



UNIVERSIDAD ESTATAL PENÍNSULA DE SANTA ELENA

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TOPIC:

**“THE USE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET (IPA) AS A
TOOL FOR DEVELOPING ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION SKILLS”**

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Dedicatory

My parents Nelson Guevara and Mercedes Gavilanes, my siblings Sofia and Arturo, have supported me unconditionally, thanks to their support this educational dream has become true and I dedicate them with all my love.

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GLOSSARY

IPA: Brown (2012) stated that the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is a set of symbols designed to represent speech sounds of languages of the world.

Pronunciation: It refers to how words and speech sounds are articulated and produced in a language. It encompasses the correct formation of individual sounds, stress patterns, intonation, rhythm, and the overall phonetic characteristics that contribute to effective communication. Accurate pronunciation is essential for clear and comprehensible verbal expression in both spoken and written communication (Kobilova, 2022).

Language: It is a complex system of communication used by humans to convey thoughts, ideas, emotions, and information. It encompasses a set of structured elements, such as words, grammar, syntax, and phonetic features, that enable individuals to engage in meaningful interactions. Languages can be oral, written, or signed and are central to human culture, identity, and social interaction (Kasmei et al., 2023).

Skills: They refer to the ability to perform specific tasks or activities effectively and proficiently. In the context of language learning, language skills typically include four main components: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills enable individuals to comprehend, communicate, and interact in the target language. Language skills are developed through practice, instruction, and exposure to authentic language use (Harahap, 2020).

Teaching Method: It is a systematic approach or strategy employed by educators to facilitate the learning process and achieve specific educational objectives. Teaching methods encompass a wide range of techniques, practices, and activities designed to engage learners, promote understanding, and enhance skill development. Effective teaching methods are often

selected based on the subject matter, learning goals, and the needs and preferences of the learners (Tuma, 2021).



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RESUMEN

El presente trabajo es una exploración integral centrada en la utilización del Alfabeto Fonético Internacional (IPA) como una potente herramienta para el avance de las habilidades de pronunciación en inglés. El objetivo principal es investigar la eficacia de integrar IPA en la educación del idioma inglés, centrándose en su influencia en la competencia de pronunciación de los estudiantes. Este estudio se enfoca en responder la siguiente pregunta de investigación: ¿Qué tan efectivo es el uso del (IPA) como herramienta para desarrollar habilidades de pronunciación en inglés? Esta investigación utilizó un método cualitativo que abarca una revisión de la literatura educativa relacionada con el tema. Los resultados indican que aprender el Alfabeto Fonético Internacional es útil para dominar la pronunciación en inglés. El uso del IPA también puede permitir a los alumnos percibir, articular y reproducir sonidos con mayor precisión.

Palabras clave: pronunciación inglesa, fonética, IPA, vocales inglesas, consonantes inglesas.



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ABSTRACT

The present work is a comprehensive exploration centered on the utilization of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) as a potent tool for the advancement of English pronunciation skills. The primary objective is to investigate the efficacy of integrating IPA into English language education with a focus on its influence on learners' pronunciation competence.

This study focuses on answering the following research question: How effective is the use of the (IPA) as a tool for developing English pronunciation skills? This research used a qualitative method that encompasses a review of educational literature related to the topic. The results indicate that learning the International Phonetic Alphabet is useful for mastering English pronunciation. The use of the IPA can also empower learners to perceive, articulate, and reproduce sounds with greater accuracy.

Keywords: English pronunciation, phonetic, IPA, English vowels, English consonants.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a multifaceted tool for communication that integrates various sounds. Effective communication in English necessitates proper pronunciation, which can be challenging for learners owing to the lack of one-to-one correspondence between English sounds and letters used for writing (Hsieh et al., 2023). As noted by Brown (2012), unlike Spanish, where one letter equals one sound, English has numerous sounds represented by a single letter. As a result, students must use symbols to represent the sound they want to pronounce.

Proper pronunciation is crucial for research, as inaccurate production of a phoneme can lead to misunderstanding the message. Phonetic transcription accurately represents sounds, allowing learners to see the correct pronunciation of words and phrases independent of any regional accent or instructor's speech. By learning the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), learners gain a universal tool that can be applied to all-natural speech sounds, enabling them to differentiate and pronounce the sounds of words correctly.

The International Phonetic Alphabet was developed in the 19th century by the International Phonetic Association, which is the oldest organization that represents phoneticians (Brierley & Heselwood, 2022). The IPA was first established in the landmark work “Le Maître Phonétique” by Paul Passy in 1886. The IPA focuses on the scientific study of phonetics (Léon, 2021).

