

The Effects of Using AI on Iraqi EFL University Students' Performance

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ABSTRACT

This paper is concerned with investigating the role of artificial intelligence tools in enhancing English language teaching for Iraqi university students. AI refers to computer systems that can perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence. This study tackles the problems that many Iraqi university students believe that AI always provides correct answers. It tries to pinpoint the advantages and disadvantages AI brings to the teaching and learning process and it tries to find out to what extent can AI tools increase Iraqi students' motivation in the learning process. The paper is based on the hypotheses that (1) AI tools consistently deliver accurate and reliable information to university students who are learning English as a second language, (2) integrating AI into the teaching process positively enhances EFL students' performance. This study has come up with the conclusion that AI tools can increase the Iraqi EFL students' motivation making them feel more engaged and confident since they can get direct feedback, support and explanations according to their own individual needs.

KEYWORDS: Artificial Intelligence, Credibility, Motivation, EFL Learning Facilitation.

1. Introduction

Artificial intelligence (henceforth AI) has become one of the fastest-growing technologies in the world today. It refers to computer systems that can perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence, such as understanding language, recognising speech, making decisions, and solving problems. (Poole and Mackworth, 2023: 3).

In the field of education, AI is playing a growing role, Hence, this research attempts to explore its role in enhancing English language teaching for Iraqi university students. Specifically, the AI tools investigated in this study are ChatGPT and Google Translate. These tools can help students learn in innovative ways. Besides, they can provide immediate feedback, answer questions, and offer a personalised learning experience. Accordingly, such tools are believed to be helpful especially for Iraqi university students learning English as a second language.

The use of AI in education remarkably affects both how teachers teach and how students learn making education more interactive and efficient (Tan and Ling, 2024:6). AI is a double-edged weapon. Despite its benefits, it has some drawbacks. This study attempts to tackle the following problems: (1) the credibility

of the information provided by AI tools cannot always be trusted. (2) any Iraqi university students believe that AI always provides correct answers., (3) excessive reliance on AI tools can hinder the development of students' critical thinking and (4) AI can reduce the interaction between teachers and students.

This study aims at: (1) examining the credibility of AI tools when used for teaching English as a second language, (2) identifying the advantages and disadvantages AI brings to the teaching and learning process, (3) finding out to what extent can AI tools increase Iraqi students' motivation in the learning process and (4) figuring out the possibility of integrating AI to EFL learning process. The paper is based on the hypotheses that (1) AI tools consistently deliver accurate and reliable information to university students who are learning English as a second language. (2) integrating AI into the teaching process positively enhances students' English, (3) excessive use of AI tools adversely influences the development of students' independent language skills and can hinder their mental activities. and (4) using AI tools can make learning more enjoyable, interactive and engaging.

This study adopts a descriptive research design to examine the role of AI tools in enhancing English language learning among university students. The participants consist of 171 Iraqi university students from the Department of English at the College of Basic Education/ Sharqat. Data is obtained through a questionnaire of twelve questions. This questionnaire is designed by the researcher in order to achieve the aims and verify the hypotheses of this research. Specifically, this paper investigates two AI tools, ChatGPT and Google Translate. It is hoped to help EFL learners and educators know how to benefit from AI tools properly.

2. Artificial Intelligence: An overview

Artificial intelligence is an area that is advancing rapidly, aiming to design computer systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence. These activities include recognizing spoken and written words, detecting patterns, making decisions, and solving complex issues. recently, AI has shifted from being an idea into a practical instrument in different fields, such as health, education and finance (Poole & Mackworth, 2023: 3).

According to Russel & Norving (2021: 20), AI falls into different types as far as function is concerned: (a) narrow or weak AI is used to perform specific functions like engaging in dialogues or translation, (2) general AI can handle mental tasks. As for MaciasLoor et al. (2024:14), AI comprises machine learning and deep learning. These enable the systems to analyse data, make use of it and develop their capacities. As far as education is concerned, AI seems to be vital in enhancing learning methods, offering feedback, and providing tutoring systems adapted to meet the learners' needs (Maity & Deroy,2024:1).



1. Previous Studies

Many researchers have emphasized the importance of AI tools in enhancing learning process. To be more specific, the following studies have tackled this role in the educational field.

