.2%), representing a substantial additional linguistic resource. Translation applications were reported by nine participants (19.6%), whereas Balinese and gestures were less frequently identified. The distribution indicates that English functioned as the principal communication resource within the sample, but participants' reported practices extended beyond English alone. The relatively substantial use of Indonesian further suggests that communication in Bali involved engagement with the national language alongside the international lingua franca.

The qualitative records provided additional detail concerning how communication resources were perceived and used. The field-note summary associated with Participant P35 described English as the primary communication resource and mentioned translation applications and gestures as potential

supplementary resources when understanding became difficult. However, the corresponding quantitative record identified English and gestures without separately reporting the use of translation applications. Therefore, the reference to translation applications was interpreted as contextual information in the interviewer-recorded summary rather than direct evidence of their use by P35. Similarly, the record for Participant P2 documented occasional misunderstandings associated with language barriers and indicated that translation tools helped address communication problems. These examples illustrate the potential relevance of additional communicative resources when English alone does not fully support mutual understanding. Nevertheless, the qualitative records did not establish the frequency or sequence with which such resources were used in actual conversations.

Other records indicated that communication difficulties could also be managed through interpersonal relationships rather than linguistic or technological resources alone. Participant P31, a longer-stay foreign resident, was described as combining direct communication with assistance from a local social network to navigate language gaps. This account extends the range of reported communication resources beyond language choice and translation technology by indicating the potential relevance of social support in everyday interactions. In contrast, the field-note summary for Participant P40 characterized communication with local people as relatively accessible because English was widely understood in the participant's experience. This contrasting account demonstrates that communication experiences were not uniformly difficult across the sample.

Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative findings indicate that English was the dominant shared resource, while additional languages, digital tools, gestures, and interpersonal support were also relevant to participants' reported communication experiences. The qualitative evidence illustrates variation in how communication resources were perceived and mobilized, although the available summaries do not permit conclusions about the precise conversational processes through which these resources were combined.

English Sufficiency and Evaluations of Communication Challenges

The second research focus examined participants' evaluations of English sufficiency, communication difficulty, and language-related misunderstanding. Descriptive analysis was conducted on five communication-related items measured using a four-point evaluative scale. Categories 3–4 represented positive evaluations, while categories 1–2 indicated less favorable evaluations. This interpretation was consistently applied across the items, including those

addressing communication difficulty and misunderstanding. The descriptive statistics were used to identify the distribution of participants' evaluations and compare how favorably different communication-related dimensions were assessed. Table 2 presents the results.

Table 2. Descriptive Results for Four-Point Communication Items

Item	M	SD	Median	Q1-Q3	Positive Evaluations (3–4) (%)
Difficulty communicating with locals	2.59	0.91	3	2-3	52.2
English is enough for communication	2.91	0.94	3	2-4	69.6
Learning Indonesian improves daily life	3.52	0.84	4	3-4	87.0
Interest in learning Indonesian	3.39	0.91	4	3-4	89.1
Misunderstanding because of language limitation	2.61	0.98	2	2-3	47.8

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation; Q1–Q3 = first and third quartiles. The four-point evaluative scale comprised 1 = poor, 2 = less satisfactory, 3 = fairly good, and 4 = good. Categories 3–4 were interpreted as positive evaluations across all items. For items addressing communication difficulty and language-related misunderstanding, higher scores represented more favorable evaluations rather than greater severity of communication problems.

Table 2 indicates that 69.6% of participants provided positive evaluations of English sufficiency, suggesting that English was generally perceived as an adequate communication resource. Positive evaluations were also recorded for the communication-difficulty item (52.2%) and the language-related misunderstanding item (47.8%). However, the proportions of positive evaluations for these two dimensions were lower than those for English sufficiency. Notably, 52.2% of respondents provided less favorable evaluations of the misunderstanding-related dimension. These distributions indicate that participants generally evaluated English sufficiency more positively than other aspects of their communication experiences. The differences suggest that favorable perceptions of English did not necessarily extend equally to all communication-related dimensions. The qualitative evidence provides additional context for understanding these variations in participants' evaluations.

