Discourse Analysis in the English Language Classrooms and Scaffolding in the Language Teaching

英语课堂话语分析与“支架”式教学

李丹丽 著

WUHAN UNIVERSITY PRESS
武汉大学出版社

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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

英语课堂话语分析与"支架"式教学/李丹丽著. —武汉：武汉大学出版社，2012.5

ISBN 978-7-307-09729-2

Ⅰ.英… Ⅱ.李… Ⅲ.英语—课堂教学—教学研究—高等学校 Ⅳ.H319.3

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2012)第 073021 号

责任编辑：谢群英　　责任校对：黄添生　　版式设计：马　佳

出版发行：武汉大学出版社　(430072　武昌　珞珈山)

(电子邮件：cbs22@whu.edu.cn　网址：www.wdp.com.cn)

印刷：湖北民政印刷厂

开本：720×1000　1/16　　印张：20.25　字数：401 千字　插页：1

版次：2012 年 5 月第 1 版　　2012 年 5 月第 1 次印刷

ISBN 978-7-307-09729-2/H·888　　定价：32.00 元

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自　　序

21 世纪应用语言学的研究重心从语言本体与教学法转向学习者主体，学习者的心理过程和认知系统将成为新世纪应用语言学研究的关注焦点和发展趋势。愈来愈多的专家学者认为外语教育不仅仅是一种心理语言行为，同时也是一种社会文化行为。前苏联教育学家维果斯基(Vygotsky) 为代表的社会文化理论指出课堂是非常重要的互动场所，包含最丰富的老师和学生之间的交际话语，从而蕴含着语言学习和认知发展的契机。该理论提倡师生共同参与各种任务型课堂教学活动，通过“支架”(scaffolding) 可以更好地提高交际效率并促进学生的外语学习。“支架”用来比喻暂时性的辅助话语，通过搭建支架，新手在较为熟练的专家或同伴的帮助下发展新的技能、观念或者更高层次的理解能力。维果斯基还提出最近发展区(zone of proximal development，简称 ZPD) 的概念，即学习者实际发展水平和潜在发展水平之间的差距。前者由现有独立解决问题的能力决定，后者则指在成人指导下或与能力较强的同伴合作时解决问题的水平。通过最近发展区，他人调节构成了学习者依靠他人帮助来完成任务的中间发展阶段，而自我调节则构成了学习者在没有他人帮助的情况下能够独立完成任务的阶段。学习者从他人调节阶段向自我调节阶段的发展，是对其认知和语言习得都十分重要的阶段。

在二语习得研究领域，社会文化理论已被应用于研究师生改错和同伴学习等活动如何促进语言学习，发现支架不仅存在于不同语言水平的合作者之间(例如老师和学生、讲母语者和外语学习者、高水平和低水平的学生之间) ，也存在于相同语言水平的合作者之间，甚至低水平学习者也可以为高水平学习者提供帮助。然而，国内外现有的第二语言或外语课堂研究一般侧重于支架的应用分别在老师和学生交流过程中，或者学生和学生交流过程对语言学习的正面影响。例如，老师对学生展开的支架，或者学生之间的支架式学习促使学生对第二语言知识的重建，探索交际自由和学习机会。但这些研究较少涉及老师对学生的支架在何种状态下会否对语言学习产生负面作用，教师反馈和同伴反馈作用比较之差异，以及何种教师反馈对学生的语言潜能发展会起到促进或桎梏的作用。虽然以往的研究表明同伴支架对语言形式的准确度总体上有积极影响，但忽略了同伴互动的局限性，即学习者可能很难推动同伴在最近发展区的进展，因为他们的实际语言发展水平或多或少在同一水平。我们需要在个体学习者层面了解这些互动过程，尤其是在学习者最近发展区内

的微观发生变化(microgenesis) 。因为支架的意义在于中介作用于个体并帮助他们实现知识的内化，进而提高他们在语言应用和第二语言学习中自我调节的能力。本书旨在通过研究学习者话语如何在相对短期内的重组和发展，用实验发展的方法探究认知的发展过程。

