

# THE USE OF R.A.P. PARAPHRASING STRATEGY TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION AT CLASS X.A3 IN SMKN 2 SINGARAJA IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2013/2014

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## Abstrak

Penelitian ini dapat dikategorikan sebagai sebuah penelitian tindakan kelas yang dilaksanakan dengan tujuan meningkatkan kemampuan membaca siswa-siswi Kelas X.A3 di SMKN 2 Singaraja pada tahun ajaran 2013/2014 melalui penerapan *R.A.P Paraphrasing Strategy*. Terdapat dua siklus yang dilaksanakan pada penelitian ini, yang mana masing – masing terdiri dari empat aktivitas utama yakni perencanaan, tindakan, observasi, dan refleksi. Dalam proses pengumpulan data, terdapat 3 jenis instrumen yang digunakan antara lain catatan harian peneliti, kuisisioner, serta materi tes. Kemudian, data yang telah diperoleh dianalisa secara kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Data pada *pre-test* dan *post-test* dianalisa secara kuantitatif, sementara data yang diperoleh dalam kuisisioner dan catatan harian peneliti dianalisa secara kualitatif. Berdasarkan hasil yang diperoleh dalam penelitian ini, ditemukan bahwa kemampuan membaca siswa – siswi Kelas X.A3 telah meningkat secara signifikan. Hasil *pre-test* menunjukkan bahwa dari 35 siswa secara keseluruhan, hanya 14.29% siswa saja yang lulus dan mampu melewati batas nilai minimal. Namun, dalam *post-test I*, jumlah siswa yang lulus meningkat menjadi 71.43% siswa, kemudian dalam *post-test II*, jumlah siswa yang sukses melampaui batas nilai minimal meningkat secara signifikan menjadi 85.71% siswa. Disamping itu, keberhasilan penelitian ini juga didasarkan pada hasil yang diperoleh melalui kuisisioner serta *researcher's diary* yang menunjukkan respon – respon positif siswa terhadap penerapan *R.A.P. Paraphrasing Strategy* dalam aktivitas membaca mereka.

**Kata kunci:** reading comprehension, R.A.P. paraphrasing strategy, English subject in vocational school

## Abstract

The study was categorized as classroom action research which was done for the purpose of improving the students' reading comprehension at Class X.A3 in SMKN 2 Singaraja in academic year 2013/2014 through the implementation of R.A.P Paraphrasing strategy. The study was done in two cycles where each cycle consisted of four main activities; planning, action, observation and reflection. To collect the data, there were three kinds of instrument used namely researcher's diary, questionnaire, and tests. Furthermore, the data obtained in this study were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The data gained in pre-test and post-tests were analyzed quantitatively, while the data from researcher's diary and questionnaire were analyzed qualitatively. Based on the results of this study, it was found that the students' reading comprehension at Class X.A3 in SMKN 2 Singaraja had improved significantly. It was indicated by the result of students' tests on which in pre-test, from 35 students in total, there were only 14.29% students passing the school passing grade. But in post-test I, the number

increased into 71.43% students, and finally in post-test II, the criteria of success had been reached as 85.71% students could successfully pass the standard passing score. In addition, the success of the study was also based on the results of the questionnaire as well as the researcher's diary which showed the students' positive attitudes toward the implementation of the R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy in their reading activities.

**Keywords** : reading comprehension, R.A.P. paraphrasing strategy, English subject in vocational school

## INTRODUCTION

In English language teaching and learning, there are four basic language skills that should be comprehended by the students. These language skills include listening, writing, reading, and speaking. Speaking and writing are categorized as productive skills, while reading and listening belong to receptive skills. In order to have good language communication skill (spoken and written), a language learner should be able to have proper knowledge and ability to use those four language skills in appropriate and accurate manner.

Among the four language skills, reading can be considered as one of the skills that has a significant connection to the other language skills especially writing and speaking. Reading can lead to the basic reference for one's writing product, and on the other hand, reading can also contribute to one's speaking skill, since the ability to speak in a proper way is also based on ideas, insight, and information that can be found in a reading activity. However, as often found in common teaching and learning activities, does reading simply expect the language learners or the students to be able to read a text and answered particular questions following it?

