

PROJECT REVIEW

The First Week

Direction: “unequal dialogue”

Enquiry: How do system error messages use language and interface to look like a dialogue, but actually give the user no real response or control?

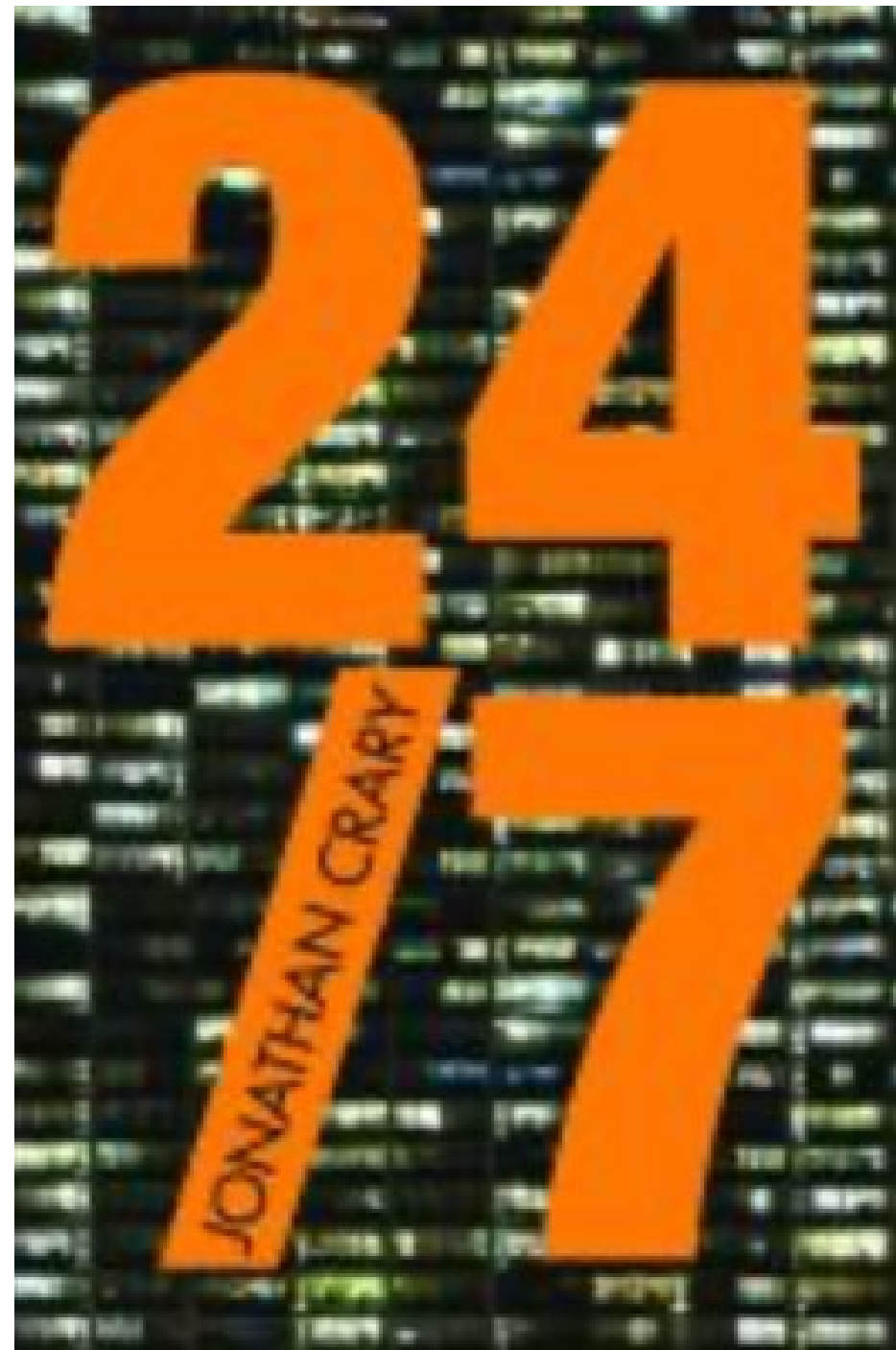
Last Week

Direction: “waste time”

Enquiry: When users are forced into waiting states—such as loading, error prompts, or system non-responsiveness—can they regain control over this period of time, even if only in a small, humorous way, by giving new meaning to the experience?

Reference

Crary, J. (2013). 24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep. London: Verso.
(pp.10-28)



“Sleep poses the idea of a human need and interval of time that cannot be colonized and harnessed to a massive engine of profitability... and thus remains an incongruous anomaly and site of crisis in the global present.”

Crary argues that sleep is a kind of time that cannot be controlled or used by capitalism. It is unproductive and outside the system’s logic.

This book inspired me to rethink the language of error messages—not as system notices , but as signs of a system losing control. I began to ask: Who wrote these system languages? Why do they speak for the system? Crary’s critique of time and power helped shift my focus—from “wasted time” to the structure of system language itself. I now see these system failures as small openings where users might reclaim their own voice.

New Direction: Language power structure

New Enquiry:

Who wrote these "system languages"? Why can it speak on behalf of the system?

Reference Mirror Ritual: Human-Machine Co-Construction of Emotion



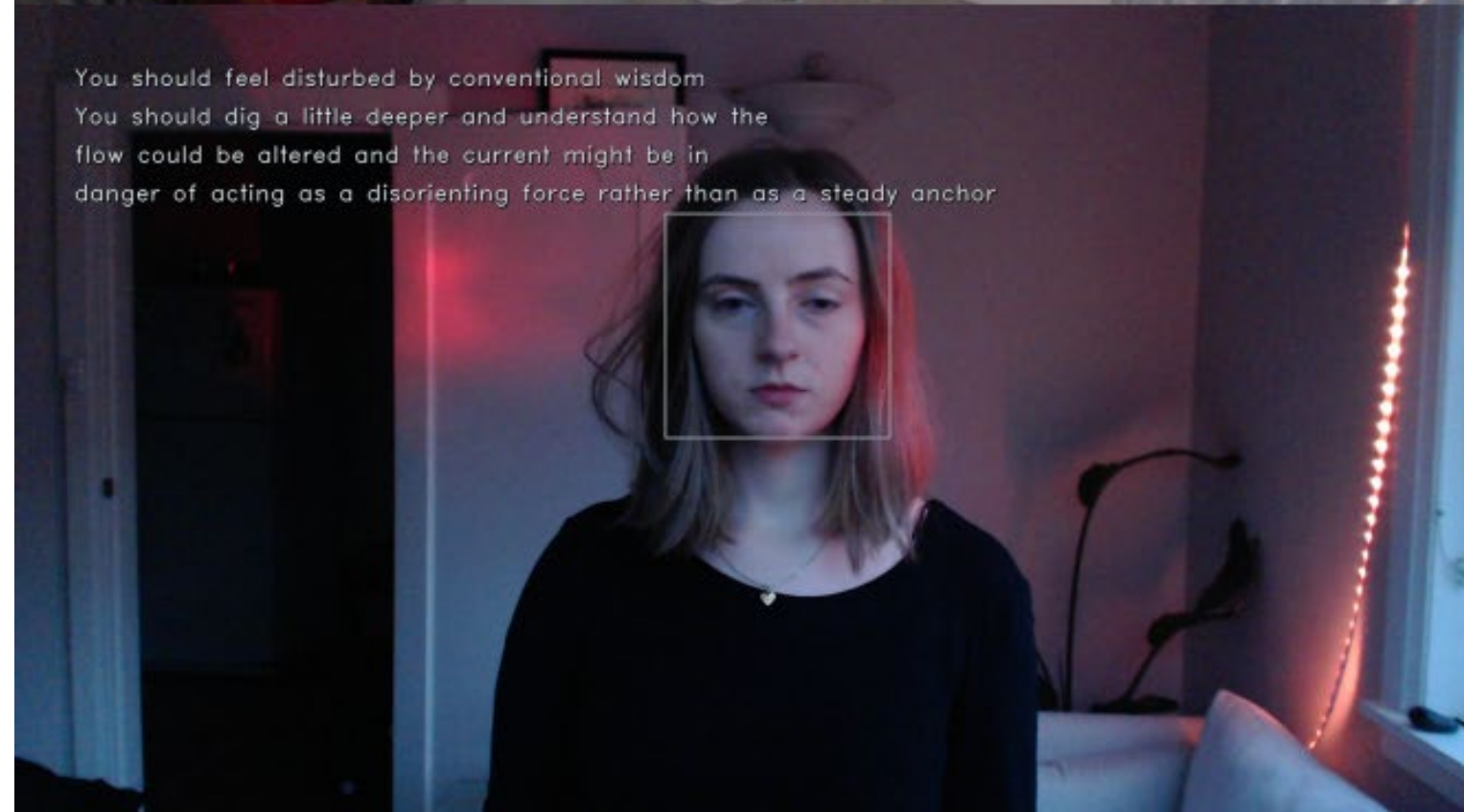
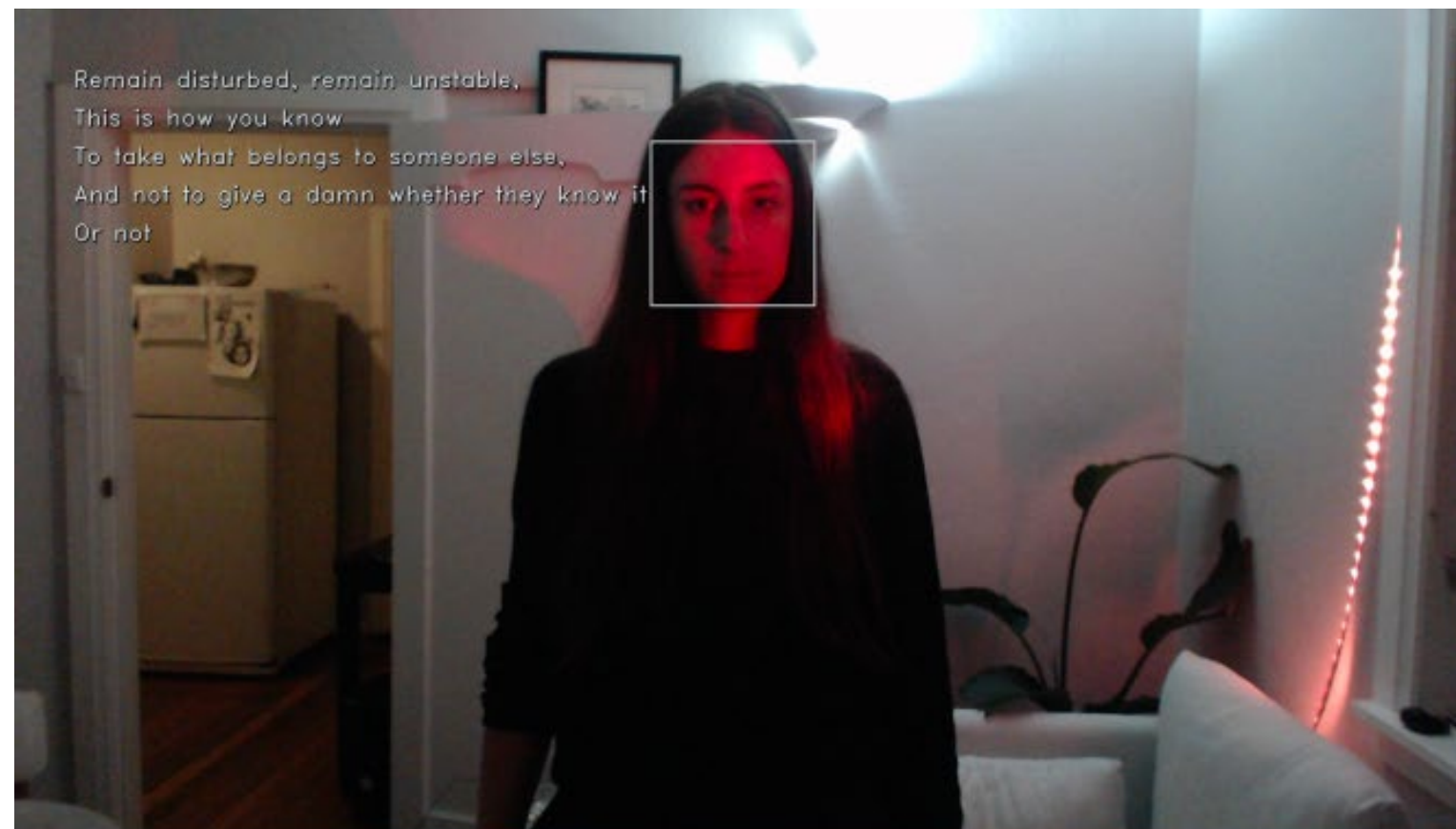
Introduction: "Mirror Ritual" is an interactive artwork. It looks at visitors' facial expression, guesses how visitors feel, and then uses AI to write a short poem based on that feeling. Visitors see both their face and the poem on the mirror.