本书运用社会文化理论视角，以话语分析为主体的定性分析方法和定量分析方法相结合，探索中国高校(内地和香港) 的大学生在英语课堂师生互动过程中的交际话语如何服务于目标语学习。在武汉某大学和香港某大学英语课堂交际环境中，采用微观发生法分析学生分别与教师和同伴协作完成写作任务时的交际话语，观察支架在中国学生二语习得过程中的影响特点和发展模式。其中包括主要的支架策略对目标语学习产生的正面和负面作用，及其对学习者最近发展区的影响。研究发现支架策略应用于目标语学习的有效性取决于教师和学生是否能够恰当运用主要的支架功能，教师辅助与学生小组互动相结合的合作话语模式能激发学习者的最大潜能，推动其最近发展区。教师适时提供重点明确的支架可以促进二语学习，而教师话语中的过度调节会对语言学习产生负面作用。教师支架与同伴支架相结合的应用模式帮助学习者突破自身现有二语知识水平和课堂管理能力的限制，在合作话语中有效地注意形式和澄清意义，意识到自身的知识差距，监控自我或同伴的输出效果。

本书提倡在英语课堂教学中发掘小组活动与教师指导相结合的潜能，尤其是对于当前二语口语或写作课堂的同伴互评机制，监控学生的合作学习成果并确保其准确性是非常必要的。教师作为促进者、引导者和导师，能够监控学习者聚焦形式和意义且合作输出正确的目标语形式，保证互动活动高效率地进行。尽管个体在同伴合作中兼具优势和劣势，但有时无法确认自己提供的反馈信息是否有效。而事实上，即使是具备较为成熟的知识体系和交流技巧的成人学习者，也未必能够像有经验的语言教师那样进行有效的批判性思考并帮助学习者完善其认知过程，这是由于学习者自身的语言体系及其对支架的运用能力都是有限的。因此，本研究强调教师在英语课堂支架式教学中帮助学习者发现自我知识体系的不足，克服单纯的同伴互动的局限性，加强对目标语学习的自我调节，以及在构建适当的支架基础上鼓励学习者发展独立学习能力，从而推动学习者的最近发展区。本书对于武汉和香港高校的英语课堂支架应用模式的研究成果可以推广至中国内地及港澳台地区的大学外语课堂，以提高外语课堂交互活动的有效性和第二语言发展的准确性。

本研究在理论框架和研究设计上尚有改进之处，如进一步完善研究手段、观察语言输出的历时性效果、关注学习者个体差异等。今后的研究可对支架的应用过程针对不同年级的大学生开展跟踪研究，亦可推广至基础教育阶段的英语课堂研究。

李丹丽

2012 年 1 月于武汉大学

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My heartiest thanks go to Dr. Cynthia Lee, my principal supervisor, for her enthusiastic commitment, incisive advice and editing, as well as her patient guidance in the course of my Ph. D. study at the Hong Kong Baptist University. She devoted enormous time to read all the drafts and made prompt and constructive comments. Without her foresight and continuous support, this book would not have come to fruition.

My tremendous gratitude goes to Prof. William Littlewood, my former principal supervisor, for his guidance and encouragement. His advice and inspiration helped me in the evolution of my research from 2004 onwards.

I am very grateful to Dr. Yang Suying and Dr. Huang Yueyuan, for their generous assistance and constant encouragement throughout my Ph. D. study. Many thanks are due to their kind support and pertinent suggestions on the drafts of the book.

Sincere gratitude is extended to all the teachers and students in Hong Kong and the China Mainland who took part in the study for their kind support and important contributions to this work. Without their participation, this study would not have been completed.

I would like to thank the Department of English Language and Literature and Language Centre of Hong Kong Baptist University for providing me with the opportunity to conduct my research. My thanks also go to many colleagues and friends who shared my ups and downs during my stay in Hong Kong. Their invaluable friendship and assistance will always be treasured in my heart.

