

Analyzing Students' Motivation in Learning Business English Writing Skills by Utilizing CLIL Method in China

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Abstract: *This study investigates the effects of utilizing CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) method in improving Chinese college students' motivation of learning Business English writing. This study adopted a quasi-experimental design. The Experimental Group was taught Business English Writing using CLIL method while the Control Group was taught using the conventional method over a period of eight weeks. The sample of the study consisted of 80 third year Business English college students from Shaoyang University in Hunan Province, China. Two classes of students were chosen as intact group sampling (40 in the Experimental Group while another 40 in the Control Group). A pre-motivation questionnaire and post-motivation questionnaire were used as instruments in this study. The data was analyzed using SPSS version 25 and Independent samples t-test. Prior to the actual study a pilot test was conducted to obtain the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. The findings from quantitative data revealed that students in the Experimental Group using CLIL teaching method showed significantly better than the students in the Control Group in their overall motivation in terms of ARCS (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction). These findings have significant pedagogical implications in that the CLIL method enhances students' learning motivation and therefore facilitates them to improve in their Business English writing skills. Therefore, it can be concluded that the CLIL instruction should be employed as an alternative method in future Business English writing classes.*

Keywords: *CLIL method, Conventional method, Business English writing, Motivation, Chinese college students.*

I. Introduction

With the development of the economy and continuous expansion of opening up, China is in urgent need of compound talents proficient in both the English language and professional knowledge in the field of international trade, cross-border e-commerce, international commercial law. According to the national college education guidelines in China, the training goal of the Business English major is to provide the society with talents who have a good command of a second foreign language and be flexible in international business practices, including writing, speaking, translation, business negotiation, contract drafting, dispute resolution and so on (Luo, 2006). However, how to balance the relationship between English and business knowledge remains the core issue that challenges most college teachers (Ushioda, 2013).

The term Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) was originally coined by Marsh (1994) as a teaching method which stressed both language proficiency and subject contents. It is a dual-focused learning and teaching approach which has become a wide-recognized term for foreign language teaching in the past decades (Dalton-Puffer, 2011; Coyle, 2013; Doiz, Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2014b). This method has been applied

in a business context in many countries and widely accepted as an effective approach (Coyle, 2014; Dalton-Puffer *et al.*, 2014). In some European countries like Netherlands and Finland, CLIL is adopted as an innovative method to teach trade practice and entrepreneurial ideas, which is especially practical for those engaged in the field of business (Pérez-Cañado, 2012; Lasagabaster, Doiz, & Sierra, 2014). Although CLIL is still in the stage of exploration and experiment, it has been widely valued by experts in education and gradually applied in the second language learning environment (De Smet *et al.*, 2019).

The current Business English teaching in China often pays attention to the writing theories and formats while neglects the importance of professional knowledge. Under this type of education mode, students' practical English ability is constrained and limited so that their intrinsic motivation fails to be stimulated. Therefore, cultivating college graduates who can proficiently use English as a tool to build an international vision while smoothly participate in business transactions and cultural exchanges should become one of the most urgent tasks for college education (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014).

Research Hypothesis:

Five null hypothesis were formulated based on the objectives of the study:

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of overall motivation towards learning Business English writing skills between the Experimental Group (using the CLIL method) and the Control Group (using the conventional method).

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the mean scores for Attention towards learning Business English writing skills between the Experimental Group (using the CLIL method) and the Control Group (using the conventional method).

Ho3: There is no significant difference in the mean scores for Relevance towards learning Business English writing skills between the Experimental Group (using the CLIL method) and the Control Group (using the conventional method).

Ho4: There is no significant difference in the mean scores for Confidence towards learning Business English writing skills between the Experimental Group (using the CLIL method) and the Control Group (using the conventional method).

Ho5: There is no significant difference in the mean scores for Satisfaction towards learning Business English writing skills between the Experimental Group (using the CLIL method) and the Control Group (using the conventional method).