According to Kasneci et al. (2023:5), AI tools such as intelligent tutoring systems, translation tools, and automated feedback systems help students develop their language skills more effectively. Alqahtani and Abumlik (2025:527) indicate that using tools such as ChatGPT and Google Translate leads to innovative ways of practicing language skills, allowing students to actively engage with the content and receive immediate feedback.

Moreover, Birhane (2023:8) explains that students sometimes overestimate the reliability of AI, which leads to an excessive dependence on its information without verifying its accuracy. Zhai et al. (2022:15) add that overreliance on AI tools can negatively affect students' critical thinking abilities and the development of independent learning skills. Overall, previous studies have focused on the advantages of employing AI in education, but they have not addressed the issue of the credibility of the information provided by these tools.

Worthy mentioning, Ghedir and Gasmi (2024) have investigated AI concentrating on the impact of its tools on the critical thinking of EFL learners. However, this study seems to be too limited because it has looked at the writing skill overlooking the other teaching skills.

4. The Credibility of Artificial Intelligence

Because of the huge amount of information, there is some difficulty in specifying its reliable sources. Feigerlova et al. (2025:13) point out that the AI credibility indicates the extent to which the information artificial intelligence offers as being precise and reliable. The accuracy and trustworthiness of the output are affected by the data quality used to train AI tools.

Additionally, AI tools cannot independently estimate the degree of the credibility of the sources because they depend basically on the embedded patterns at the training period (Kasneci et al., 2023:7). Despite some advanced AI tools seem to offer correct presentation, they, Sousa & Cardoso (2025:17) report. may generate partially wrong or incomplete information.

As a result, the AI generated information should be critically reviewed and verified before adopting it. In the educational field, the credibility of the information is vital since both students and lecturers rely on AI tools for learning, making reports and researches, and constructing presentations (Abbas et al., 2025:693). Learners are supposed to have critical thinking skills in order to evaluate the outcome sources.

5. Artificial Intelligence in Education

Artificial intelligence is considered to be an influential instrument in pedagogical contexts. Haenlein & Kaplan (2019: 3) mention that AI technologies appeared at first in the 1950s and they were formally used in the research field in 1956.

In the advent of 1970s and 1980s, researchers began to use then AI applications in both cognitive and theoretical sciences establishing the foundations for the use of such systems in education (Doroudi, 2023: 890).

During 1980s and early 1990s, AI has emerged in pedagogical institutions through the use of learning computer-based programs designed to adapt students' needs (Panda, 2024:3757). At the beginning of the 21st century, AI has developed significantly, particularly after the spread of the learning platforms which greatly contributed to the adoption of AI in educational contexts (Kavitha & Joshith, 2024: 440).

Nowadays, the use of AI tools such as ChatGPT and other language models have proved to be essential in education (Wang et al., 2024:2). New sophisticated AI systems have been designed to help educators, enhance text-books designs, and facilitate material analysis in educational institutions in (Alwakid et al., 2025: 6).

In a nutshell, as Chan & Tsi (2023: 10) refer, AI is not intended to replace teachers; but it can serve as a supportive tool that enhances the educational process when used appropriately (Chan & Tsi, 2023: 10).

6. Benefits of Artificial Intelligence

There are many benefits that artificial intelligence contributes to the improvement of the educational learning process. These can enhance learning strategies as well as teaching methods. Zawacki-Richter et al. (2019: 4) state that one of the significant advantages of these AI tools is their capability to supply students with learning programs that can adapt their needs. Besides, this serves to provide them with instant feedback at each learning step.

In addition, AI can assist educators in conducting some teaching tasks such as testing, grading and assessment. This can provide economy in time and effort, i.e., it reduces their workload and perform tasks in a short time. Consequently, educators can have extra time for interactive activities with their students (Arrington et al., 2025: 5).

Balci (2024: 75) elaborates that AI tools such as ChatGPT and Google Translate can play a prominent role in enhancing language learning. The former offers learners an interactive context in which they may engage in dialogues, generate ideas rapidly and ask questions, while Google Translate assists learners to conquer linguistic problems (see also Ting & Tan, 2021: 145).

In general, integrating AI tools into educational process can enhance efficiency, create an interactive learning atmosphere, expand opportunities, and develop more innovative teaching methods.