The International Phonetic Alphabet is a group of symbols that represent the world's language sounds. It is a set of 44 symbols divided into three categories: vowels, diphthongs, and consonants, as illustrated by Brown (2012). Understanding those complex sounds is a challenge for any professional in education and communication. The intention of creating the IPA is to avoid

confusion between spelling and spoken language. This part of the study will describe the definition of IPA, demonstrate the activities for teaching IPA, and analyze the importance of IPA.

Formulation of the problem

In the context of classroom communication, effective interaction between teachers and learners heavily relies on the accurate pronunciation of vowel and consonant sounds (Dandee & Pornwiriyakit, 2022). When either party commits pronunciation errors, mutual comprehension becomes challenging. As highlighted by Blasius (2022), the significance of pronunciation cannot be understated in the pursuit of oral language learning objectives. Notably, while the Spanish language adheres to a one-letter-one-sound correspondence, the English language exhibits a more intricate soundscape, posing difficulties for learners aiming to articulate words correctly.

This study seeks to address this concern by investigating the efficacy of incorporating the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) as a pedagogical tool to facilitate the acquisition of accurate English pronunciation skills.

Main question

How effective is the use of the IPA as a tool for developing English pronunciation skills?

OBJECTIVES

General objective

To explore the advantages of using IPA as a tool for developing English pronunciation skills.

Specific objectives

- To **describe** the importance of pronunciation

- To **define** the fundamental aspects of the International Phonetic Alphabet.
- To **synthesize** the benefits of integrating International Phonetic Alphabet instruction within English language education.

METHODOLOGY

This study has a qualitative method to conduct a review of existing educational literature to gain a comprehensive understanding of the use of IPA to improve pronunciation. This research includes the investigation of educational databases focusing on the search term “IPA”. Finally, this method includes the analysis of scientific articles to extract information about the advantages of using IPA.

BACKGROUND

English pronunciation can be a challenging aspect of language learning for non-native speakers. The correct pronunciation of words and sounds is crucial for effective communication. To facilitate more accurate pronunciation, the International Phonetic Alphabet is a valuable tool for learners and educators (Suryaleksana et al., 2022).

The International Phonetic Alphabet is an internationally recognized system of phonetic notation. It was developed in the late 19th century to represent the sounds of spoken language consistently. The IPA provides a standardized set of symbols that correspond to individual speech sounds. Each symbol in the IPA represents a unique sound unit, allowing learners to pinpoint and replicate the precise pronunciation of words in any language, including English (ASC English, 2020).

The use of IPA in language education has gained prominence due to its potential to enhance pronunciation skills. By incorporating the IPA into English language teaching, educators can help

students grasp the subtleties of English sounds that may not exist in their native languages (Messerklinger, 2009).

Furthermore, Al-Mahdi (2022) claims that the IPA serves as a bridge between phonetic transcription and auditory perception. It assists learners in connecting written symbols with the actual sounds produced during speech. This visual representation of sounds offers a systematic approach to tackle pronunciation difficulties, helping learners break down complex words and sounds into manageable components.

Finally, a study done by Romero (2016) at Universidad Internacional del Ecuador aimed to teach English as the target second language by involving several considerations that have to do with both the source language of speakers and the kind of training these students go through. Spanish native speakers are considered who study English as a second language and identified, through two vowel sounds forming a minimal pair, that phonemes of General American English are more likely to be mispronounced; the study found that exercising reinforcement needs to be focused not only on the phonemes of the English vowel system which native speakers of Spanish have more trouble with but also new and creative distribution exercising must be included in textbooks to help students master the English vowel sounds consequently avoiding accent due to Spanish interference.

THEORETICAL BASES

Phonetics Theory:

Phonetics explores the physical properties of speech sounds, while phonology examines their abstract, linguistic characteristics. Theoretical frameworks in these areas provide the

foundation for understanding the IPA and its application in the context of English pronunciation (Al-Mahid, 2022).

Articulatory phonetics theories explain how speech sounds are produced by the human vocal apparatus. The IPA, as a tool, enables learners to connect theoretical knowledge of speech sound production with practical pronunciation. Theoretical insights into the articulation of English sounds serve as a basis for using the IPA effectively to depict and replicate these sounds accurately (Fadli et al., 2021).

Phonology Theory:

Phonology theory helps learners comprehend the systematic patterns and rules governing sound combinations in English. Understanding these rules, such as assimilation, elision, and syllable structure, is essential for using the IPA. Theoretical insights into phonological processes guide learners in recognizing pronunciation patterns and predicting sound changes (da Rosa, 2016).