My heartfelt thanks also go to Prof. Marianne Celce-Murcia, Prof. Olga Yokoyama, Prof. Gao Yihong, Prof. Liu Junping, Prof. Ren Xiaojin, Prof. Zhang Weiyou, Prof. Zhu Binzhong, Prof. Deng Liming, and Prof. Ma Yunxia, for their consistent support on my research during these years. I am much obliged to the English Department and the School of Foreign Languages and Literature of Wuhan

University for the Publishing Funds for this book.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to my parents and all the families for their great support throughout the time, and for their tolerance and understanding during the research experience. Their encouragement and love made the completion of the book possible.

ABBREVIATIONS

D	Demonstration
DM	Direction Maintenance
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
F	Feedback
FC	Frustration Control
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
LD	Learning-disabled
LRE	Language-related Episode
MCF	Marking Critical Features
NA	Normally Achieving
NS	Native English-speaking
R	Recruitment
S	Simplifying the Task
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

FOREWORD

Over the past few decades, second language acquisition researchers have been studying how language learners learn. They approach it from different theoretical perspectives—linguistic, psychological, cognitive and sociocultural, and recommend various learning hypotheses—input, interactive, cognitive processing and output. On the other hand, second language teachers are concerned about the ways in which second language can be learnt effectively in the classroom context. They have been integrating theoretical constructs with pedagogy and pedagogical tasks. Engaging learners in discussion is frequently used by second language teachers in their classrooms.

This book addresses both theoretical and pedagogical concerns. The study investigates how three different forms of student-and-teacher discussion facilitate the learning of the target grammatical form (i. e. , relative clause) from Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective in the Chinese learning context. It is found that teacher-student + student-student form of discussion promotes learning and the zone of proximal development most. More importantly, good quality of interaction rather than quantity and unfocussed interaction impacts learning. The findings shed insights into the significance of interaction and grouping in second language acquisition. Simply putting learners into groups and asking them to talk without paying much heed to participants and their strategies may not be beneficial to learning. With a view to enhancing the quality of interaction and output, second language teachers should be aware of grouping impact and should learn how to manage discussion themselves by using the appropriate scaffolding strategies. It is without doubt that the book has made significant contributions to the learning and teaching of English in the Chinese context.

Dr. Cynthia Lee
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MA in Language Studies Programme Director
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES ····· 1
ABBREVIATIONS ····· 1
FOREWORD ····· 1

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION ····· 1
1.1 Background ····· 1
1.1.1 Theoretical Background ····· 1
1.1.2 English Language Learning in the Chinese Context ····· 2
1.2 A Brief Review of Literature ····· 3
1.3 Purpose of Research ····· 4
1.4 Outline of the Book ····· 4

CHAPTER 2 SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING ····· 6
2.1 Fundamental Concepts of Sociocultural Theory ····· 6
2.1.1 The Importance of Social Interaction ····· 6
2.1.2 The Zone of Proximal Development(ZPD) ····· 8
2.1.2.1 The Definition of ZPD ····· 8
2.1.2.2 The Role of ZPD ····· 9
2.1.3 Scaffolding ····· 9
2.1.3.1 The Definition of Scaffolding ····· 9
2.1.3.2 The Role of Scaffolding ····· 10
2.1.3.3 Features of Scaffolding ····· 11
2.2 Research on Scaffolding, ZPD and Second Language Learning ····· 14
2.2.1 Research on Scaffolding in Expert-novice and Peer-peer Interaction ····· 14
2.2.1.1 Research on Scaffolding in Expert-novice Interaction ····· 14
2.2.1.2 Research on Scaffolding in Peer-peer Interaction ····· 17
2.2.2 Research on the Zone of Proximal Development(ZPD) ····· 22

2.2.2.1 Research on ZPD in Expert-novice Interaction ····· 22
2.2.2.2 Research on ZPD in Peer-peer Interaction ····· 27
2.3 Research Gap ····· 28
2.4 Research Questions ····· 30