Drawbacks of Artificial Intelligence

Although artificial intelligence has a lot of advantages in education, it exhibits numerous drawbacks when carefully considered. Foremost among them is the credibility of material presented by AI. Martin-Moncunill & Alonso Martinez (2025: 11) draw the attention to the students' assumption that the information presented by AI is always correct so they do not usually verify its reliability or validity. Furthermore, some learners are believed to lack the ability to utilise AI tools efficiently, which can bring about inaccurate results (Becirovic et al., 2025: 14).

Moreover, relying on AI excessively may impede students' capacity to improve problem-solving skills and critical thinking since they might not engage in independent reasoning counting heavily on ready-made materials (Kasneci et al., 2023: 7). Teachers, in turn, encounter difficulties in integrating AI tools into traditional teaching methods, since such integration requires adjustments to instructional practices as well as the acquisition of new skills—both of which demand considerable time and effort (Delello et al., 2025: 5).

In addition, the absence of human interaction in AI-driven learning environments reduces the psychological and social support available to students. Also, this technology can reduce opportunities for the development of interpersonal and communication skills (Delello et al., 2025:4).

8. Pedagogical Enhancement of Artificial Intelligence

Improving the use of Artificial Intelligence in education requires institutions to adopt innovative strategies that enhance both effectiveness and ethical responsibility. In order to arrive at a remarkable enhancement to integrating AI in the teaching process, the following approaches should be considered:

- 1- Enhancing the level of knowledge and understanding of AI tools among lecturers and students helps them engage with these modern technologies consciously and responsibly (Ravi et al., 2023: 6875-6876).
- 2- Integrating AI into adaptive and personalized learning environments is considered one of the most prominent future directions in the development of education (Maity & Deroy, 2024: 2).
- 3- Recent studies indicate that AI systems can modify educational materials and assessments to suit the abilities and needs of each individual learner (Halkiopoulou & Gkintoni, 2024: 28).
- 4- These systems contribute to increasing students' motivation and achieving deeper and more effective learning outcomes (Mohamed et al., 2024: 591).

5- Teachers should develop their roles in accordance with the educational transformations influenced by AI technologies (Zhai, 2024: 4).

6- Developing modern skills such as prompt engineering and AI-based teaching methods will enable educators to guide students toward effective interaction with these tools and ensure their use in thoughtful and innovative ways (Arrington et al., 2025: 6).

7- It is necessary to consider the ethical issues when dealing with AI applications in education, i.e., using AI tools in education should be fair and transparent (Chintal et al., 2024: 23).

9. Data Analysis and Discussion

9.1 Data Collection and Description

In order to explore the pedagogical effects of utilising AI tools namely, ChatGPT and Google Translate in an EFL learning process, the researcher uses an adapted questionnaire of 13 questions then the students' responses are analysed. The questionnaire is basically designed by Ghedir & Gasmi (2024). The participants involve 171 students of the English department / college of basic education/Shargat/ university of Tikrit. The undergraduate students in the second, third and fourth stages have been surveyed, according to their personal experience, concerning the effects of using such AI tools. The questionnaire questions with the options provided, students' responses and discussions are shown below:

Analysis:

Question (1)

To what extent do you use AI tools (such as ChatGPT or Google Translate) in your studies?



Discussion

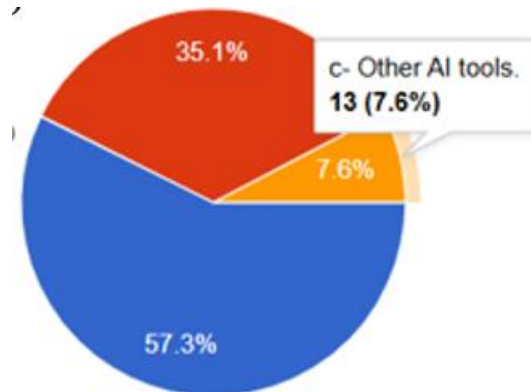
The question above tries to find out the extent to which respondents use artificial intelligence in doing their educational assignments. The results show that 34.5% of the students use AI on a regular basis, while 49.7% use it from time to time. These percentages prove that artificial intelligence tools are crucial to students' activities. Conversely, 12.3% have exhibited the scarcity of using such tools, which may mirror

their limited need or probably awareness for this technology. Additionally, the findings indicate that a few students (3.5%) never use artificial intelligence in their academic assignment.