A closer examination of the respondent-level data identified overlapping positive evaluations across selected communication-related dimensions. Eighteen of the 46 participants (39.1%) selected categories 3–4 for both English sufficiency and communication difficulty. Similarly, 16 participants (34.8%) provided positive evaluations for both communication difficulty and language-related misunderstanding. These results indicate that favorable evaluations of different communication-related dimensions frequently occurred within the same

respondent records rather than appearing only in separate aggregate distributions. However, the overlap was not complete, suggesting variation in how participants evaluated different aspects of their communication experiences. The findings therefore support examining English sufficiency, communication difficulty, and language-related misunderstanding as related but distinct evaluative dimensions.

Exploratory correlation analysis identified a positive association between evaluations of communication difficulty and language-related misunderstanding (Spearman's $\rho = .437$, $p = .002$). A positive association was also observed between perceived English sufficiency and evaluations of communication difficulty ($\rho = .375$, $p = .010$). Given the positive orientation of the response scale, these findings indicate that more favorable evaluations of English sufficiency tended to accompany more favorable evaluations of communication circumstances. Similarly, favorable evaluations concerning communication difficulty tended to coincide with favorable evaluations of language-related misunderstanding. The moderate coefficients suggest that the respective evaluative dimensions were related but not interchangeable. These associations were interpreted as exploratory relationships among participants' reported evaluations rather than evidence of causal effects or direct measurements of communication performance.

The qualitative records also revealed variations in participants' communication experiences. The field-note summary associated with Participant P40 described relatively smooth communication with local people, attributing this experience to the perceived availability of English in everyday interactions. The corresponding quantitative record contained category 3 responses for both communication difficulty and language-related misunderstanding. Given that category 3 represented a positive evaluation, these responses were broadly compatible with the favorable communication experience described in the qualitative summary. Nevertheless, the two forms of evidence differed in their level of detail and could not establish the precise circumstances of the participant's interactions. This example illustrates how qualitative accounts can contextualize numerical evaluations without necessarily implying discrepancies between the two forms of evidence.

Overall, the findings indicate that English sufficiency, communication difficulty, and language-related misunderstanding represented related but distinct dimensions of participants' communication experiences. Positive associations among their evaluative scores suggest that participants who assessed one communication-related dimension favorably also tended to provide favorable evaluations of other dimensions. However, the differences in the proportions of positive responses indicate that English sufficiency was generally evaluated more favorably than communication difficulty and language-related misunderstanding.

The accompanying qualitative accounts further demonstrated that participants' communication experiences varied and that additional linguistic, digital, gestural, or interpersonal resources could be useful in particular situations. Taken together, these findings suggest that English plays an important role in supporting tourism communication while other resources remain relevant to addressing interactional needs. The available dataset, however, did not permit direct examination of conversational repair processes or the circumstances underlying individual communication experiences.

Multilingual Adaptation and Intercultural Understanding

The third research focus examined participants' evaluations of local-language learning and its relevance to everyday communication and intercultural engagement. As presented in Table 2, the item concerning the perceived benefits of learning Indonesian produced the highest mean score among the five communication-related variables (M = 3.52), with 87.0% of participants selecting categories 3–4. Similarly, the item measuring interest in learning Indonesian had a mean of 3.39, with 89.1% of participants selecting these categories. Because both items were positively worded, the relatively high evaluative ratings were consistent with favorable orientations toward Indonesian-language learning. These results suggest that participants generally recognized the potential value of learning Indonesian and expressed interest in developing additional local-language resources.

The relationship between these two variables was further examined using Spearman's rank-order correlation. The analysis identified a positive association between perceived benefits of learning Indonesian and interest in learning the language ($\rho = .427$, $p = .003$). This result indicates that participants who selected higher response categories for the perceived benefits of learning Indonesian also tended to select higher categories for their interest in learning it. Although the association does not establish that perceived benefits caused greater learning interest, it demonstrates a relationship between the two recorded orientations.

The qualitative evidence provided additional context for the possible relevance of local-language knowledge. Participant P31's field-note summary associated local-language proficiency with greater independence and deeper social integration. This account reflected a longer-stay resident's orientation toward communication needs extending beyond immediate transactional exchanges. Similarly, the record associated with Participant P39 described learning Indonesian or Balinese as important for navigating everyday life, while Participant P42's record

connected local-language knowledge with cultural understanding and respect toward local communities.

