



# Enhancing Arabic language learning through cultural acculturation: a case study from madrasah aliyah in Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation of Arabic language learning and cultural acculturation at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo and the benefits of acculturation. This theme becomes important, along with the increasing interest in learning Arabic and the need to understand the impact of cultural acculturation in the learning process. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method with data collection through observation, interview, and documentation. The results show that implementing Arabic learning in this Madrasah involves good planning, effective implementation, and constructive evaluation. Cultural acculturation was found to play an important role in learning, including understanding the differences between Arabic and Indonesian, assignments relevant to students' social lives, and giving appreciation for learning Arabic. The benefits of cultural acculturation include making it easier for students to understand Arabic, increasing learning motivation, and encouraging teachers to be more creative and innovative in teaching. This research demonstrates the importance of integrating culture into Arabic language learning and potentially opens up further research opportunities on how Arabic language teaching and learning can be improved through cultural acculturation.

**Keywords:** Arabic language learning; cultural acculturation; madrasah aliyah

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Arabic significantly influences the life of the people and culture of Islam Nusantara. Many loanwords from Arabic are used in people's daily languages, indicating acculturation between Arabic and local culture (Jannah & Herdah, 2022; Muasmara &

Ajmain, 2020). In education, Arabic learning is important so that students can communicate using the language and understand related literature.

Despite acculturation, Arabic does not eliminate the cultural elements of each individual. Conversely, acculturation of the Arabic language can contribute to the development of certain cultures, such as the influence of Arabic in the local Bugis culture. Arabic entered Indonesia along with the spread of Islam, and Arabic also has an important role in the lives of the Bugis people (Al-Amri & Haramain, 2017; Wekke, 2013).

However, mastery of Arabic is still faced with challenges. Some students find Arabic difficult, affecting their learning motivation (Amirudin, 2017). Therefore, efforts must be made to improve students' understanding of Arabic and develop their language and cultural competence.

In Arabic language learning in Indonesia, cultural acculturation should be considered an important part of teaching. Cultural acculturation can affect students' understanding of Arabic and increase their interest and motivation (Sadrina Putri, 2018). Arabic language learning is about linguistic aspects and involves understanding culture and identity. Educators must create a learning environment that strengthens students' cultural identity and encourages better mastery of Arabic. Although Arabic makes a great contribution, the level of mastery of Arabic is still an ongoing problem. It is due to students' perception of the high difficulty level of Arabic, which reduces their motivation to learn it. In addition, the use of Arabic in daily communication and understanding of literature is also lacking. Recognition of Arabic vocabulary in Indonesian or regional languages can provide advantages and cause linguistic problems (Rohman, 2022). Efforts are needed to improve students' understanding of the Arabic language and overcome difficulties in its learning.

Based on the observations of researchers, students of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Palopo can be divided into three groups based on their background, namely students from coastal areas (Malangke, Malangke Barat, Lamasi Pantai), students from cities (Palopo, Luwu), and students from mountainous areas (Bastem, Kambo, Tana Toraja). They vary in the language used in everyday communication. Students from coastal areas mostly use the Bugis language, students from mountainous areas tend to use the Tae language and Torajan culture, while students living in urban areas communicate using Indonesian.

The researchers' observations show several problems that occur in Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo, including: (1) many students use their regional languages so that there are differences in language characteristics between one another, including

fundamental differences in the grammatical system; (2) problems of students' abilities related to psychological factors and differences in socio-cultural conditions of Luwu people who are not yet familiar with Arabic, thus becoming obstacles in learning Arabic; (3) limited facilities and infrastructure (laboratory) and lack of time to learn Arabic which is considered still less than optimal. It can impact the learning process and student achievement, which is not optimal for learning targets.

The problem of learning Arabic involves methodological aspects and needs to be considered in planning, implementing, and evaluating learning. The learning methods teachers use affect student motivation, confidence, and interest. It is important to pay attention to students' psychological and cultural aspects and develop teacher management skills in applying interesting learning methods in accordance with cultural approaches (Rahman, 2017). Solutions to the problem of learning Arabic can be sought through cooperation with higher education institutions or universities. In addition, this research will focus on the development of cultural acculturation in Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Palopo City.