Question (2)

Which AI tools do you mostly use in your studies?

- a- ChatGPT
- b- Google Translate
- c- Other AI tools.



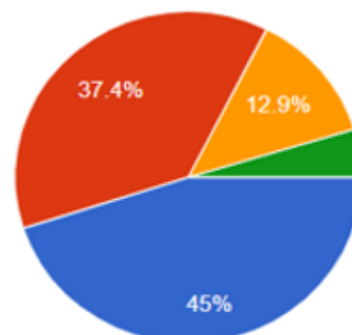
Discussion

The question reveals the tools that learners use in their studies. The results show that 57.3% use ChatGPT, which helps them complete tasks and meet their academic needs. Meanwhile, 35.1% use Google Translate to assist with translation and to better understand other languages. A very small percentage, 7.6%, reported using other tools in their studies

Question (3)

In your opinion, to what extent do AI tools contribute to facilitating the learning process ?

- a- To a very great extent.
- b- To a moderate extent.
- c- To a small extent.
- d- They do not contribute at all.



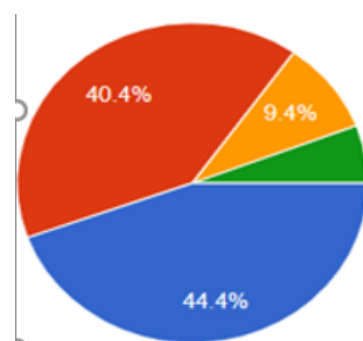
Discussion

The survey results indicate that most artificial intelligence tools play an important role in facilitating the learning process. 45% of students believe that these tools are very useful, while 37.4% indicated that their impact is moderate. In contrast, 12.9% believe that the artificial intelligence has a limited role, and a small percentage of 4.7% consider that its tools do not make any contribution to education.

Question (4)

Does using AI increase your motivation to learn?

- a- Yes, a lot.
- b- Sometimes.
- c- It does not affect my motivation.
- d- Reduces motivation.



Discussion

Regarding the enhancement of learning motivation through the use of artificial intelligence tools, a large proportion of participants (44.4%) think that their motivation increases significantly. Meanwhile, 40.4% indicate that they sometimes receive motivational boosts. Despite these relatively high percentages, 9.4% of respondents found that artificial intelligence does not affect their motivation in any way, while 5.4% believe that these tools actually reduce their motivation to learn.

Question (5)

"Do you feel that the learning process becomes more enjoyable and interactive when using AI tools?"



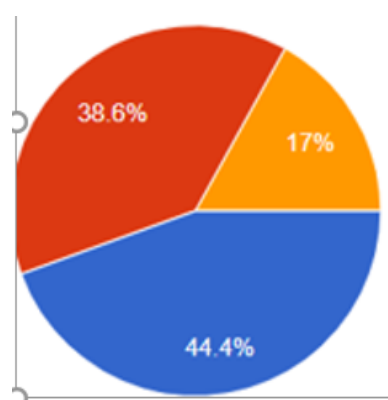
Discussion

The results above indicate that 55.6% of the EFL students definitely believe that learning process becomes more interactive and enjoyable when artificial intelligence tools are utilised, while 36.3% mention that such tools are somewhat beneficial. However, a very few students (8.2%) deny any interactivity or enjoyment associated with using AI in education.

Question (6)

"What are the main benefits you see in using AI in education?"

- a- Easy access to information.
- b- Saving time and effort.
- c- Improving the quality of understanding and analysis.



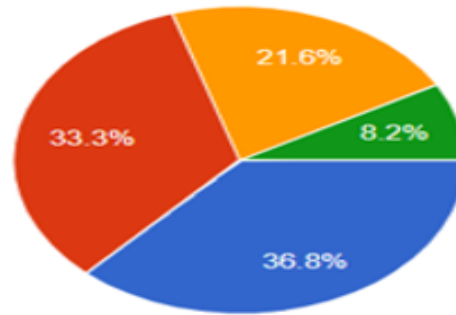
Discussion

This question investigates the most significant benefits students find when using artificial intelligence. The results show that the big portion of respondents (44.4%) stand with the easy accessibility of information, 38.6% refer to the economy in time and effort and helps, while the least percentage (17%) indicate the merit of the enhancement in the quality of both understanding and analysis.

