
THE REFLECTION OF PRONUNCIATION TEACHING MATERIALS: AN OLD PARADIGM IN A NEW ERA

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ABSTRACT

Ideally, pronunciation teaching materials should be developed based on the equal proportion of segmental and suprasegmental features and the employment of innovative pronunciation learning task types (e.g. awareness-raising tasks, rhyme and verse, ear training, etc.) (Goodwin, 2013). Unfortunately, such a reasonable breakthrough apparently has not responded by the effective use of pronunciation teaching materials. For these reasons, this study was aimed at exploring the pronunciation teaching materials in Pronunciation Practice module and course syllabus at a university in Tasikmalaya, Indonesia. The data were analysed with Tergujeff's data-driven classification (2010), namely phonetic training, reading aloud, listen and repeat, rhyme and verse, rules and instructions, awareness-raising activities, spelling and dictation and ear training. The findings revealed that the existing pronunciation teaching materials only accentuated on fostering the students' segmental features. Besides, the traditional task types still dominated the tasks in such a module, such as phonetic training, reading aloud, listen and repeat and rules and instructions. This confirms that the creative and dynamic use of current pronunciation teaching materials enable the students not only to undergo accuracy-oriented exercises but also fluency-based activities.

Keywords: pronunciation teaching materials; segmental and suprasegmental features; students' English pronunciation; task types of pronunciation

INTRODUCTION

In the last few decades, pronunciation teaching practices have undergone a significant flux (Jones, 1997). Initially, in the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) era, pronunciation was neglected since the focus of teaching language emphasized on mastering grammatical rules, vocabulary memorization and translation of the texts (Djebbari, 2014). In the late 1800s and 1900s in which Direct Method emerged, teaching pronunciation was dominantly carried out by intuition and imitation (Djebbari, 2014, p.88).

In the late 1960s, pronunciation did not become the priority in English language teaching since the advent of the Cognitive Approach (Celce-Murcia *et. al.* 1996). Based on this view, the native-like pronunciation was presupposed to be unrealistic and unattainable goals of language teaching (Celce-Murcia *et. al.* 1996). Thus, pronunciation was not overtly taught except vocabulary and grammar (Djebbari, 2014).

Different from the previous eras in which pronunciation was neglected in language teaching and learning, teaching pronunciation has been regarded as a crucial aspect in Communicative Approach (1980's) (Celce-Murcia *et. al.* 1996, p.5). To illustrate, the primary goal of this method is to promote the importance of communication in language teaching and learning, including pronunciation (Celce-Murcia *et. al.* 1996).

Currently, the present language methods pay more attention on teaching English pronunciation since the communicative competence and intelligibility have become the primary goals of language teaching (Berns, 1990, p.29). Communicative competence refers to the students' ability to foster their language knowledge and usage in a given community through social interaction (Hymes as cited in Brooks, 1992, p.219). On the other hand, intelligibility is interrelated to pronunciation, including stress and rhythm differences (Berns, 1990:33). Thus, employing language for real communication should be the basis of language pedagogy (Celce-Murcia *et. al.* 1996).

Dealing with pronunciation teaching materials, empirical studies have revealed that a little attention has been devoted to pronunciation textbooks compared to other language skills, such as grammar and writing (Derwing, 2008). Besides, the existing textbooks only accentuate on phonetics and phonology irrespective of considering the pedagogical element which the pronunciation teachers hold. In this case, the prevailing materials are anchored on the intuition of materials developers that contradict to the researchers viewing teaching materials (e.g. textbooks) ought to follow the empirical findings for establishing effective pronunciation teaching and learning process (Derwing and Munro, 2015).

Further, a majority of pronunciation teaching materials still emphasize on the importance of teaching segmental features instead of suprasegmental features (Alghazo, 2015). This presumably leads the students to learn English pronunciation in perceiving and producing individual sounds (Tergujeff, 2010). However, a few studies have been addressed to investigate pronunciation teaching materials, particularly in terms of promoting teaching segmental and suprasegmental features proportionally in pronunciation teaching materials (e.g. Jones, 1997; Tergujeff, 2010; Alghazo, 2015).

To fill this empirical gap, this study aimed at scrutinizing what types of task are represented in pronunciation teaching materials. More specifically, it seeks to discover the following research question; What types of task are represented in pronunciation teaching materials?