In learning Arabic, many still do not realize the similarities between Arabic and Indonesian. Loanwords from Arabic have enriched Indonesian and regional languages. It is important to develop multicultural Arabic language education that expands and enriches Arabic language learning and accommodates cultural diversity. In overcoming the problem of Arabic language learning, it is necessary to do mapping and solutions through cooperation with higher education institutions or universities. This study will analyze cultural acculturation in Arabic language learning at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo.

## **2. METHOD**

### **a. Type and Location of Research**

This research is field research and literature research. Field research was conducted using ethnographic methods to uncover in-depth data through direct observation of Arabic language learning at MAN Palopo and a review of curriculum and learning documents. Literature research is carried out by collecting data from various literature sources relevant to Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo. This research is a descriptive study of critical analysis that looks for patterns and models of Arabic learning and provides input on the reality of Arabic language learning. Researchers act as research instruments that interact directly with data and make meanings in the context of Arabic language learning at MAN Palopo. This study also used ethnographic methods to study the cultural patterns of the group and collect data from primary and secondary sources. The focus of this research is Arabic language

learning at MAN Palopo with students from different cultural backgrounds, intending to form a balanced human being in intellectual ability and morality through learning Arabic culture and language (Haris, 2012; Lune & Berg, 2017).

### **b. Data Sources**

The data used in this study is qualitative data that aims to obtain a quality explanation of cultural acculturation in Arabic language learning in MAN Palopo City. A data source consists of primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through interviews with informants such as teachers, students, and madrasah heads. Researchers choose informants considered to know following the required data (Firman, 2018). Secondary data is pre-existing data collected from indirect sources, such as government written sources or libraries. Secondary data is in the form of a review of scientific books, published research, and other sources related to cultural acculturation in Arabic language learning at MAN Palopo City.

### **c. Research Approach**

In this study, the qualitative approach focuses on understanding the subject from the point of view of the subject itself. The researcher ignores the existing reality and makes interpretations using conceptual schemes. The researcher emphasizes subjective thinking because of his assumption that the world is ruled by symbolic wishful thinking. The ethnographic method allows researchers to understand and describe the cultural patterns of a group and collect data from informants through interviews and observations. The research process includes understanding existing perspectives and philosophies, making research questions, collecting data from the subjects involved, data analysis, and understanding gained from individual experiences. Ethno pedagogy is also an important aspect of the study, using culture as a source of innovation and skills in multicultural education. This study aims to deeply study the phenomenon by understanding the participants' perspectives and beliefs (Spradley, 2007).

### **d. Data Collection Techniques and Instruments**

This research used qualitative methods to explore information and a deep understanding of cultural acculturation in Arabic language learning at MAN Palopo City. Data is collected through data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations are made to observe human behaviour and objects related to Arabic language learning. Interviews were conducted with students, teachers, community leaders, and religious leaders to gain their perspectives on cultural acculturation in learning. Documentation involves collecting data from various documents relevant to the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Thus, this study provides a

deeper understanding of cultural acculturation in Arabic language learning in MAN Palopo City.

### **e. Data Processing and Analysis**

After qualitative data is obtained through interviews and observations, the next step is data processing through a reduction process (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This process involves data inclusion and exclusion, where relevant data is retained, and irrelevant ones are eliminated. After that, a search for the meaning of relevant data is carried out. The granting of this meaning involves deeper interpretation and qualitative descriptive analysis.

Qualitative descriptive analysis methods describe and present research data, whether it comes from interviews, observations, or documentation. This analysis uses sentences or paragraphs instead of numbers or other numbers. Qualitative analysis is not used to search for data in the sense of frequency but to understand the social processes occurring and the meaning of the observed facts.

