

# INQUIRY MODEL FOR TEACHING GRAMMAR

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**Abstract:** this research aimed at improving the quality of grammar lessons of grade eight students of SMP Lab IKIP Negeri Singaraja. By applying the action research procedure, the results of the study show that the implementation of Inquiry Learning Model which focuses on the empowerment of students' self directed learning, that is learning to discover the concept themselves, could improve students' mastery on the grammar concepts.

**Abstrak:** penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran Gramatika siswa VIII.1 SMP Lab IKIP Negeri Singaraja. Dengan prosedur penelitian tindakan kelas. Hasil penelitian membuktikan bahwa pemanfaatan model pembelajaran *Inquiry* yang menekankan pada pemberdayaan siswa dalam belajar dengan lebih mandiri, yaitu belajar menemukan konsep sendiri, dapat meningkatkan penguasaan gramatika siswa.

Key Words : Grammar Lessons, Inquiry Model, Contextual Approach

Competency-based curriculum requires learners to be able to use the target language learnt in an actual language context. In regard to that goal, the government through the Directorate of Secondary Education (2002) established what the so-called Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL). CTL is a teaching concept which assists teachers to link the material taught with the learners' real world. They have to encourage the learners to make connection between their knowledge and the effort of applying it in their daily lives.

Taking a close look at its concept, the language instruction must be concentrated to teaching the skills which include listening, speaking, reading and writing. By mastering the four major skills, the learners may become communicatively competent users of the language. Besides the four language skills, the supporting aspects such as, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation play significant roles. Without the mastery of those aspects of language, the language skills under consideration could not be achieved. Grammar is one of the noteworthy aspects which should be well mastered by the learners since

good mastery in grammar gives them a strong foundation to construct good and appropriate sentences either orally or in written form.

The current findings indicated that the grammar lessons which occasionally produced complexities to the learners had not yet handled seriously. The results of the observation proved that the teachers in SMP LAB IKIP Negeri Singaraja gave more focus on the teaching of reading skill with the emphasis on vocabulary and comprehension of the content of the reading passage. In conducting instruction, the teachers tended to apply the question and answer technique in order to assist students' understanding of the passage and the translation technique to help them picking the meaning of the vocabulary.

Dealing with the grammar lesson, the teachers tended to use a deductive strategy, in which they started the lessons by giving the rules of grammar accompanied with examples of rule application in sentences. This kind of routine instruction might result in the students' boredom which gradually

discouraged them and, as a result they could not maximize their learning outcome.

Regarding the aforementioned phenomenon, the researcher wanted to assist the teacher in solving the problem in handling the grammar lessons by applying the Inquiry Model. The major goal was to motivate the students to discover the grammar concept and to solve the problems dealing with grammar themselves.

According to Kindsvatter *et al* (1996: 258), Inquiry is a teaching method which stimulates the skill in critical thinking to analyze and solve the problems systematically. Inquiry is a very effective method as it can be used to teach the material, solve problems, train critical thinking as well as make a decision.

Kindvatter *et al* further explained (1996: 258) the key words for the Inquiry model, namely (1) **Problem** is the main component of Inquiry and this can be conducted in various forms, (2) **Analysis** indicated that the problem can be operated in various parts and be learnt, (3) **Systematic** means that the problem will be learnt methodically through procedural phases. Hence, an inquiry is a process which is learned and experienced by the students while they are solving the problem through a reflective thinking.

## METHODOLOGY

### The Subjects

The subjects of this research were grade eight students of class II.1 in semester 1 of SMP LAB IKIP Negeri Singaraja who possessed grammar problems in English. Actually, there were three classes of the same grade which were taught by the same teacher. In determining the subjects of research, the researcher interviewed the English teacher when this proposal was being made.

According to the teacher, all of the three classes actually had serious problems in grammar lessons. Due to that, he recommended the researcher to use any class to be the subjects. The decision, then, went to class II.1.

### The Research Design

This study is an action-based research, which was collaboratively carried out between the researcher and the English teacher in the school concern. The teacher was involved in various activities starting from the problem identification, creation of teaching scenario, preparation of research instruments, determination of teaching material, execution of research, up to finally the construction of final report. This was done so to give as many opportunities as possible to the teacher to comprehend the nature of the action research procedure.