A contrasting orientation appeared in the field-note summary for Participant P35, a short-term visitor. The record characterized learning the local language as interesting but less practical for visitors who relied on English to meet immediate communication needs. This account suggests that the perceived relevance of local-language learning may differ according to participants' circumstances and communicative priorities. However, the available qualitative evidence does not establish a systematic distinction between short-term visitors and longer-stay foreign residents. The contrast is therefore presented as an illustrative difference among documented experiences rather than as evidence of a statistically established subgroup relationship.

The findings indicate that English and local-language knowledge were not necessarily perceived as competing resources. English was frequently reported as a practical means of communication, while Indonesian and Balinese were associated in several qualitative accounts with additional opportunities for independence, social engagement, and cultural understanding. These perspectives suggest that multilingual adaptation involves more than selecting an immediately accessible language, although the relative importance of different resources varied across the documented experiences.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The preceding quantitative and qualitative findings were systematically integrated to evaluate how numerical trends and descriptive accounts collectively addressed the study's three core research focuses. This integrative analysis served two complementary functions. First, it provided a cross-validation of broad patterns by demonstrating how overarching statistical trends and numerical distributions aligned with and reinforced the qualitative narrative. Second, it supplied essential contextual nuance by incorporating specific qualifications, edge cases, and human experiences drawn from individual field-note summaries to explain the underlying realities behind the numbers. To clearly represent this synthesis, the combined insights, convergent evidence, and contextual distinctions are structured in the mixed-methods joint display in Table 3.

Table 3. Mixed-Methods Joint Display

Research Focus	Quantitative Pattern	Qualitative Evidence	Integrated Inference
RF1 – Multilingual communication resources	English was the dominant but not exclusive communication resource.	Field notes associated with P2 and P35 mentioned supplementary communication resources; P31 described local social support, while P40 provided an example of relatively smooth communication.	English operated as the principal shared language within a broader set of linguistic, digital, gestural, and interpersonal resources.
RF2 – English sufficiency and interactional challenges	Positive evaluations of English sufficiency were more frequent than positive evaluations of communication difficulty and misunderstanding. Positive exploratory associations were identified among the recorded evaluative scores.	Field-note summaries documented varied communication experiences. P35 identified supplementary resources as potentially useful, while P40 described relatively smooth communication supported by English.	English was generally evaluated favourably as a communication resource, but participants' evaluations varied across communication-related dimensions. Qualitative accounts further indicated the relevance of supplementary resources in particular interactional contexts.
RF3 – Multilingual adaptation and intercultural understanding	Perceived benefits of learning Indonesian were positively associated with interest in learning it.	P31, P39, and P42 connected local-language knowledge with independence, social engagement, or cultural understanding, whereas P35 emphasized immediate communication needs.	English and local languages appeared to provide complementary resources whose perceived relevance varied with communicative purposes and circumstances.

Note. Quantitative findings are summarized from Tables 1 and 2. Qualitative evidence is based on condensed respondent-level statements documented in the original fieldwork records. The integration identifies contextual patterns and does not imply direct observation of conversational processes.

Table 3 demonstrates how the quantitative and qualitative findings provided complementary insights into multilingual tourism communication. The quantitative results established the prominence of English, identified differences in the proportions of positive evaluations across communication-related dimensions, and revealed exploratory associations among these evaluations. The

qualitative records contextualized these patterns by documenting additional communication resources, variations in perceived communication ease, and differing orientations toward local-language learning. Although participants generally evaluated English sufficiency favorably, their evaluations of communication difficulty and language-related misunderstanding were comparatively less positive. The qualitative accounts further indicated that supplementary linguistic, digital, gestural, and interpersonal resources could support communication in particular circumstances. Together, these findings suggest that English functions as an important shared language within a broader repertoire of resources relevant to effective intercultural interaction.

Discussion

The findings contribute to understanding tourism communication by demonstrating the central role of English as a shared communicative resource while highlighting the complementary importance of multilingual adaptation. Three interconnected interpretations emerge from the study. First, English functions as the dominant communication resource within a broader repertoire that includes local languages, translation applications, gestures, and interpersonal support. Second, favorable evaluations of English sufficiency are positively associated with favorable evaluations of other communication-related dimensions, although these dimensions are not evaluated equally across participants. Third, local-language learning is perceived as potentially beneficial for communication, independence, social engagement, and culturally situated interaction. These findings are discussed in relation to English as a lingua franca (ELF), Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), and previous empirical studies of tourism communication.