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN ····· 32
3.1 Design ····· 32
3.1.1 Grouping ····· 32
3.1.2 Pre-task Interview ····· 34
3.1.3 Pre-test and Post-test ····· 34
3.2 Participants´ Profiles ····· 35
3.2.1 Students´ Profiles ····· 35
3.2.2 Teachers´ Profiles ····· 36
3.3 Pedagogic Task ····· 37
3.3.1 Focus of the Grammatical Form ····· 37
3.3.2 The Task ····· 38
3.4 Data Collection Procedures ····· 38
3.5 Data Analysis ····· 39
3.5.1 Procedures of Data Analysis ····· 39
3.5.2 Analysis of the Discourse ····· 40
3.5.2.1 Identifying Scaffolding Episodes ····· 41
3.5.2.2 Coding and Quantifying Scaffolding Types in Episodes ····· 42
3.5.2.3 Consistency ····· 43
3.5.3 Transcription Conventions ····· 43
3.5.4 Operational Definitions of Coding Categories ····· 44

CHAPTER 4 MICROGENETIC ANALYSIS OF THE CLASSROOM DISCOURSE ····· 47
4.1 Scaffolding in Clarifying the Meaning of Key Words, Sentence, or Paragraph ····· 47
4.1.1 Scaffolding in Student-student Interaction ····· 48
4.1.1.1 Clarifying Meaning at Word Level ····· 48
4.1.1.2 Clarifying Meaning at Sentence Level ····· 50
4.1.1.3 Clarifying Meaning at Paragraph Level ····· 51
4.1.2 Scaffolding in Teacher-student Interaction ····· 56

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4.1.2.1 Clarifying Meaning at Word Level ····· 57
4.1.2.2 Clarifying Meaning at Sentence Level ····· 60
4.1.2.3 Clarifying Meaning at Paragraph Level ····· 63
4.1.3 Scaffolding in Teacher-student + student-student Interaction ····· 67
4.1.3.1 Clarifying Meaning at Word Level ····· 67
4.1.3.2 Clarifying Meaning at Sentence Level ····· 73
4.1.3.3 Clarifying Meaning at Paragraph Level ····· 76
4.2 Scaffolding in Noticing the Form ····· 80
4.2.1 Scaffolding in Student-student Interaction ····· 80
4.2.2 Scaffolding in Teacher-student Interaction ····· 86
4.2.3 Scaffolding in Teacher-student + student-student Interaction ····· 92
4.2.3.1 Teacher Acting as a Facilitator or Encourager ····· 92
4.2.3.2 Teacher Acting as a Guide or Supervisor ····· 104

CHAPTER 5 QUANTITATIVE RESULTS ····· 108
5.1 Quantitative Analysis of Scaffolding Episodes ····· 108
5.1.1 Quantifying Scaffolding Episodes ····· 108
5.1.2 Quantifying Scaffolding Functions ····· 109
5.1.2.1 Distribution of Each Scaffolding Function in Total Episodes ····· 109
5.1.2.2 Occurrence of Each Scaffolding Function in Each Setting ····· 110
5.2 Statistical Analysis of Results from Pre-test and Post-test ····· 114
5.3 Report on the Students' Revised Writings ····· 115
5.3.1 Exemplification of Correct and Incorrect Target Forms in Students' Writings ····· 115
5.3.2 Comparison of the Number of Correct Target Forms in Three Settings ····· 116
5.4 Summary of Students' English Learning Experience from Interview ····· 117

CHAPTER 6 DISCUSSION ····· 121
6.1 The Role of Scaffolding When Focusing on Form ····· 121
6.2 The Impact of Scaffolding on Learning the Target Form in the Three Classroom Settings ····· 122
6.2.1 Teacher-student + student-student Interaction ····· 123
6.2.1.1 The Most Effective Setting ····· 123