II. Literature Review

A significant body of studies have investigated the characteristics and implementation of CLIL in a diverse educational settings, most of which focused on the positive aspects of CLIL and the benefits it brings to the teaching of bilingualism (Banegas, 2013; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009; Sylvén & Thompson, 2015;). Navarro-Pablo and Garcia-Jimenez (2018) explained the positive influence of CLIL upon students' language fulfillment. While Pinner (2013) discussed the feasibility of CLIL in the Asian context when it offered students' opportunities to study authentic English materials. Nevertheless, there is hardly studies analyse the effectiveness of CLIL method in the setting of Business English writing with quantitative data drawn from college levels in China.

2.1 CLIL and language learning motivation

CLIL is generally considered as an effective tool in motivating learners to use and develop the second foreign language skills while acquiring subject contents (Doiz, Lasagabaster, & Sierra, 2014a). The CLIL programme provides the foundation for classroom communication activities because students can interact with each other on topics they are interested in a real and extensive business scenario which effectively stimulate discussion in groups (Lasagabaster, 2011). Traditional foreign language teaching pays attention to the structural form of the language while ignores its cultural aspects. In this regard, CLIL combines the L2 language learning with subject-based teaching. The “content” refers not only to the subject contents that students learned in class, but also the non-subject topics that they are interested in (Lasagabaster & Doiz, 2015). In the CLIL mode, the second language acquisition is promoted through team work, authentic materials, as well as effective communication. This method overcomes the shortcomings of the traditional teaching class which is teacher-dominated and less motivated but taking into account the students’ initiative and self-expectancy (Sierra, 2016). Further, Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008) found that students were able to successfully complete the writing tasks under the motivational CLIL practice. At the same time, Dörnyei (2001) noted that the CLIL instruction enabled the teacher to create an inspiring and stimulating learning environment which served as a critical motivation factor to enhance students’ confidence for learning foreign languages and build their self-esteem during this process. In addition, Colye (2013) further developed the CLIL theory with 4Cs framework, namely, Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture. It is to provide a challenging yet accessible learning content while encourage group communication through collaborative action when students acquire new knowledge and develop cognitive processing by developing an intercultural awareness (Colye, 2014). Under the guidance of 4Cs framework, students are more easily to be motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically (Hüttner *et al.*, 2013).

2.2 Keller’s ARCS theory of motivation

Motivation originally derives from a psychological conceptualization which refers to the inner driving force or persistence that encourages a person to accomplish the goals or finish the tasks stimulated and inspired by individual needs or desires (Dörnyei, 2001). Motivation also symbolizes learners’ willingness to master a skill or acquire professional knowledge with engagement in class (Keller, 2008). In other words, motivation is a type of energized and constant goal-oriented behavior in nature. To prove this, Bruning and Horn (2000) studied motivational research upon writing focusing on the authentic writing tasks, a supportive context, as well as a positive emotional environment.

The ARCS motivation model was first introduced by Keller in 1983 (Keller, 1987). Its theoretical system was based on the expectancy-value theory proposed by Tolman and Lewin, who believed that when the value of knowledge is presented to learners, they would have optimistic expectations for success and thus learning motivation was stimulated (Lamb, 2017). Therefore, Keller integrated principles of self-efficacy, attribution theory, and goal orientation theory to put forward four key elements of ARCS, respectively, Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction, on the maintenance of learners’ motivation (Keller, 2010).

Attention refers to the learner’s interest in the subject knowledge. It means to attract their attention, intrigue curiosity and maintain an active involvement in class by using different approaches, like incongruous and uncertain events; or stimulating their curiosity through challenging questions or problems to be solved.

Relevance means that learning activities should be closely related to the learners' existing knowledge and their goals. Instructional design should be goal-oriented and be connected with their cognition. It is recommended to use concrete language and examples with which the learners are familiar so that they can best learn by establish a connection based upon the present knowledge with past experience.

Confidence is closely related to the time and energy that learners spend to achieve learning goals, that is, self-efficacy. Therefore, enabling learners to have a positive assessment of the learning task is the key to enhance their confidence. It can be achieved by designing reasonable and specific tasks to improve the chance of successful learning. Also, learners would believe that their success is a direct result of the amount of effort they have put forth.