Essentially, the main contributions of this study is to provide informative insights on types of task of pronunciation teaching materials and their impacts on pronunciation teaching and learning. Additionally, the findings of this study offer valuable information on how to select, analyse, design and evaluate pronunciation teaching materials not only based on intuition but also from the empirical evidence to meet the needs of actual teaching and learning English pronunciation, notably in Indonesian EFL context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A Brief Description of Teaching Materials in Language Learning

Generally, language teaching materials constitute various instructional resources deployed in language educational contexts, such as textbooks, software, computers, projects, visual aids and assignment sheets (Alghazo, 2015, p. 318). In a similar vein, Tomlinson (2012) claims that teaching materials applicable materials ought to embrace five features for leading the teachers and students. Those features are informative (informing the students about the target language), instructional (directing the students to perform the language), experiential (supplying language use experience for the students), eliciting (motivating the students to apply the language) and exploratory (facilitating the students to explore the language) (p. 143).

Nevertheless, the existing teaching materials produced do not merit the contexts of the audiences (readers) who most of them are the non-native speakers of English (Alghazo, 2015). This may affect the employment of textbooks as language learning resources in the classrooms. On the one hand, textbooks offer the teachers a working plan delineating the apt use of approaches and a variety of teaching and learning activities (Akbari, 2008). On the other hand, they function as the principal sources of language exposure and interaction, notably in EFL milieu (Richards, 2001). However, Prabhu (1989) insinuates that textbooks will not function effectively if they are not synchronized with the students' current knowledge. In addition, Allwright (1981) perceives that textbooks potentially confiscate the students' negotiation towards the curriculum design process. Therefore, a flexible approach to the application of a textbook and its selection should be taken into account (Nation & Macalister, 2010, p. 159).

Teaching Materials in Pronunciation Learning

Pronunciation teaching materials are regarded to have paramount roles to shape and reinforce the quality of pronunciation teaching and learning. Further, Baker and Murphy (2011) contend that there have been burgeoning amounts of classroom textbooks, manuals, classroom-based research reports, teacher-training books, book chapters, journal articles, CD-ROMs, videos, computer software and internet resources provided for the ESL/EFL teachers in the past decades. This phenomenon leads the teachers and the students to be able to select and utilize such pronunciation teaching sources effectively to attain the desired learning objectives, particularly in pronunciation teaching and learning practices. One of the most widely used instructional media as the containers of language teaching materials in the classrooms is textbooks (e.g. Cunningsworth, 1984; Richards, 2001; Zacharias, 2005; Tomlinson, 2012; Mukudan et. al., 2016; Timmis, 2016; Levis & Sonsaat, 2016). In this sense, textbooks have been regarded as a focal element in the classroom activities due to its roles to connect the curriculum, teaching materials and teaching and learning practices (Zacharias, 2005). Nonetheless, Zacharias (2005) acknowledges that selecting the appropriate materials is not an easy endeavor since both the internationally- and locally-published textbooks display their prominence.

In response to the inevitable roles of the textbooks in teaching English pronunciation, the teachers seem to strengthen their dependency on them because of their reluctance, skepticism and insufficient training to teach pronunciation (Burgess & Spencer, 2000; Macdonald, 2002; Derwing & Munro, 2005). These occurred due to a number of factors, such as the dichotomous status of the speakers (e.g. native and non-native), pronunciation

as an elusive spoken language sub-skill compared to grammar or vocabulary and uncertain subject for the language teacher (Levis & Sonsaat, 2016, p. 110). In fact, McDonald (2002) reported that a majority of teachers desire to have assistive and facilitative pronunciation teaching materials. Hence, designing proper, facilitative and applicable pronunciation teaching materials can help the teachers practice pronunciation teaching and learning activities effectively in the classroom.

Given these facts, Levis & Sonsaat (2016) suggest that the design of pronunciation teaching materials should encompass three pivotal principles, namely they should accentuate on intelligibility, they should be integrated with other language skills and they should be able to cater adequate and functional encouragement for the teachers. Specifically, accentuating on intelligibility means that the materials should prioritize the meaningful communication among native speakers (Ns) and non-native speakers (NNs). In the same way, Jenkins (2000) theorizes such a concept as Lingua Franca Core (LFC) for Ns and NNs communication. Besides, setting the materials to merit with the goal (intelligibility) should be based on the proportional portion of segmental and suprasegmental features, especially in ESL contexts (Derwing, et. al. 1998). Hence, intelligibility-based pronunciation teaching materials enable the speakers and the hearers to have acceptable, meaningful and contextual communication.

