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# **JURNAL BAHASA, SASTRA DAN BUDAYA**

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Monny Basalawa



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# **JURNAL BAHASA, SASTRA DAN BUDAYA**

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# COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES USED BY THE TEACHERS AND THE STUDENTS IN ENGLISH AS FOREIGN LANGUAGE AT RSBI CLASS

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**Abstract:** This study aims to find out the types of communication strategies used by the teachers and the students in English classroom at RSBI class and to find out the factors causing the use communication strategies in learning English as foreign language. Three English teachers and the students at RSBI class is the source of data in this research. This study used descriptive qualitative method. Data of this study was collected through observation, interview and documentation. The findings of this study showed that the participant in this research employed eleven out of twelve Dorney's classification of communication strategies, such as; message abandonment, topic avoidance, circumlocution, approximation, use all purpose words, word coinage, use of non linguistics means, literal translation, code switching, appeal for help, use of fillers hesitation. One strategy which is not employed by the participant is foreignizing. This study found that there were some main factors that influence the using of communication strategies. They were motivation, limited knowledge of the language, and attitude.

## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, learning how to communicate better in foreign language is significant to all of us both in our private and public sectors. The position of English as a foreign language in Indonesia is requisite to be learned in all schools from the lower school to upper secondary school, and in some cases, also in elementary school.

However, the teaching and learning English as foreign language is not as simple as we thought, because there is a set of rules we must follow, especially related to how the learners can communicate fluently in English. There are so many efforts tried to respond to the problems arising. Yet, efforts related to how learners can communicate fluently are still rare. According to Richards and Schmidt (2002), communicative competence involving four components of competence, namely; "grammatical competence", "discourse competence", "sociolinguistic competence" and "strategy competence". It means that in teaching English, an English teacher should pay attention to all of communicative competences. This is contrary to the reality, where the teachers only focus in teaching grammatical competence, discourse competence and sociolinguistic competence while the use of strategy competence is ignored in teaching and learning process.

Based on my experience as an English teacher at Senior High School, the students have learnt English for more than three years, but there is no significant English ability achieved after many years of study. The main problem faced by the students in English class is communication strategies.

To overcome the problem, an English teacher often use strategies called as communication strategy. By using it, the teacher can create one situation which makes the learners feel comfort in expressing their ideas or communicating with the entire participant in English class. Faerch and Kasper (1983) define communication strategies as potentially conscious plans used by an individual to solve a problem in order to reach a specific communication goal. It is believed that communication strategies play an important role in the development of strategic competence in learning language. It was supported by Corder (cited in Bialystok, 1990), He pointed out that Communication strategy is an organized technique employed by a speaker to express his or her meaning when faced some difficulties.

This research is crucial for foreign learner because by knowing the various types of

communication strategies, the students and the teacher can develop good communication strategies in English class. A professional teacher does not give up when she/he found their students confusing with her/his explanation. They will look for the other way to create a good communication. The good application of communication strategies also enables students to be more active to communicate with the teacher and the other learners in English class.

Based on that reasons, I am interested in raising a study entitled "Communication strategies used by teachers and students in English classroom of pilot international standard school (RSBI)". This study is intended to look at the employment of communication strategies in English as the second language at RSBI class.

In conducting the study I have certain purposes or objectives as the main target to gain in this research paper, i.e., to find out the types of communication strategies used by the teacher and students in English classroom at RSBI class, and to find out the factors causing the use of communication strategies in learning English as foreign language. This research is expected to be beneficial for the teachers, as they will know the various types of communication strategies, so they can develop good communication strategies in teaching English as foreign language. For the students, this research is useful to provide information of varieties of communication strategies used by them in English class. Therefore it shows what kinds of communication strategies are suggested to maintain the communication in learning process. In general, the result of this research will help the English foreign learners to keep their communication when they use second language. Thus, they can use communication strategies to overcome the limitations in communication.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### The Nature of Communication

According to Rosenbaum (2005, p.1), "communication can be defined in many ways. In

simple term, communication is information transmitted a verbal or non verbal message, and a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, sign, or behavior". Similar to Rosenbaum, G.G Brown (2000) said that "Communication is transfer of information from one person to another, whether or not it elicits confidence. But the information transferred must be understandable to the receiver".