Satisfaction aims to establish a positive emotional experience in learning activities. A sense of accomplishment helps learners to study actively and maintain their motivation for learning. Satisfaction originates from internal reinforcement, that is, the inner satisfaction of the learner; it also comes from external rewards, for example, praise or positive feedback from a higher-up or mere entertainment. It is thus important to make the learners feel as though the skill is useful or beneficial by providing opportunities to apply the newly acquired knowledge in a real setting.

In addition, according to the ARCS Model, learners would be more involved in a classroom activity if they hold to the faith that they will somehow succeed and their personal needs and goals will be satisfied in the end. The motivational design is an effective tool in improving students' writing motivation and performance. The above listed four categories was applied to the study on learning motivation of Business English writing skills under the CLIL instruction.

III. Methodology

This quantitative study adopted a quasi-experimental design. The Experimental Group was taught using the CLIL method and the Control Group was taught using the conventional method. The sample of the study are 80 third-year Business English majors from Shaoyang University, Hunan province, China. This college has a population of 511 Business English students in total. These 80 participants come from two classes as an intact group. Further, both classes are taught by two different English teachers with eight years of teaching experience. This experiment lasted for 8 weeks, 4 hours for each week, that is a total of 32 hours. According to the students' English final exam results of second year, the performance and average level of English writing in these two classes is about the same. The instrument used in this study is the questionnaire on motivation adapted from Keller's ARCS (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, Satisfaction) Model of Motivational Design used to collect data on students' motivation towards Business English writing when adopting the CLIL and the conventional method. The questionnaire consists of 36 items in total and distributed to the respondents before and after the intervention. The questionnaire was in Chinese version (all the items in the questionnaire were translated back to back, from English to Chinese and Chinese to English by two experts in the field of applied linguistics from Hunan University). Validity forms were given to the experts to validate items in the questionnaire. The Chinese version was provided to the students to ensure that they completely understand the gist and actual meaning of each items in the questionnaire. A pilot study was conducted among 40 students to obtain the reliability of the questionnaire. Reliability test of the Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire on motivation. The Cronbach value obtained was 0.905 which indicated that the questionnaire is highly reliable and can be used in the study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016)

The items in the questionnaire of motivation are all close-ended statements measured on a Five-Point Likert Scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The students from both the experimental and the control groups were required to fill in the two sets of questionnaire. The pre-questionnaire was administered before the intervention while the post-questionnaire was carried out after the intervention. The questionnaire is the essential tool for collecting the data on learning the motivation of students before and after using this two types of teaching methods. The SPSS Statistics 25.0 was used to analyze and interpret the quantitative data while the Independent sample t-test was employed to test the hypotheses.

IV. Results And Discussion

The purpose of this analysis is to see the difference in the mean scores for motivation towards learning Business English writing skills between the Experimental Group and the Control Group. In this study, the questionnaire adapted from Keller (2010) aimed to investigate the differences of mean scores on learning motivation before the intervention (pre-motivation) and after the intervention (post-motivation).

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the mean scores on overall motivation towards learning Business English writing skills between the Experimental Group (using the CLIL method) and the Control Group (using the conventional method).

Table 4.1a

Comparison of Mean Scores for Overall Motivation in the Pre-test

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	df	p-value
Exp. Group	40	110.75	14.02	-.625	-.188	78	.825
Con. Group	40	111.37	15.72				

Level of significance is at $p < 0.05$

Table 4.1a indicates the mean scores of the students from the two groups for overall motivation are about the same level prior to the intervention. The mean score for the Experimental Group was 110.75. Whereas the mean score of the Control Group was 111.37. Findings from the Independent sample t-test indicate that there is no significant difference between the Experimental Group and the Control group in their overall score on motivation in learning Business English writing skills prior to intervention (Mean difference = -.625, $t = -.188$, $df = 78$, $p = .825$).