Question (7)

"What are the main challenges or concerns you face when using AI in learning?"

- a- Over-reliance on AI tools.
- b- Weak independent thinking.
- c- Information accuracy is not guaranteed.
- d- Privacy and security.

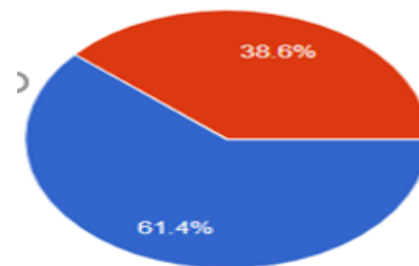
**Discussion**

This question attempts to explore the consequences of students' using artificial intelligence tools in their assignment. The results show that over-reliance on AI tools seem to be the prominent challenge about (36.8%) students encounter with AI tools. The next percentage (33.3%) are concerned about the weakness of the critical thinking. Some students (21.6%) are concerned about the accuracy of the given information, while 8.2% are concerned about the security or privacy, i.e., students worry that their personal information, academic progress or habits might be exposed.

Question (8)

"In your opinion, should AI be formally integrated into the university curriculum?"

- a. Yes
- b. No

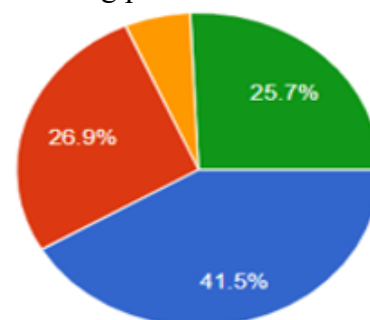
**Discussion**

According to the results above, the majority of EFL students (61.4%) stand with the integration of AI tools in the educational institution as an essential component in the university curriculum. On the other hand, a good number of them (38.6%) argue against this integration.

Question (9)

"To what extent do you believe that AI-based tools support your learning process?"

- a- very much.
- b- a little bit.
- c- They do not support at all.
- d- I use them for tasks that are difficult and problematic for me.

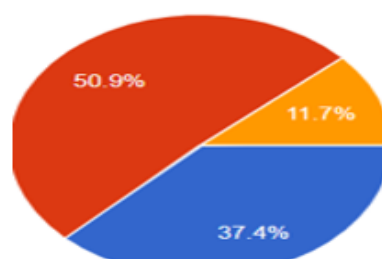


This question illustrates diverse perceptions regarding the effectiveness of artificial intelligence in supporting the learning process. 41.5% of students receive a very high level of support, while 25.7% use it when they encounter difficulties in completing a task. 26.9% report that it provides limited support, and 5.9% indicate that it offers no support in the learning process.

Question (10)

"Are you able to assess the credibility of the AI information sources you use in the learning process,

- a- Yes, I check the sources before using them in my assignments.
- b- Sometimes.
- c- I am not sure.



writing assignments, etc. ?"

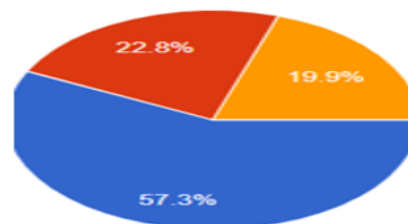
Discussion

The tenth question discusses students' ability to evaluate the credibility of information provided by artificial intelligence. The results show that 37.4% of students verify the credibility of sources before using the information, which indicates a level of cognitive awareness among this group. In contrast, 50.9% report that they verify the information only occasionally, while 11.7% of students were unable to determine their ability to assess the credibility of the information provided.

Question (11)

"Do you believe that AI-based tools adapt to your individual educational needs?"

- a- I agree
- b- I disagree
- c- I have never paid attention to that.