Formal properties:

1. "Mirror + Camera + text"
2. Minimalist style, poetic language, and vitality
3. System language generation mechanism

Mechanism:

- Camera detects user facial expression ➡
- System generates a poetic sentence via GPT-2 ➡
- Emotional response is displayed



Inspiration :

It transforms facial emotion recognition ➡ into system-generated verses, constructing an emotionally expressive interface between humans and machines.

My thought--in reverse (from "system responding to the user")

When system language fails, can users “speak back”?

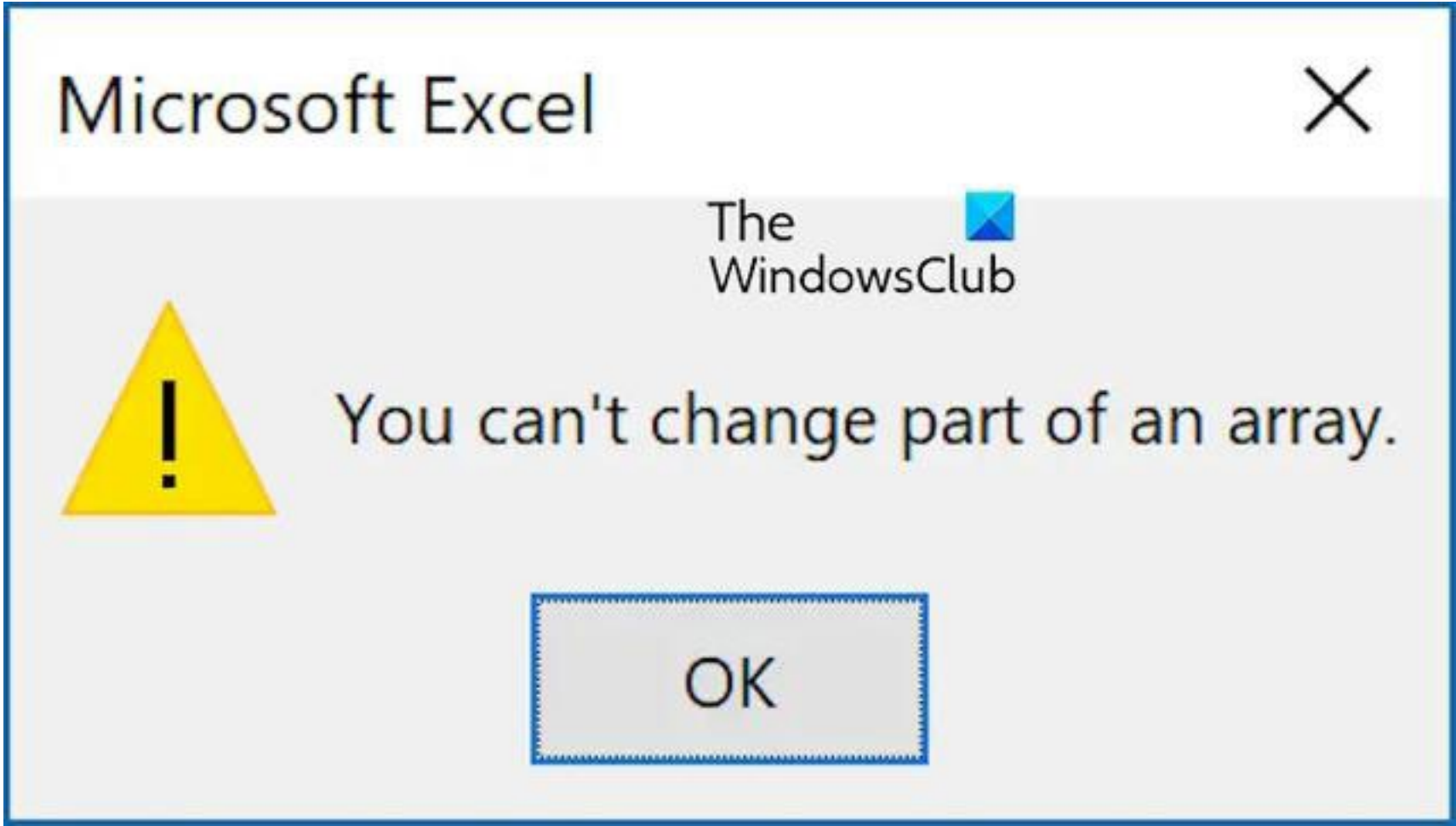
When system language reveals its controlling nature through errors, delays, or rejections, can users interrupt and poetically rewrite it—constructing a human-centered, affective language?

My response--

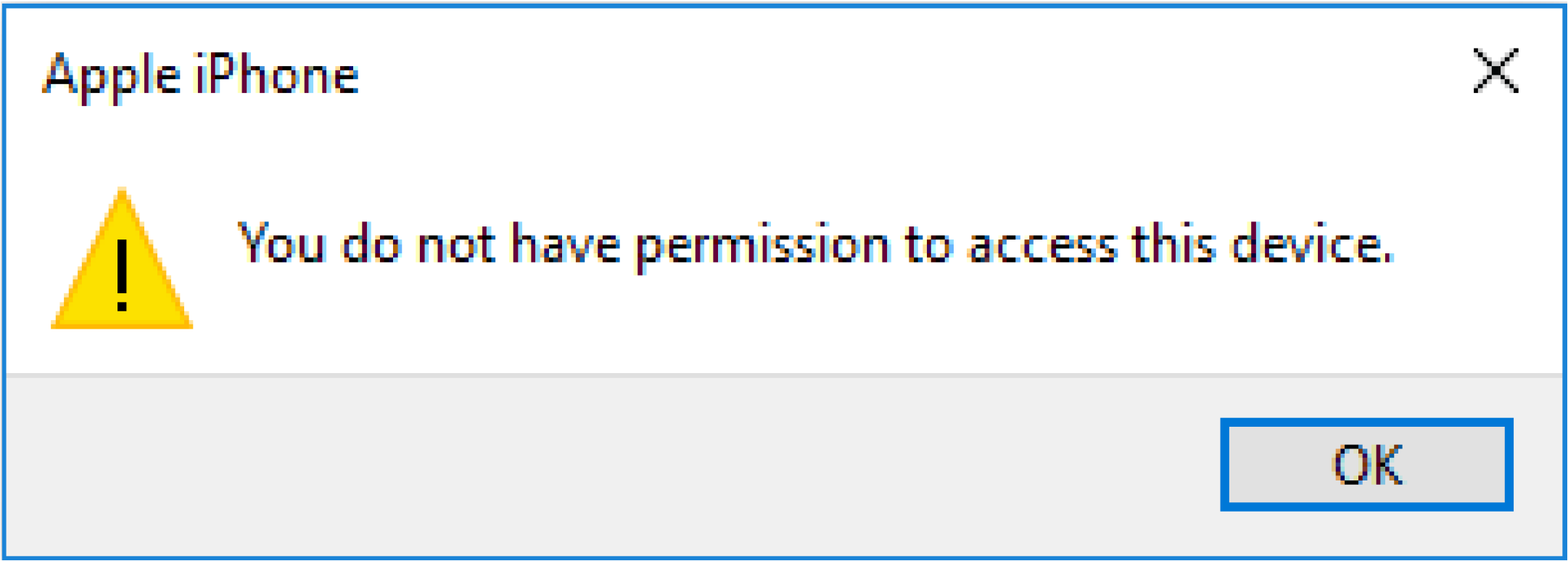
I wanted to break down error messages, rewrites them with imagery, and translates them into poetic expressions.

Intention: challenges the controlling nature of system language and explores whether users can create a human-led, emotionally expressive way of speaking back.

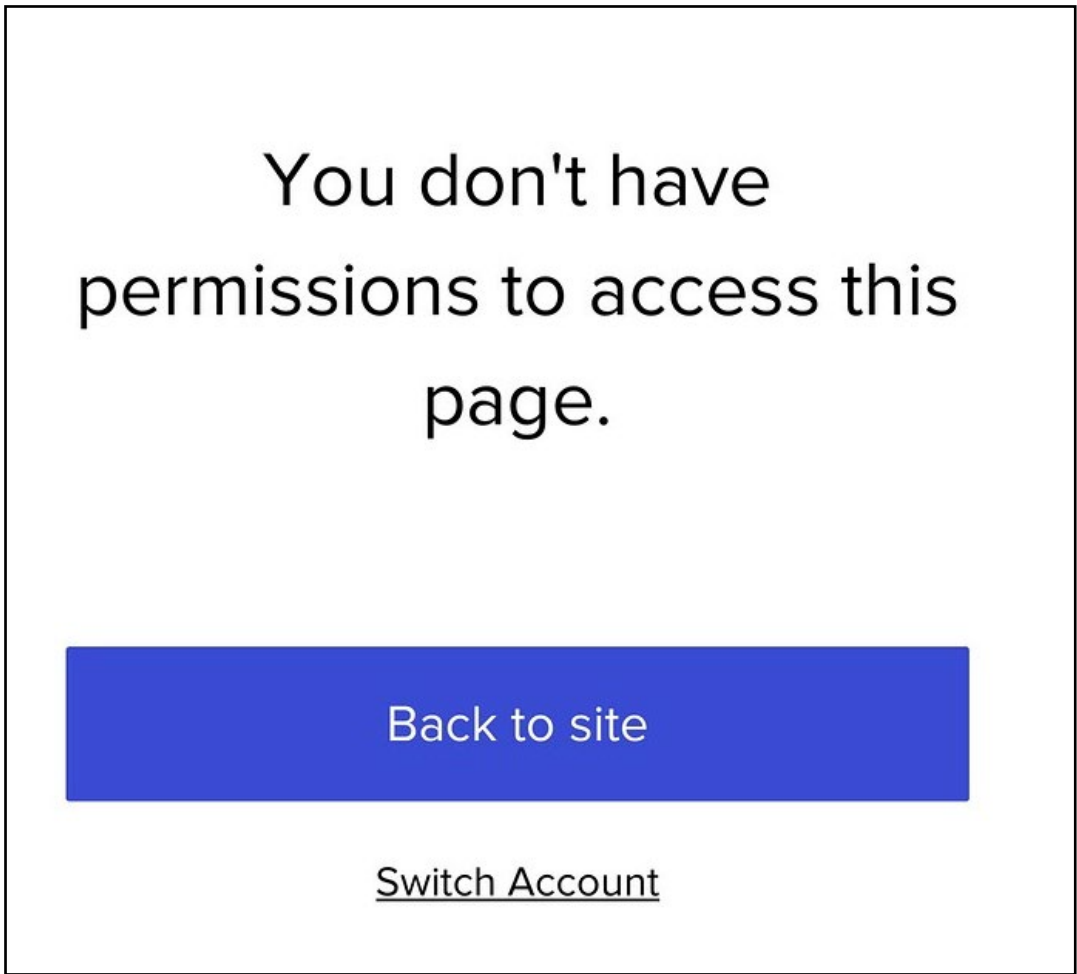
01 Collect system languages and classify them--“Rejection”type



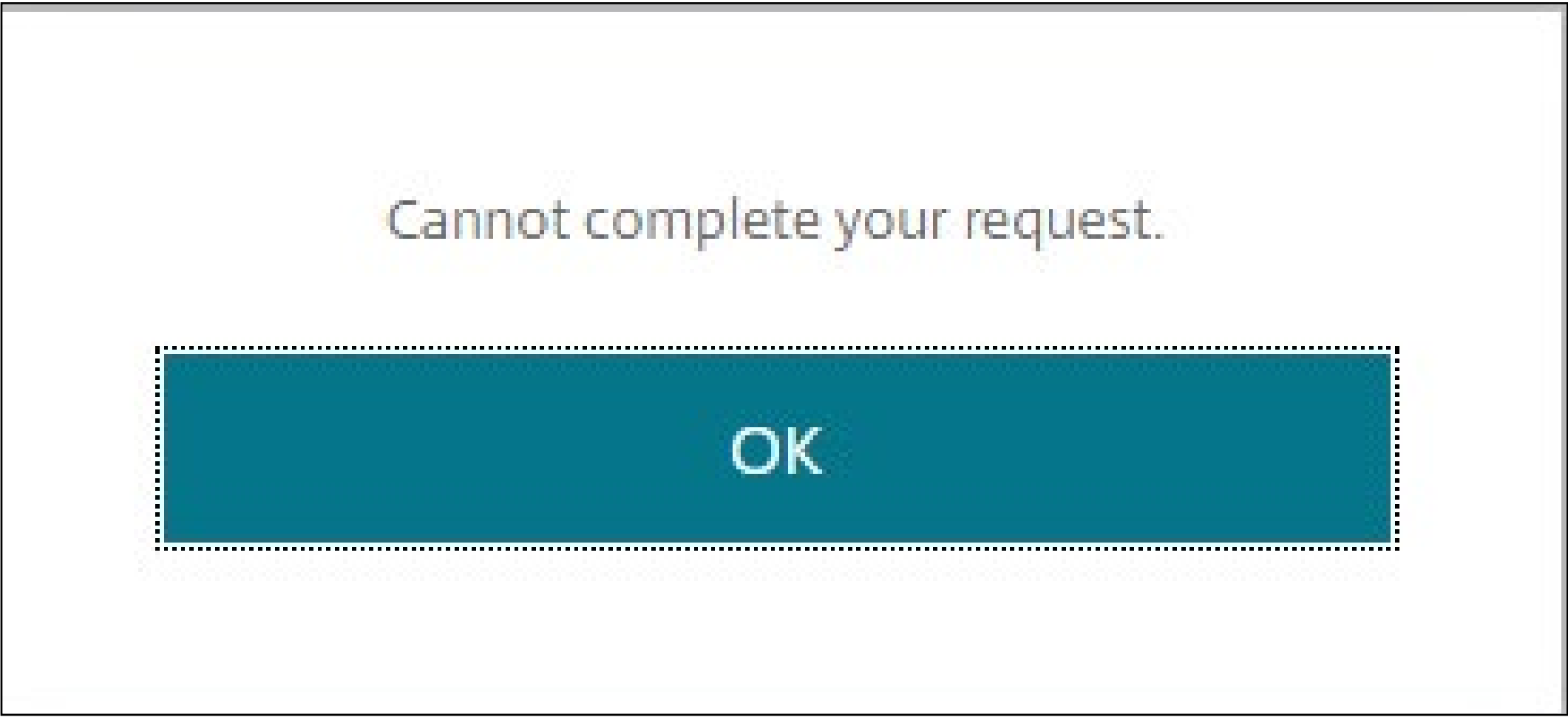
“You can't change part of an array.”



