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## **AUTHENTIC MATERIALS FOR FRESHMEN STUDENTS: A CASE OF SPEAKING CLASS IN A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY**

*Research Article*

Laksnoria Karyuatry   
Sebelas Maret University  
[laksnoria@gmail.com](mailto:laksnoria@gmail.com)

Joko Nurkamto   
Sebelas Maret University  
[jokonurkamto@gmail.com](mailto:jokonurkamto@gmail.com)

Dewi Rochsantiningsih   
Sebelas Maret University  
[dewi\\_roch@hotmail.com](mailto:dewi_roch@hotmail.com)

Laksnoria Karyuatry is a student in the Master's Program of English Language Education in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Sebelas Maret University, Indonesia. Her research interests are in the field of teacher professional development and English for specific purposes.

Joko Nurkamto is a full-time lecturer in the English Language Education Study Program in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Sebelas Maret University, Indonesia. His research interests include language curriculum development and teacher professional development.

Dewi Rochsantiningsih is a full-time lecturer in English Language Education Study Program in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Sebelas Maret University, Indonesia. Her research interest include teachers' professional development and English language teaching management

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Laksnoria Karyuatry  
[laksnoria@gmail.com](mailto:laksnoria@gmail.com)

Joko Nurkamto  
[jokonurkamto@gmail.com](mailto:jokonurkamto@gmail.com)

Dewi Rochsantiningsih  
[dewi\\_roch@hotmail.com](mailto:dewi_roch@hotmail.com)

### Abstract

This study aims at exploring Authentic Materials used in teaching speaking for university students. A case study method is implemented. The study was conducted at the language center of a university in Indonesia in the first semester of the 2018/2019 academic year. The data were collected by three instruments: interview, classroom observation, and document analysis. The data were analyzed using an interactive method. The results show that the teachers used three kinds of AMs in the classroom: audio material such as recordings and broadcast news, audio-visual material such as videos, and printed material such as photos, pictures, images, articles, and a map. It is found that the most used type is video since it can be very useful to develop speaking, listening and pronunciation skills. The results of this study also reveal that teachers might take useful AMs from selected websites and combine them with the course book in order to support teaching-learning activity.

*Keywords:* authentic materials, teaching, speaking, EFL, university students

### 1. Introduction

Nowadays, it is important for teachers to prepare students to face real-life situations especially in the case of speaking a foreign language. Consequently, teachers are expected to prepare appropriate materials, including authentic materials such as printed magazines, videos, and songs. Authentic materials (AMs) are defined as realistic everyday materials that are not produced specifically for pedagogical purposes, yet they can be used as learning tools for students. AMs can help students to be aware of the relevancy and meaningfulness of what they are learning. This study aims to investigate the use of AMs in the teaching of speaking to university students in English classes. The impetus of this study comes from the researcher's interest in the phenomena in the speaking classroom. Many students find it difficult to speak in English since they rarely use the language in daily life. Most students know English speaking theories, yet they are confused about speaking the language in real conversation. This study aims to answer the research question: What kinds of Authentic Materials are used in teaching speaking for university students?

### 2. Review of Literature

Relating to the present research, there are several studies about the use of AMs in teaching activities. Ciornei and Dina (2015) conducted a study untitled *Authentic Text in Teaching English*. The objective of the study was to establish the relation between the use of authentic texts and the improvement of communicative abilities. In addition, it also identified the types

of authentic texts which facilitated the students' academic performances and the understanding of the target culture. It was done by using an experimental approach and analyzing with Kramsch's framework (2010) that focused on the context and culture in language teaching. The results obtained supply positive arguments for the use of authentic texts in the improvement of communicative abilities and cultural acquisitions. However, these materials bring benefits only when used in accordance with students' proficiency level and interests. By helping students comprehend authentic texts, we develop their language capabilities while strengthening their cross-cultural and literacy skills.

Gilmore (2011) aimed to explore the effects of authentic versus textbook input on learners' development of linguistic, pragmalinguistic, sociopragmatic, strategic, and discourse competencies. This quasi-experimental study results indicated that the experimental group outperformed the control group in five of the eight measures, suggesting that the authentic materials and their associated tasks were more effective in developing a broader range of communicative competencies in learners than the textbook materials.