According to Pressley (2000), reading is viewed as a hierarchy of skills which represents the process from the level of individual letters into their associated sounds and then to the aspect of word recognition and continued to construction of meaning of text. This expects the students particularly to have good comprehension among all of those processes, starting from

words recognition, the understanding of sentences in paragraphs as well as the understanding of longer text levels. Based on what has been proposed by Pressley (2000), teacher should consider that reading comprehension takes a big role to the students' mastery of a language. In this case as the students have internalized such a good reading comprehension, then it will ease them to understand particularly a kind of written learning materials, where at the same time this competency is helpful for the students' learning development on the other language skills.

If we compare to the productive skills like writing and speaking, reading as a receptive skill in language learning may contain different perspectives and expectations from the aspect of students. In classroom teaching and learning activities, reading is not merely about the activity to read a text or a passage with a good fluency, but it is more on the comprehension and the construction of meaning to get what a text actually communicates to the reader (Pearson, 2004). Therefore, it should be realized that reading activity at the same time expects the students to have the ability to locate the information, either general or specific information from a text as the references to ease them in understanding the text itself.

When talking about the expected competency that students should achieve in reading activities, here, as specified in the basic competencies of reading in the Curriculum 2013, the students are expected to be able to analyze the social function, text structure, as well as the linguistic features of certain genres of text such as

narrative, recount, descriptive, and others. These expected competencies indicate that the students should be able to analyze a text deeper or more than just doing a superficial identification of a text in order to achieve sufficient reading comprehension.

In a distinctive condition, when these expectations cannot be fulfilled, there is the indication that the students are facing a degree of difficulties to grow their reading comprehension. This condition may hinder the students to be independent readers, because when they notice that reading is a difficult task, they tend to show lower involvement on reading activity. As lately observed in teaching and learning process at school, some issues related with students' problem on reading comprehension have arisen.

Previously, the researcher had done a teaching practice at one vocational school in Singaraja regency that is SMKN 2 Singaraja. The researcher had a chance to teach the tenth grade students, and in one of the classes which is the Class X.A3, the researcher found that most of the students had difficulties to understand the reading materials discussed in the classroom.

According to the observation on the students' learning attitudes in that class, the researcher viewed that the students have the tendency to focus on gaining the meaning of difficult words in a reading text instead of trying to comprehend the text by making a kind of inference and relating the ideas of each paragraph in the text. As the result, the students often lose the important information that is inferred in the text.

In the case found by the researcher on the students in Class X.A3 at SMKN 2 Singaraja, the researcher perceived that the problem that hindered students' reading comprehension was because they gave too much concern on word recognition and only gave little concern on understanding the message that was conveyed through a text. It is of course undeniable that word recognition or decoding process is important for reading comprehension, however, students need to balance both the ability on word recognition and the ability to

understand the message or idea implied in a text to be able to achieve the maximum reading comprehension (Nation, 2005:249).

After conducting the observation, the researcher also had interviewed one of the English teachers at SMKN 2 Singaraja in order to find more information on the difficulties that the students often faced when building their reading comprehension. From the interview, the teacher confirmed that the students' common problems were in identifying the main idea and specific information of a text. The teacher also said that besides having trouble on identifying the main idea and specific ideas of a text, the students also found difficulties on comprehending textual reference of a text as well as making the inference toward the paragraphs in a text especially when a longer or more complex text is given.

Furthermore, in the classroom teaching and learning process, the researcher did not only observe the way the students learned in their reading activity, but also the teaching strategy that was applied by the teacher in the classroom especially in the reading activities. From the observation, the researcher found that, the lack of students' reading competency was also caused by the ineffectiveness of teaching strategy implemented by the teacher. In this case, the ineffective teaching technique that was found by the researcher was the teacher's tendency to let the students focusing on word translation only and did not provide them with the strategy to foster their understanding and comprehension toward a given text. This attitude creates a bad influence to the students, because the students often prefer to read a text with the tendencies of getting the word meaning and they were not accustomed to comprehend a text deeper by making a kind of inference on how the paragraphs are related one to another.