### The Concept of Communication Strategies

Maleki (2007) explains that a communication strategy is individual's efforts to find out the way to fill the gap between their communication effort and immediate available linguistic resource.

From the brief explanation of communication strategies above, it can be seen that the English teachers and the learners are emphasize the using of communication strategies as a way to keep going on the communication when the speakers find the difficulties in communication.

All the previous definitions reveal the same purpose of communication strategies, to solve a communication problem that has emerged by applying some kinds of techniques. Although there are some different definitions of communication strategies but the basic idea remains the same. The concept about the communications strategies in this chapter will be the basis in directing my research later.

### Taxonomy of Communication Strategies

Dornyei (1995) asserts that there are 12 types of Communication Strategies:

1. Message abandonment: the strategy of leaving message unfinished because of language difficulties. For example: a speaker says "he took the wrong way in mm..." (He/she does not continue his/her utterance)
2. Topic avoidance: the strategy where the speakers try not to talk about concepts which they find it difficult to express. For example: a speaker avoids saying certain words or

- sentence because he/she does not know the English terms or forget the English terms.
3. Circumlocution: the strategy used by speakers in which they describe or paraphrase the target object or action. For example: if a speaker does not know the word *corkscrew*, he/she replaces it by saying '*the thing that you use to open the bottle*'.
  4. Approximation: the strategy in which a speaker uses an alternative term to express the meaning of the target lexical item as closely as possible. For example: *ship* for *sail boat*; *pipe* for *water pipe*.
  5. Use of all-purpose words: This is the strategy when speakers expand an empty lexical item to context where certain words are lacking. For example: the overuse of the words *thing*, *stuff*, *make*, *do*, *what-do-you-call-it*, *what-is-it*.
  6. Word coinage: a speaker creates an L2 word based on his/her knowledge of morphological rules. For example: *vegetarianist* for *vegetarian*. (*vegetarianist* is not stated in the dictionary)
  7. Use of nonlinguistic means: a speaker uses non-linguistic resources such as mime, gesture, facial expression, and sound imitation to help him/her in expressing the meaning. For example: a speaker uses his/her hands and acts like flying to refer to *birds*.
  8. Literal translation: the strategy in which speakers translate a lexical item, an idiom, or a structure from their L1 to L2. For example: *do not enter sign* for *no entry sign*.
  9. Foreignizing: speakers use L1 word by adjusting it to L2 phonologically. For example: a speaker does not know the word *tap*, he/she uses the L1 word, that is *kran* but with L2 pronunciation, so he/she says *kren*.
  10. Code switching: the strategy in which speakers use their L1 word with L2 pronunciation. For example: if a speaker does not know the word *baki*, he/she will say '*baki*' with L2 pronunciation.
  11. Appeal for help: the strategy where the speakers ask other speakers or teacher for help because they do not know or forget some words, structures, or idioms. for example: a speaker may ask his/her friend by saying '*What do you call.....?*'
  12. Use of fillers/hesitation devices: a speaker may use filling words to fill pause and to gain time to think. For example: *well, as a matter of fact, now let me see*. The examples of fillers such as *I think, you know, you see, um, mm, ah, sort of, OK, right, really*.

#### Pilot International Standard School (RSBI)

According to Sindiknas, Bab XIV Pasal 50 Ayat 3 Undang-Undang No. 20 Tahun 2003, the local government has to develop at least one international standard school in each district. Based on this rule, the local government in Gorontalo developed some international standard schools. All schools in Gorontalo have the potential to develop into RSBI. However, to be able to implement an international curriculum is not easy. To adopt international curriculum, there are some standards schools must meet.

#### Previous Study

The study about communication strategies in English as foreign language in Indonesia is still rare. One of the studies was conducted by Yusrita Yanti entitled *Conversational Communication Strategies: Conversational Analysis of the Member of English Club at English Literature Department University of Bung Hatta*. The research was conducted in 1997. The focus of this study is the investigation of the strategies used by learners of English in conversation. The subjects of this study were the native speakers of the Minangkabau language (LI) who are learning English.