A third study was carried out in a foreign language school at a Colombian public university by Losada et al. (2017). Its main purpose was to analyze the extent to which the use of authentic materials and tasks contributes to the enhancement of the communicative competence on an a2 level English course. This study was a mixed study composed of a quasi-experimental and descriptive-qualitative research design was implemented through a pre-test, a post-test, observations, semi-structured interviews, surveys, and diaries. The findings showed that the use of authentic materials and tasks, within the framework of a pedagogical project, had an impact on students' communicative competence progress and on the teaching practices of the experimental group teacher. Similarly, authentic materials lead the teacher to a continuous reflection process in which he/she is free to intervene in his/her own teaching practice. Therefore, the use of authentic materials in the language classroom must be strongly encouraged as they have a positive impact on the students' linguistic and affective domains.

## 2.1. Authentic Materials

This section goes through some common definitions of the term "authentic materials" from several experts' point of view. First, Herod (2002) states that authentic learning "materials and activities" are designed to imitate real-world situations. Next, Nunan (1988) defines authentic materials as the materials "which have been produced for purposes other than to teach language". Then, Carter and Nunan (2001, p. 68) propose authentic materials are 'ordinary texts not produced specifically for language teaching purposes. Besides, Laniro (2007, p.1) opines that authentic materials are print, video, and audio materials students encounter in their daily lives, such as change-of-address forms, job applications, menus, voice mail messages, radio programs, and videos. Authentic materials are not created specifically to be used in the classroom, but they make excellent learning tools for students precisely because they are authentic. Similarly, Gilmore (2007, p. 98) defines an authentic text as a stretch of real language produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort. Besides, authentic learning is defined as learning that is seamlessly integrated or implanted into meaningful, "real-life" situations (Jonassen, Howland, Marra, & Crismond, 2008) as cited in Iucu, 2014, p .410. Further, Martinez (2002, p. 1) states that "authentic would be material designed for native speakers of English used in the classroom in a way similar to the one it was designed for". Based on those definitions, it could be concluded that authentic materials are realistic everyday materials that are not produced specifically for pedagogical purposes, yet they can be used as learning tools for students.

## **2.2. Types of Authentic Materials**

Teaching material is a very essential part of teaching and learning a foreign language. These days, the resources for teaching materials are widely available to everybody. The internet is regarded as a very important and rich source of authentic materials. Genhard (1996) classified authentic materials into three categories as follows: authentic listening/audio materials, such as radio news, cartoons, songs, etc; authentic visual materials, such as street signs, magazines, and newspapers pictures, post cards, etc; authentic printed materials, such as sports reports, newspapers, restaurant menus, train tickets, etc. The sources of authentic materials that can be used in the classroom (whether spoken or written) are infinite, but the most common materials are newspapers, magazines, TV programs, movies, videos/DVDs, radios and recordings, songs, rhymes and poems, pictures, charts, diagrams, advertisements, realia such as airline tickets, hotel information, leaflets, posters, instruction manuals, telephone books, menus, maps, books, dictionaries, storybooks, comics, original letters, post cards, timetables, and the world outside the classroom: shop, library, museum, art gallery, theatre, telephone, talks, cinema, and menus which are useful for anyone who needs English to travel abroad, particularly if their language level is pre-intermediate or below (Ellis, 1996, p. 168). Moreover, in this modern era, the internet is known as the most useful resource. While newspapers, magazines, brochures and any other printed materials date very quickly, the Internet is continuously updated. It is more visually stimulating as well as interactive. Therefore, the internet promotes a more active approach to reading rather than a passive one. From a more practical point of view, the internet is a modern day reality. Most students use it. For teachers, it provides ease of access to endless amounts of many different types of materials.