English as a Shared Resource Within Multilingual Repertoires

The prominence of English in the present study is consistent with the central role attributed to ELF in communication among speakers with different linguistic backgrounds. Contemporary ELF scholarship conceptualizes successful communication primarily through negotiated intelligibility and pragmatic effectiveness rather than conformity to native-speaker linguistic norms (Jenkins et al., 2018; Marlina & Xu, 2018). From this perspective, the frequent use of English among international participants in Bali is unsurprising, particularly in a tourism environment characterized by sustained contact between local communities and speakers of diverse first languages. However, the simultaneous reporting of

Indonesian, translation applications, Balinese, and gestures indicates that shared-language communication should not be reduced to exclusive reliance on English.

This interpretation is compatible with previous research demonstrating the flexibility of linguistic resources in multilingual and intercultural communication. Jaroensak and Saraceni (2019) examined variation in spoken English as a lingua franca within tourism encounters, while Nomnian et al. (2020) highlighted the complexity of language use, dependency, and communication needs in community-based tourism. Parise (2021) further investigated ELF users' attitudes and orientations in tourism interactions. Extending the discussion beyond tourism-specific settings, Victoria et al. (2025) emphasized the importance of understanding ELF as intercultural interaction rather than primarily as a linguistic system, drawing on communicative practices within an Asian intercultural context. Collectively, these studies indicate that effective communication involves flexible linguistic practices, contextual interpretation, and the negotiation of meaning across cultural differences. The present findings contribute to this perspective by documenting how international participants in Bali reported using English alongside Indonesian, digital translation, gestures, and interpersonal support. Rather than functioning as mutually exclusive choices, these resources appear to form complementary elements of participants' reported communicative repertoires.

The qualitative evidence offers a particularly useful illustration of this relationship. The interviewer-recorded summary for Participant P35 characterized English as the “primary bridge” while also describing translation applications and physical gestures as fallback resources when understanding became difficult. This wording is reproduced from the field note and should not be interpreted as a verified verbatim quotation from the participant. Nevertheless, it illustrates the practical distinction between identifying a primary communication language and recognizing the potential need for supplementary resources.

The findings also resonate with Communication Accommodation Theory, which explains how speakers adjust communicative behavior in response to interlocutors and situational expectations (Giles, 2016). Within this framework, reported reliance on additional languages or communication tools can be interpreted as potentially relevant to communicative accommodation. However, the present study did not directly observe participants adjusting their language during interaction. Consequently, CAT provides an explanatory perspective rather than direct evidence that particular accommodation processes occurred.

A further contribution concerns the role of social relationships in multilingual communication. Participant P31's account indicated that local social

networks could help address communication gaps. This suggests that communicative resources may include interpersonal access and social support in addition to linguistic competence and technological assistance. Such an interpretation complements research on intercultural communication in tourism, which recognizes the importance of social relationships, mediation, and situated meaning-making (Jack et al., 2020; Yusra, 2023). The finding therefore broadens the analytical perspective from language availability toward the communicative resources through which participants navigate interactions.

Rethinking English Sufficiency and Interactional Difficulty

The positive association between evaluations of English sufficiency and communication difficulty suggests that favorable perceptions of English were generally accompanied by favorable evaluations of communication circumstances. This relationship is consistent with the practical role of English as a shared communicative resource in international tourism. However, the lower proportions of positive evaluations concerning communication difficulty and language-related misunderstanding indicate that participants did not assess all dimensions of communication equally favorably. Such differences highlight the importance of distinguishing perceived language sufficiency from broader evaluations of communicative experiences. Koc (2021) demonstrated the limitations of relying exclusively on subjective evaluations of intercultural competence, emphasizing that self-reported perceptions do not necessarily correspond directly to actual communicative ability. Similarly, ELF scholarship emphasizes negotiated intelligibility and pragmatic adaptation as important dimensions of successful communication (Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018; Walkinshaw, 2022). The present findings therefore suggest that English sufficiency should be understood as an important component of tourism communication rather than a comprehensive measure of communicative effectiveness.