Table 4.1b

Comparison of Mean Scores for Overall Motivation in the Post-test

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	df	p-value
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Exp. Group	40	133.00	1.45	24.87	10.30	78	.000
Con. Group	40	108.12	1.75				

Level of significance is at $p < 0.05$

Table 4.1b indicates the students' mean scores for overall motivation after the intervention. The overall score for the students from the Experimental Group is higher (Mean = 133.00, SD = 1.45) than the students from the Control Group (Mean = 108.12, SD = 1.75). Findings from the Independent sample t-test indicate that there is a significant difference between the Experimental Group and Control group in their overall scores on motivation in learning Business English skills (Mean difference = 24.87, $t = 10.30$, $df = 78$, $p = .000$). Therefore, the results fail to accept H_01 . The findings clearly showed that the overall motivation of the Experimental Group was significantly improved when CLIL method was used in Business English writing class and the Control Group under the conventional teaching method. The results are paralleled with findings by Navarro-Pablo and Garcia-Jimenez (2018) who noted that the CLIL learning has a positive influence upon students' affective stance and language attainment, especially for those who desired to work and has a realistic self-demand. Further, Pinner (2013) supported this view by looking at the applicability of CLIL in the Asian context and advocated the CLIL approach as an effective tool of increasing students' opportunities to get contact with authentic learning contents, which intrigued their curiosity and thus potentially motivated them to learn. Similarly, Lasagabaster and Sierra (2009) confirmed that CLIL instructions helped students to foster positive attitudes towards language learning in general.

H_02 : There is no significant difference in the mean scores for Attention towards learning Business English writing skills between the Experimental Group (using the CLIL method) and the Control Group (using the conventional method).

Table 4.2a

Comparison of Mean Scores for Motivation of 'Attention' in the Pre-test

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	df	p-value
Exp. Group	40	36.42	4.71	.575	.465	78	.643
Con. Group	40	35.85	6.24				

Level of significance is at $p < 0.05$

Table 4.2a indicates the students' mean scores for 'Attention' are about the same in the two groups in the pre-test. The mean score for the Experimental Group was 36.42 and 35.85 for the Control Group. Findings from the Independent sample t-test indicate that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of 'Attention' in learning Business English skills between the Experimental Group and the Control Group in the pre-test (Mean difference = .575, $t = .465$, $df = 78$, $p = .643$).

Table 4.2b

Comparison of Mean Scores for Motivation of 'Attention' in the Post-test

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	df	p-value
Exp. Group	40	41.32	4.58	4.325	4.418	78	.000
Con. Group	40	37.00	4.16				

Level of significance is at $p < 0.05$

Table 4.2b shows the students' mean scores for 'Attention' in the post-test. The students' mean score for 'Attention' from the Experimental Group is higher (Mean = 41.32, SD = 4.58) than their counterparts from the Control Group (Mean = 37.00, SD = 4.16) in the post-test. The results from the Independent sample t-test reveal that the Experimental Group performed significantly higher than the Control Group in the mean scores of 'Attention' in learning Business English skills after the intervention (Mean difference = 4.325, $t = 4.418$, $df = 78$, $p = .000$). In addition, when students immersed in the CLIL environment they perform better than those who were taught using conventional strategies. The current findings are consistent with Otwinowsk and Foris (2017), and De Smet *et al* (2019) who highlighted that the CLIL approach increased students' expectancy for success so that they were more absorbed in class. Also, Lasagabaster (2011) stressed that activities carried out in a CLIL context would evoke a positive motivational response among students while those taught in a traditional EFL class presented an obvious lack of interest in learning.

Ho3: There is no significant difference in the mean scores for Relevance towards learning Business English writing skills between the Experimental Group (using the CLIL method) and the Control Group (using the conventional method).