## **2.3. Advantages and Disadvantages of Authentic Materials**

Most researchers realize the role of authentic materials in language teaching. They believe that authentic materials scaffold learners' learning of a target language more sufficiently (Guariento & Morley, 2001; Wilcox & Oaks, 1999; Weyers, 1999). Berardo (2006, p. 64) supports the idea of using AMs in the foreign language teaching process for these reasons: having a positive effect on student motivation, giving authentic cultural information, exposing students to real language, relating more closely to students' needs, and supporting a more creative approach to teaching. "Authentic texts can be motivating because they are proof that the language is used for real-life purposes by real people." (Nuttall, 1996, p.172). Researchers such as Gilmore (2007) and Sherman (2003) believe that authentic materials have a strong positive effect on motivation. Motivation is regarded as the key element in the success of learning in general, and in learning languages in particular. For his part, Kilickaya (2004) states that using authentic materials helps increase learners' motivation for learning a language, because they feel that they are practicing a real language used beyond the classroom.

Although authentic materials play an important role in supporting students' learning of a foreign language, many difficulties hinder the use of such materials by teachers. Kilickaya (2004) claims that authentic materials add a burden on teachers, as they may contain difficult vocabulary and structures which need more effort to be simplified and explained, in order to make them appropriate for their learners. Similarly, Miller (2005) also states that authentic materials are "too difficult and time-consuming to select, edit and prepare." In addition, Martinez (2002) argues that authentic materials are regarded as too culturally biased and difficult to comprehend by learners in the classroom. He also adds concerning the cultural effect, that "authentic texts from one culture may give a false impression to students from another, unless they are presented in an authentic context which makes it clear precisely what they exemplify."

## 2.4. Teaching Speaking in EFL Speaking Class

According to Iucu (2014, p. 412), there are five ways to support authentic learning: providing students with coaching and scaffolding at critical times, providing students with the opportunity to reflect, providing the opportunity to collaborate, promoting articulation to encourage students to verbalize their knowledge and thinking, and enabling students to use technology. Although these problems may cause a burden for the teachers of lower-level classes, Richards (2006, p. 20) supports the idea of using authentic materials in the foreign language teaching process due to these reasons: they provide cultural information about the target language, they provide exposure to real language, they relate more closely to learners' needs, and they support a more creative approach to teaching.

## 2.5. The Criteria of Selecting Authentic Materials in Teaching Speaking

In this regard, McGrath (2002) provides a useful set of guiding principles for choosing AMs, which apply as much as to the teaching of listening skills as to other areas cited in Field (2008, pp. 275-276). Field lists these guiding principles adding his own comments with connection to speaking in the following way: relevance, intrinsic interest of topic, cultural appropriateness, linguistic demands, cognitive demands, logistical considerations, quality, and exploitability. Furthermore, Lee (1995, p. ii) states that the important criteria for selecting AMs are textual authenticity, suitability of content, compatibility with course objectives, and exploitability. In addition, Nuttall (1996, p. 54) gives three main criteria when choosing texts to be used in the classroom; they are suitability of content, exploitability and readability. Suitability of content can be considered to be the most important of the three, in that the reading material should interest the students and be relevant to their needs as well as the texts should motivate. Exploitability refers to how the text can be used to develop the students' competence as readers. A text which cannot be exploited for teaching purposes has no use in the classroom. Just because it is in English does not mean that it can be useful. Readability is used to describe the combination of structural and lexical difficulty of a text, as well as referring to the amount of new vocabulary and any new grammatical forms present. Based on this explanation, it can be concluded there are five important criteria based on some criteria proposed by the experts, they are relevance to course objectives, topic interest, cognitive demands, linguistic demands, and exploitability.

## 3. Method

A case study approach was used in this research as an attempt to explore the use of AMs in teaching speaking for university students in-depth. Yin states that a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in-depth and within a real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident (2014, p. 16). It relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in triangulating fashion (p. 17). The current study was conducted in a Language Training Centre in one of a private university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. There were 2 teachers teaching a Free Conversation Class who became the main informants in this study since the teachers used some authentic materials in the classroom.

The data sources of this study were; (1) event consisting teachers' authentic materials in teaching speaking and the process of teaching, (2) informants, the teachers and students who give information the impact of using authentic materials in teaching speaking for university students, (3) documents which consist of syllabus and lesson plans are the last data source in this research. Thus, this research looked at the use of authentic materials in the teaching speaking process, with teachers and students as an informant, and documents related to the use

of authentic materials in teaching speaking in the classroom as sources of data for doing this research.