As stated by Magar (2009), students will find difficulties to perform at their best when they are not engaged in a meaningful and purposeful learning. He further states that teacher should have a clear goal of what competency he or she expects his/her

students to achieve through the learning activities. In this case, students cannot be left with an ineffective learning habit which may hinder the improvement of their reading comprehension, instead of fostering it.

Referring to the condition that was found during the observation and the interview, the researcher was interested to find out a way or solution to help the students to solve the problems that hinder the improvement of their reading comprehension. Here, the researcher finally decided to implement a strategy called R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy in the frame of classroom action research. This strategy is characterized by the three main steps directing the students in their learning activity which include *Read* the text intensively, *Ask yourself* what main idea and specific ideas of the text are, and *Put* the ideas into your own words.

There are several basic reasons why the researcher finally decided to use R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy to help improving reading comprehension of students in Class X.A3 at SMKN 2 Singaraja. Basically, when deciding to use this strategy, the researcher's main consideration was the appropriateness or the applicability of the strategy to resolve the problem on students' reading comprehension. It meant that, there should be no wrong treatment given for 'healing' the problem found on students' reading comprehension. The researcher believes that, R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy is an effective alternative which enables the students to learn and improve their reading comprehension not only by the means of decoding process, but also by analyzing, inferring the text meaning, and putting the ideas of the text in their own words for a deeper comprehension process. Therefore, by applying this strategy the researcher believes that this strategy is applicable to help the students to perform better in their reading activity.

This strategy according to Schumaker et al. (1984) is defined as a multi-step cognitive strategy that teaches

students to paraphrase what they read with a goal of increasing comprehension. Fisk and Hurst (2003) assert that R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy should not be understood only as a word for word translation, instead it is a genuine rewording on which students have to deliver the main idea of text and other supporting information in their own words.

In relation to classroom teaching and learning process, Blume (2010) assert that R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy is believed to be an effective strategy that assists the students not only to optimally remember and understand a text, but also to build their comprehension and help them to retell and recall the information consisted in a text.

Referring to those descriptions, the objective of the study was therefore to find out how R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy can improve reading comprehension of students at Class X.A3 in SMKN 2 Singaraja.

## **METHOD**

This study was based on a classroom action research design in which according to Gay et al. in 2009 focuses on the improvement of the quality of students' learning and the effectiveness of teaching process in the classroom. The classroom action research design itself according to Kemmis and McTaggart (1998) consists of planning, action, and reflection which are all managed in a cyclic process in a study.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

This part presented the data that were managed from the results of pre-test, post-test I in Cycle I, and also post-test II in Cycle II and added by further discussion that described the data more specifically.

### ***The Findings on Pre-Test***

Pre-test was conducted in order to find the quantitative data about the students' reading comprehension level before the treatments in the study were

given. Besides, pre-test was also conducted to see whether or not the result of pre-test could reflect the students' comprehension problems that were found during the observation and interview. There were 25 multiple choice items administered in pre-test on which these items were based on two recount texts.

After the pre-test had been conducted, the result of students' achievement could be presented in the following table.

**Table 1. The Result of Students' Achievement on Pre-Test.**

1	Mean Score	60.30
2	Highest Score	80
3	Lowest Score	40
4	Number of Students with score $\geq$ 70	5 (14.29%)
5	Number of Students with score $<$ 70	30 (85.71%)

According to the result of students' achievement as presented in the table above, it was found that the students' mean score in general was relatively low. Although the students' highest score reach 80 points, yet it was not a sufficient result since from 35 students, there were only 5 students who could pass the school passing grade, while the rest 30 students got insufficient scores and stood under the school passing grade. The result of pre-test therefore reflected the low reading comprehension of students at Class X.A3 in SMKN 2 Singaraja as found from the observation and the interview done previously.

Referring to this result, the researcher implemented the R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy as the treatment to help improving the students' reading comprehension. The implementation of the strategy was first managed Cycle of the study. Overall, the students were engaged in two classroom meetings where they had their reading activities in the basis of R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy.