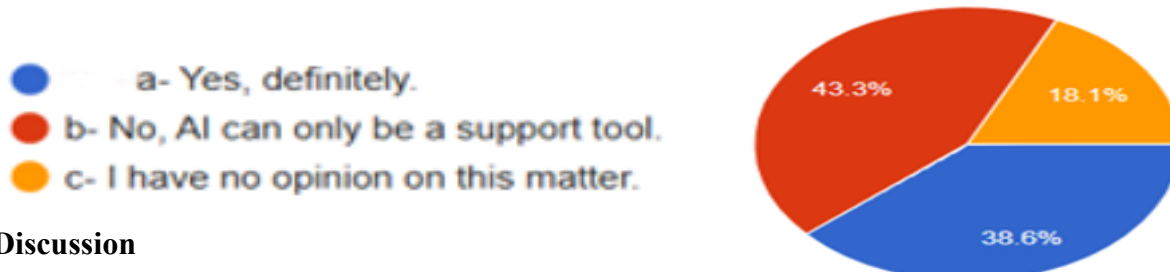
Discussion

This question discusses the ability of artificial intelligence to adapt to the individual needs of learners. 57.3% strongly agreed that AI-based tools succeed in planning learning experiences. However, 22.8%

disagreed with this view, and notably, 19.9% had not paid attention to this aspect at all, indicating limited awareness or interaction with these specific features of artificial intelligence.

Question (12)

"Can AI replace traditional teaching methods in developing critical thinking skills?"

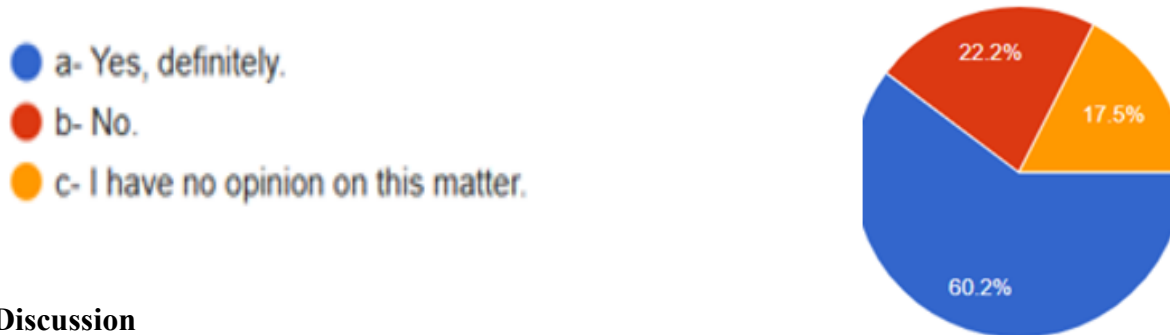


Discussion

The question above investigates the possibility of replacing traditional teaching methods with artificial intelligence. The results indicate that the majority of respondents (43.3%) do not believe that AI can replace the traditional methods when the critical thinking is emphasized. The next number (38.6) see there is a possibility of this replacement while 18.1% of participants cannot make a judgement on this issue,

Question (13)

"Do you fear excessive reliance on AI could weaken your ability to think independently?"



Discussion

The final question of the survey addresses students' concerns that excessive reliance on artificial intelligence may weaken their ability to think independently. The results show that 60.2% expressed significant concern about this effect, while 22.2% are not worried about it. Meanwhile, 17.5% of students select the option "no opinion," which reflects a degree of hesitation or lack of clarity on this issue.

10. Conclusions

This paper has come up with the following conclusions:

1. AI tools can increase the Iraqi EFL students' motivation making them feel more engaged and confident since they can get direct feedback, support and explanations according to their own individual needs.

- This proves the validity of hypothesis (4) ' *using AI tools can make learning more enjoyable, interactive and engaging*'.
2. Artificial intelligence is remarkably effective in enhancing the Iraqi EFL students' language. However, it serves as a facilitating and supportive tool rather than a replacement to traditional teaching methods .This validates hypothesis (2) "*integrating AI into the teaching process positively enhances students' English.*"
 3. The use of AI tool ChatGPT is more common and preferable to the Iraqi university students because it can can perform various functions such as engaging in dialogues, explaining concepts, and providing solutions and translations.
 4. Easy access to information and time-saving are almost equally the main benefits Iraqi students see in using AI in education.
 5. Excessive reliance on artificial intelligence can weaken the student' critical thinking. This supports hypothesis (3) “*excessive use of AI tools adversely influences the development of students' independent language skills.*”
 6. Many Iraqi EFL undergraduate students do not verify the credibility of AI information; however, a few numbers do check the AI sources. This can refute hypothesis (1) " *AI tools consistently deliver accurate and reliable information to university students who are learning English as a second language.*"

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