Principally, this research was held in three cycles which consisted of four phases, namely (1) planning, (2) action, (3) observation, and (4) reflection. In each of the cycles, the researcher planned to use three teaching sessions (two sessions for the teaching treatment and one session for the post-test). Thus, among the three cycles there were nine (9) teaching sessions.

The steps taken in the planning phase were: (1) organizing the teaching scenarios, (2) making instruments (test) to measure the students' mastery of grammar before and after the treatment, (3) creating a questionnaire to identify the teacher and students' opinions due to the teaching strategy which was used in the teaching and learning process, (4) designing an observation sheet to measure the students' participation in the teaching and learning process and their attitude during the lessons.

The action taken to improve the quality of grammar instruction to grade eight students of SMP LAB IKIP Negeri Singaraja was by carrying out the lessons which was held by implementing Inquiry Model. The students were designed to work collaboratively in groups in discovering the concept or rules of grammar, applying them in sentences, and solving the problems related to the grammar usage in sentences. The detailed tasks between the teacher and students were as follows:

The evaluation toward the action was performed during and after the teaching and learning process. During the teaching and learning process, the evaluation was conducted due to the accomplishment of the tasks by the students in the class,

while the evaluation after the teaching and learning process was administered in the form of written test which included all aspects of grammar learnt in each cycle.

No.	Teacher Activities	Student Activities
1.	Reviewing the grammatical concept which has previously been taught.	Listening to the explanation.
2.	Giving questions due to the previously learned grammatical concept.	Responding to the questions.
3.	Distributing the handout of reading text which consists of predetermined grammatical rules that become the topic of the lessons.	Reading the handout.
4.	Guiding the students' understanding of the grammatical concepts used in the text.	Paying attention to the teacher's guidance.
5.	Instructing the students to work in groups to find the rules of grammatical concept which are being learned.	Finding the rules of grammatical concept which are being learned.
6.	Giving the sentences with the inclusion of grammatical mistakes and asking the students to solve the grammar problems.	Solving the grammatical problems in the sentences given.
7.	Guiding the students to make a report on the result of the group discussion in the form of the finding of the grammatical mistakes.	Reporting the result of group discussion in the form of the finding of the grammatical mistakes.

On the basis of the characteristics of observation and evaluation mentioned above, the analysis of the results of observation and evaluation was held at the end of the cycle to enable the researcher to identify the students' mastery on the grammar concept. From the result of the analysis, the researcher could make a decision whether or not to make a further effort to improve the students' mastery on the grammar concept and their participation especially to those low achievers. In conclusion, the result of the analysis could be benefited as an input to carry out the phases of research in the next cycle.

### The System of Evaluating the Mastery of Grammar

At the end of each cycle, the students' mastery of grammar was evaluated through the delivery of written test which consisted of 20 items in the form of sentences dealing with the grammatical

concept they had studied. The form of the tests was Multiple Choice. This form was chosen to simplify the researcher in analyzing the data. For every correct answer, the students obtained score 5, and the maximum score for 20 items was 100.

The minimum criterion for the success of this research was 80%, which meant that the attainment of the mastery of grammar by implementing Inquiry Model was categorized Good.

In interpreting the scores obtained by each student, the researcher used Criterion Referenced Evaluation type I which was introduced by Masidjo (1995: 153) as the following:

The Level of Achievement	Category
90%-100%	Very Good
80%-89%	Good
65%-79%	Sufficient
55%-64%	Insufficient
Less than 55%	Very Insufficient

### The Instruments

#### The Test

The test used in this research was a written test consisted of 20 items in the form of multiple-choice type test. For each correct answer, the students got score 5, so that for 20 items the maximum score obtained by the student was 100. The attainment of the grammar mastery was evaluated using the criterion mentioned above.

The pre-test was performed to take the data about the students' mastery on grammar before they were given the treatment. Based to the result of the test, the researcher could collect data about the grammatical problems faced by the students. Meanwhile, the post-test was administered to identify whether or not there was an improvement of the mastery on grammar after Inquiry Model was treated to the students in the teaching and learning process.

#### The Observation Sheet

The unstructured observation sheet was used to have a closed look on the teaching and learning activities, whether or not the teaching scenario was implemented on the basis of the planning, and also

to detect the students' participation and attitude during the teaching and learning session.