At the end of Cycle I, the researcher gave post-test questions to the students in order to see their improvement after the implementation of R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy in two meetings in Cycle I. In short, the result of post-test I could be seen in the following table.

**Table 2. The Result of Post-Test I in Cycle I.**

1	Mean Score	72.90
2	Highest Score	84
3	Lowest Score	60
4	Number of Students with score $\geq$ 70	25 (71.43%)
5	Number of Students with score $<$ 70	10 (28.57%)

The students indicated an improvement on their reading achievement as shown by the students' mean score in the table above. As also seen from the number of students passing the school passing grade, there had been 25 students who were able to reach and pass 70 points as the minimum score required. Then, a better result was also indicated in the number of students who got below than 70 points. There were 10 students who still achieved insufficient score after Cycle I and post-test I had been conducted, in which this result was better than the one obtained in pre-test.

However, the improvement that had been accomplished in cycle I did not indicate the success of the study yet, because there should be at least 75% of students passing the school passing grade as the success indicator of the study. Besides, based on the result of questionnaire that was also administered at the end of Cycle I, the students' attitudes and perceptions toward the implementation of R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy in their reading activities did not yet indicate a quite satisfying responses from the students. In addition, when referring to the students' learning processes in the classroom, some students still encountered difficulties in their

reading activities since they seemed could not optimally cope with the strategy.

Considering that the expected result of the study had not been accomplished yet, the researcher decided to continue the treatment to Cycle II.

By reflecting to the result obtained in post-test I in Cycle I, the researcher made certain modification on the teaching and learning activities to get a more satisfying result in Cycle II. There were two meetings conducted in Cycle II where the students were involved in more intensive reading activities in the basis of R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy.

As in Cycle I, the students were also given a post-test at the end of Cycle II. Post-test II consisted of 25 multiple choice items which were based on two narrative texts. The result of students' reading achievement in post-test II could be presented as below.

**Table 3. The Result of Post-Test II in Cycle II.**

1	Mean Score	80.30
2	Highest Score	96
3	Lowest Score	64
4	Number of Students with score $\geq$ 70	30 (85.71%)
5	Number of Students with score $<$ 70	5 (14.29%)

Referring to the scores achieved by the students in post-test II, the students' mean score had improved significantly compared to the result obtained in post-test I. The mean score represented the improvement of all students' scores. Here, the most significant improvement could be seen from the percentage of students who passed the standard passing score. After post-test II, there were 30 (85.71%) students who could successfully get satisfying achievement and passed the standard passing score. On the other hand, even though there were still 5 (14.29%) students failed to get satisfying scores, yet these students had shown a gradual

improvement from their scores in pre-test, post-test I, and post-test II.

In addition, based on the questionnaire that was administered at the end of Cycle II, the students' responses toward the implementation of R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy were generally positive. The students' attitudes showed that the implementation of the strategy contributed positively to the improvement of their reading comprehension as well as their vocabulary knowledge and reading motivation.

## Discussion

The discussion part respectively described the findings that were gained from the implementation of R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy on the reading activities of students at Class X.A3 in SMKN 2 Singaraja.

### The Improvement of Students' Achievement

In this study, the R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy was implemented for the aim of improving reading comprehension of the students' at Class X.A3 in SMKN 2 Singaraja. Before the strategy was implemented, the researcher had done the observation and interview focusing on the teaching and learning activities at Class X.A3 in SMKN 2 Singaraja. Referring to the students' learning attitudes in the classroom, the researcher found the indication of the students' low reading comprehension level, they often encountered sort of difficulties to understand a text as well as to do certain task related to a text given by the teacher. On the other hand, based on the result of the interview, the English teacher teaching the class admitted the common problems that were often faced by the students in their reading activities.

The results of both the observation and the interview were then compared to the students' result on pre-test. The pre-test was conducted in order to find the quantitative data of the students' reading comprehension level by administering the

scores that they achieved in pre-test. From this result, the quantitative data of the students' reading comprehension achievement in the form of students; initial scores were obtained. Furthermore, the results of those aspects were used as the starting points to monitor the students' progress or improvement from one cycle to the other cycles in the study.