This descriptive analysis process can be carried out in three activity cycles. First, data reduction is done by selecting, simplifying, and transforming data from field notes. Secondly, the data are presented verbally according to the qualitative-descriptive type of research. Finally, conclusions are drawn through a deductive process, from general things to specific conclusions. Ethno pedagogy follows an inductive approach that tries to find theories based on collected data, gain a deep understanding, see events holistically in context, and are speculative.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **a. Implementation of Arabic Language Learning in Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo**

Based on the results of interviews with stakeholders related to the Arabic learning process at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo, several important pieces of information were found. In learning planning, there are stages of preparing a syllabus and a Learning Implementation Plan (RPP). The syllabus is prepared based on the National Education Standards, including learning objectives, teaching materials, teaching methods, learning resources, and learning outcomes assessment. Meanwhile, RPP focuses more on student development through Arabic language learning by considering students' differences, such as emotions, abilities, cultural background, interests, and talents. RPP includes indicators, core competencies, basic competencies, learning objectives, learning materials, methods used, learning resources, learning steps, and assessment of learning outcomes.

In implementing Arabic language learning, there are three activities stages: introduction, core, and closing. The introduction includes material introduction activities, learning objectives, and student motivation. The core stage involves material mastery activities, discussions, exercises, and other creative activities. In contrast, the closing stage involves strengthening and re-assessing the material that has been learned. During the learning implementation process, the interaction between teachers and students is very important in creating a conducive learning atmosphere (Triasnan et al., 2023).

Arabic learning is evaluated through various forms of assessment, such as daily tests, Midterm Exams, and Final Semester Exams. In addition, the head of the Madrasah also evaluates learning in meetings held every semester. This evaluation aims to measure students' ability to understand and master Arabic and provide feedback to teachers to improve the quality of learning.

### 1) Arabic Learning Planning

Based on the results of interviews with stakeholders related to the Arabic learning process at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo, it was found that learning planning has an important role in achieving learning objectives. Learning planning includes the preparation of a syllabus and Learning Implementation Plan (RPP). The syllabus is a reference in compiling a learning framework and is prepared based on Graduate Competency and Content Standards. The syllabus includes learning objectives, teaching materials, teaching methods, learning resources, and learning outcomes assessment. Although Arabic teachers at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo compiled the syllabus, students were not given a copy.

RPP, as a learning activity plan, is developed from the syllabus to direct student learning activities to achieve Basic Competencies (KD). RPP includes indicators, core competencies, basic competencies, learning objectives, learning materials, teaching methods, learning resources, learning steps, and assessment of learning outcomes. Arabic teachers at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo systematically compile lesson plans by considering learning methods, learning media, and student conditions and abilities. The lesson plan is a guide in carrying out learning in class.

Although the preparation of the syllabus and lesson plans has been carried out by Arabic teachers at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo, there are findings that students are not given a copy of the syllabus and the draft lesson plans that have not fully met the needs of students, especially in increasing students' confidence in actively participating in learning. Therefore, it is necessary to prepare a more optimal RPP by paying attention to the psychological condition of students and involving cognate subjects so that they

can adjust to the needs of students psychologically (Anggraeni & Akbar, 2018). In addition, it is necessary to improve teaching methods and learning resources used so that Arabic learning can be more optimal.

## 2) Implementation of Arabic Language Learning

In the process of implementing Arabic learning at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo, there are three stages of activities: preliminary, core, and closing. The introductory activity begins with the opening of learning through prayer and discussion of the previous material. The teacher also asks students to reflect on previous material and collect assigned assignments before starting new material. However, learning objectives are not always explicitly conveyed to students in this activity.

In the core activities, teachers use learning methods such as lectures, discussions, and questions and answers. Learning materials are delivered using textbooks provided by the school but do not always follow in detail the contents of the RPP that have been prepared before. The learning media used are still limited, such as printed books, story books, and PPT-based media. Limited facilities and infrastructure in schools are inhibiting factors in using more interesting learning media.