**The Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was distributed to both the teacher and students at the end of the cycle to know their opinions and responses toward the teaching and learning activities using the Inquiry Model. In order to attain as maximum information as possible, both the teacher and students assessed their activities in the classroom. Therefore, there were four types of questionnaire, namely: (1) The teacher self assessment, (2) The students' assessment of the teacher's skill in teaching, (3) The students' assessment, and (4) The special assessment for group work.

**The Analysis of Data**

The data obtained were analyzed descriptively. The data in terms of tests were analyzed by calculating the mean score. The result was further interpreted qualitatively to understand the qualification of the students' mastery on grammar. Below is the formula used to measure the students' mean score.

$$M = \frac{\text{The total scores of all subjects}}{\text{The number of subjects}}$$

To analyze the result of questionnaire, the formula employed is as follows:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{The number of subjects selecting the item}}{\text{The number of subjects}} \times 100\%$$

**THE RESULT OF RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION**

**The Result of Research**

**Table 01: The Mean Score of the Mastery on Grammar**

Pre-Test	Post-Test 1	Post-Test 2	Post-Test 3
22.18	39.74	65.77	83.46
Very Insufficient	Very Insufficient	Sufficient	Good

From the above table, it can be seen that the students' mastery on grammar before they were given the treatment was very insufficient with the attainment of mean score 22.18. After the treatment was conducted by utilizing Inquiry Model, the result of post-test 1 apparently had not yet given a significant improvement. The students' mean score was still categorized very insufficient. With the modification held in several phases of learning in cycle 2 and cycle 3, the results show significant improvements. The students' mastery on grammar improved sufficiently which was shown from the mean score, 65.77 in post-test 2 and further became 83.46 in post-test 3, which was categorized good.

**Table 02 : The Number and Percentage of Students for Each Category of Evaluation**

Category	Pre-Test	Post-Test 1	Post-Test 2	Post-Test 3
Very Good	-	1 = 2.56%	6 = 15.38%	15 = 38.46%
Good	-	-	5 = 12.82%	14 = 35.90%
Sufficient	-	2 = 5.13%	10 = 25.64%	7 = 17.95%
Insufficient	-	5 = 12.82%	8 = 20.51%	2 = 5.13%
Very Insufficient	39 = 100%	31 = 79.49%	10 = 25.64%	1 = 2.56%

From table 2, it can be seen that before the action was conducted, all students (100%) had a very insufficient mastery on grammar, which was proven from the mean score obtained (22.18). In cycle 1, Inquiry Model was applied in order to improve their mastery on grammar, yet the improvement was still insignificant (39.74). There was only 1 student (2,56%) who got score under very good category, 2 students (5,13%) were categorized sufficient, 5 students (12,82%) were categorized insufficient, and the rest 31 students (79,49%) were mainly categorized very insufficient. After having certain modifications in the teaching and learning activities, such as the distribution of the handout consisting of the rules of grammar which had to be filled out by the students, and the assistance of the list of the forms of verbs like verb 1 and verb 2 in cycle 2 as well as cycle 3, their understanding of the new grammatical concept being learned showed a

significant improvement. The result of post-test 2 signifies that the number of students who achieved very good scores increased to 6 persons (15.38%), 5 others (12.82%) gained good scores, 10 persons (25.64%) obtained sufficient results, while 8 students (20.51%) still got less sufficient scores, and 10 others (25.64%) gained very insufficient results. At post-test 3, the number of students achieved very good scores increased to 15 persons (38.46%), 14 students (35.90%) gained good results, while 7 others (17.95%) obtained sufficient results. However, there were still 2 students (5.13%) who got insufficient scores, and 1 person (2.56%) still gained a very insufficient result. In general, it can be concluded that 74.36% of students could achieve the scores which accomplished the target required, that is under the category of good and very good. Regarding that the attainment of the mean score at post-test 3 could reach 83.46 and categorized good, thus the research was ended and it was summarized that Inquiry Model was able to improve the mastery of grammar.

## Discussion

The result of tests proved that 39 students who were in grade eight obtained scores below 55 which meant that there was no single student had a good understanding of the tenses which had been previously taught by their teacher before the treatment was conducted.