Another principle is the integration of pronunciation teaching materials with other language skills (Morley, 1991; Levis & Grant, 2003). This principle echoes that pronunciation should not be taught in a decontextualized way since it is a part of other language skills, such as speaking and listening (Levis & Sonsaat, 2016). Additionally, Hinkel (2006) states that teaching pronunciation must be taught contextually and integrated with speaking for the sake of providing communicative purposes and realistic language learning goals. This fact implies that pronunciation teaching materials should be designed based on those aforementioned views (e.g. pronunciation for communicative purposes and realistic oriented goals).

The last principle falls into providing adequate support for teachers. It means that pronunciation teaching materials should be tailored to fulfill the teachers' aspirations and needs in which they possess distinct L1 background, levels of experience, training and confidence (Harwood, 2010). Likewise, Levis & Sonsaat (2016) assert that pronunciation teaching materials should not only offer accurate portrayal and fascinating tasks but also cater the essence of learning pronunciation. As a result, the designed pronunciation teaching materials should afford the explanation of what types of activity the students should undertake instead of furnishing them with the answers of pronunciation exercises (Levis & Sonsaat, 2016).

Types of Pronunciation Teaching materials

Despite a number of investigations have documented pronunciation teaching materials (e.g. Grant, 1995; Gorsuch, 2001; Derwing et. al. 2012; Levis & Sonsaat, 2016), Tergujeff has offered more specific types of pronunciation teaching materials (Tergujeff, 2010). To illustrate, she classifies pronunciation teaching materials into eight types, namely (1) phonetic training, (2) reading aloud, (3) listen and repeat, (4) rules and instructions, (5), rhyme and verse, (6) awareness-raising activities, (7) spelling and dictation and (8) ear training.

Phonetic Training

First, *phonetic training* is a pronunciation teaching technique applied to enable the students to recognize, understand, practice and internalize the phonetic terminologies. This technique commonly refers to the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) as the primary sounds reference (Tergujeff, 2013). In this context, Rasmussen & Zampini (2010) verbalize that implementing *phonetic training* generates a variety of benefits, such as increasing the non-native speakers' intelligibility, enlightening the technique how to teach language skills (e.g. listening skills), supporting the the integration between phonetics instruction and L2/FL curriculum, facilitating them to foster their language skills promptly into their immersion environment (target language environment) and mitigating their speaking anxiety when using the target language.

Reading Aloud (RA)

Second, *reading aloud* (RA) is regarded to be able to provide a valuable pronunciation practice for the students. Gabrielatos (2002) exploring *reading aloud* as pronunciation practice articulated that

I mentioned above that learners may be able to pronounce words correctly while reading aloud. Some teachers might argue then, that RA provides good pronunciation practice. Before addressing this assumption we need to clarify the term 'pronunciation'. The term is sometimes understood by EFL teachers as referring only to the 'correct' pronunciation of individual sounds and words in isolation (p.3).

Through RA, the students are trained to be able to practice their pronunciation from written to spoken discourse. Conversely, performing pronunciation through RA tends to be misunderstood as the activity to reach accurate pronunciation of individual sounds and isolated words (Gabrielatos, 2002).

Listen and Repeat

Third, *listen and repeat* is probably considered as one of the oldest pronunciation teaching techniques (Jones, 1997). This technique is assumed to establish the habit formation in acquiring L2 phonology. Technically, the habit formation activities incorporate both cognitive and motor functions to enable the students to produce accurate pronunciation. Nonetheless, a few studies have divulged the limitations of such a technique. As an example, the students performing accuracy in controlled rehearsal cannot successfully assign their abilities to the real communication (Cohen, et. al. 1991). In addition, Dickerson (1975) verified that pronunciation accuracy tends to change based on the task types encountered by the students in the classrooms.