Previous research on hospitality and tourism interactions provides useful explanations for this distinction (Thongphut and Kaur , 2023; Vida-Mannl, 2024; Thongphut & Kaur, 2025). Thongphut and Kaur (2023) documented the importance of explicit communicative practices in hospitality ELF encounters, while their subsequent research examined the use of multiple repair solutions in response to interactional problems (Thongphut & Kaur, 2025). These studies demonstrate that maintaining understanding may require interactional work even when participants possess a common linguistic resource. Similarly, Vida-Mannl (2024) investigated pragmatic strategies in international tourism interactions,

reinforcing the relevance of communicative flexibility in addressing interactional demands.

The present study is consistent with previous research in recognizing that multilingual communication may involve additional resources beyond the availability of a shared language. However, its empirical contribution differs from studies based on direct analysis of naturally occurring interactions. Research using conversation analysis, including Pietikäinen's (2020) investigation of multilingual lingua franca interactions, demonstrates the analytical value of examining participants' orientations to language and the sequential organization of communication. Such approaches can reveal how speakers interpret and respond to interactional circumstances within actual conversations. In contrast, the present research relied on ordinal evaluations and condensed interviewer-recorded summaries, which did not permit direct observation of conversational sequences or repair mechanisms. Consequently, the study contributes evidence concerning reported communication experiences and perceived communicative resources rather than independently establishing how specific repair practices unfolded during interaction.

The positive association between evaluations of English sufficiency and communication difficulty may reflect the perceived usefulness of English in facilitating everyday interactions within Bali's tourism environment. Participants who evaluated English sufficiency more favorably also tended to provide more favorable assessments of communication-related circumstances. Nevertheless, the qualitative records indicated that communication experiences were context-dependent and that supplementary resources could remain useful even when English was available. From the perspective of Communication Accommodation Theory, effective communication involves adjustments to interlocutors, situational demands, and communicative expectations (Giles, 2016; Fowler et al., 2026). Such adjustments may include linguistic simplification, clarification, or the use of additional communicative resources. However, because the present study did not directly observe these practices, CAT serves as an explanatory framework rather than evidence that specific accommodation strategies occurred during the documented interactions.

Nevertheless, these interpretations remain subject to several methodological limitations. Although the evaluative response categories were clarified, the archived dataset did not provide detailed documentation of how each participant interpreted the questionnaire items during the original fieldwork. Furthermore, the study did not directly measure communication frequency, interactional complexity, or participants' English proficiency through standardized

performance assessments. Consequently, the observed correlations cannot establish that English sufficiency directly improves communication outcomes or determines the occurrence of misunderstandings. The findings are more appropriately interpreted as exploratory relationships among participants' evaluations of distinct communication-related dimensions. Further research using validated measurement instruments and direct observations of tourism interactions would be necessary to clarify the mechanisms linking perceived English sufficiency with communicative experiences.

This interpretation is also consistent with evidence from Indonesian tourism settings. Malini et al. (2022) identified English-language needs among hospitality employees in Bali, while Fajrina et al. (2024) examined cross-cultural communication challenges involving tourism service providers in Aceh. Although these studies focused primarily on local service providers rather than international participants, they illustrate that communication challenges arise in settings where English is used for tourism-related interaction. The present study complements these findings by emphasizing the perspective of international visitors and foreign residents, whose perceptions of communication sufficiency may not correspond directly with those of local tourism workers.

The qualitative accounts further illustrate variations in participants' communication experiences. Some field notes described the usefulness of translation applications, gestures, and additional linguistic resources when communication became challenging, whereas others reported relatively smooth interactions through English. For example, Participant P40's qualitative summary indicated that communication barriers were limited, while the corresponding quantitative record contained positive evaluations of the communication-related dimensions. These two forms of evidence were therefore broadly consistent rather than contradictory. Nevertheless, the condensed nature of the field notes limited the extent to which individual communication circumstances could be reconstructed. This illustrates the complementary roles of quantitative evaluations and qualitative descriptions in understanding the contextual nature of multilingual tourism communication. The principal implication is therefore conceptual rather than causal: tourism communication should not be evaluated solely through the perceived availability of English. Attention should also be given to how participants recognize uncertainty, clarify intended meanings, interpret culturally situated information, and identify appropriate supplementary resources.