Based on the explanation, the study conducted by Yusrita Yanti only focused to describe the communication strategies and the kinds of errors made by the participant. While this research

focused to describe the types of communication strategies used by teachers and the students in English at RSBI class and also to describe factors causing the use of certain types of communication strategies. The other different is laid at the participants of the research. In Yusrita Yani study, the participants were the learners who used Minangkabau language as their first language whereas the participant of this research were the English teachers and students at pilot international standard school (RSBI)

### METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

This research was done at Senior High School in Gorontalo City, in one of pilot international standard school in Gorontalo. It focused on Communication strategies used by the teacher and the students of English at SMAN I Kota Gorontalo. Its address is at Jalan M.H Thamrin. The study selected three teachers and three classes as subjects of research. This research was started at April, 2012 and finished at June, 2012.

This research used descriptive qualitative research. Craswell (2003, p.18) pointed out that "a qualitative is one in which the inquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivism perspectives or advocacy/participatory perspectives. It also uses strategies of inquiry such as narratives, phenomenologist, ethnographies, grounded theory studies, or case studies. The researcher collects open-ended, emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data". In collecting data, this study used triangulation technique. Patton (cited in Sugiyono, 2007) explains that through triangulation technique can built the strengths of each type of data collection while minimizing the weakness in any single technique.

In analyzing the data, this research used procedure in analyzing the data by Creswell. According to Creswell (2003, p.191-195), there are six steps can be followed in analyzing the data which are; 1). Organize and prepare the data analysis. This involves transcribing interviews,

optically scanning material, typing up field notes, or sorting and arranging the data into different types depending on the sources of information. Transcribing interviews got from three English teachers and some students in this research. From the interview, I got some important information in supporting the data. 2). Read through all the data. The data involved the observation and interview transcript, field note. It has the aim to obtained general sense of information. 3). Begin detailed analysis with a coding process. Coding is the process of organizing the material. It means, the data organized and classified based on the type of communication strategies purposed by Dornyei (1995). 4). Use the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis. 5) Advance how the description and themes will be represented the qualitative narrative. 6). A final step in data analysis involves making an interpretation or meaning of the data. This chapter has discussed the methodology of this research.

### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### Type of Communication Strategies Used by Teacher and Students in English as Foreign Language

The data are classified based on twelve types of communication strategies proposed by Dornyei (1995). From twelve (12) types of communication strategies proposed by Dornyei (1995), there were eleven (11) types of communication strategies have been discovered in this study, i.e., message abandonment, topic avoidance, circumlocution, approximation, use all purpose words, word coinage, use of non linguistics means, literal translation, code switching, appeal for help, use of fillers hesitation devices, except for foreignizing. There is none of the teachers and the students applied foreignizing strategy. The teachers did not use this strategy because the teachers have mastered the rule of English phonology. So that, they avoid to use this strategy. While the students have the different

reason, they did not applied this strategy because they felt embarrassed to pronounce the words in Indonesian language with English phonology.

Both of the teachers and the students in this research have the different strategies in communicate. The teachers applied 6 strategies, they are; Topic avoidance, circumlocution, approximation, use of non linguistics means, code switching and use of fillers hesitation devices. While the students applied 11 strategies, they are; message abandonment, topic avoidance, circumlocution, approximation, use all purpose words, word coinage, use of non linguistics means literal translation, code switching, appeal for help and use of fillers hesitation devices.

The section below presents more details about the use of communication strategies that applied by teachers and students in this study.

### *1. Message Abandonment*

According to the observation data, it can be seen that none of the English teachers applied this strategy. The data obtained during the observation shows that the teachers avoid employing this strategy. They tried to clear all of their explanation; they think that if they use message abandonment strategy, their students would be confused in getting the information from the teacher. It is supported by the teachers' statement from interview

According to the data transcript, two students applied this strategy. They were tried to continue what will she said but because of the lack vocabularies she has, she did not continue her utterance and choose to keep silent. This was shown in the next data transcript between student and teacher.

Furthermore, one student stated that when teacher gives her a question, then she does not understand with the question given, she usually being quiet and tried to continue her utterance. The students' answer showed that she chooses to abandon the message with the aim to make her safe from all risks if she gives an incorrect answer to her teacher. The student seems did not have

the motivation in learning English, it can be seen from her statement above.