Rules & Instructions

Next, *rules and instructions* are inseparable task types in pronunciation teaching materials even though they were absent in L2/foreign language classroom activities because of the classical misconception (e.g. pronunciation cannot be taught) (Silveira, 2002). However, such a misconception has gradually disappeared currently due to pronunciation instruction does not only embrace linguistic competence but also strategic competence, sociolinguistic competence and discourse competence in terms of

underpinning paradigm (Morley as cited in Silveira, 2002). Additionally, Pennington (1994) reported that

The value of pronunciation instruction lies in the fact that it can help learners develop their interlanguage phonology by giving them the perceptual and the productive experience they need to reconceptualize the performance targets while offering motivation to change and social experiences to develop a new value set.” (p. 105)

This proves that pronunciation teaching materials are not only designed to focus on sharpening the students' accuracy but also their fluency.

In relation to rules, Calabrese (2005) affirms that phonological model must not only have rules or constraints although the rule and constraint are regarded as intertranslatable systems. Further, he explains that an ideal phonological theory ought to cover constraints and rules to avert a particular configuration and provide different functions.

Rhyme & Verse

In addition, a *nursery rhyme* (rhyme & verse) constitutes a brief poetry or song for children. Generally, it consists of vastly rhythmic, firmly rhymed and fashionable viewed from the children's perceptions (Temple, et. al. 2011). In relation to pronunciation teaching, Temple et. al. (2011) argue that listening and reciting nursery rhymes enable the students to improve their reading skills and phonemic awareness. In the same way, nursery rhymes can foster the students' English pronunciation, word play and so forth viewed from EFL context.

Awareness-Raising Activities

Subsequently, *awareness-raising activities* are one of the pronunciation teaching techniques emphasizing on generating the ability to accentuate on the sounds of speech showing distinctive meanings (e.g. *intonation, rhythm, certain words rhyme* and *separate sounds*) or phonological awareness. To illustrate, the children playing with a language through repeating its syllables (e.g. an element of rhyme awareness) (Konza, 2011). Additionally, the students can acquire their L2 based on their L1 patterns. Consequently, they need to deduce their L2 sounds as if they produce their L1. This can minimize the students' mispronunciation (Zimmer, et. al. as cited in Alves & Magro, 2011).

Spelling and Dictation

Spelling and dictation are still viewed as influential task types currently although pronunciation teaching paradigm has shifted from nativeness to intelligibility (Levis, 2005). Deterding & Mohamad (2016) claim that spelling is still considered to affect pronunciation in the past few decades though people tended to become more literate currently. Furthermore, they explicate that there are four fundamental ways affecting a change of English pronunciation in terms of spelling reflection. Such ways comprise reversion to an original pronunciation; etymologically-based changes; anglicization of borrowed words; and pronunciation of the letter 'o'. On the other hand, Blanche (2004) endeavoured to resist that dictation is a traditional technique to teach pronunciation according to the current paradigm of language teaching approach (2001). Even, he proved that dictation can create a cooperative, interactive and self-directed learning atmosphere, including teaching and learning pronunciation. Also, such a technique offers the students to have a pronunciation

learning experience based on student-centered or student-controlled approach (Brown, 2001).

Ear Training

Last but not the least, *ear training* is a pronunciation teaching technique utilized to discriminate the individual sounds and familiarize the students with various English accents and other language varieties (Tergujeff, 2013). This notion is advocated by Baars & Gage (2010) noting that the speech perception and production are an inseparable unit. Even, Cauldwell (2003) metaphorically states that listening and speaking are like two sides of the same coin. Conversely, such a technique is presumed to be a time-consuming and costly attempt (Ashby, 2007).