Local-Language Learning and Intercultural Engagement

The positive relationship between perceived benefits of learning Indonesian and interest in learning the language suggests that local-language knowledge occupies an important place within participants' orientations toward communication in Bali. While English was widely reported as a practical shared language, Indonesian and Balinese appeared in several qualitative accounts as resources associated with broader participation in local social and cultural life. This distinction reflects the difference between using language to accomplish immediate communicative tasks and developing communicative resources for more sustained intercultural engagement.

Intercultural Communicative Competence provides a useful theoretical framework for interpreting these findings. Byram (2021) conceptualizes intercultural competence in terms extending beyond linguistic accuracy to include interpretation, mediation, attitudes, and culturally appropriate engagement. Within this perspective, learning local-language expressions may contribute to communicative participation by supporting culturally situated understanding and respectful interaction. The present findings are compatible with this interpretation, although the dataset does not establish whether participants' interest in local languages resulted in measurable improvements in intercultural competence.

The qualitative records illustrate how different communicative purposes may shape orientations toward language learning. Participant P31's interviewer-recorded summary associated local-language proficiency with “independence and deeper social integration”. Similarly, Participant P39's record characterized learning Indonesian or Balinese as important for everyday life, while the note associated with Participant P42 connected local-language knowledge with “basic respect and knowing the foundations of local culture”. These excerpts reproduce wording preserved in the field notes rather than verified verbatim participant statements. Together, they illustrate how language learning was associated with relational, cultural, and practical considerations beyond immediate transactional communication.

These findings complement previous studies emphasizing the intercultural and relational dimensions of tourism communication. Liu et al. (2022) examined intercultural communicative competence from hospitality industry and educational perspectives, while Yusra (2023) investigated how language contributes to the construction of solidarity in tourism information services. Sharma (2020) likewise demonstrated the relevance of language to professional authority and social relationships within tourism encounters. In the Indonesian

context, Elfiondri et al. (2021) demonstrated the relationship between locally situated Tourism English, cultural contact, and visitor engagement in Mentawai, highlighting the importance of language in facilitating encounters with local traditions. Collectively, these studies indicate that language in tourism performs functions extending beyond transactional information exchange to include cultural interpretation, relationship-building, and participation in locally situated experiences. The present findings complement this perspective by identifying local-language learning as a perceived resource for independence, social integration, and culturally respectful engagement among international participants in Bali.

At the same time, the qualitative evidence indicates that interest in learning local languages was not uniform. Participant P35's field-note summary suggested that local-language learning could be perceived as interesting but relatively impractical for short-term visitors who relied on English for immediate needs. This contrasts with accounts from longer-stay residents who emphasized integration and everyday independence. Such variation suggests that the perceived usefulness of language learning may depend on communicative purposes and the anticipated duration or depth of engagement.

However, the study did not conduct a systematic quantitative comparison between short-term visitors and longer-stay foreign residents. Therefore, the observed contrast should not be interpreted as evidence that residence duration determines language-learning interest. Rather, the qualitative accounts indicate a plausible relationship worthy of further investigation using more clearly defined participant groups and standardized measures. Overall, the findings support an understanding of English and local languages as potentially complementary communicative resources. English may facilitate access to a broad range of interactions, whereas Indonesian and Balinese may offer additional opportunities for culturally situated engagement. Their relative value appears to depend on the purposes, expectations, and circumstances of communication rather than on a simple hierarchy of linguistic importance.

CLEAR-Bali: An Evidence-Informed Communication Repair Heuristic

The integrated findings demonstrate how English and supplementary resources support interaction in multilingual tourism settings, showing that while English was evaluated favorably, varied assessments and qualitative accounts highlight the utility of linguistic, digital, gestural, and interpersonal resources when understanding is uncertain. Combining these insights with research on interactional repair, pragmatic accommodation, and intercultural mediation, the

study proposes CLEAR-Bali—a preliminary, evidence-informed heuristic organizing five interconnected practices: Catching signs of communication trouble, Lowering linguistic and processing demands, Eliciting/Establishing shared understanding, Adding multimodal/digital resources, and Reframing culturally embedded meanings. Rather than a pre-validated model, this heuristic synthesizes empirical findings with literature to provide a structured basis for future research. While the current dataset supports broad patterns like perceived communication difficulty, language-related misunderstandings, translation apps, gestures, and interest in local-language learning, specific techniques—such as confirmation checks, lexical simplification, structured reformulation, and collaborative repair—derive primarily from prior studies rather than direct fieldwork observations, as delineated in Table 4.