#### 4. Findings

The kinds of AMs in teaching speaking for university students could be clearly seen during the teaching-learning process. The data were also supported by related documents, such as syllabus and course book. The data were obtained from interviewing two main teachers for exploring what kinds of AMs used in their speaking classes. Based on the data gained, it showed that the teachers used three kinds of AMs in the classroom, they were (1) audio material: recordings and broadcast news (2) audio-visual material: videos (3) printed material: photos, pictures, images, articles, and a map.

Table 1. *The types of authentic materials used by teacher in teaching speaking*

Data	Audio Materials	Audio-Visual Material	Printed Materials
Course book	Recordings of report news, TV program, advice, quiz show, and conversation	Videos	Photos, pictures, images, articles from newspapers and a map
Teaching-learning activity	Recordings and broadcast news	Videos of Vlog, news, film, survey, and cartoon	Photos, pictures, images, articles, and a map
Interview	Recordings and songs	Videos from the Internet, Youtube	Poets, poetry, songs, pictures, maps, and newspapers

Table 1 shows that teaching-learning activity (TLA) in the classroom was in line with the course book. On the other hand, Table 2 shows that the interview's result was not in line with the course book and TLA. From the interview, *Teacher O* said that she used not only photos, pictures, articles, and maps but she also used poets, poetry, and songs in her class whereas the researcher did not find them during the observation. Afterward, from the course book, the researcher found that the content of the course book contained several AMs that we could see in the following table:

Table 2. *Authentic materials found in the course book*

Unit	Audio Materials	Audio-Visual Material (video)	Printed Materials
Unit 1 JUDGING BY APPEARANCES	p.9: recorded report Activity 4. Jaw Surgery	p.8: video Activity 3. Video 1. Appearances Can be Deceiving, Video 2. Don't Judge People by Their Appearance, Video 3. Never Judge People by their Appearance	p.4: picture Introduction page p 5: articles of survey Activity 1. Appearance pp.6-7: photo Language Spot. Describing Appearance p.10: image Activity 4. Changing Appearance pp.11-12

			Activity 5. Judging Appearance
<b>Unit 2 WHAT'S ON TONIGHT</b>	p.20: recorded TV program Activity 3. Discussing TV Program	p.20: video Activity 2. What's on Tonight Catie Couric p.27: video Activity 7. I, Robot	p.17: image Introduction Page p.18: photo Snapshot. Stargazing pp.19-20: picture Activity 1. My Tastes & Interests pp.24-25: picture Activity 5. Legendary TV Programmes p.26: image Activity 6. Favorite Movie Scene p.27: image Activity 7. Group Discussion p.28: image Activity 8. Talk Show
<b>Unit 3 THE ADVICE</b>	p.34: recorded advice Activity 3. Hello Can I help You?	p.36: video Activity 4. Video 1. 911, Call Of Dad Delivering Baby! Video 2. Little Girl Calls 911, Adorable - He Can't Hardly Breathe Activity 4. Video 3. Police 4-Year-Old's 911 Call Saves Mom's Life p.39: video Activity 7. Lifeline Australia	p.33: picture Activity 1. Snapshot p.39: photo, picture and news article Activity 7. Group Presentation
<b>Unit 4 LEAN ON ME</b>	-	p.44: video Snapshot. What is a Helper? Video 1. Life Vest Video 2. Snapshot. Are you a helper? p. 45: video Activity 1. Single Mother Can't Afford Food. 'What Would You Do' p.47: video Activity 4. Beggars in USA	p.46: image Activity 3. Will You Give a Hand? p.48: image Activity 4. Giving or Not Giving? p.49: image Activity 5. Role Play
<b>Unit 5 THE GIFT</b>	-	p.54: video Snapshot. JCPenney: The Gift of Giving	p.54: picture Introduction page p.62: photo