6.2.1.2 The Most Conducive Pathway to Learn Grammatical Forms ····· 132
6.2.1.3 High Quality of Scaffolding Functions ····· 133
6.2.2 Teacher-student Interaction ····· 142
6.2.2.1 The Second Effective Setting ····· 142
6.2.2.2 An Alternative Pathway to Learn Grammatical Forms ····· 145
6.2.2.3 Lower Quality of Scaffolding Functions ····· 146
6.2.3 Student-student Interaction ····· 151
6.2.3.1 The Least Effective Setting ····· 151
6.2.3.2 An Alternative Pathway to Learn Grammatical Forms ····· 155
6.2.3.3 Lowest Quality of Scaffolding Functions ····· 157
6.3 Implications of the Study ····· 162
6.3.1 Implications for Sociocultural Theory ····· 162
6.3.2 Pedagogical Implications for Classroom Language Learning ····· 163

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION ····· 165
7.1 Summary of the Findings ····· 165
7.2 Significance of the Study ····· 167
7.3 Limitations of the Study ····· 170
7.4 Recommendations for Future Research ····· 172

Appendix Ⅰ ····· 174
Appendix Ⅱ ····· 175
Appendix Ⅲ ····· 177
Appendix Ⅳ ····· 179
Appendix Ⅴ ····· 181
Appendix Ⅵ ····· 184
Appendix Ⅶ ····· 185
Appendix Ⅷ ····· 189
Bibliography ····· 293

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 3. 1 The Grouping in the Writing Activity ····· 33
Table 5. 1 Number and Percentage of Scaffolding Episodes of Each Setting in the Total Data ····· 109
Table 5. 2 Number and Percentage of Each Scaffolding Function in Total Episodes ····· 109
Table 5. 3 Number and Percentage of Each Scaffolding Function in Setting 1 ····· 110
Table 5. 4 Number and Percentage of Each Scaffolding Function in Setting 2 ····· 111
Table 5. 5 Number and Percentage of Each Scaffolding Function in Setting 3 ····· 111
Table 5. 6 Number and Percentage of Each Scaffolding Function in Student-initiated Scaffolding Episodes in Setting 3 ····· 112
Table 5. 7 Number and Percentage of Each Scaffolding Function in Teacher-initiated Scaffolding Episodes in Setting 3 ····· 112
Table 5. 8 Statistical Comparison of Pre- and Post-tests Mean Scores in Each Setting ····· 114
Table 5. 9 Statistical Comparison of Pre- and Post-tests Mean Scores of Improvement in Three Settings ····· 115
Table 5. 10 Average Number of Correct Relative Clauses in Each Assignment in Three Settings ····· 117
Table 5. 11 Statistical Comparison of Means of Number of Correct Forms in Students' Writings ····· 117
Figure 6. 1 The Most Conducive Pathway of Learning Grammatical Forms in T-S + S-S Interaction ····· 132
Figure 6. 2 The Alternative Pathway of Learning Grammatical Forms in T-S Interaction ····· 145
Figure 6. 3 The Alternative Pathway of Learning Grammatical Forms in S-S Interaction ····· 156

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This chapter first introduces the background and the specific context for this study, in particular, the construct of sociocultural theory and Chinese students´ learning culture in the English language classroom. It then briefly reviews the literature and highlights the gap in previous research. The purpose of the study is then summarized and finally the structure of the book is outlined.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Theoretical Background

Within the trends of second language acquisition research, there has been an increasing emphasis on social interaction examining the second language learning process from the sociocultural perspective. Ideas from sociocultural theory, originating from the Soviet developmental psychologist Lev S Vygotsky (1978), have begun to influence second language teachers and researchers. Sociocultural theory focuses on the social processes that contribute to cognitive development. It argues that the development of higher forms of thinking is mediated by social interactions(see Gallimore & Tharp, 1990; Kozulin, 1998; Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Appel, 1994; Moll, 1990; Rogoff, 1990; Wertsch, 1985, 1991). Therefore, an individual´s knowledge is socially and dialogically constructed through social interactions in which language is the principal means.

Two central concepts of sociocultural theory are zone of proximal development (ZPD) and scaffolding. ZPD refers to the distance between the learner´s actual level and potential level of development(Lantolf & Appel, 1994). It is the cognitive gap between what the learner can do alone and what he can do with the help of others. Moving from one level to another may require assistance from adults or other capable peers. This assistance is portrayed as scaffolding, the temporary support which helps the learner extend his or her current skills and knowledge to a higher level of competence (Rogoff, 1990). Accordingly, the

concept of scaffolding is indeed a metaphor about how people learn, as it demonstrates how interactive support functions as a symbolic tool to achieve goals.