The analysis of the result of tests proved that the students had problems in *Subject-Verb Agreement*, such as the use of verbs with *-s/es* for third person singular in *the Simple Present Tense*, *auxiliary verbs do/does* in forming negative and interrogative sentences, and they were unable to detect the use of adverbs as key words which were the markers of tenses. In addition, in *the Simple Past Tense*, the students tended to use wrong verb forms like *verb 1* or even *-ing form* in the sentence. In forming the negative and interrogative sentences, they often made mistakes in using *auxiliary verb*. In spite of using *did*, they used the *auxiliary do* or *does*. The other mistake was that in the negative and interrogative sentences which had employed

*did*, the students at the same time still used *verb 2*, and also occasionally used *-ing form*.

In cycle 1 of the two teaching sessions, the students were introduced with Inquiry Model. The result shows that the mean score obtained was 39.74. Apparently, this result signifies that there was not yet a significant improvement of the students' mastery on grammar.

The analysis of the finding on the observation sheet in the two sessions gave evidence that though the students were satisfactorily participative and cooperative in group work, the confusion occurred among the majority of students regarding the new introduced model of learning. When the students were instructed to find out the pattern of grammar in the reading passage, they had not yet understood what the task was required them to do, even though the teacher had given an example in the pre-activity. The same thing happened while they discussed the sentences which consisted of grammatical mistakes. The majority of students did not know what they were supposed to do and revise. In the reporting of the result of group discussion on the grammatical mistakes in the sentences, there were only three students eager to present the group result in session 1 and four students in session 2. The result of questionnaire demonstrated that both the teacher and students had a positive response toward the teacher's skill in teaching, their learning activities, and the operation of the group work.

In assessing the teacher's skill by the students, the aspects under assessment were classified into three, namely (1) the material, (2) the classroom management, and (3) the teacher's communication.

The teacher started the class by reviewing the previous lessons. On the basis of the questionnaire analysis, it was found that the teacher reviewed the lessons well. The statement dealing with the lesson review was extremely agreed by 25 students (64%), while 14 students (36%) agreed with it. In connecting between the topic previously discussed and the new one, the teacher used several questions. According to the students, the questions forwarded to them were able to guide them to comprehend the topic would be discussed, and 95% of students showed their agreement on this issue. The

main activity was conducted by giving the students the reading text which was made compatible to the topic. All students (100%) stated that the text given by their teacher was suitable with the topic. In terms of the text difficulty to their level, 82 % students affirmed that the text was suitable for their level. Furthermore, 92% of them conveyed that their teacher could guide them well in understanding the main concept of the lessons. As well, they pointed that the strategy used by their teacher could assist them to understand the key concept of grammar taught. In order to help the students in finding the rules of grammar in the text themselves, the teacher made use of group work. According to 87% of students, the group work was considered an effective strategy. The sentences in the text were regarded as easy to comprehend by 98% students, so that they were able to solve the grammatical problems in the text. Thus, it can be concluded that there was self confident among the students (82%) that they could comprehend the grammatical concepts, which enabled them to present the result of the group discussion. In the post activity, the teacher drew a conclusion of the material taught. According to 90% of students, the teacher was able to summarize the lessons well. Before the class was ended, the assessment conducted by their teacher was considered related to the topic and suitable with the students' ability by 28 out of 39 students (79%).

Furthermore, the teacher's classroom management was regarded as successful since most of the students stated that their teacher could handle the class well. The evidence could be seen from the attention given to the students. 38 students expressed that the teacher gave fair attention to different gender. He did not tolerate the students' bad behavior as he directly coped with any misconduct soon there was an indication of it. In utilizing the time, the students conveyed that their teacher could use the time effectively so that he ended the class on time.

Regarding the communication aspect, 21 students (80%) stated that the teacher explained the lesson using the language which was easy to comprehend. All students (100%) further said that the volume of the teacher's voice was clear, and the

quality of his language for instruction was good. As well, the language used was regarded as polite and not insulting racism, ethnicity, and religion.

The results of the students' assessment toward their teacher's skill in teaching were not far different from the teacher's self assessment. The results of his self assessment show that in pre-activity, whilst activity and post-activity, the teacher said that he had done his tasks well. In terms of the classroom management and communication, the teacher's self assessment was congruent with the students' assessment. This proved that his self assessment was quite reliable.