METHODS

This study utilized qualitative research approach and content analysis was selected as the research method. Content analysis enables to examine data as representations of texts, images, observable and interpretable expressions for exploring their meanings to supply the researchers new insights and enhance their comprehension on a certain phenomena or notify practical actions (Krippendorff, 2004). In addition, document analysis is used as the process of employing documents as a tool to scrutinize social phenomena and examine the individual or institutional records (Gibson & Brown, 2009). This involves pronunciation module and course syllabus used in the department to analyze based on the materials development of English pronunciation and Tergujeff's data-driven classification (Tergujeff, 2010) including phonetic training, reading aloud, listen and repeat, rhyme and verse, rules and instructions, awareness-raising activities, spelling and dictation and ear training.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Pronunciation learning materials within the *Pronunciation Practice 3* module cover 20 units. Typically, there are 17 practices and 3 additional materials in such a module. Although the current notions of pronunciation learning materials have paid more attention on suprasegmental features as well (Ponsonby, Undated; Mortimer, 1985; Dauer, 1993; Cunningham & Bowler, 1999; Hewings, 2004; Gilbert, 2005; Baker, 2007; Hewings, 2007), this module plausibly still puts a heavy emphasis on teaching and learning segmental features. As a matter of fact, 17 of 20 units of the module are dominated by the materials of segmental features, such as practice 1 bilabial plosives /p/ & /b/, practice 2 alveolar plosives /t/ & /d/, practice 3 velar plosives /k/ & /g/, practice 4 palato alveolar /tʃ/ & /dʒ/, practice 5 labio dental fricatives /f/ & /v/, practice 6 dental fricatives /θ/ & /ð/, practice 7 alveolar fricatives /s/ & /z/, practice 8 palato-alveolar /ʃ/ & /ʒ/, practice 9 glottal fricative /h/, practice 10 bilabial nasal /m/, practice 11 alveolar nasal /n/, Practice 12 velar nasal /ŋ/, practice 13 lateral /l/, practice 14 alveolar frictionless continuant /r/, practice 15 unrounded palatal semi vowel /j/, practice 16 labio-velar semi vowel /w/ and/ practice 17 vowels /i:/ & /ɪ/. Indeed, the materials in each unit are dominated by the consonants rather than vowels. This is supported by the evidence that there is only a pair of vowels displayed in the module, namely close vowel /i:/ and /ɪ/. Even though three units of the entire materials are presented differently as the additional materials, only two of them focus on the suprasegmental features elaboration, namely classroom expressions and reading materials. On the other

hand, the last unit of this module emphasizes on teaching phonetic transcription. For these reasons, this module is possibly designed to only concentrate on fostering the students' segmental features rather than suprasegmental features. In general, the findings on pronunciation specific materials in this study are dominated by phonetic training (25 occurrences), reading aloud (25 occurrences), listen and repeat (12 occurrences) and rules and instructions (1 occurrence). These might prove that learning materials in Pronunciation Practice 3 module are considered as traditional teaching and learning activities (Tergujeff, 2010). However, Rasmussen & Zampini (2010) studying the impact of phonetic training on the students' L2 listening comprehension argue that the experimental group in their study displayed a significant improvement on the intelligibility of several phonetic aspects trained. In other words, it could assist the L2 learners in improving their listening comprehension. Although phonetic training is probably deemed as one of the traditional activities in teaching and learning English pronunciation, it is assumed to be able to facilitate the students in improving their pronunciation.

Reading Aloud (RA)

Since the findings reveals that reading aloud has similar amount of occurrences to phonetic training, it means that reading aloud might be regarded as one of the traditional activities offered to the students in the Pronunciation Practice 3 module (Tergujeff, 2010), for it involves the determined genres to be spoken, such as speeches, poems, plays, dialogues etc. (Celce-Murcia et. al. 1996). For examples, miscellaneous word lists & sentence exercises and various reading materials in typical topics are provided within the module to support reading aloud tasks. In contrast to the notion regarding that reading aloud as a traditional activity in teaching and learning pronunciation, reading aloud is assumed to be able to strengthen the students' graphemic-phonemic correspondences.

Listen & Repeat

Another major activity frequently appearing in pronunciation specific materials is listen and repeat. This might indicate that although materials for the pronunciation teaching have changed extensively over the past 50 years from focusing on the accurate isolated sounds production to emphasizing on communicative aspects, such as connected speech (Jones, 1997), listen and repeat popularly known as the traditional activity is still widely used in pronunciation learning materials. In the same way, Tergujeff (2010) claims that listen and repeat is probably regarded as all-time favourites in language teaching.

Rules & Instructions

In the light of rules and instructions, there is merely one occurrence identified as a task type of pronunciation specific material in the module. In particular, it discusses about phonetic transcription and its rules, such as (1) writing the phonetic transcription in between square brackets [], (2) using block letters, (3) prohibition of using capital letters, (4) prohibition of using double consonants and (5) prohibition of using the sign of abbreviation ('). Although rules and instructions only obtained the least amount of occurrences compared to the other activities in the module, they may be able to offer indispensable information in terms of pronunciation specific materials.