1.1.2 English Language Learning in the Chinese Context

Recent years have witnessed the blossoming of English language learning in China.① In spite of some individual differences in learning within the same culture among Chinese learners of English due to educational and geographical factors(in this case, Hong Kong② and Wuhan in the China Mainland③), Chinese learners, in general, share significantly similar features in the English learning classroom as their behaviour is to some extent interwoven with the Chinese culture of learning. Researchers who have studied the two groups of Chinese English learners´ language learning behaviour generally agree that many of them are accustomed to teacher-centred classrooms where the teacher plays a superior and authoritative role in the process of learning and students are ready to accept the traditionally dominant role of the teacher(Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Lee, 1999; Liu, 1998). This can be argued from the influence of the Confucion tradition of Chinese culture upon Chinese students´ learning attitude and social behaviour (Lee, 1999). Chinese students are taught to respect authority by listening to the teacher and the elderly, and passively receive knowledge as they are reluctant to adopt active speech roles in the learning process (Liu & Littlewood, 1997). Moreover, researchers have pointed out three common features of English language learning culture in the Chinese context in spite of some individual differences within the same culture and across the regions: the emphasis on knowledge of vocabulary and grammar and the result of learning, the likelihood of student passivity and teacher-centredness, and the inextricable relationship between Chinese ways of learning, Chinese culture and society (Cheng, 2002; Koch & Terrell, 1991; Lee, 2004). Accordingly, in a broad sense, Chinese

① Kachru´s(1992) call for a paradigm shift to World Englishes indicates that China is in the extending or expanding circle contexts of global English where English has enjoyed a higher social status than other foreign languages.

② English in Hong Kong is designated as an official language, an important symbolic capital indispensable for both upward and outward mobility(Bolton, 2002; Li, 1999).

③ English learning is given a very high status in education in the China Mainland for syllabus requirements, career advancement or “social and economic mobility”(Zhao & Cambell, 1995).

students in the two regions behave more or less the same in the English learning classroom as they are influenced by the Chinese learning culture. Although some people may feel that they are two distinctive groups of learners, these learners indeed share similar background and experience in learning English grammar, such as learning motivation, the way of learning grammar, and the strategy to deal with difficulties in grammar (see Section 5.4). Ultimately, learners from either Hong Kong or Wuhan would behave similarly in classroom interaction under the same learning culture in the Chinese context. In this light, it is feasible to claim that they are akin to each other, instead of being distinctive or homogeneous, representing Chinese learners from two different areas. Their interactional behaviour in the classroom is applicable and generalized to Chinese learners in different areas of China.

1.2 A Brief Review of Literature

Recent studies have examined the effects of scaffolding on second language learning with the focus on form. Researchers have shown how target language features may be incorporated into learners´ independent discourse through scaffolding (Lantolf, 2000). Studies to date have been small-scale and have generally relied on qualitative and interpretative research procedures. Researchers have focused on either expert-novice scaffolding or peer-peer scaffolding in noticing form and meaning in second language classrooms (e.g., Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Anton, 1999; Swain & Lapkin, 1998). Further, most research has investigated either expert-novice scaffolding involving early language learners or adolescents in elementary or high schools (e.g., Gibbons, 2002; Nassaji & Cumming, 2000; Pei, 2005), or peer-peer scaffolding involving adult learners like college-level students (e.g., Donato, 2000; de Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Ge & Land, 2003). However, studies that compare the different degrees of effectiveness of teacher-student and student-student scaffolding on handling the target form, particularly the grammatical form, are scant. Similarly, little research has explored the issue of extending the ZPD①. Moreover, reports on adult language learners are also very few and investigation in the Chinese tertiary language

① In this book, extending or stretching the ZPD refers to the movement from the actual level of development to the potential level of development in the existing ZPD, and then the potential level is pushed forward to a more advanced level of development in a new ZPD.

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