Besides observing and assessing the teacher's teaching skill, the students also assessed their own learning. The questionnaire consisted of close and open statements. Almost all of the students (92%) said that the material was interesting. The strategy applied gave them clear understanding on the concept of grammar. This was stated by 38 students (97.44%). The group work was actually used to help less able students to understand the material faster and also to train them to respect others' opinions. This way of learning was regarded successful as 36 students (92.31%) said that it was appropriate to help them finding the grammar concept themselves. Furthermore, 97% of students conveyed that the Inquiry Model was successful to make the concept of grammar easy to comprehend and 93% of students considered that the Inquiry Model was able to put the concept of grammar learned in their long-term memory.

On the basis of the findings in cycle 1, the modification was mainly operated to anticipate the quiet students who did not understand the topic discussed. The assistance to them was in the form of handout with the sentences and rules of grammar which had to be completed before the group work was activated. As well, the list of verb 1 and verb 2 was also provided to guide and simplify their understanding to the concept of grammar.

The results of post-test 2 indicated there was a moderately significant improvement. The students' mean score reached 65.77 and it was categorized sufficient. The finding from observation displayed that the students were very cooperative, active and

participative. They became more familiar with the strategy used by their teacher, and their understanding to the tenses was becoming better, though there were still 10 students (15.64%) obtained very insufficient scores, and 8 students (20.51%) attained insufficient ones.

The results of the observation of two sessions in cycle 2 illustrated a considerable progress, for example, at the beginning of the lessons when the students were given three grammatically wrong sentences, they were actively engaged in listening to the teacher and some of them raised their hands to eagerly revise the sentences. In the whilst-activity, the students seriously completed the handout with the grammar rules. In the group work, they enthusiastically worked on finding the grammar concept. In the reporting phase, all groups excitedly raised their hands to report the result of their group discussion. To avoid the disturbance to other classes, the teacher gave turns to the representative of each group to present the report in front of the class while the other students paid attention to. In the closing activity, the teacher gave emphasis to the important parts of the lessons by giving questions and the students were actively giving responses.

Similar to cycle 1, the questionnaire to assess the teacher's performance in cycle 2 consisted of three aspects, namely (1) the material, (2) the classroom management, and (3) the communication. In terms of the material, the students stated that the strategy used to introduce the material was regarded as effective. This can be seen in three phases, in the pre-activity, in the whilst-activity, as well as in the post-activity. According to 38 students (97.44%), the teacher reviewed the lessons well. At the pre-activity, the teacher gave them several ungrammatical sentences. The objective was to guide their understanding to the grammatical mistakes and to revise them. In the whilst activity, the teacher gave them the material in terms of the reading passage. The students (82 %) stated that the passage given was relevant to the topic. The level of difficulty was also in line with their ability. They further said that their teacher could help them understand the grammar concept well. The handout which should be completed was able to guide their

understanding to the rules of grammar. In relation to the use of group work, 75% of the students mentioned that its application was appropriate since they could do the task more easily. The sentences with the grammatical mistakes could be easily understood, so that they could solve the problems of grammar in them. More importantly, 35 students (89.74%) felt they were able to report the result of their discussion. Regarding the post-activity, 35 students (89.74%) cited that the concluding of the lesson was done well. The result of the questionnaire proved that the assessment was relevant to the topic. In terms of the difficulty of the assessment, 31 students (79.49%) pointed that it was suitable with the students' ability.

In reference to the classroom management, the students confirmed that the teacher managed the class properly. 95% of students stated that their teacher gave fair attention to each group, and all students (100%) agreed that the time was used effectively, and the misbehavior disturbing the class was also dealt with nicely.

In communication aspect, the majority of students (90%) evaluated that the teacher explained the lesson using a simple language, the volume was clear, the quality of the voice was good, the language used was polite and not offending to racism, ethnicity, and religion. Meanwhile, the teacher self evaluation indicated the same result. The evaluation from the students was consistent with the teacher's self evaluation in three aspects of teaching skill.

Moreover, the effect of the teaching strategy was also evaluated by the students. In cycle 2, the students valued that the Inquiry Model was considered effective and had a positive impact to their mastery of grammar. 38 students (96.44%) verified that this model of learning could assist them in having a clearer understanding to the grammar learnt.