The closing activity is carried out by reflecting on the material taught. Students are asked again about the material learned and reflect on other examples. The question and answer session at the end of the class is used as an evaluation and can affect students' enthusiasm and motivation in learning. After all the activities are completed, the study ends with prayer.

In the implementation of Arabic language learning at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo, there are several findings that teachers do not always follow in detail of the content of the lesson plans that have been prepared previously, the limited use of interesting learning media, and the lack of emphasis on clear learning objectives. It can hinder the increase in students' interest in learning Arabic.

Arabic teachers need to use more interesting learning media, such as audio-visual and technology-based, to increase student interest. In addition, it is also important to emphasize learning objectives more explicitly to students. The learning process must be more integrated with pre-prepared planning, including using learning methods that follow the material, student mastery, and classroom conditions (Khomsah & Imron, 2020).

### 3) Arabic Learning Evaluation

In the context of evaluating Arabic learning in Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo, there are two types of evaluations carried out: evaluation of learning outcomes and evaluation of the learning process.

Evaluation of learning outcomes is carried out to determine the extent to which students achieve the learning goals that have been set. This evaluation form is done through written or oral examinations, such as daily tests, Midterm Exams, and Final Semester Exams. It was confirmed through interviews with Arabic teachers at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo, where they explained that the form of evaluation they did was through these exams.

In addition, learning evaluation is also carried out on the Arabic teacher himself. The Head of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo said that at the end of the semester, a teacher evaluation meeting involved examining teaching components such as attendance, syllabus, and lesson plans. It is done to improve teacher performance in teaching, especially Arabic teachers.

Evaluation of the learning process is an evaluation of the effectiveness of the learning process in helping students achieve learning objectives optimally. Although not mentioned in detail in this context, the evaluation of the learning process can cover various aspects, such as the quality of material delivery, interaction between teachers and students, appropriate learning methods, and effective learning media.

Although the field findings data do not specifically explain the evaluation of the Arabic learning process in Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo, it can be assumed that in these evaluation activities, evaluation of the learning process is also carried out through teacher observation and assessment of the quality of material delivery, interaction in class, and the use of learning methods and media.

Overall, the evaluation of Arabic learning in Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo involves evaluating student learning outcomes through written or oral examinations and evaluating the learning process, which involves examining teaching components and certain aspects of the learning process.

#### **b. Cultural Acculturation in Arabic Language Learning at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo**

Cultural acculturation in Arabic language learning at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo is carried out with several forms of action. First, the teacher provides students with an understanding of the differences between Arabic and Indonesian in terms of



language elements and grammar. It is done through discussions, stories, vocabulary, and conversations (hiwar). Teachers and students together examine the differences in wording and their use in everyday life.

Second, students are tasked with analyzing the meaning of Arabic reading. This assignment aims to enable students to understand the meanings contained in Arabic texts and be able to relate them to their cultural context. The assignment results are then discussed in class to discuss students' understanding and provide further explanations.

Furthermore, in speaking, teachers give freedom to students to express their culture in written and oral form. Students are tasked with making up freely (*insya' hurr*) by expressing their culture, daily life and other things related to their home culture. Assignments like this encourage students to be enthusiastic about learning Arabic.

In addition, one form of cultural acculturation in Arabic learning involves students finding or collecting *mufradat* (single words) similar to each student's regional language. It aims to show that Arabic words have been absorbed into Indonesian and regional languages. This task has become distinctive and mandatory for students in Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo.

By doing cultural acculturation in Arabic language learning, teachers at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo try to pay attention to and appreciate the cultural diversity of students. They try to integrate cultural aspects into Arabic learning so that students can understand Arabic in their cultural context. This effort is expected to facilitate students' understanding and increase their interest in learning Arabic.

The importance of including cultural aspects in Arabic language learning was also emphasized by Dieter Buttjes and Michael Byram, who mentioned that cultural teaching can be done through comparison between student culture and target language culture, as well as through cultural learning in foreign language subjects using foreign language speakers materials and cultural demonstrations (Buttjes & Byram, 1991).