Auditory Perception:

Theoretical models of auditory perception and speech processing elucidate how individuals perceive and process speech sounds. Understanding these models is crucial for educators and learners alike. The IPA serves as a visual representation that can enhance auditory perception by linking written symbols to auditory input. Theoretical knowledge of speech perception informs the design of pronunciation training using the IPA (Gold et al., 2011).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Importance of Learning Pronunciation

People need to communicate with each other, so that means the speaker must pronounce vowels, consonants, words, and sentences correctly in the light to avoid a misunderstanding between speakers and listeners. Otherwise, that would be very frustrating and almost impossible to communicate between humans. According to Kusz and Paulisko (2022), pronunciation refers to how words and speech sounds are produced in a language.

A common problem in the field of EFL teaching is when the learners get confused by trying to use the English writing alphabet to produce the English sounds, so students must be aware of those differences and learn the sounds that are used for speaking to avoid an incorrect pronunciation. Ibragimova (2020), states that English spelling doesn't always match its sounds, leading to confusion.

Pronunciation is essential in communication in every aspect of our life, for example in the classroom when English students need to communicate with the teacher through activities or another example is when we have a conversation in daily life by phone. Without the capacity to pronounce correctly, verbal communication would be impossible. Suryaleksana et al. (2022) point out that as pronunciation plays a vital role in effective communication, it becomes a critical concern for English students who engage in daily conversations with instructors and peers. The ability to pronounce English accurately significantly influences their success in spoken communication within the classroom. According to Maslow (2020), numerous scholars strongly advocated for language and communication studies to acquire knowledge of the phonetic alphabet, as well as those in the International Phonetic Alphabet. For those reasons, the IPA should be taught in every classroom to continue performing and mastering the model of good pronunciation.

The IPA is a great tool to practice the 44 English phonemes. The students pay attention to the symbols which are divided into vowels, diphthongs, and consonants in the light of memorizing their sounds. Setiyono (2019) emphasizes that instructing pronunciation through the use of IPA phonemic transcriptions aids learners in memorizing correct pronunciation patterns more effectively. In essence, the IPA is essential for English students to comprehend and engage in meaningful classroom conversations, thereby contributing to their overall success in language and communication studies (Suryaleksana et al., 2022). In the same way, the IPA helps learners to improve their listening and speaking skills, which are elements of effective communication. When learners develop a better understanding of the English phonemes, they perform better in conversations contributing to overall communication.

The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)

In addition, Brown (2012) states that the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is a set of symbols created to represent the sounds of languages worldwide. Otto Jespersen introduced the concept of IPA, which aimed to establish a standardized representation of spoken language and replace individual transcription systems. Jespersen's idea was later developed by A. J. Ellis, Henry Sweet, Daniel Jones, and Paul Passy in the late 19th century. The IPA was officially launched in 1888 and has undergone various improvements in the 20th and 21st centuries. It comprises 44 symbols categorized into three types: consonant, diphthong, and vowel sounds, each with distinct characteristics that contribute to the pronunciation of words.

Benefits of the IPA

For those who are not English native speakers and wish to practice and improve their English pronunciation, the IPA is a great tool for learning the symbols that will help to enhance their pronunciation. According to Al-Mahdi (2022), the IPA is a valuable tool for improving

English pronunciation. It provides standardized symbols that represent spoken sounds, offering learners a systematic approach to mastering English pronunciation. The IPA helps bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical pronunciation, benefiting language learners and educators.

In the classrooms, students need to practice listening exercises as much as they can for auditory perception skills, and the use of IPA can be used also to evaluate auditory improvement. Messerklinger (2009) highlights that the IPA is useful for listening exercises. Teachers can use IPA notation to assess students' listening skills by having them transcribe a word or two or a few simple sentences. This method provides a more precise evaluation of auditory perception skills than just asking students to repeat or spell the word that they hear.

Vančová (2020) suggests that the International Phonetic Alphabet is a useful tool for representing language sounds in a standardized way. The IPA follows a behavioral model that includes precise representation, observable behavior, reinforcement, and error correction. The phonetic chart makes possible a better understanding of English sounds by providing a categorized division of vowels, consonants, and diphthongs, so students can analyze the English language representation to practice articulation and perception to master and improve their pronunciation.