“You do not have permission to access this device .”

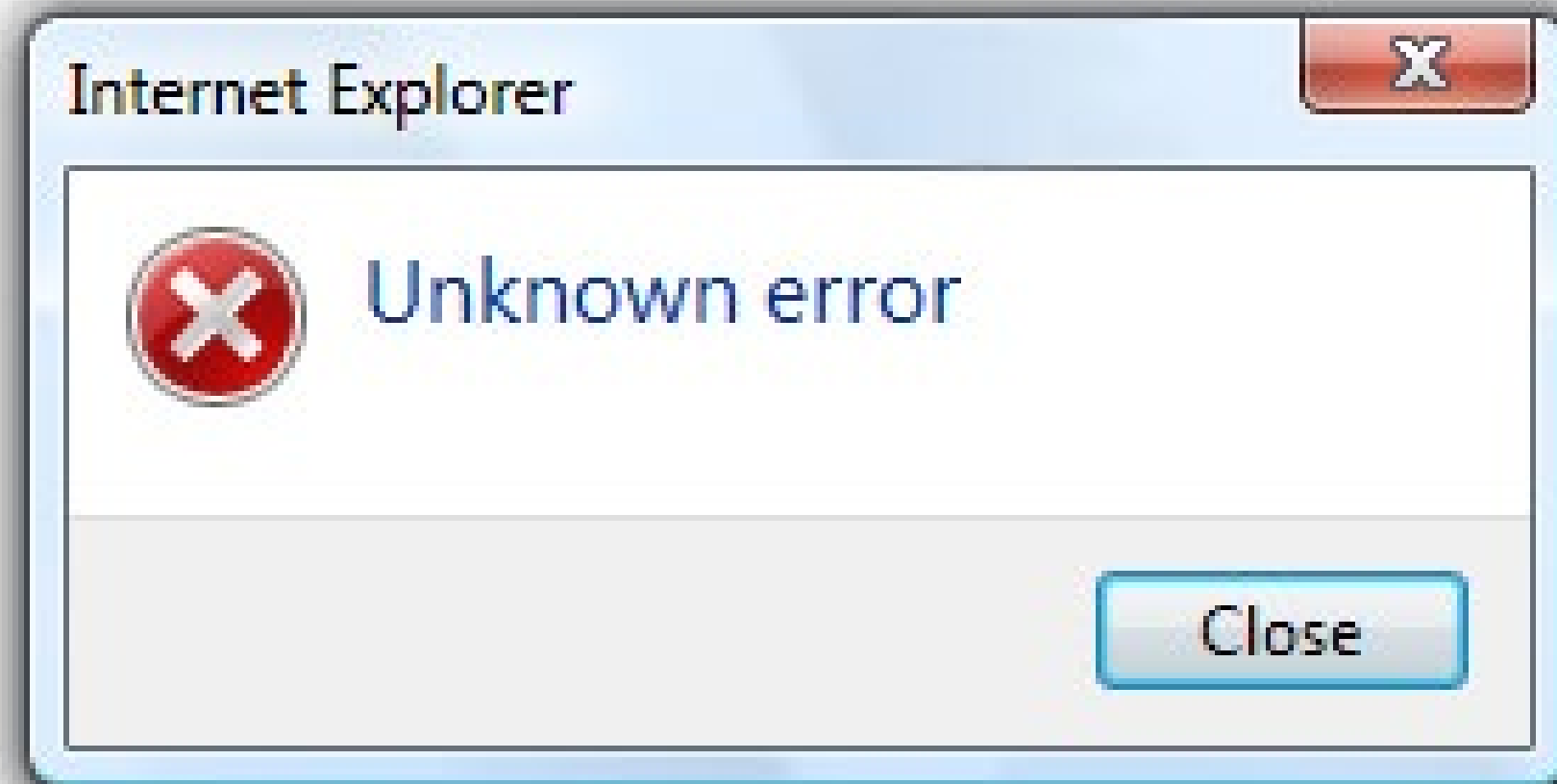


“You don't have permissions to access this page .”

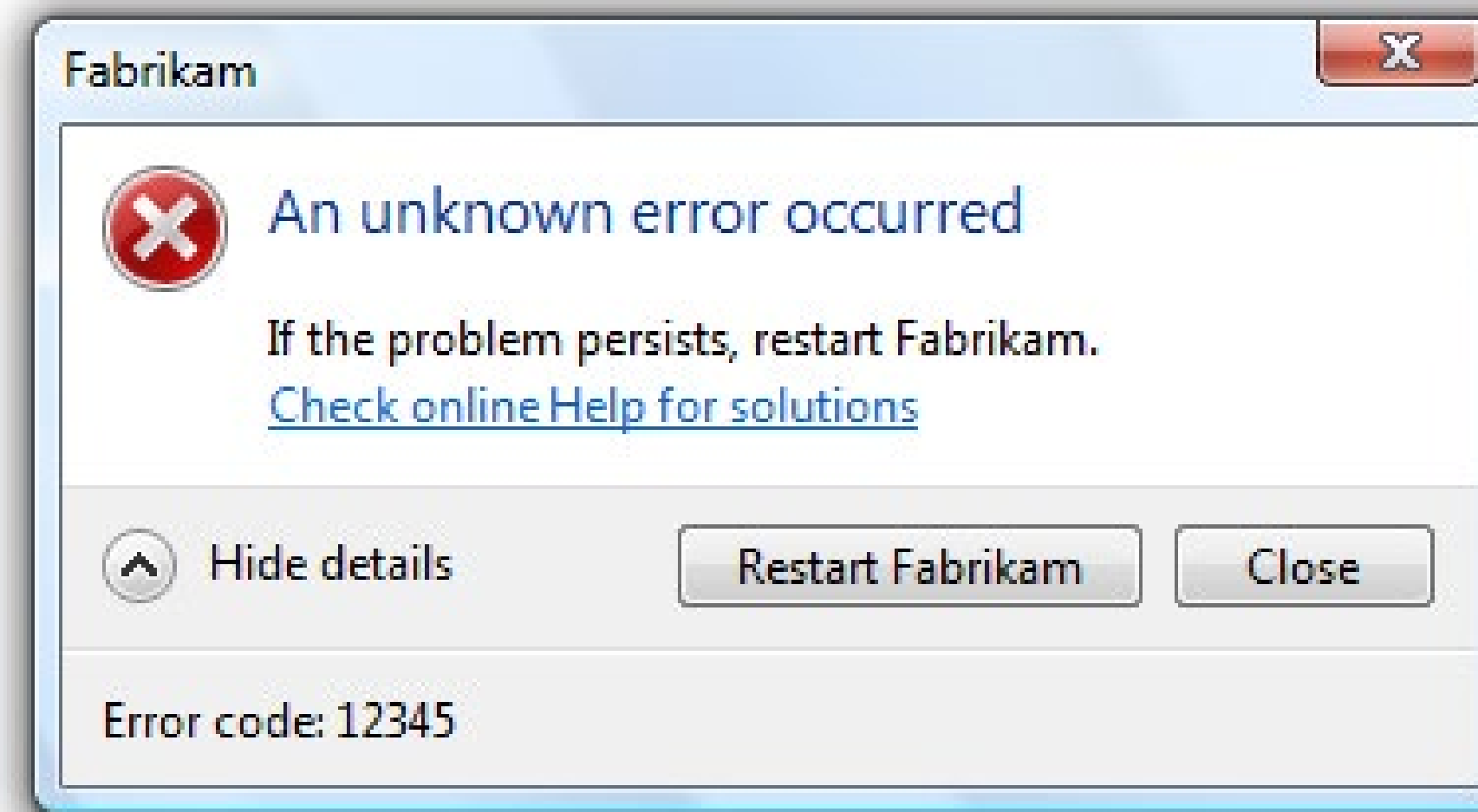


“cannot complete your request .”

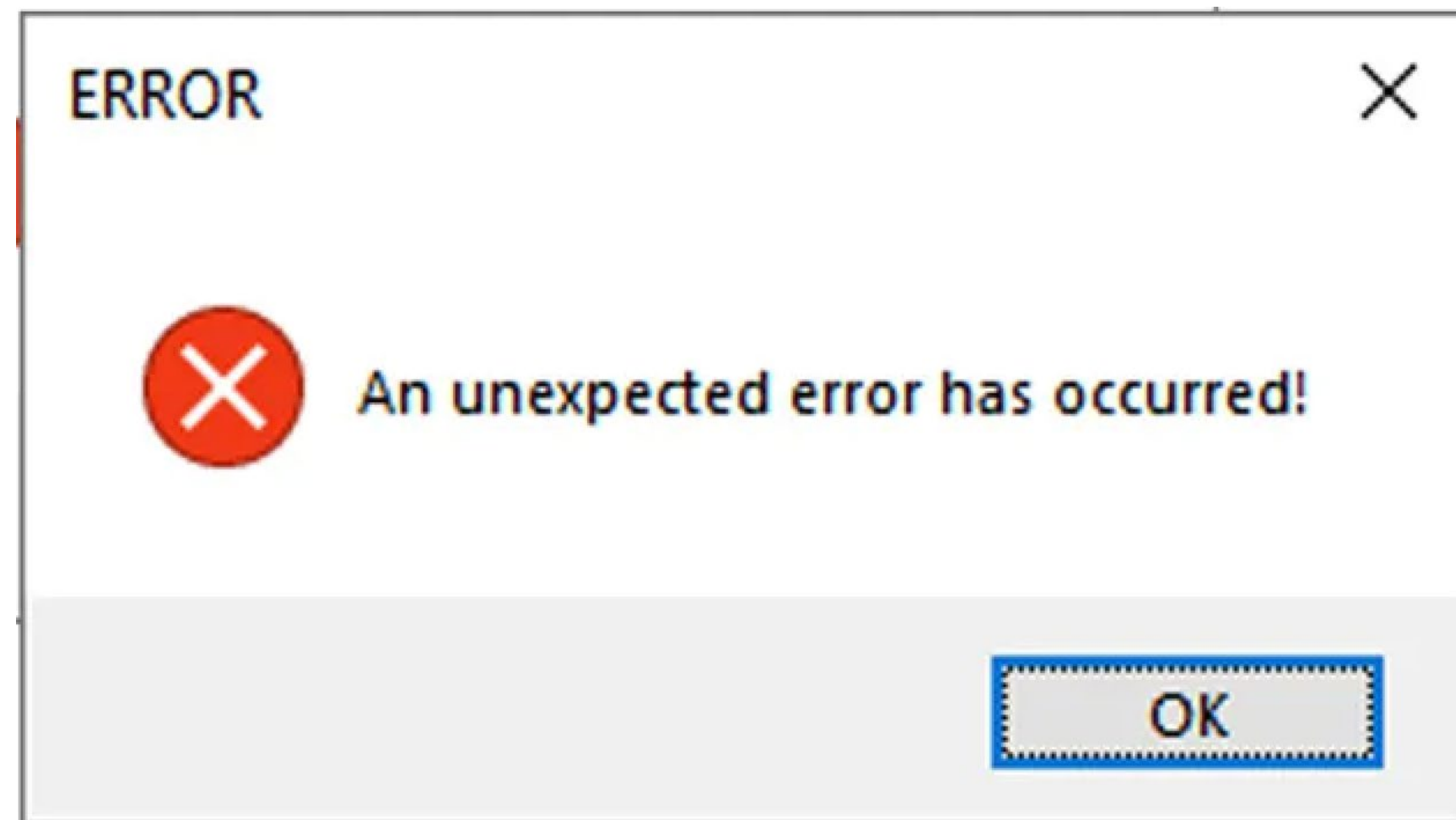
01 Collect system languages and classify them--“Fuzzy”type