Thus, cultural acculturation in Arabic language learning at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo plays an important role in facing the challenges of students' cultural, ethnic, and ethnic diversity. By understanding cultural differences and using the right methods and approaches, teachers can help students learn Arabic more effectively and enjoyably.

This statement is reinforced by the findings of the researcher in the form of a summary that the researcher has compiled regarding the results of student assignments, which can be seen in the following table:

**Table 1.** Arabic Loanwords into Indonesian and Regional Languages

<i>Mufradat</i>	<b>Terms in the Bugis language</b>	<b>Terms in Luwu language</b>
Islam	Selleng	Sallang
Syahadat	Sahada'	Sahada'
Qirthas	Karetasa'	Kartasa'
Dawat	Dawa'	Dawa'
Doa	Doang	Doang
Takbir	Takabbere'	Takkabbere'
Amal	Amala'	Amalang'
Masjid	Masigi'/Masiji	Massigi
Khutbah	Katubba'	Katobba
Ashr	Assare'	Assara'
Iqamat	Kame'	kama'
Qurban	Karoba	Karoba
Imam	Imang	Imang
Rak'ah	Rakang	Rakang
Abun	Ambo	Ambe
Tarwih	Tarawe	Tarawe
Ahad	Aha'	Aha'
Khamis	Kammisi'	Kamisi'
Tsulatsa	Salasa	Salasa
Jum'ah	Juma'	Juma'

Cultural acculturation in Arabic language learning at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo is important in dealing with students' cultural diversity. Arabic teachers there apply various strategies to enrich Arabic learning by considering the culture of students. Some forms of cultural acculturation found in the study include:

### 1) Comparison with Everyday Language

Arabic instructors present Arabic subjects by linking them to the students' everyday language, such as Indonesian or regional dialects. It helps pupils comprehend the differences between Arabic and their languages.

### 2) Utilization of absorption vocabulary

The teacher uses Arabic vocabulary that has been absorbed into the student's Indonesian and regional languages. It helps students relate Arabic vocabulary to their cultural context, thus facilitating their understanding of learning Arabic.

### 3) Use of learning media

Teachers use learning media following the material taught, such as animated videos about sentence formation or Arabic word changes. Although the use of this

media is limited and not done daily, students respond to it enthusiastically and more quickly understand the material taught.

#### 4) The task of memorizing mufradat

Students are tasked with memorizing Arabic mufradat (single words) at each meeting. This assignment aims to enrich students' vocabulary and assist them in speaking Arabic.

#### Appreciation of students

The teacher appreciates students who are trying to learn Arabic, especially those who are still unfamiliar with Arabic. This appreciation rewards students' efforts and encourages their enthusiasm for learning.

The application of cultural acculturation in Arabic learning at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo has a positive impact, such as facilitating student understanding, increasing learning enthusiasm, and linking Arabic with students' cultural context. In the context of vocabulary mastery, teaching Arabic vocabulary is also important in learning because vocabulary is an integral part of mastering the language (Yazidi, 2018).

### **c. Benefits of Cultural Acculturation in Arabic Language Learning at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo**

In Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo, cultural acculturation in Arabic learning has important benefits. Through cultural acculturation, students can easily learn Arabic because of the similarity of vocabulary with Indonesian. They can also know and understand the culture of origin of the Arabic language, including the customs and traditions associated with that culture.

In addition, cultural acculturation in Arabic language learning also positively impacts student learning motivation. When students engage in learning that integrates Arabic culture, they become more enthusiastic and interested in learning. It increases students' interest in Arabic lessons.

Not only that, but cultural acculturation also encourages teachers to be creative and innovative in managing learning in the classroom. Teachers need to create an engaging and relevant learning environment by integrating Arabic culture into Arabic language learning. In this way, learning becomes more interesting and effective.

In interviews with Arabic teachers at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo, similar answers were found regarding the benefits of cultural acculturation in Arabic language learning. One of the main benefits is the ease with which students can learn Arabic as a

second language. Mr Alahuddin stated that students more easily understand everyday vocabulary similar to Arabic. The same thing was expressed by Ibu Indarmi, who emphasized that students can easily memorize mufradat that have similarities with Indonesian and Regional Languages.