The group work was also considered by 80% of students to give a great help to make them understand the lesson quicker. Furthermore, 34 students (87.18%) cited that the group work was very appropriate to help them discovering the concept themselves. They found that the lesson became easier to comprehend and at last 38 students (97.44%) ex-

pressed that through the use of the Inquiry Model, their understanding of grammar was kept long in their memory.

On the basis of the findings in cycle 2, there were still certain issues to be monitored in the next cycle. There were 18 students who attained insufficient and very insufficient scores. The researcher diagnosed that those students are the quiet ones and found the material was still difficult to understand. For that reason, the extra treatment in cycle 3 was focused on handling them. Those 18 students were located in the first two rows and in the question and answer phase and in reporting phase in the form of discovering the grammatical mistakes and revising, they were given the tasks to do so. This was done in order to provide more challenge to them so that they were motivated to learn and thus understand the lessons. As well, the teacher approached them to their table and paid a close look at their work.

Doing those modifications, the result of post test 3 displayed a significant improvement. The mean score reached 83.46.

The findings from the observation were showing almost the same result as cycle 2. The students were cooperative and participative following all activities from the beginning up to the end of the lesson. They actively answered the teacher's questions on the sentences consisting of grammatical mistakes at the pre-activity. In the-whilest activity, they read the passage thoroughly. The teacher assisted them in the usage of verb form, and the students paid proper attention to the teacher's explanation. When the teacher distributed the handout of sentences and the handout of the rules of grammar to be completed, the students quickly did the task in their group. In dealing with the ungrammatical sentences, the students were actively doing the task and in the reporting session all students raised their hands to be given the chance to report the result of group work. In this cycle, more attention was given to the 18 students so that the reporting time was given more to them. Hence, the rest of students felt despaired for not getting their turn. This illustrated there was an interesting moment of learning that the students enjoyed.

Comparable to the result in cycle 2, the result of the questionnaire of the teacher's evaluation by the students showed that the teacher's skill in delivering the material was good and effective. Indeed, almost all of the students evaluated the teacher managed the classroom activities properly. His communication to the students was also fine. The result of the students' assessment of their teacher was in line with the teacher's self evaluation. Therefore, the students' assessment was consistent with the teacher's own evaluation.

In relation to the evaluation on the effect of Inquiry Learning Model, the result of the questionnaire proved that the way the teacher taught had a positive impact on their achievement. From the close type questionnaire, the students valued that the material was interesting, the strategy utilized in learning made their understanding of grammar clear. The use of group work could help the students to faster comprehend the lesson and to discover the concept of grammar themselves. Furthermore, 97% of students affirmed that the strategy enabled them to keep a good memory of the grammar concept.

Dealing with the open type questionnaire, 38 students (94.77%) liked the grammar lesson being handled in the form of group discussion in order that they were able to discover and solve the problems themselves, 82% of students further confirmed that they were no longer afraid of giving responses or presenting the group report in front of the class. In this cycle, there was no single student gave a less interesting reaction to the strategy developed. This signified that they enjoyed their learning.

From all the above discussion, it can be explained that the teacher's skill in giving the instruction with the group work strategy could maximally encourage the students to optimize their learning. Though the group work strategy is not a very current strategy of activating the students, but the way to organize it with the Inquiry Model to guide them to discover the concept of grammar was considered very effective both to increase their interest and motivation and further had a great impact on their understanding of grammar, which eventually enabled them to attain good mastery on it.



## CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, a conclusion is drawn up as follows: (1) The Inquiry Learning Model could effectively improved the mastery on grammar of grade eight students of SMP Lab IKIP Negeri Singaraja, (2) The students had a positive response towards the activities developed traced from the findings of observation and questionnaire. From the result of observation, the students participated actively in the group work in order to discover the rules of grammar and revise the ungrammati-

cal sentences themselves and report them to the class. From the questionnaire, it could be summarized that the students enjoyed the model of learning. This could also be proven from their positive evaluation on their teacher in three aspects, namely the skill in explaining the material, classroom management, and communication. Dealing with the group work, most of the students pointed that the group work was effective to assist them understanding the lessons.

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