When the pre-test was administered, the students got relatively insufficient scores. The mean score of the students was only 60.30 where there were only 5 students could reach the school passing grade and the rest 30 students failed. This result indicated that the students' reading achievement was far from the expected result. In addition to that, the attitudes questionnaire which was given after the pre-test also showed that the students had low motivation reading motivation. They also perceived that their reading comprehension problems were based on various factors such as the lack vocabulary knowledge, the complexity of reading materials, and also the teaching and learning strategy used in the classroom.

Drawing from the results of pre-test, the R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy was then administered in the teaching and learning activities in the two cycles of the study. In Cycle I, the students were introduced to the strategy and were explained about the roles of the strategy to improve their reading comprehension. In the initial meetings, the students worked hard to be able to adapt and use the strategy effectively. Most of the students seemed to be confused and hesitant to do their reading task in the first meeting, while in the second meeting, the students had already build a conception about the strategy in their mind and learned how to understand a text by analyzing its main idea and specific ideas and then making inferences about the meaning of the text.

In order to see the improvement of students' reading comprehension, post-test I was conducted at the end of Cycle I and then continued by administering the

questionnaire which dealt with the students' attitudes toward the implementation of the R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy.

From the result of post-test I, there was a good progress shown by the students in terms of their individual scores and also the mean score in general. The students' mean score which was 60.30 in pre-test improved significantly into 72.90 in post-test I. The improvement of this mean score also affected the number of students who could pass the school passing grade. After post-test I was conducted, there were 25 students could pass the school passing grade in which the highest score achieved by the students was 84 and the lowest score was 60. The lack point of this result was the existence of 10 students who failed to achieve sufficient score. It indicated that the percentage of success of the study was 71.43% and had not yet reach 75% as the minimum criteria of success.

On the other hand, the result of the questionnaire in Cycle I was in line with the result of post-test I. According to the students' responses on the questionnaire, they mostly had a good interest toward the strategy being used, however, along its implementation in Cycle I, the students perceived that they had not yet feel the optimum result that the strategy could contribute to their reading comprehension. The students indicated that the strategy was rather assisting them in their reading activities, which meant that the implementation of R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy should be optimized to foster the students' reading comprehension.

Another significant thing apart from the result of post-test I and the questionnaire was the process of students' learning in all the teaching and learning sessions in Cycle I. At the first teaching and learning sessions when the students began to use the R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy in their reading activities, it was noted in the researcher's diary that the students had not yet coped with the strategy effectively, they still showed hesitancy and confusion in using the strategy in their reading activities. In the second session on the other hand,

the students had performed better in their reading activities, yet still required an intensive assistant from the researcher especially in the process of representing their understanding about the ideas in a text in their own words.

By referring to the results and condition after the implementation of Cycle I, the researcher considered that the study needed to be continued to Cycle II with several modifications in the teaching and learning plans for Cycle II. The modifications included the optimization of the role of students who got good achievement in Cycle I to assist the other students with lower achievement in terms of peer discussion and peer-checking. Besides, another modification was also done by the researcher by giving more intensive feedback and correction to optimize the students' performance in the classroom.

As Cycle II was conducted, the researcher implemented all the modifications accordingly in the teaching and learning sessions. Based on the researcher's diary, the modifications that were done in the teaching and learning processes brought positive influence to the students' performance in reading activities. They engaged positively in the learning activities and could use the R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy effectively.

After all the teaching and learning sessions in Cycle II were done, the students' reading comprehension was measured through post-test II. From the result obtained in post-test II, it was indicated that the students' improvement was quite significant. As seen from their mean score, it improved from 72.90 in post-test I into 80.38 in post-test II. All the students including high and low achieving students were noted to have improvement in their scores. This result influenced the overall number of students who could pass the school passing grade for there were 30 students could successfully get satisfying scores and the other 5 students failed to reach the school passing grade.

By referring to all the results in pre-test, post-test I, and post-test II, the students' mean score had gradually improved including on their score in the four reading indicators. The following table showed the improvement of students' achievement in their reading comprehension tests.