		p.60: video Activity 4. Describing Gifts (Pentatonix Receiving Gifts May 2016)	Activity 5. Shall We Swap?
<b>Unit 6 CONCRETE JUNGLES</b>	p.66: recorded quiz show Snapshot. Let's Check Our Knowledge p.71 : recorded interview Activity 5. Welham Then and Now	p.70: video Activity 3. Video 1. Thousands Rally against Blasphemy Video 2. Activity 4. The City of London	p.66: a map Introduction Page
<b>Unit 7 GOOD FENCES MAKE GOOD NEIGHBORS</b>	-	p.77: video Activity 2. Types of Neighbors	pp.75-76: image Introduction Page p.76: picture Activity 3. Choose Your Own Ideal Neighbors
<b>Unit 8 DANGEROUS SITUATION</b>	p.86: recorded conversation Audio Snapshot. Got a Light part 1 Audio Snapshot. Got a Light part 2 Audio Snapshot (Full)	p.90: video Activity 4A. Video 1. 10 Deadliest Countries. Video 2. Top 10 Countries With the Lowest Violence Rates – Pastimers p.91: video Activity 4B. Video 1. Girl Escapes from Alleged Kidnapper in Walmart Caught on Tape Video 2. Stranger Danger! Stanger Danger!	p.85: image Introduction Page p.86: image and picture Activity 1. Got a Light p.89-90: photo Activity 4. Gang Violence p.92: picture Activity 5. Watch Out p.93: picture Activity 6. Act It Out

### **Audio Materials**

In the course book, there are 5 of 8 units used AMs in the form of audio materials and in total the recorded audio consists of 8 files. The first authentic audio material is on page 9 in the form of a recorded report in Activity 4 about Jaw Surgery. Second, there is a recorded TV program on page 20 in Activity 3, Discussing TV Program. Third, there is recorded advice on page 34 in Activity 3, Hello Can I Help You. Fourth, there is a recorded quiz show on page 66 in Snapshot, Let's Check Our Knowledge. Fifth, there is a recorded interview on page 71 in Activity 5, Welham Then and Now. Sixth, there is a recorded conversation on page 86 in Snapshot, Got a Light part 1. Seventh, still on page 86, there is a recorded conversation in Snapshot, Got a Light part 2. Lastly, there is a full recorded conversation for Snapshot Got a Light on page 86. Based on the data, it can be concluded that authentic audio materials used in teaching speaking are mostly in the form of recorded audio with various topics, such as reports, TV programs, advice, quiz shows, interviews, and conversations.

The major resource used for this course is Slater, S., Collie, J. (1995). *Speaking 3*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. In the interview teachers admitted that they only used audio provided by the institution and focused on following the task from the course book, so, they usually prepared the laptop and speaker in the classroom and played it for the students. The authentic audio materials are in the form of a soft file that is provided by the institution only for the teachers. In addition, the teachers may give additional materials, but they preferred to use the provided audio since they thought the audio materials were clear enough for introduction and exercise. It was not really necessary to find more because there would be video after playing the recording. However, *Teacher I* said that sometimes, she used songs in the classroom; yet, the researcher could not find it in observation. Besides, from the observation, the teachers reported using mainly recording for audio material type. After greetings, the teacher usually played it twice or more. The origin of speakers in the recording was 95% native speakers, only one person was from India, Asia.

### ***Audio- Visual Materials***

The Audio-visual materials came from the course book, observation, and interview. From Table 2 Authentic Materials found in the course book, every unit had at least a video and the total of the videos are 22 files. In unit 6, there are 2 videos on page 70; Video 1 is Thousands Rally against Blasphemy. It is news about a demonstration in Jakarta and the source of the video is from Aljazeera News Channel. Then, Video 2 is The City of London. It is news that reporting the situation in London then and now and the source of the video is from BBC News Channel. While watching the video, the students completed the sentence in the activity 3 and 4. Next, in unit 7 on page 77, there is a Vlog video about the types of neighbors that was taken from Askylitavenue Youtube Channel. After watching the video, the students answered the following questions in Activity 2 and wrote notes if necessary.

Meanwhile, in unit 8, there are 4 videos related to the topic 'Dangerous Situation'. The first and second video are on page 90; Video 1 tells 10 deadliest countries in the world that come from Alltime Youtube Channel and Video 2 tells 10 countries with the lowest violence rates that came from Amazonaw News Channel. After reading an article and watching the videos, the students had to choose the country to live, which country that he and their group would choose and told the class about the reason in Activity 4A. The third and fourth videos are on page 91; Video 1 is a video of a girl escaping from an alleged kidnapper in Walmart which is caught on tape and Video 2 is a video that tells eleven traps to avoid children crimes. After watching the videos, the students discussed the questions and wrote a list of what kind of traps used by strangers children should avoid in Activity 4B.