### *2. Topic Avoidance*

The second strategy is topic avoidance. From the data gathered from observation and interview, only one of three English teachers in this research applied this strategy. The teacher 2 used this strategy to ensure the communication to runwell. Teacher 2 avoidedto discuss something difficult to response by her students. The teacher tried to move to the other topic which familiar with their students daily. So that, the student can answers the teacher's question easily.

Based on the observation, topic avoidance was most frequent strategy done by the students. They preferred to apply this strategy to maintain the communication.

### *3. Circumlocution*

All teachers in this study have applied this strategy. They used this strategy when they found their students hardto understand their explanation. The teacher used this strategy to keep the flow of communication and to make his ideas easy to understand.

One student also applied this strategy. By that, it can be said that the student have the motivation in maintaining the communication. Unfortunately, the students in this study were less likely to use this strategy in maintaining communication. This strategy could greatly help the student in improving the English language skills.

### *4. Approximation*

The next type of communication strategies used by the teachers was approximation. Based on the data, it showed that all of English teachers applied this research. The teacher chooses to use the familiar words with the student to get the student to understand the meaning.

The same way is done by the students as participant of this research. They also applied this strategy. The students used less specific term than the intended meaning. In this case, the student's

efforts in maintaining the communication should be appreciated by the teacher.

### 5. *Use of All-Purpose Words*

From the data obtained during the observation, none of the teacher in this research applied this strategy. It can be concluded that the teacher has prepared the materials that will be provided to students. This strategy is used when the learners expand an empty lexical item to context where certain words are lacking.

There is only one student used this strategy in communication. The student tried to overcome her difficulty by try to find by herself, where certain words are lacking. In this case, the student seems tried to maintain the communication.

### 6. *Word Coinage*

None of the teacher in this research applied this strategy. It is caused by their knowledge about the English morphological rules. So, it is impossible for them to create a second language word based on the morphological rule of the first language. Based on the data gathered during the observation, the students as the participant in this research rarely used this strategy. From 165 the numbers of communication strategies applied by the participant, just three students applied this strategy. The student used this strategy because he wanted to keep his answer to run smooth. He thinks that all of the student can understand what he said.

### 7. *Use of Non-Linguistics Means*

According to the observation, it can be seen that all teachers mostly used this strategy. They used gesture, mimic, or facial expression to describe the intended meaning. From three English teachers, teacher 3 looked to use the gesture and facial expression more often than the other teachers. The teacher used it help the students understand better his explanation.

Use of non linguistics strategy was also applied by the students. Based on the data obtained during the observation, it can be seen that the student who applied this strategy had high

confidence in demonstrating their explanation by using gesture, mime and facial expression. The student used her hand to demonstrate how people stop the vehicle. When she said "I need your help something" she uses facial expression to illustrate that she really need help. The data above also supported by the data during the interview. Some of the students give the same answer. They always used gesture when they want to explain something.

### 8. *Literal Translation*

There is none of the teachers applied this strategy. It means, as the English teacher they have mastered the rule in English language. Thus, none of the teacher translated a lexical item, an idiom, or a structure from the first language to the second language. The next strategy used by the students was literal translation. In observation it was done three times. From the conversation above, it can be seen that student translate the sentence based on the rule of the first language. Actually, the sentence "lost announcement" refers to lost announcement. Because of the first language interference so the student spontaneously used it.

### 9. *Foreignizing*

Based on the data during the observation, there is none of the participant in this research applied this strategy. The teachers and the students have the different reasons. As an English teacher, they have been learnt about the English phonology. So that, they were never used this strategy. While the students think that they felt embarrassed if they use the vocabulary in first language by using the phonological of the second language.

### 10. *Code Switching*

This is the favorite strategy used by the participant. It can be seen from the data transcript obtained during the observation. All teachers in this subject always used this strategy when they are teaching in the English class. It can be seen from the data transcript, they are used it every time they come in the class. Even though they know that their school is one of pilot international school,

where English is used as intermediate language in some subjects.