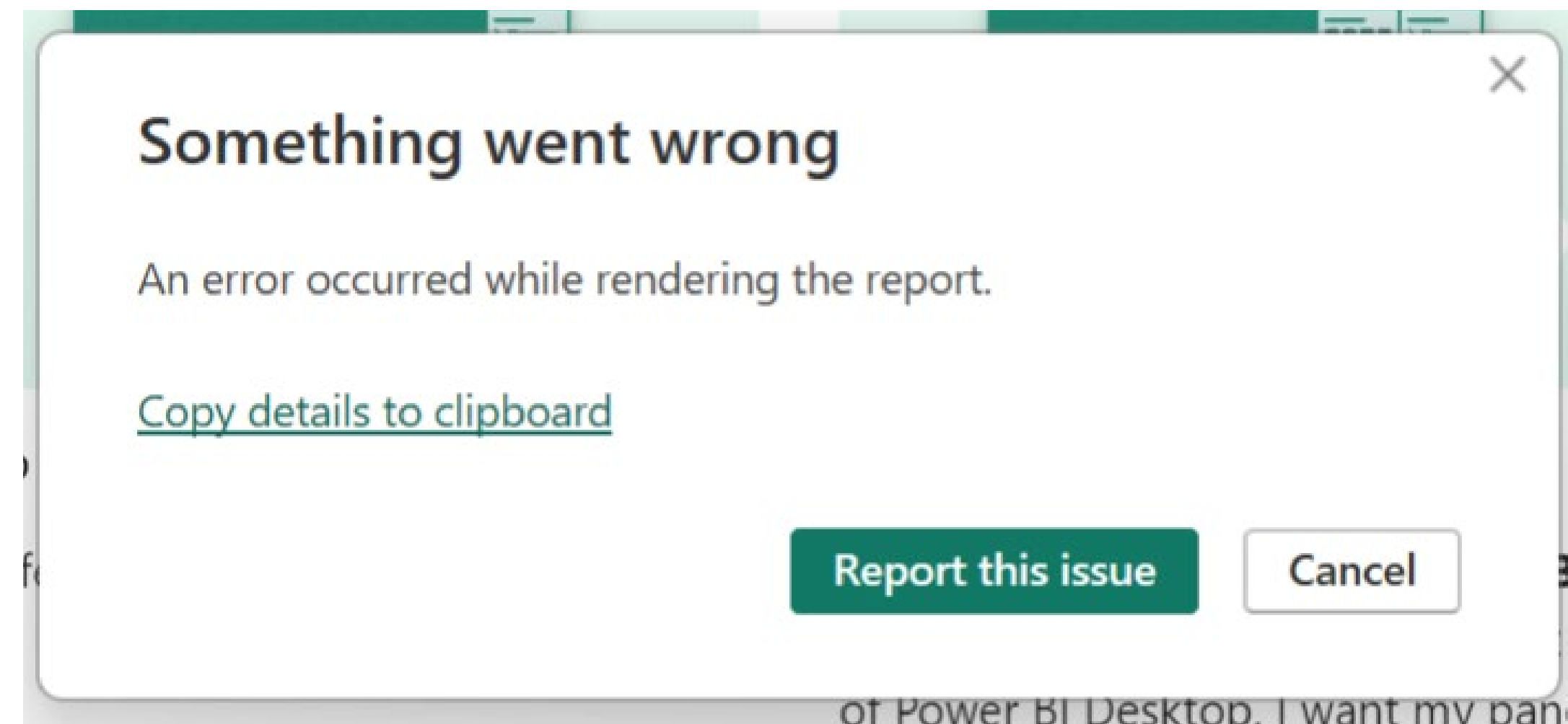
“Unknown error.”



“An unknown error occurred.”

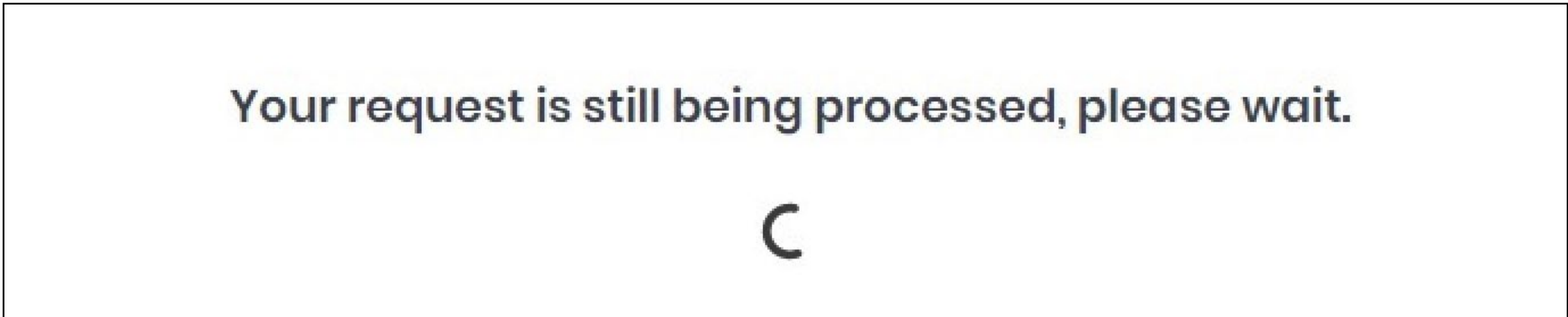


“An unexpected error has occurred!”

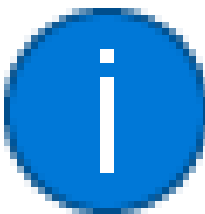


“Something went wrong.”

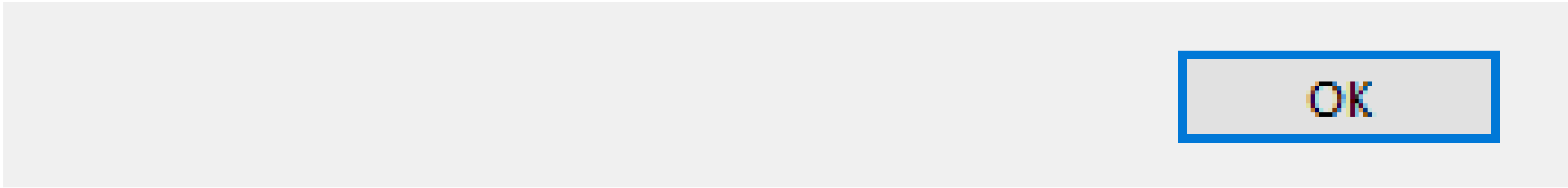
01 Collect system languages and classify them--“Command”type



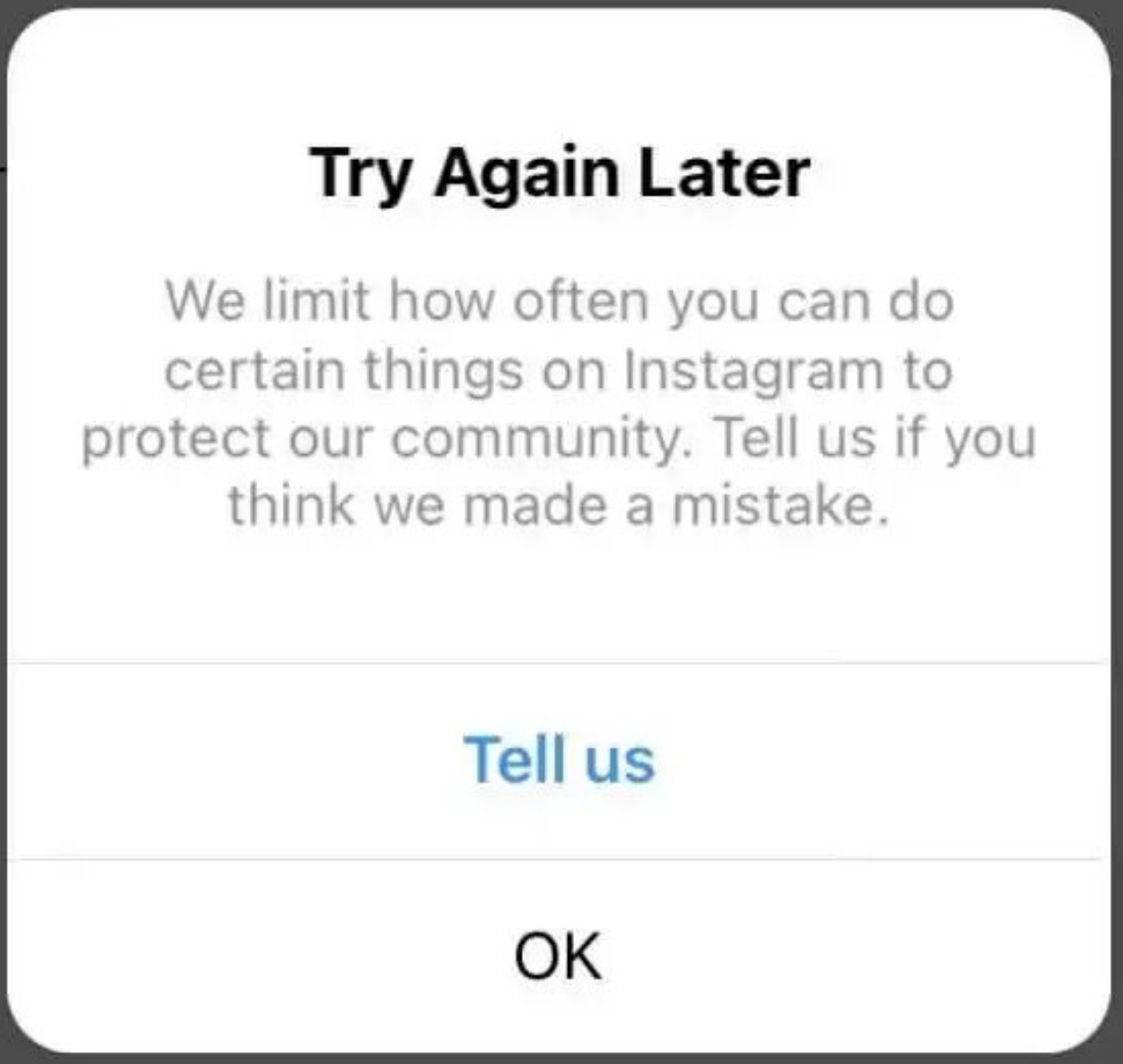
“XXX, please wait.”



Please wait for the task to complete before closing.