Table 4.3a

Comparison of Mean Scores for Motivation of 'Relevance' in the Pre-test

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	df	p-value
Exp. Group	40	26.65	4.10	-.400	-.444	78	.658
Con. Group	40	27.05	3.95				

Level of significance is at $p < 0.05$

Table 4.3a shows the students' mean scores for 'Relevance' prior to the intervention are almost similar in the two groups. The mean score for the Experimental Group was 26.65. Whereas the mean score of the Control Group was 27.05. Findings from the Independent sample t-test indicate that there is no significant difference between the Experimental Group and Control group in the mean score of 'Relevance' in learning Business English skills (Mean difference = -.400, $t = -.444$, $df = 78$, $p = .658$).

Table 4.3b

Comparison of Mean Scores for Motivation of 'Relevance' in the Post-test

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	df	p-value
Exp. Group	40	33.35	3.07	4.900	5.719	78	.000
Con. Group	40	28.45	4.46				

Level of significance is at $p < 0.05$

Table 4.3b explains the students' mean scores for 'Relevance' after the intervention in two groups. The students' mean score for 'Relevance' from the Experimental Group is higher (Mean = 33.35, SD = 3.07) than their counterparts from the Control Group (Mean = 28.45, SD = 4.46) in the post-test. The Independent sample t-test results show that the mean scores of the Experimental Group and Control Group are significantly different in the mean score of 'Relevance' in learning Business English skills in the post-test (Mean difference = 4.900, $t = 5.719$, $df = 78$, $p = .000$). The findings clearly show that the mean score for 'Relevance' of the Experimental Group has been significantly improved when the CLIL method was used in the Business English writing and the Control Group under the conventional teaching method. Lasagabaster and Doiz (2015) held that in the CLIL class students' motivation to learn was consistently maintained due to relevance of the the subject knowledge with real life issues. At the same time, the CLIL teacher played a vital role in connecting the teaching material to the business scenario (Coonan, 2007). Also, Doiz *et al* (2014a) highlighted that students' intrinsic motivation was obtained through instrumental orientation and interest in foreign language cultures. As the CLIL programme would associate the writing skills with the cultural background in multinational corporations, students gradually developed an awareness of the practical side which was relevant to language learning and enhanced their motivation.

Ho4: There is no significant difference in the mean scores for Confidence towards learning Business English writing skills between the Experimental Group (using the CLIL method) and the Control Group (using the conventional method).

Table 4.4a

Comparison of Mean Scores for Motivation of 'Confidence' in the Pre-test

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	df	p-value
Exp. Group	40	27.50	4.55	-.575	-.552	78	.583
Con. Group	40	28.07	4.76				

Level of significance is at $p < 0.05$

Table 4.4a indicates the students' mean scores for 'Confidence' before the intervention are almost the same in

the two groups. The mean score for the Experimental Group was 27.50 and 28.07 for the Control Group. Findings from the Independent sample t-test indicate that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of 'Confidence' in learning Business English skills between the Experimental Group and the Control Group prior to the intervention (Mean difference = -.575, $t = -.552$, $df = 78$, $p = .583$).

Table 4.4b

Comparison of Mean Scores for Motivation of 'Confidence' in the Post-test

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	df	p-value
Exp. Group	40	33.67	4.82	7.575	6.824	78	.000
Con. Group	40	26.10	5.10				

Level of significance is at $p < 0.05$

Table 4.4b indicates the students' mean scores for 'Confidence' after the intervention in two groups. The students' mean score for 'Confidence' from the Experimental Group is higher (Mean = 33.67, SD = 4.82) than those from the Control Group (Mean = 26.10, SD = 5.10) in the post-test. Findings from the Independent sample t-test indicate that there is a significant difference between the Experimental Group and the Control Group in the mean score of 'Confidence' in learning Business English skills (Mean difference = 7.575, $t = 6.824$, $df = 78$, $p = .000$). The findings clearly show that the Experimental Group's mean score for 'Confidence' is significantly higher than the Control Group. These findings are in synergy with studies by Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008) who proved that teacher's motivational teaching practice accompanied by quality instruction contribute to learners' motivated learning behaviors. Under the CLIL settings, students felt a sense of fulfillment in successfully accomplished the writing tasks, thus their confidence were boosted. Also, Sylvén and Thompson (2015) investigated through students' exposure to CLIL and found that a higher L2 self-confidence was spotted among them. Dörnyei (2001) also stressed that to build learners' self-esteem and confidence, it is important to make the learning process more motivating and interesting by designing classroom activities in a stimulating way. Therefore, the CLIL program could be a source for the enhanced learning confidence.