Based on the data transcript, it can be seen that all teachers in this subject applied this strategy. Teacher 1 switches her explanation with Indonesia language when she wants to give questions to the students. Moreover, she used local dialect in her explanation. Teacher 2 mostly used this strategy. Based on the data obtained from interview showed that teacher 2 did not only mix or switch some sentence but also used Indonesian at the whole explanation. This is very different with the teacher 3. He rarely applied this strategy. He used this strategy just to confirm what he said and to clarify students' understanding. The data interview showed that there is the different reason why the teacher applied this strategy. It depends on the teachers' aims and the students' ability in understanding English.

Code switching strategy is not only applied by the teachers but also the students in this research. This strategy was the most frequent strategy used by them. It can be seen that the student tried to answer the teachers' question although he should switch to the first language. The student has some reason why he switches in the first language.

### 11. Appeal for Help

The data transcript showed that, from 165 strategies occurred in this research. There is none of the teacher applied this strategy. The teachers never applied this strategy during the process of teaching and learning. It can be seen from the data transcript gathered during the observation. The students applied this strategy twice during the study. From the data, it can be seen that the student tried to continue her utterance by ask help to her friends who seated next to her.

### 12. Use of Fillers Hesitation Devices

The use of filler hesitation devices was the second highest frequent of communication strategies used by the teachers in this research. The teachers used this strategy to divert the students' concern and also to get time for think

before they will continue their explanations. Most of filler used by the teachers were "Ok" and "well". From the conversation, it can be seen that teacher 1 tried to divert the students' concern towards her explanation and instructions. Teacher 1 raised the intonation when she wanted to say "Ok" or "Well"

The other strategy found in the observation during the English learning process was use of fillers hesitation devices.

Mostly the teachers and the students use code switching. The second strategy mostly used by these subjects is use fillers hesitation device. According to Bialystok (1990) by using this strategy the learners may use filling words to fill pause and to gain time to think. Not only had the teachers, the students in this research also applied this strategy. According to Dornyei (1995) the learners may use some filler to fill pause and to gain time to think, such as, I think, you know, well, Ok, right, really and etc. The next type of communication strategy is use of non linguistic. The data in research finding showed that from three English teachers, Teacher 3 mostly used this strategy than the other teachers. He used mime, facial, expression and also gesture in teaching English, so that the students look so enthusiastic when the teacher teach them. The teacher used this strategy to get students' attention during the learning process. There are some students also applied this strategy but most of them feel ashamed if they should use their facial expression or gesture to communicate at the English classroom.

The next strategy taken by the participant in this research was topic avoidance. Most of the students in this research applied this strategy. There are some reasons expressed by the student, she/he did not remember a lot of vocabulary in their mind, as a result sometime she/he was confused with the chosen vocabulary or lack of vocabulary.

The participant in this research also applied approximation strategy. Faerch and Kasper (1980) explain that this strategy consists in the use of a super ordinate, synonymic or subordinate term. Most of the teachers applied this strategy by using synonymic.

Circumlocution was one type of communication strategies which is applied in this research. Sometimes, the students in this research gave some description of things in a simpler way in order to make the interlocutor understand. Meanwhile, the teachers describe or paraphrase the target object.

The other types of communication strategies applied by the participant were word coinage and literal. Dorney (1995) explains that the students use word that does not really exists in English. The data gathered from the observation showed that the teacher never used word coinage strategy, this strategy just applied by the student. The same things happen in literal translation, there is none of the teacher applied this strategy. It can be said that the teachers have master the rule of English language. So, it is impossible for them to create a second language words based on the morphological rule of the first language.

The using of message abandonment and appeal for help also occurred in this research. It can be seen that all of the English teachers tried to not use this strategy in teaching English. This strategy is only applied by the students when they are found the difficulties in delivering their ideas to the others.

### Factors Causing the Use of Communication Strategies in Learning English as Foreign Language

The data in this part are gathered from interview and observation. From the data, it can be concluded that there are some factors influence the participant in using communication strategies in teaching and learning process. They are; motivation in teaching and learning the second language, attitude towards the language, lacks of vocabularies, limited knowledge of the target language and also for solving problem in reaching a communication goal.