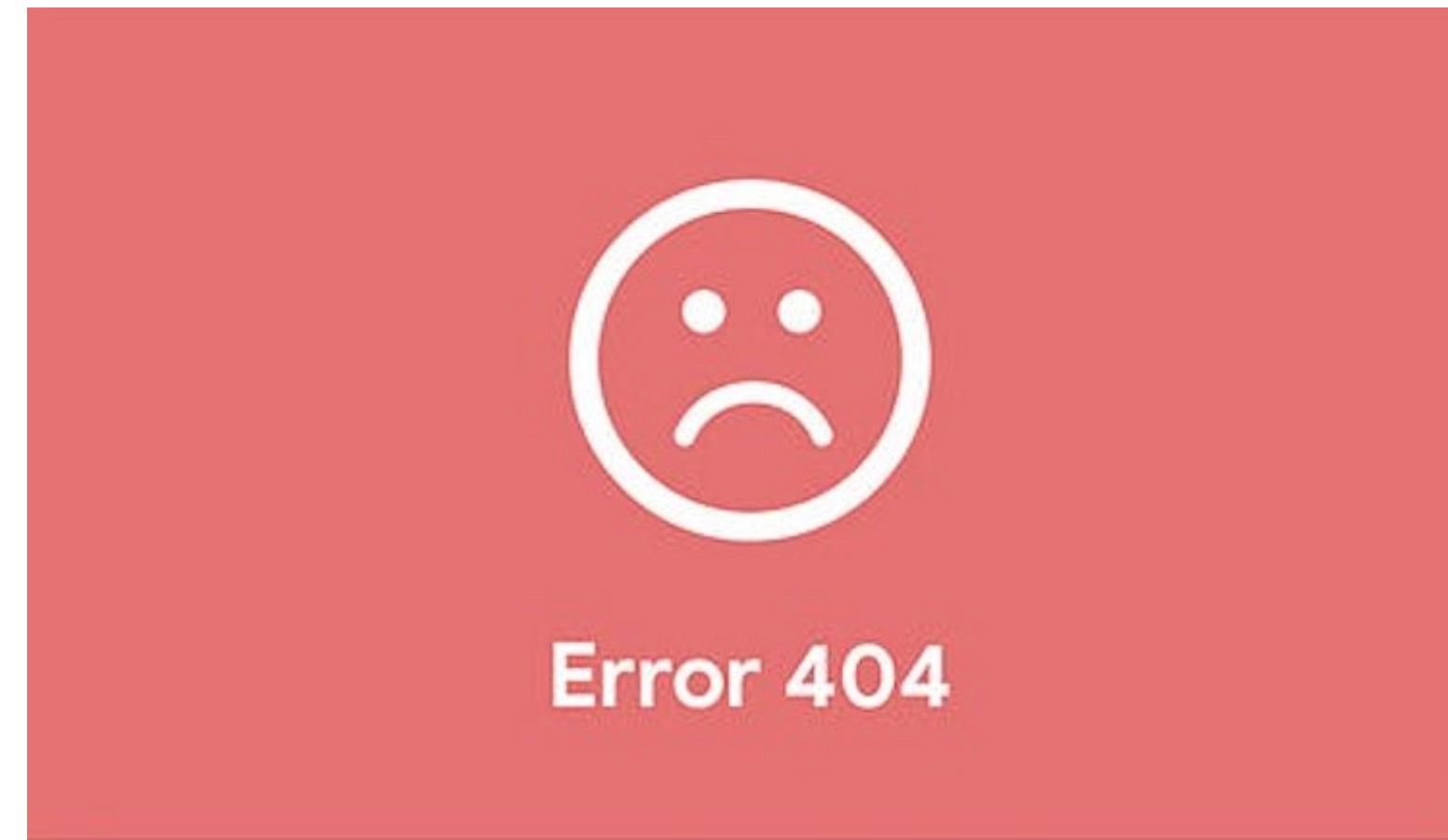
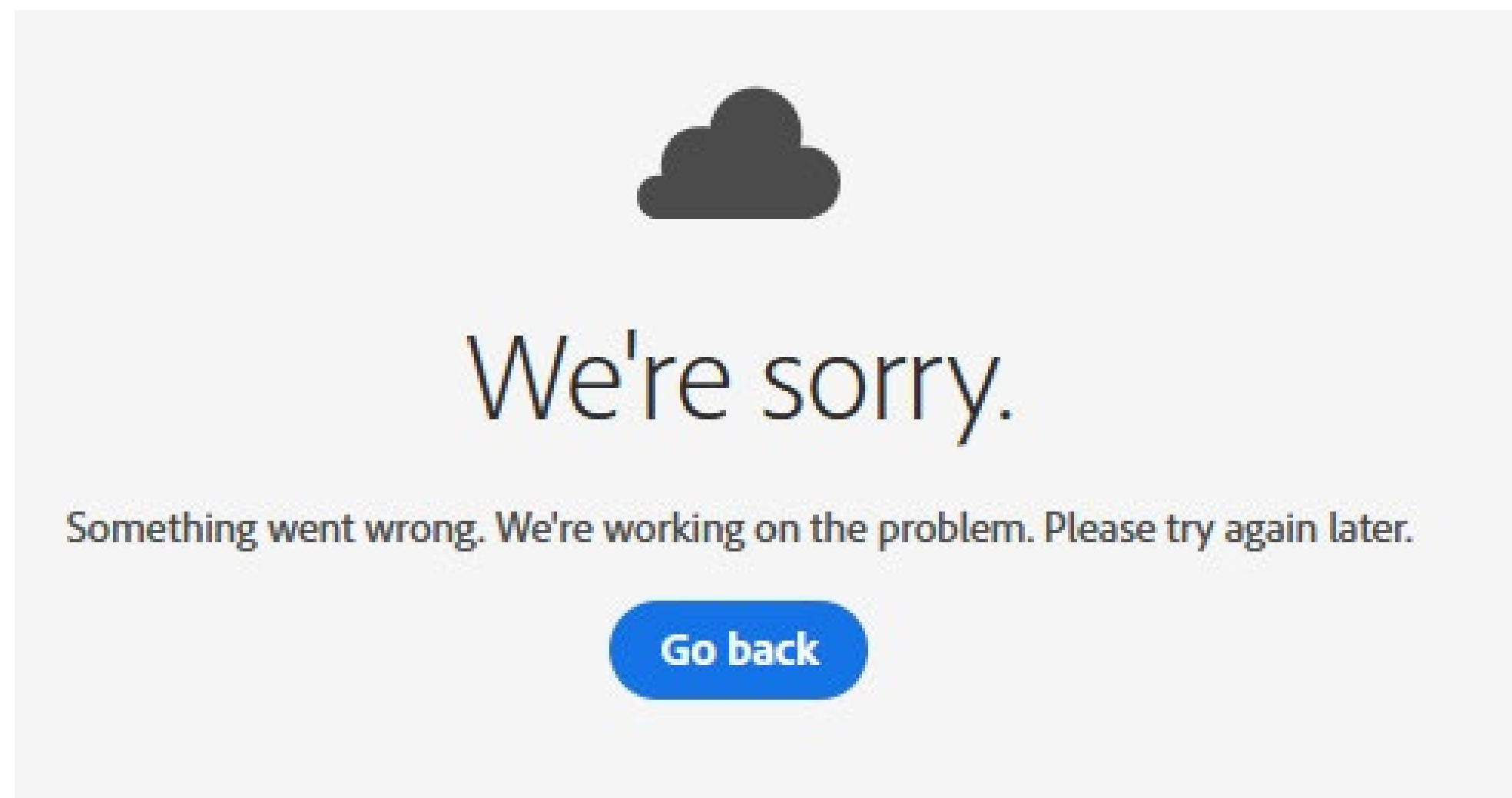
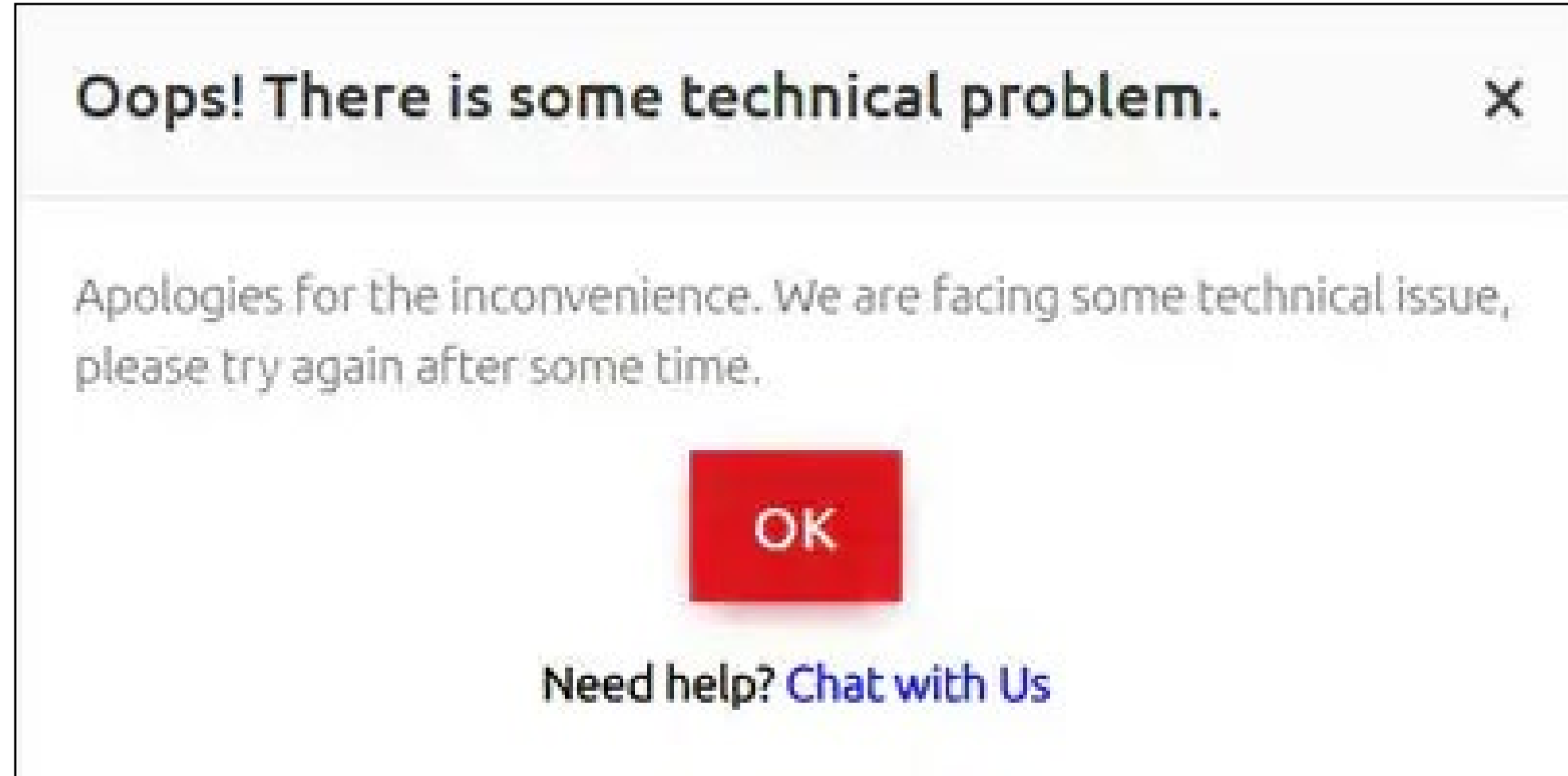


“Please wait for the task to complete before closing.”

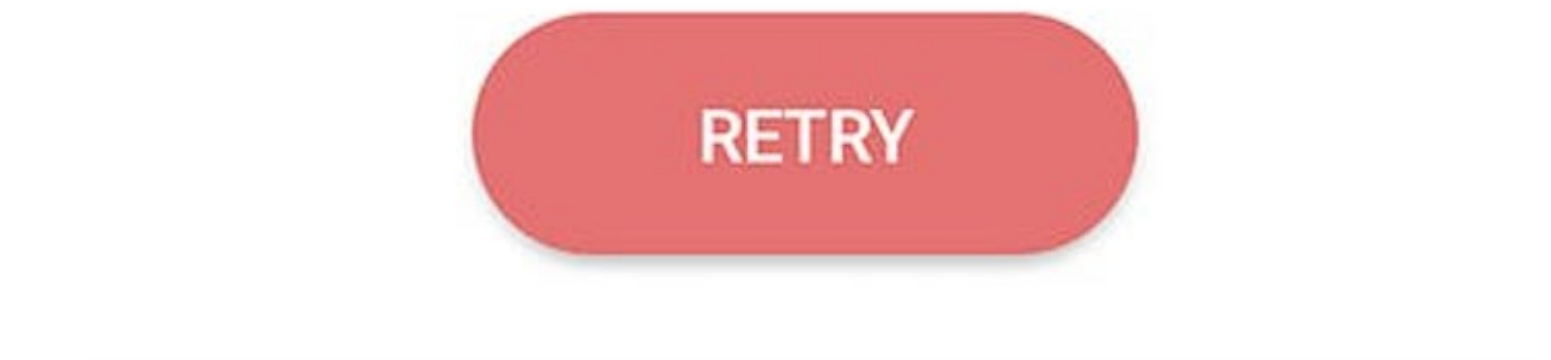


“Try again later.”