**Table 4. The Improvement of Students' Achievement Based on the Mean Scores in Pre-Test, Post-Test I, and Post-Test II.**

Test	Mean Score	Category
Pre-Test	60.30	Insufficient
Post-Test I (Cycle I)	72.90	Sufficient
Post-Test II (Cycle II)	80.38	Good

The improvement of students' reading comprehension from the result of pre-test, post-test I, and post-test II was also indicated in the students' mean scores in each of the reading indicators as shown in the table below.

**Table 5. The Improvement of Students' Mean Score in each of the Reading Indicators.**

The Four Reading Indicators	Pre-Test	Post-Test I (Cycle I)	Post-Test II (Cycle II)
Main Idea	59.06	70.48	88.57
Specific Idea	59.29	78.29	78.86
Textual Reference	75.23	78.57	81.43
Word Meaning	47.63	64.29	72.86
<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>60.30</b>	<b>72.90</b>	<b>80.38</b>

The results of pre-test, post-test I, and post-test II had presented the quantitative data showing that the students'



reading comprehension had been improved positively. In addition, these results were also supported by the results of the questionnaire in each of the Cycles in the study which showed the students' positive attitudes toward the implementation of R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy. Then, seeing from the teaching and learning process in the classroom as noted in the researcher's diary, the students' performance in their reading activities improved significantly as they could show good enthusiasm and positive involvement when having reading activities in the basis of R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy.

### **Conclusion and Suggestion**

After the evaluation was done twice at the end of Cycle I and Cycle II through post-test I and post-test II, the researcher found the positive contribution of the R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy to improve the students' reading comprehension at Class X.A3 in SMKN 2 Singaraja. one of the indicators which indicated the success of the study was the improvement of students' mean score in general as well as their mean score in the four reading indicators including finding out main idea, finding out specific ideas, textual reference, and also word meaning. The success of the study was also seen from the number of students who could achieve the school passing grade. From pre-test until post-test I and post-test II, the percentage of students who successfully achieved the school passing grade had improved significantly. The other factor indicating the effectiveness of the implementation of the R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy in this study was the students' responses in the questionnaire which was administered at the end of Cycle I and Cycle II. The students' perceptions and attitudes toward the implementation of the strategy became even more positive from one cycle to another. At the end of the Cycle II, the result of the questionnaire even indicated that the students felt that they were being assisted effectively by the strategy to comprehend the text they were reading.

Based on those positive results, it could be concluded that the study had successfully met the primary goals of this study in which through the basic steps in the R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy, the students could overcome their reading comprehension problems and even achieved better grade and ability in their reading activities.

Referring to the results of the study, there were also several suggestions that could be addressed especially for students, English teachers, and also other researcher who work on the same field of study.

The students took a very important role and contribution in a teaching and learning process especially the context of this study. Due to this reason, it is suggested that the students may keep on employing the significant value of the R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy in their reading activities since the strategy could assist the students to improve their reading comprehension so that they can understand a reading text easier. Besides, the strategy also offer the students with an alternative way of learning that is considerably effective and worth implementing in the students' reading activities especially.

The important thing that can be suggested to the English teacher regarding to the implementation of the R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy in this study is that to lead the teacher to implement the strategy continuously in his/her teaching in order to provide the students the series of activity which can foster their reading comprehension toward a text. The English teachers are also suggested to strengthen the concept of R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy to the students, therefore the students would be able to comprehend a text through the strategy effectively. Furthermore, for the English teachers who want to apply the strategy in different type of classes or different characteristics of students, they are suggested to be creative and innovative to modify or combine the strategy with certain activities or teaching materials in order to create a more attractive and

motivating teaching and learning atmosphere for the students.

For the other researchers who may work on the field of English language teaching and learning especially on the implementation of R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy on reading activities, the result of this study could be used as the reference that supports the development of particular issues in common. Apart from that, there is also a possibility for the use of R.A.P. Paraphrasing strategy to be implemented on the other language skill such as writing. Considering the concept of the strategy which also deals with the ability of restating ideas based on one's own words and understanding, other researchers may develop certain study which is based on this conception.

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