From the teacher's statements, the teacher showed a positive attitude toward the English language. He has a positive view of the importance of English in the globalization era. If you want to be a part of the world, you should master the

English language. Teacher 1 has the same view with the teacher 3. They show a positive views and optimism attitude toward the future role of English language, especially in education field. Meanwhile, the teacher 2 only had a narrow view of the role of English language in learning.

Based on the findings above it can be concluded that is a significant relationship between teachers' motivation and teachers' attitude toward the application of certain type of communication strategies.

The result of the study showed that, from all English teachers, two of them showed the high motivation, it can be concluded from their statement in interview. They said that they were motivated by the spirit of the students. According to them, the students were so enthusiastic during the teaching and learning process. Even though they have the difficulties in communicate with English but they tried to communicate by applied all strategies. The teachers' motivation also could be seen during the observation; the teachers seemed to have a great spirit in explaining the material. Meanwhile, one of the teachers showed low of motivation. She argues that her students never showed the spirit in learning and when she give questions for them they just silent without any response. It can be seen that the students' interest and motivation in learning English can influence to the teachers' motivation.

Two of the teachers assume that the lack of knowledge of the students became the motivation to use the various strategies in teaching. But one of them thinks that the students lack can decrease her motivation in teaching. The result of this study also supported by Basalama (2010: p.185) in her research entitled "A qualitative study of professional formation identity and practice", she pointed out that "the teachers' perceptions of their students' capacities to learn influence their teaching practice".

Some of the students in this research has positive attitude in English, it can be seen from their statement during the observation. Most of the students applied some types of communication

strategies when they were found the difficulties in delivering their ideas. It was supported by the data obtained from interview. The students showed a positive attitude towards English. From the interview, some of the students said that they tried to practice their English in their daily life, for example when they want to send a message for their friend they always mix with the English language.

Basalama (2010, p. 187) said that there are three characterizes of the teacher who has positive attitude, first "View constraints as challenges not barriers, empathetic to limitation and able to maximize limited resources". Two of the teachers in this research also showed the positive attitude toward the using of communication strategies in teaching English. They were able to maximize their limitation in teaching and learning process and also assume that the challenges in communication can be bridged by the use of communication strategies

Based on data analysis, not only motivation and attitude could influence the participant in using communication strategies. There are some reasons given by the students, such as their limited knowledge of the language, they were forgetting the target language so they were decided to use the communication strategies. The different reasons were given by the teachers. The English teachers choose to use certain types of communication strategies because they want to maintain the communication and to solve communication problems found by them in explaining the material in the English classroom.

It can be concluded that in guiding the students to become a competent speaker in English as the foreign language, English teachers should have the ability to explore the factors influence the using of communication strategies. By this, the teachers could choose the appropriate strategies for pedagogical purposes.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research finding and discussion, the following points are concluded. Firstly, based on the data findings, it can be concluded that from twelve (12) types of

communication strategies proposed by Dorney (1995), there were eleven (11) types of communication strategies have been discovered took place in this study, such as; message abandonment, topic avoidance, circumlocution, approximation, use all purpose words, word coinage, use of non linguistics means, literal translation, foreignizing, code switching, appeal for help, use of fillers hesitation devices, except, the foreignizing. Both of the teachers and the students in this research mostly use code switching strategy in teaching and learning English. Secondly, the participant in this research used various types of communication strategies. It is influenced by some factors which is influence the used of communication strategies. They are; motivation in using the language, attitude of the language use, lacks of vocabularies, limited knowledge of the language and also for solving problem in reaching a communication goal.

Based on the conclusion above there are some points that can be recommended to be done by the teachers of English at SMAN Negeri I Kota Gorontalo. Firstly, it is suggested to the teachers of SMAN I Kota Gorontalo to recognize the communication strategies which is appropriate with their students in learning English. Secondly, it also recommended for the teachers in the other subjects using English as intermediate language. The teachers can apply the various types of communication strategies when they face the difficulties in their communication. Finally, the result of this study is expected can give a contribution to the English teacher and the learners of foreign language in increasing their motivation to learn English and the limitation is not be an obstacle in communicating with the other people.

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