01 Collect system languages and classify them--“Emotion”type



Operation could be completed
(WD GeneralErrorNetwork404)



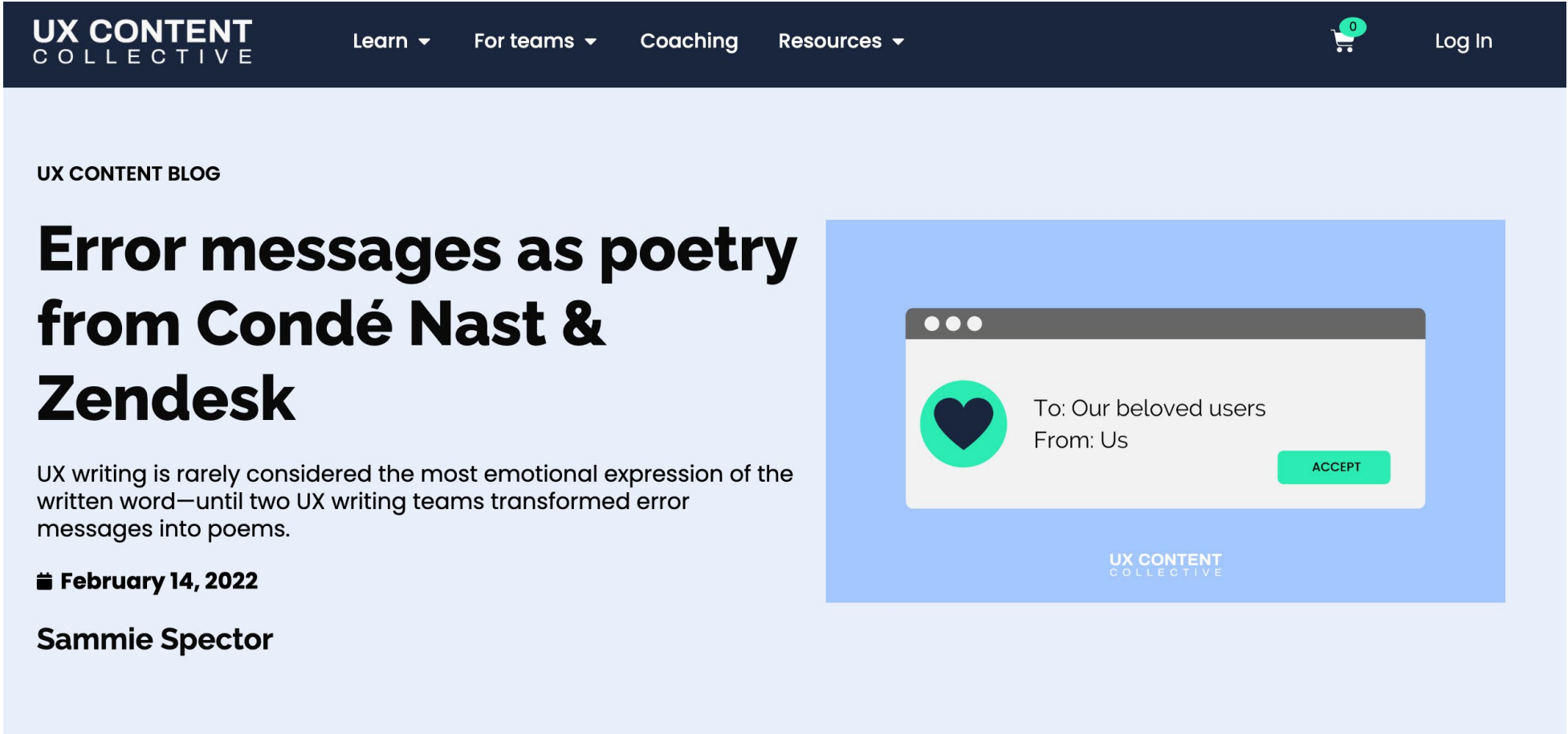
02 Breaking Down and Analyzing System Messages

- “You can't change part of an array.”
- “You do not have permission to access this device .”
- “You don't have permissions to access this page .”
- “(system) cannot complete your request .”

[who/subject]	you/system
[what /action]	can't/don't/change/access/permission/complete
[for what/object]	array/device/page/request

Reference

Error Messages as Poetry

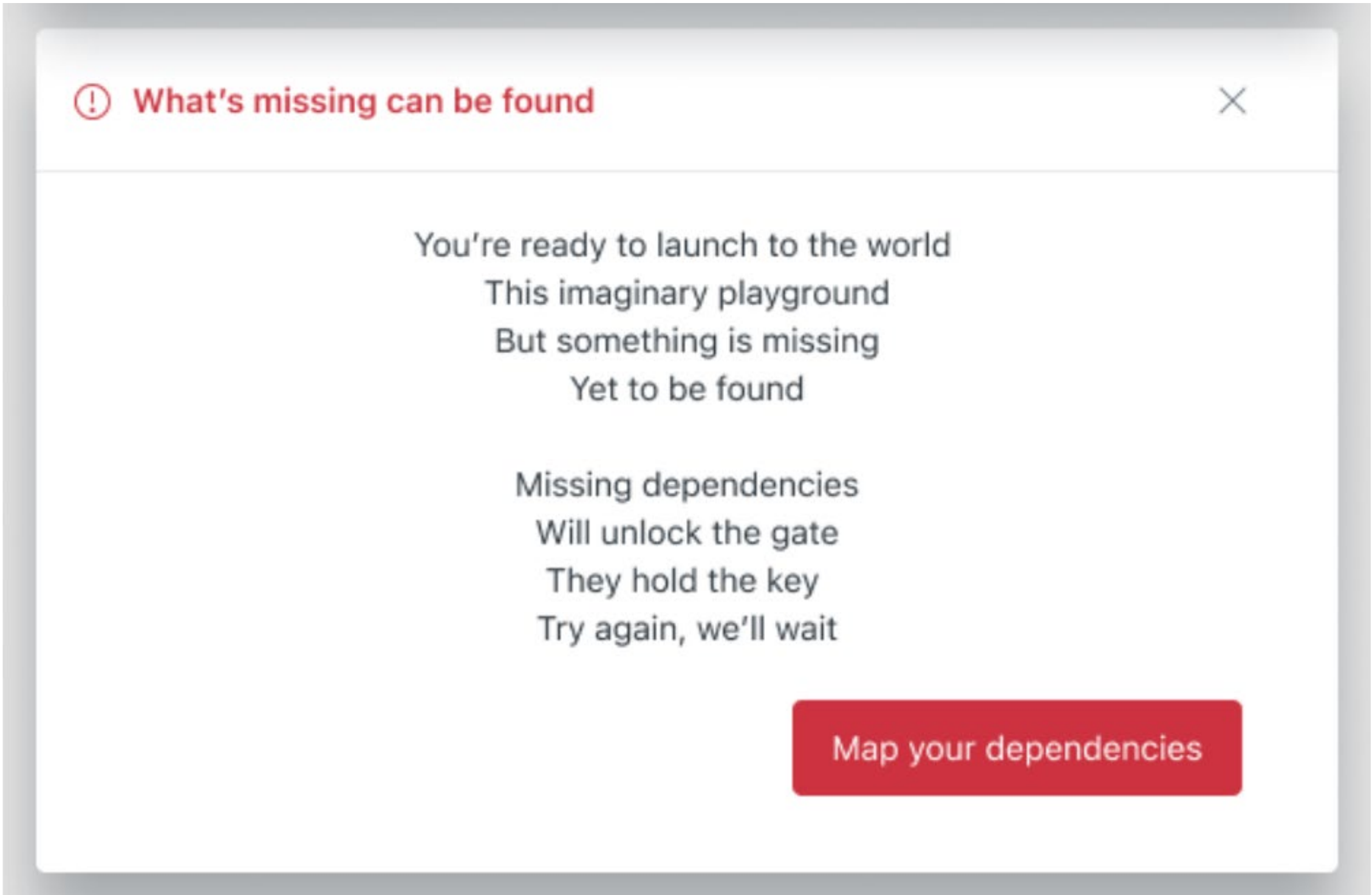
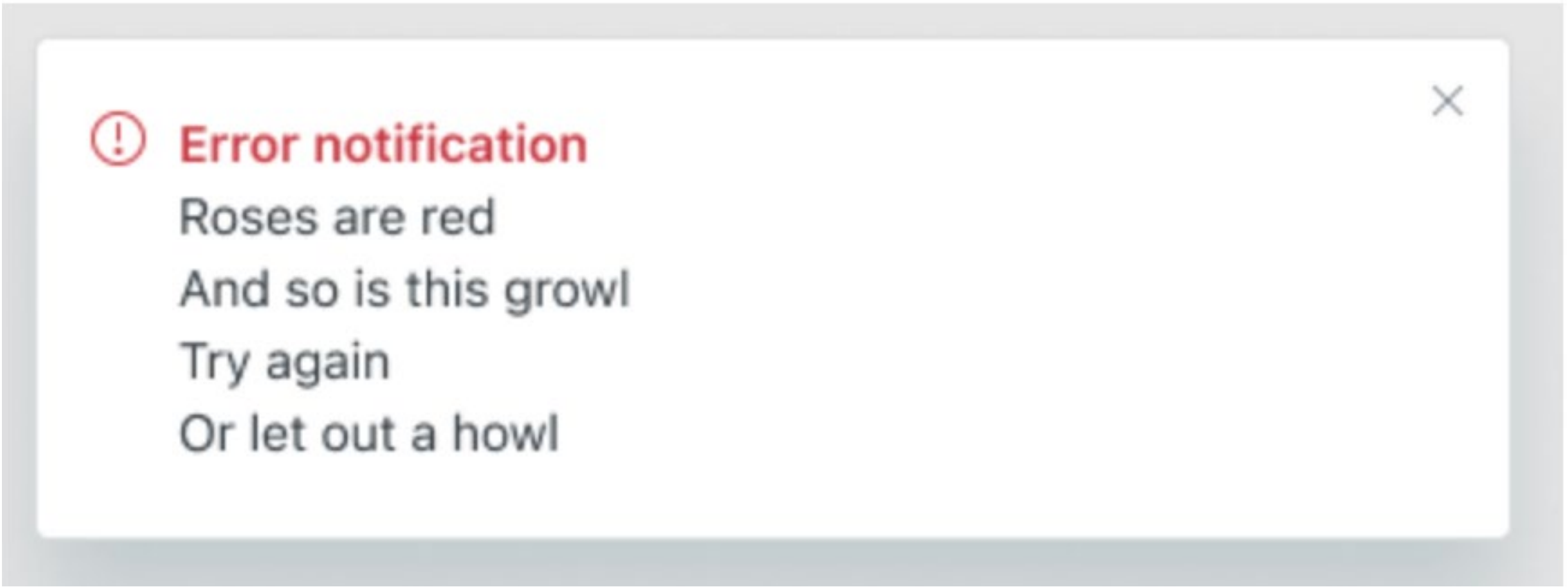


Introduction :

This was an experimental collaboration by a UX content team, in which they reimagined product error messages as short, emotional, and poetic expressions.

Thought:

This practice inspired my idea of a “System-to-Poetic Language Toolkit” and offered creative reference points for building my own vocabulary set, poetic rules, and modular templates.



03 Constructing “Poetic Vocabulary Set”

who (subject)	you system	Metaphoric Substitution →	A servant waiting for command/A ghost without voice Invisible hand/Cold-faced monitor
what happens (action)	change access/permission complete	Personification + Kinetic Association →	twist/distort/hover knock/reach/shout click into place/seal
for what (object)	array device page request	Imagistic Concretization →	Grid of locked tiles Metallic skin An unreadable book/gate/door A voice behind the door/A knock unheard/echo
emotion	User Emotional Response		silence/static/powerless/ache/hollow/tremble/shiver/fractured/fragile/echoing/ unheard/emoji

04 Poetic rewrite rules and templates

RULES--

Users can choose one or more rules below to rewrite the original system message with emotion, rhythm, or structure.

Rule A. Image replacement (Replace system words with “poetic” ones from the vocabulary list.)

Example: "permission"——"knock"; "you"——"A servant waiting for command"

Rule B. Rhythm modification (Break, interrupt, or delay the sentence.)

Example: Still. Waiting. Still.

Rule C. Emotional insertion (Add personal emotion)

Example: I waited. And it felt like ash / I felt fragile.

Rule D. Subjective rhetorical question (add subjective questions)

Example: But who decidedes?

04 Poetic rewrite rules and templates

Templates--Users select keywords from the vocabulary list and place them into a structure template to quickly create poetic expressions.

·[who] + [action] + [object] , [emotion]

Original: “You can't change part of an array.”

“A servant waiting for command can't twist Grid of locked tiles, like static”

·[(negative sentence)+action]*3 + why[who] + [action]?

Original: “Can not complete your request .”

“Can't, Can't, Can't , why the cold-faced monitor always have no echo ? ”

·In front of [object], + [who] tried to [action], [emotion]?