Rhyme & Verse, Awareness Raising Activities, Spelling & Dictation and Ear Training

Different from other task types emerging in the module, rhyme and verse, awareness raising activities, spelling and dictation and ear training seemingly do not become the foci of pronunciation teaching. Based on the data obtained, none of these task types appear in the module. For this reason, reviewing the previous findings on these types of task would generate various perspectives of them on pronunciation teaching. In contrast to the findings of this study on rhyme and verse, Sayakhan & Bradley (2014) report that listening to and reciting rhymes could develop reading skills and phonemic awareness which are assumed to be able to predict a child's reading success. In fact, not only young students but also adult ones are believed to be able to gain advantages from applying nursery rhymes. In relation to awareness raising activities, Zhang (2004) discovers that TEFL students plausibly becoming the English teachers in China conveyed their desires to be able to speak English by referring to a native-speaker model. Briefly stated, integrating awareness-raising activities with the pronunciation specific materials in the textbooks would enhance the comprehensibility of EFL students (Venkatagiri & Levis, 2007). At this point, spelling and dictation indicated no occurrence based on the findings. On the one hand, this is relevant to Tergujeff's findings scrutinizing the existence of spelling and dictation in EFL textbooks. For example, she inferred that peer spelling & dictation activities occurred infrequently in Finnish EFL textbooks since they merely reached 3% of the pronunciation-specific materials provided by the chosen course books (Tergujeff, 2010).

Eventhough there is no occurrence identified in ear training, there are multifaceted interactions between heard language and spoken language aimed at fostering the language development since the infancy during language is acquired (Baars & Gage, 2010). Besides, ear training is assumed to facilitate the students in mastering the sounds of International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) (Ashby, 2007). Thus, ear training and the teaching of IPA should be integrated with the coursebooks even though the activities may focus primarily on discriminating segments (Tergujeff, 2010). However, today, there is a variety of current technology equipment and applications used in education. At this point, it should be stressed that the teachers should be motivated to make use of some computer-based pronunciation teaching programs that are available in the market. Moreover, language teachers are to be stimulated to use the Internet so as to improve their pronunciation teaching skills and bring a variety to the language classroom. At this juncture, language teachers may be informed of available pronunciation teaching sites on the Internet through teacher training programs, which can also raise their awareness for the selection of the appropriate pronunciation teaching sites (Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2010). At last, this supports the goals of pronunciation teaching which often revolve around the concepts of intelligibility and comprehensibility (Atli & Ayfer, 2012; Murphy, 2014).

CONCLUSION

Once the comprehensive analysis was conducted to identify the types of pronunciation teaching materials offered by the Pronunciation Practice course (course syllabus), the findings dismantled that pronunciation course syllabus still traditionally cater the students with the old-fashioned pronunciation teaching materials, such as emphasizing on how to produce accurate English vowels and consonants. Unfortunately, these types of task can only lead the students to produce individual English sounds accurately instead of shaping fluency and integrating pronunciation into authentic communication. This course

syllabus design apparently accentuates to teach segmental features of English only without noticing suprasegmental ones.

A similar viewpoint has been represented in the module as a single source of pronunciation teaching in that department. For instance, the traditional task types still dominated the tasks in Pronunciation Practice module, such as phonetic training, reading aloud, listen and repeat and rules and instructions. These reinforce the assumption that the teacher might still hold an old paradigm of teaching English pronunciation, namely nativeness, teacher-centered and accuracy-oriented exercises. Therefore, to gain the realistic goals of pronunciation teaching, the teachers should shift her paradigm to the current one, namely intelligibility, student-centeredness and fluency-based activities.

Although this study offers valuable findings, the limitations of this study embrace the insufficient data triangulation, time constraints and surface structure analysis. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized. Due to these limitations, the future research should delve the deployment of triangulated data collection techniques (e.g. interview and observation), discourse-oriented studies (e.g. functional approach, critical discourse analysis, sociolinguistic approach or intercultural communication study) and technology-based investigations (e.g. the use of PRAAT).

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