Few people realize that much of Arabic vocabulary was adopted into Indonesian through cultural acculturation. However, this is an advantage for Arabic learners, especially Muslims already familiar with Arabic as a religious language. It is evidenced by the findings in student interviews, where they just noticed a similarity between Arabic and Indonesian. For example, Arya mentions that many Arabic vocabulary words are similar to Indonesian, making it easier for them to memorize mufradat.

Cultural acculturation in Arabic learning also makes it easier for students to learn Arabic. It can be seen from the similarity of Arabic vocabulary with Indonesian and Regional Languages. Previous research has also shown that Arabic has significantly contributed to enriching the vocabulary of regional languages, such as the Bugis language. Therefore, Arabic students and teachers at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo benefit from learning Arabic more easily.

In addition, learning Arabic also means learning Arabic culture. It includes the habits and ways of communicating with Arabs. Through this learning, students can model the behaviour of Arabs and apply them in everyday life. Arab culture is also part of Islamic culture. Arabic teachers at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo teach Arabic customs to students to be applied in everyday life.

The results of interviews with Arabic teachers at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo show that cultural acculturation in Arabic learning provides several significant benefits. One of them is the increase in student learning motivation. Students show high enthusiasm when learning integrates Arabic culture and comparison with student culture. They become more interested and motivated to learn Arabic well.

Arabic culture was also introduced as a learning tool that allows students to apply knowledge in everyday life situations, work cooperatively, and see the interrelationship between Arabic and other fields of science. In addition, students also become more aware of the existence of scientific rules in everyday life and culture in the context of the field of Arabic.

In addition to benefits for students, teachers must be more creative and innovative in planning and managing Arabic language learning. Teachers must structure learning that focuses on the material and integrates culture. It encourages teachers to use various interesting teaching strategies and methods so that students are more interested and involved in learning (Akzam et al., 2021). Although not all teachers

develop lesson plans (RPP) with cultural aspects in mind, they realize the importance of teaching culture in Arabic language learning.

In this context, teacher creativity in the teaching-learning process is important in improving the quality of student learning outcomes. A professional teacher is a teacher who not only masters the learning material but also has a good understanding of teaching and learning problems. To create quality students, creative teachers who can vary in teaching and use various learning media are needed (Mubaligh et al., 2022).

Thus, cultural acculturation in Arabic language learning at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo provides significant benefits, including increasing student learning motivation, understanding of Arabic culture, and teacher creativity. It improves the quality of learning and student learning outcomes in learning Arabic.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of research on cultural acculturation in Arabic language learning at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo, it can be concluded that the implementation of Arabic learning in the school involves planning, implementing, and evaluating learning. Learning planning is carried out by preparing syllabi and lesson plans considering individual student differences. The implementation of learning is carried out through three stages of activities: introduction, core, and closing. Student learning outcomes are evaluated through various forms of assessment, such as daily tests and midterm exams. Learning evaluation is also carried out by the Head of the Madrasah in meetings every semester. In addition, cultural acculturation in Arabic learning is carried out to facilitate students' learning. Forms of acculturation include understanding the differences between Arabic and Indonesian, assigning assignments related to students' social circumstances, practising speaking Arabic with freedom of cultural expression, memorizing mufradat, and giving appreciation to students. The benefits of cultural acculturation in Arabic learning include making it easier for students to learn Arabic, understanding Arabic culture, increasing student learning motivation, and prosecuting teacher creativity and innovation in managing to learn. This research has implications for improving Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Palopo and the importance of integrating cultures in foreign language learning. The resulting solutions include curriculum rearrangement, improving teacher competence, adjusting books and learning media, selecting appropriate learning strategies, and providing special guidance to students unfamiliar with Arabic. This research has limitations because it was conducted in only one school, so further research is recommended to involve more stakeholders.

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