Original: “You don't have permissions to access this

“In front of an readable book, a ghost without voice tried to shout, powerless ? ”

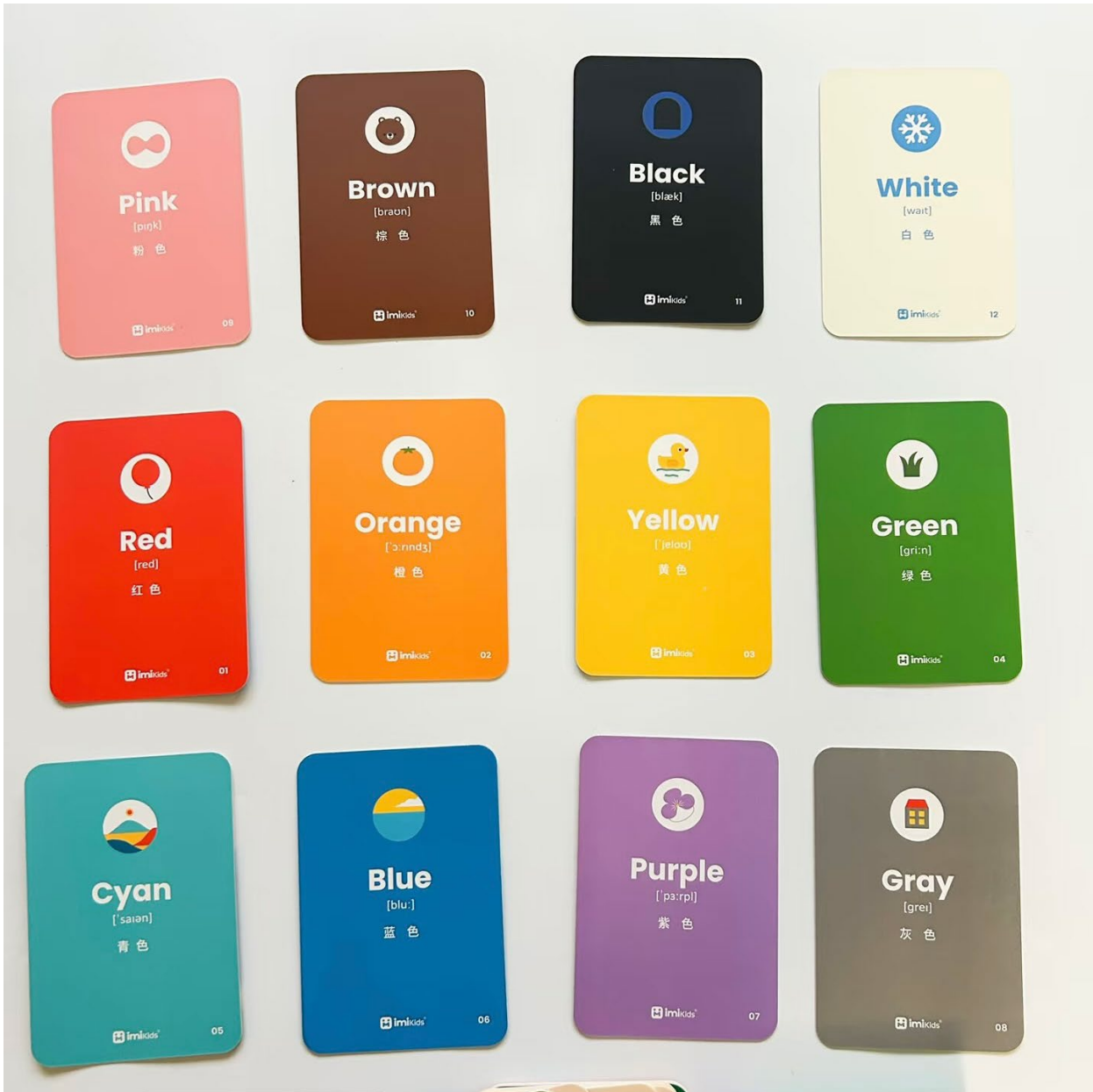
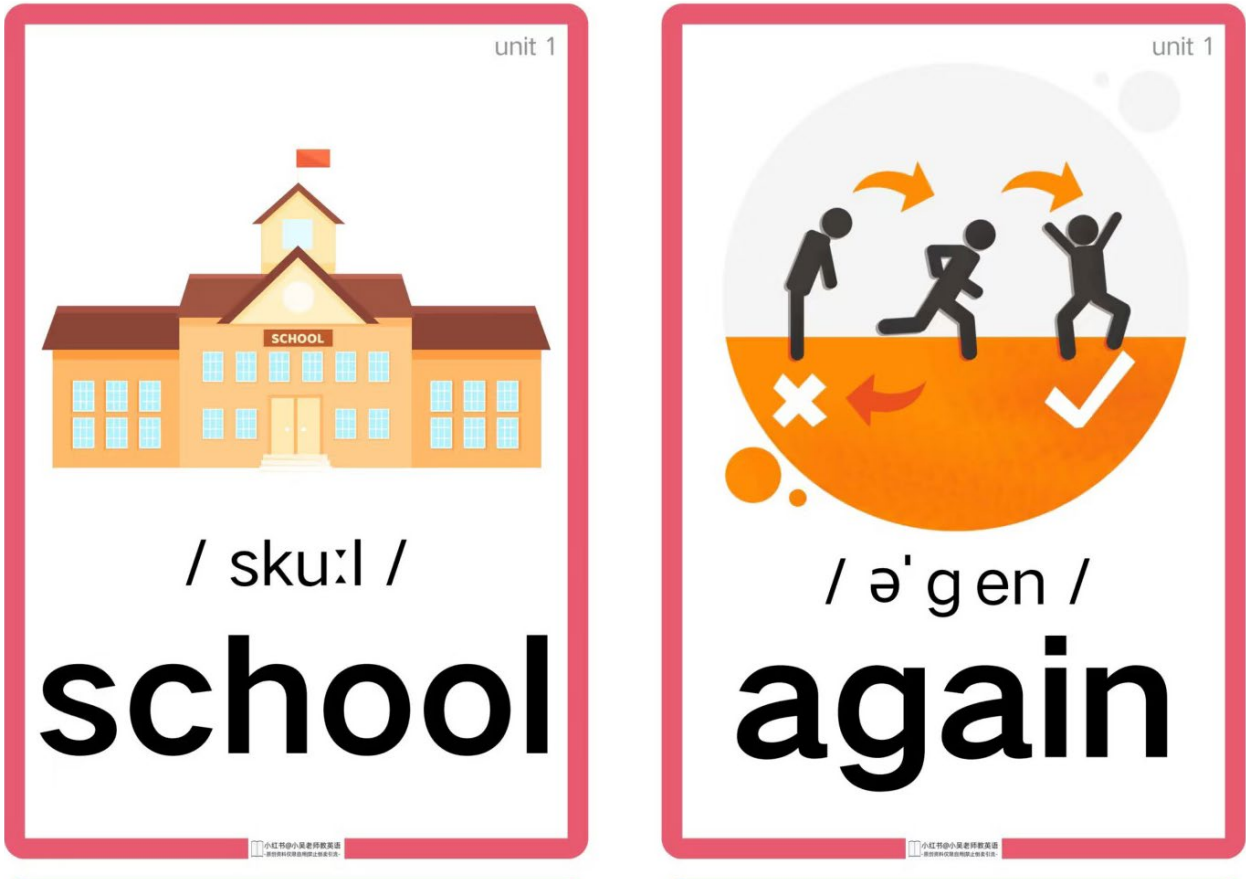
·No [action], No [action], Only [emotion].

Original: “You do not have permission to access this device .”

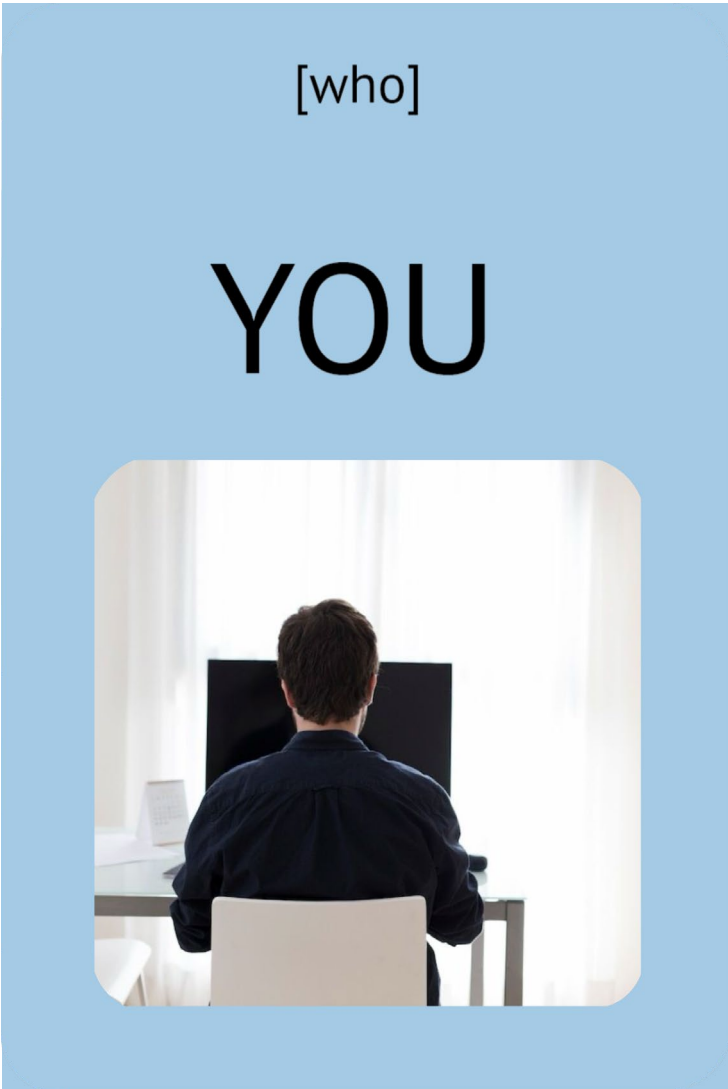
“No knock. No reach ,only ache .”

05 Present--"Word card"

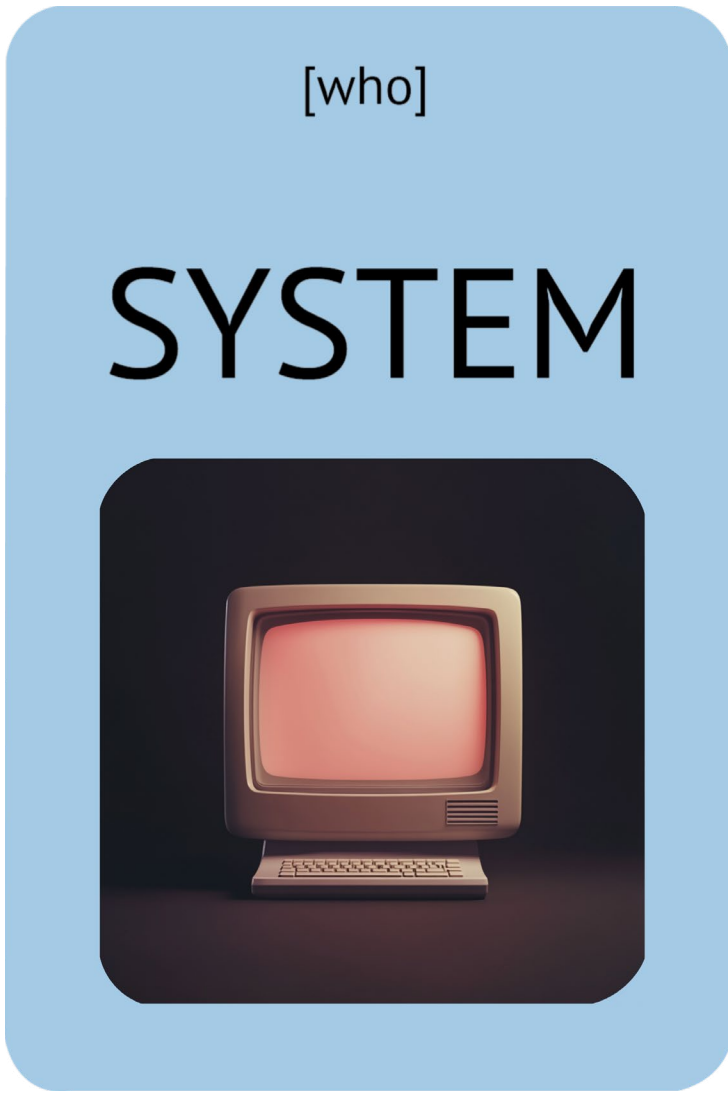
Inspiration



[who]--“Subject card”



flip
→




flip
→



[action]--“Action card”

[action]


CHANGE



Twist

[action]


COMPLETE



Click
into
place

[action]


PERMISSION



Shout

[action]

ACCESS




Knock

[for what]--“Object card”

[for what]


PAGE



Un-
readable
book

[for what]


ARRAY



Metallic
skin

[for what]


REQUEST



A voice
behind
the door

[for what]

DEVICE



Metallic
skin

Poetic Templates 1


[who] + [action] + [object],[emotion]

,

Not

[who]

SYSTEM



[action]