Other data came from the observation that most of the time teachers used videos not only in the beginning of the lesson as a model but also in the main activity as an exercise. They were played 1 to 4 times according to the length and difficulties of the videos. The materials shown were in the form of videos without subtitles; therefore, if the students seemed confused or asked for repeating, the teacher would show the video again. After that, she continued with a simple discussion before going to the main part of the lesson. The contents of the videos were in the form of Vlog, talkshow, demonstration, and news. Next, from the interview, *Teacher O* said that she only used prepared video from the institution and selected videos from Youtube based on the topic of the day; she usually chose a short movie and showed it to students.

*I choose the materials depending on the topic discussion in the classroom. For example, if it is about movies, I will find short movies from Youtube, like in the previous meeting. After cutting the movie, I showed it to the students. [The teacher also prepared her additional materials based on the current topic in the classroom, such as finding short movies from Youtube channel.](Obv.2, 1/11/2018)*



preference from 6 photos, and giving the reason why they like and dislike them. The language features are provided below the photos, so the students could learn from them.



Figure 3. Photos of a woman and a man

Source: google.com

## 5. Discussion

The research findings reveal that there are three kinds of AMs in teaching speaking for university students; they are audio, audio-visual, and printed materials. From the findings, it is found that authentic materials used in teaching speaking are mainly combined in course book and teachers' additional materials that come from the Internet source. First, authentic audio materials used in teaching speaking are mostly in the form of recorded audio with various topics, such as report, TV program, advice, a quiz show, interview, and conversation. According to Zafarghandi (2014), using authentic materials made students interested in language learning. Authentic listening materials cause exposure to real language and are more related to natural needs of the language learners. Real-life listening materials bring the chance of applying a more creative approach toward teaching.

Next, authentic audio-visual materials used in teaching speaking are mostly in the form of video taken from the Internet such as Youtube and news channel. This finding is relevant with Berardo (2006), who assumed that the Internet as the most powerful source. Compared to the other sources, the Internet is more useful because teachers can get articles, audio clips, podcasts and videos that are always updated, interactive, and provided with visual stimulation (Berardo, 2006). Besides, from the observation it is found that authentic videos materials used in teaching speaking are mostly from the Internet such as Youtube, BBC News, Aljazeera News, Amazona News, and ABC News Channels. In addition, this statement is in line with Bordonaro (2018, p.4) who says that the Internet also offers gateways to many collections of materials posted specifically for ESL teachers who could incorporate such material into speaking activities. He gave examples of such sites including Dave's ESL Café, The English Zone, Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Café, Interesting Things for ESL Students, and Activities for ESL Students.

Afterwards, authentic printed material in teaching speaking are found in the course book and the 5 major types are photos, pictures, images, articles, and a map. The uses of printed materials are used for supporting the videos as the main materials. The printed materials are used as the helper, by giving visual images in reinforcing students' understanding toward the videos. As stated by Berardo (2006, p.63) that the "authentic" presentation, through the use of pictures, diagrams, photographs, helps put the text into a context. This helps the reader not only understand the meaning of the text better but also how it would be used. A more "attractive" text will appeal to the student and motivate them into reading. An "attractive" looking article is more likely to grab the reader's attention rather than a page full of type.

In brief, the three kinds of AMs in teaching speaking are combined in course book and teachers' additional materials that come from the Internet source. However, there are many sources from the Internet that teachers could find in teaching speaking. From selected websites,

teachers might take useful AMs and combine them with course books in order to support the teaching-learning activity.

## **6. Conclusion**

Authentic Materials mastery is one of the most important abilities in teaching speaking; the materials can be classified into three types: audio, audio-visual, and printed material. They are mainly used in the opening and main stages combined with a range of speaking activities. The results of this research show that the three kinds of AMs in teaching speaking are combined in course book and teachers' additional materials that come from the Internet source. Further, there are boundless sources from the Internet that teachers could find in teaching speaking. From selected websites, teachers might take useful AMs and combine them with course book in order to support teaching-learning activity.

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