Table 4. CLEAR-Bali Communication Repair Heuristic and Evidence Base

Element	Interactional Function	Example Practice	Evidence Base
C – Catch	Recognize possible communication trouble when mutual understanding becomes uncertain.	Notice repeated questions, delayed responses, or indications of misunderstanding; initiate a neutral clarification check.	Present study: reported communication difficulty and misunderstanding. Behavioral indicators informed by Thongphut and Kaur (2023, 2025).
L – Lower	Reduce linguistic and processing demands while preserving intended meaning.	Use shorter expressions, familiar vocabulary, explicit references, and less idiomatic language.	Research on explicitness, reformulation, and pragmatic accommodation (Thongphut & Kaur, 2023; Walkinshaw, 2022).
E – Elicit and Establish	Support collaborative clarification and verification of shared understanding.	Invite clarification, rephrase information, summarize important details, and confirm intended meanings.	Research on collaborative repair and multiple repair solutions (Thongphut & Kaur, 2025; Walkinshaw, 2022).
A – Add	Supplement spoken language with additional linguistic, visual, gestural, or digital resources.	Use written information, translation applications, gestures, images, or maps when spoken communication is insufficient.	Present study: reported translation applications and gestures. Related tourism ELF evidence (Lee et al., 2023).
R – Reframe	Mediate culturally embedded meanings that cannot be adequately conveyed through literal translation alone.	Explain relevant local terminology, cultural expectations, contextual meanings, or examples of appropriate behavior.	Research on intercultural mediation and culturally situated tourism communication (Jack et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2022; Yusra, 2023).

Note. CLEAR-Bali is proposed as a preliminary evidence-informed heuristic derived from the present findings and relevant literature. Its components require empirical evaluation before claims of effectiveness can be established.

Table 4 demonstrates how CLEAR-Bali translates the study's conceptual interpretation into a set of potentially observable communication practices. The first component emphasizes the recognition of possible non-understanding, while the second and third concern linguistic adjustment and collaborative clarification. The fourth introduces additional communicative resources when spoken language alone is insufficient, and the fifth highlights the importance of culturally situated interpretation. Together, these components reflect an understanding of communication as an adaptive process involving linguistic, pragmatic, multimodal, and intercultural resources.

This conceptual orientation is consistent with ELF research emphasizing negotiated intelligibility and pragmatic flexibility (Walkinshaw, 2022), as well as communication accommodation perspectives concerning adjustments to interactional circumstances (Giles, 2016). It also reflects ICC's emphasis on cultural interpretation and mediation (Byram, 2021). However, the heuristic should not be interpreted as a direct empirical representation of the communication behavior of the 46 participants. Its individual components incorporate practices documented in previous research, while the current study provides contextual evidence concerning their potential relevance.

The principal contribution of CLEAR-Bali is therefore to offer a structured and testable framework for examining communication support in situations where English is available but mutual understanding remains uncertain. Future studies could investigate whether the proposed practices improve communicative clarity, reduce misunderstanding, or support intercultural interaction. Until such evidence becomes available, CLEAR-Bali should be regarded as a conceptual and practical proposition rather than an established communication intervention.

Practical Implications and Research Limitations

The findings have implications for communication training in tourism and hospitality contexts, particularly for programs that emphasize English proficiency as the primary indicator of communicative preparedness. While linguistic competence remains important, the present results suggest that training may also benefit from addressing how communicators recognize possible misunderstanding, adapt language to different interlocutors, and make appropriate use of supplementary resources. Rather than relying exclusively on grammatical accuracy or vocabulary knowledge, communication-oriented learning

activities could incorporate clarification, reformulation, confirmation of meaning, and culturally sensitive explanations.