Ho5: There is no significant difference in the mean scores for Satisfaction towards learning Business English writing skills between the Experimental Group (using the CLIL method) and the Control Group (using the conventional method).

Table 4.5a

Comparison of Mean Scores for Motivation of 'Satisfaction' in the Pre-test

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	df	p-value
Exp. Group	40	20.20	3.70	-.200	-.213	78	.832

Con. Group	40	20.40	4.64
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Level of significance is at $p < 0.05$

Table 4.5a shows the students' mean scores for 'Satisfaction' are similar in the two groups in the pre-test. The mean score for the students from the Experimental Group was 20.20 and 20.40 for the Control Group. Findings from the Independent sample t-test indicate that there is no significant difference between the Experimental Group and the Control Group in the mean score of 'Satisfaction' in learning Business English skills (Mean difference = -.200, $t = -.213$, $df = 78$, $p = .832$).

Table 4.5b

Comparison of Mean Scores for Motivation of 'Satisfaction' in the Post-test

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	df	p-value
Exp. Group	40	24.65	3.74	8.075	8.426	78	.000
Con. Group	40	16.57	4.76				

Level of significance is at $p < 0.05$

Table 4.10 explains the students' mean scores for 'Satisfaction' in the post-test in two groups. The students' mean score for 'Satisfaction' from the Experimental Group is higher (Mean = 24.65, SD = 3.74) than their counterparts from the Control Group (Mean = 16.57, SD = 4.76) in the post-test. The results from the independent samples t-test reveal that the Experimental Group performed significantly higher than the Control Group in the mean score of 'Satisfaction' in learning Business English skills after the intervention (Mean difference = 8.075, $t = 8.426$, $df = 78$, $p = .000$). The findings clearly show that the Experimental Group's mean score for 'Satisfaction' is significantly higher than the Control Group. In addition, when students immersed in the CLIL environment they perform better than those who were taught using conventional instructions. These findings support the studies of Banegas (2013) who emphasized that students were found to be satisfied with their performance by collaborative action. In addition, these findings support what Doiz et al (2014b) and Lasagabaster et al (2014) pinpointed that students were willing to spend more time studying English and the subject once they found their hard work paid off. In this regard, the CLIL lecturer encouraged group work and offered positive feedback so that students would be more motivated in the learning process.

V. Conclusion

In this study, the questionnaire adapted by John Keller (2010) was used to examine the utilization of CLIL and conventional methods for students' motivation on Business English writing skills. The findings of the quantitative data of the this study indicated that students immersed in the CLIL programmes were more motivated to learn and performed significantly better than their counterparts who were studying under the conventional method. This study also demonstrated important findings which have both pedagogical and practical implications. In term of pedagogical enlightenment, the CLIL method facilitated the teacher to successfully attract students' attention and motivated them to actively participate in class activities. In terms of practical implications, students in the CLIL classroom learned practical Business English writing skills which prepared them to be a fast learner and therefore make a quick transition into the future workplace. Nevertheless,

there are still limitations in the current study. First of all, the sample size of this study only consists of 80 third year college students majored in Business English so that the results can only be generalized to similar sample. In this regard, future studies should involve a larger sample and include different subjects. Secondly, as CLIL was first initiated in Europe, it only began to gain popularity in recent years so that both the experts in education and the local governments in China failed to pay sufficient attention to the promotion of this method. As such, it is hoped that more effort should be put on how to provide a systematic training to the CLIL teachers who should be trained to be proficient in English and can master this teaching tool to fully exert its advantages. Also, as there is no well-recognized CLIL textbooks in the market, more discussions can be focused on this aspect. Finally, future studies could focus on integrating a qualitative insight that would be convenient to delve into a varied motivational dimensions as was discussed in this study.

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