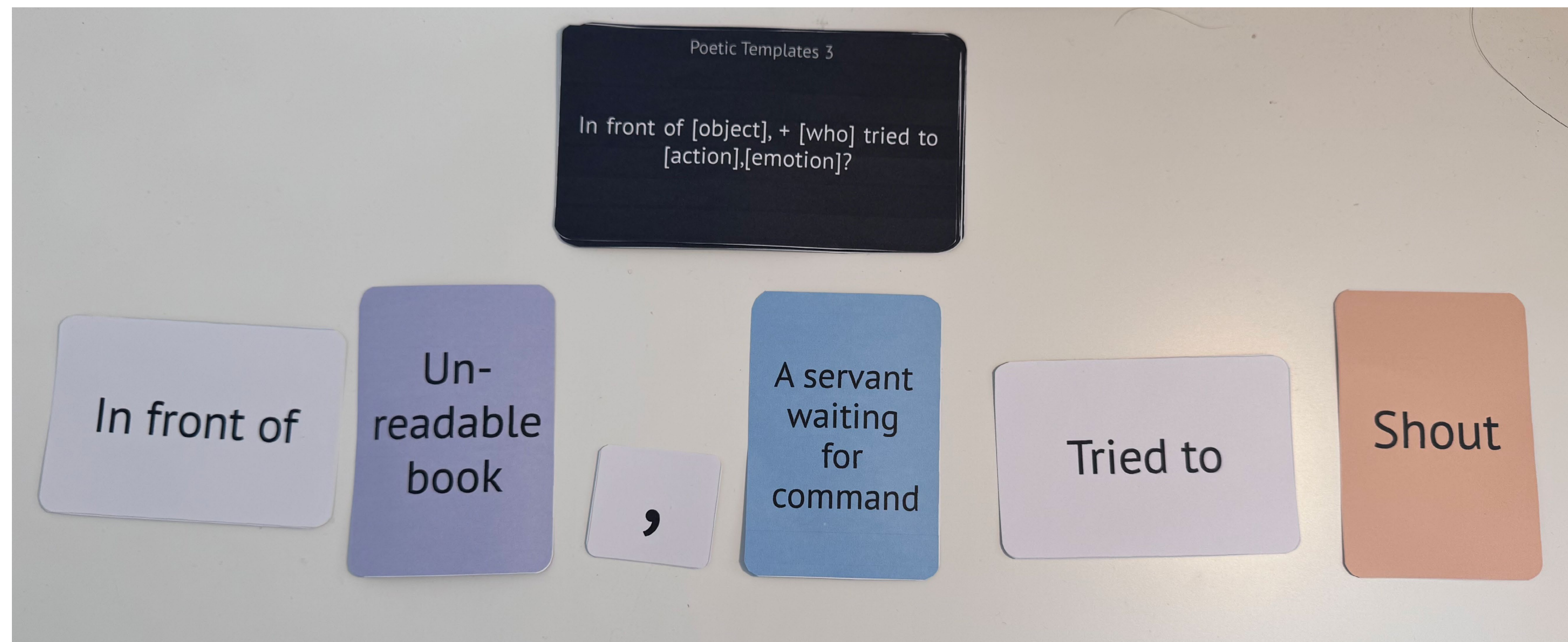
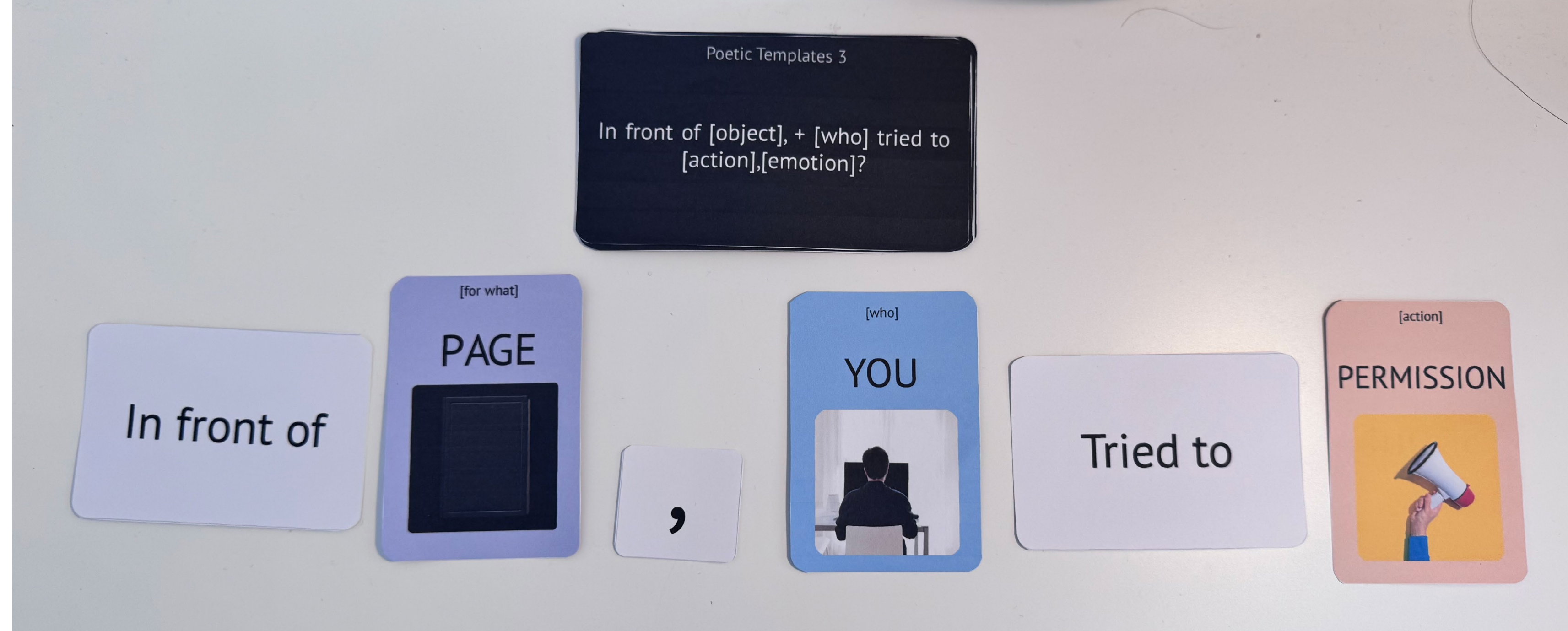
PERMISSION



[for what]

PAGE

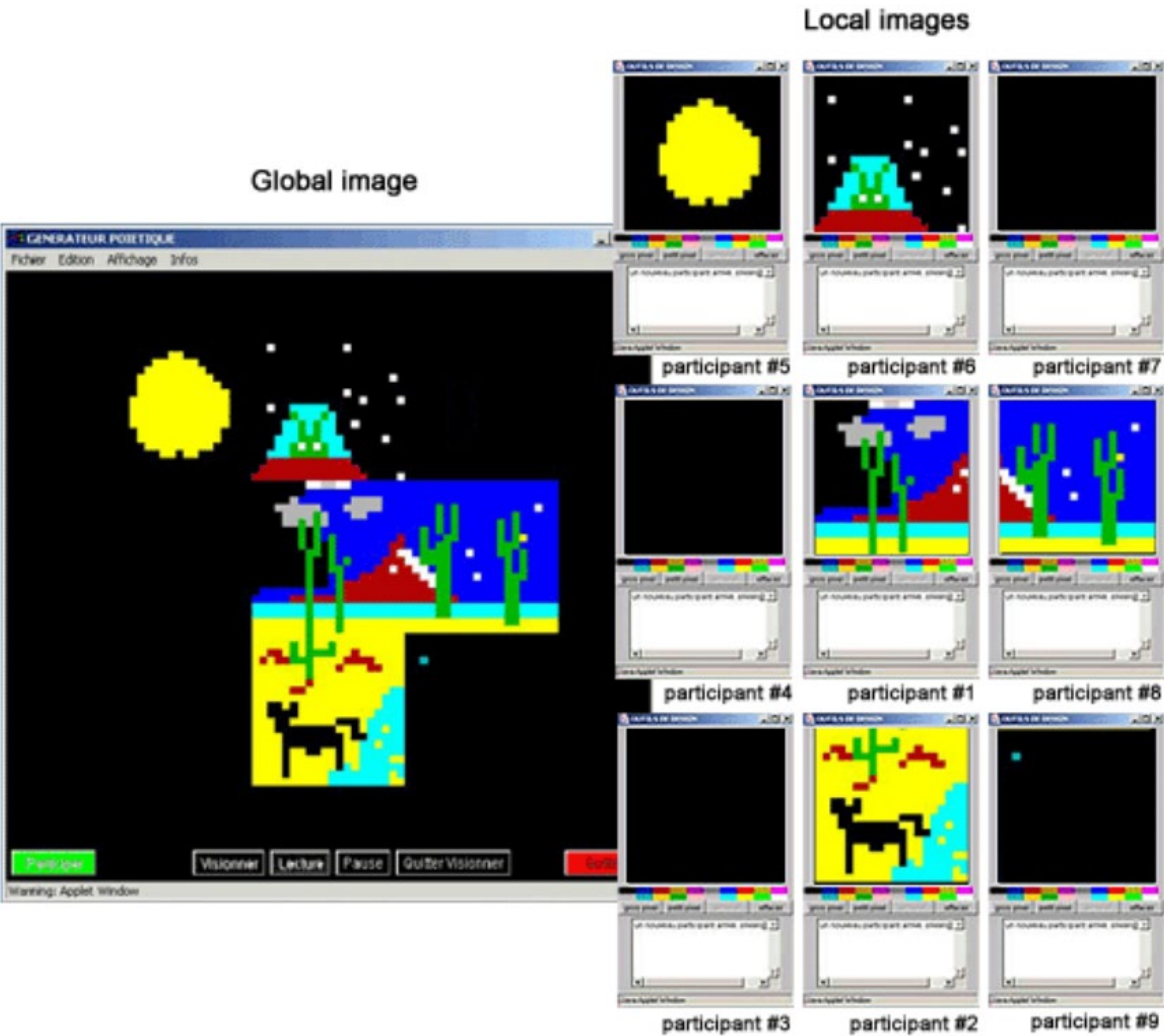
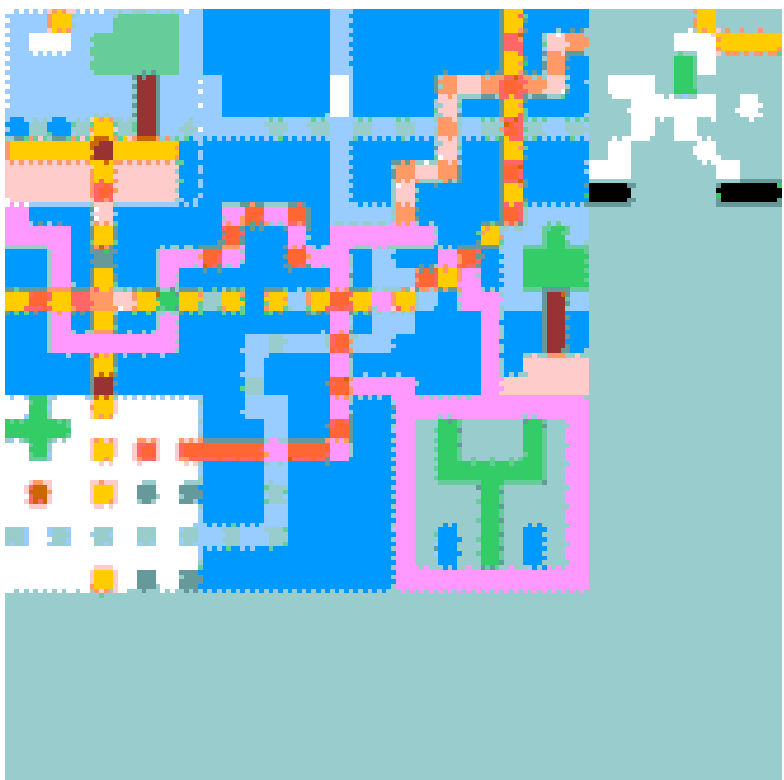




Reflection—Rreference

Poietic Generator – Olivier Auber

Auber, O. (1987–present). Poietic Generator. [online] Available at: <https://poietic-generator.net>



Introduction :

This is a collaborative online drawing experiment where each user controls only one point in a grid, yet together they create evolving visual structures. It shows a decentralized model of meaning-making—language or form doesn't need to follow top-down commands.

Reflection:

Is the structure of my project too rigid?
Is my toolkit still too systematized, limiting the user's true linguistic agency?

[emotion]--“Emotion card”

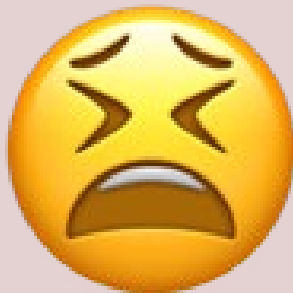
Ache

Unheard

Shiver

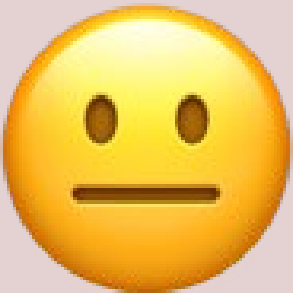
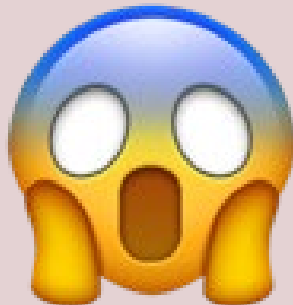
Powerless

Fragile



Silence

Echoing



Don't

Not

Can't

Poetic Templates 1

[who] + [action] + [object],[emotion]

Poetic Templates 3

In front of [object], + [who] tried to
[action],[emotion]?

Poetic Templates 2

[(negative sentence)+action]*3 +
why [who]+[action]?

Poetic Templates 4

No [action], No [action],
Only [emotion].