Scenario-based learning offers one possible approach to translating these implications into practice. Common tourism situations, including accommodation services, transportation, directions, food restrictions, payments, complaints, and explanations of local customs, could provide contexts for examining communication difficulties and appropriate responses. Such activities would be consistent with communicative approaches to Tourism English that prioritize the practical use of language in occupational interactions (Ho, 2020). However, the effectiveness of specific training activities cannot be inferred from the present study and would require independent evaluation.

The findings also suggest potential value in incorporating local-language awareness into intercultural communication preparation. For international visitors, basic Indonesian expressions and contextual explanations of culturally significant terminology may provide supplementary resources when English does not convey intended meanings adequately. For longer-stay residents, opportunities to develop Indonesian-language knowledge may also be relevant to everyday independence and social participation. Nevertheless, these implications should be understood as context-sensitive possibilities rather than universal prescriptions, particularly because the study did not establish systematic differences between visitor and resident groups.

Several methodological limitations qualify the interpretation of these findings. First, the relatively small purposively recruited sample limits the extent to which the observed patterns can be generalized beyond the participants represented in the dataset. Second, although the four-point evaluative response categories were subsequently clarified by the research team, the archived workbook did not preserve their original verbal descriptions or provide documentation of formal psychometric validation. The analysis therefore relied on retrospective clarification of the response categories, with categories 3–4 consistently interpreted as positive evaluations across all items. However, these evaluations should not be regarded as direct measurements of actual communication performance or the frequency of misunderstandings. Third, the qualitative component consisted of condensed interviewer-recorded summaries rather than verbatim transcripts, and communication-related information was not equally complete across participant records. These characteristics limited the depth of qualitative interpretation and prevented direct examination of conversational repair processes. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted as exploratory evidence concerning perceived communication experiences and

multilingual adaptation rather than definitive measurements of communicative competence or interactional effectiveness.

Additional limitations concern the relationship between the quantitative and qualitative records. Some respondent identifiers and demographic classifications were inconsistently documented, and occasional differences appeared between numerical responses and qualitative summaries. Although these limitations did not prevent exploratory integration at the level of broad patterns, they reduced the certainty of some respondent-level interpretations. Furthermore, the dataset did not include direct observations of interactional frequency, conversational complexity, or repair sequences. Consequently, the study cannot establish why particular associations occurred or whether the proposed CLEAR-Bali practices would improve actual communication outcomes.

Future research should therefore examine these relationships using larger and more systematically characterized samples, clearly documented response scales, and measures with stronger validity evidence. Direct recordings of tourism encounters would be particularly valuable for identifying how speakers recognize misunderstandings and negotiate repair in naturally occurring interactions. Comparative research involving short-term visitors, longer-stay foreign residents, and local tourism service providers could also clarify how communicative purposes and contexts influence reliance on English and additional languages. Finally, empirical evaluation of CLEAR-Bali through carefully designed pilot studies could determine whether its proposed practices contribute to more effective multilingual and intercultural communication.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that English functions as a prominent shared communicative resource in Bali's international tourism environment while operating alongside Indonesian, Balinese, translation applications, gestures, and other forms of communicative support. The findings revealed generally favorable evaluations of English sufficiency and positive associations among evaluations of different communication-related dimensions. However, participants' assessments of communication difficulty and language-related misunderstanding were comparatively less favorable, suggesting that positive perceptions of English did not extend equally across all aspects of communication experience. Qualitative evidence further highlighted the relevance of supplementary linguistic, digital, gestural, and interpersonal resources in addressing diverse interactional needs. Integrating these findings contributes to understanding tourism communication

as an adaptive multilingual process in which effective interaction involves more than access to a shared language.

The findings suggest that tourism communication preparation should extend beyond English proficiency to incorporate clarification strategies, communicative accommodation, multimodal support, and culturally sensitive meaning-making. The proposed CLEAR-Bali heuristic offers a preliminary framework for organizing these practices, although its effectiveness requires further empirical validation. Given the exploratory design, relatively small sample, and reliance on condensed qualitative records, the findings should be interpreted cautiously and should not be generalized broadly or treated as direct evidence of conversational repair processes. Future research employing validated instruments, direct interactional observations, and empirical evaluation of CLEAR-Bali could provide stronger evidence concerning multilingual adaptation and communication effectiveness in intercultural tourism settings.

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