Dandee, W., & Pornwiryakit, P. (2022) investigate the improvement of students' English pronunciation skills by using the English phonetic alphabet drills in students of English for International Communication major, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Rajamangala University of Technology Tawan-ok. The results of the study showed that all students pronounced English consonant and vowel sounds so much better after applying English phonetic alphabet drills. They learned how to use the speech organs to produce the sounds, therefore they were able to make sounds more closely than native speakers. This result is consistent with the findings of

Kotcharay and Limsiriruengrai (2014). This result is similar to the suggestions of previous studies by Thapornpard (1995), Wei and Zhou (2002), Phon-ngam (2008), and Jukpim (2009). The results indicate that language rules of pronunciation, phonetics, and phonology are useful in EFL/ESL lessons. Therefore, it can be said that if learners have phonetic knowledge, their pronunciation will be improved. There is no discussion about how the phonetic drills and the practice of sounds using the parts of our body that are involved in the production of sounds, such as the larynx, lips, tongues, palates, and alveolar ridge help the learner to the articulation of the phonemes and the overall pronunciation.

Research by Suryaleksana, B., & Sari, M., & Nadilia, M., & Bram, B. (2022) aims to investigate the effects of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols, involving 23 English education students of Sanata Dharma University. The results confirm that the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) has had a significant impact on the acquisition of phonetics and the enhancement of pronunciation. Certain consonant, vowel, and diphthong sounds, including /θ/, /dʒ/, /ð/, /z:/, and /əʊ/, have proven to be difficult to articulate. This is due to a lack of familiarity with the IPA and insufficient knowledge of its symbols. In summary, students should learn the IPA to enhance their English pronunciation. In other words, pronunciation is a crucial aspect for English learners and the IPA serves as a fundamental basis for mastering it. In addition, according to Riza and Kawakib (2021), using phonetic transcription based on the IPA accurately demonstrates the correct pronunciation of a word. When considering improving English pronunciation in learners, the IPA plays a fantastic role in practicing and getting knowledge about the phonemes that will correct some mistakes and misunderstandings in the speaking skills of learners.

Chuzaimah & Fadli, F., & Satriyani, D. (2021) used a qualitative approach to investigate the Role of the International Phonetic Alphabet in enhancing high school Students' Pronunciation Skills in Indonesia. The results reported that the utilization of phonetic symbols provides numerous benefits to students. It boosts their confidence in developing communication skills, enables them to engage in meaningful conversations, and helps guide their pronunciation learning effectively. Also, all the participants agreed that the International Phonetic Alphabet is crucial to learning to fix their accent. In other words, students who participate in the research perceive the IPA positively as a learning system. All participants agree that learning the IPA is important and useful, although some find it difficult to memorize the phonetic symbols. As can be seen, the use of the IPA has multiple benefits in English pronunciation education and even in accent reduction that could be used by beginners or advanced English students.

Moreover, a study made by Messerklinger, J. (2020) concluded that teachers can increase their students' awareness of correct English pronunciation by utilizing the IPA. It's important to note that using the IPA alone won't automatically improve students' pronunciation skills. However, it can serve as a starting point to introduce other activities that are designed to help learners focus on improving their pronunciation. As with every activity in life, if someone wishes to accomplish something, that person needs to train and train hard, so why not bring this concept into the classroom? Teachers should motivate, encourage, and force the students to train their muscles that are involved in pronunciation with some daily phoneme drills and activities related to mastering pronunciation.

Stanton (2020) asserts that phonetic symbols play a pivotal role in representing the nuances of the English language's sounds. This makes them an invaluable tool for aiding students in refining their pronunciation skills. Unlike the conventional alphabet letters, which often prove

inadequate guides to accurate pronunciation, phonetic symbols stand as unwavering references. To practice and learn the real sounds in English students must gain knowledge about the phonetic symbols and avoid the common mistake of using the writing alphabet to represent the speaking alphabet.

Similarly, when a learner needs to search for a meaning of a word, he may look for it using a dictionary. On the other hand, suppose that he has to discover the real sound of a word, he must use the phonetic chart to realize about the phoneme differences, but that would be impossible if the learner does not know about the symbols used in the IPA. The visual nature of phonetic symbols further accentuates their utility. Students can visually discern differences or similarities in pronunciation between words, a visual aid that fosters a clearer understanding of phonetic distinctions. As an indispensable component of a student's learning arsenal, a chart displaying phonetic symbols augments their resources just like a vocabulary dictionary and a grammar book (Hassan, 2014).

The investigation of the IPA is very interesting and deep, it is a continuous learning and investigation in the field of education, so every research will bring more insight into the importance of using the IPA even for students and teachers. Ping and Fong (2011) claim that the investigation into the use of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) as a tool for developing English pronunciation skills becomes increasingly relevant. The IPA holds the potential to empower learners and instructors alike in their pursuit of phonetic accuracy and effective communication in English. The investigation of the IPA is very interesting and deep, it is a continuous learning and investigation in the field of education, so every research will bring more insight into the importance of using the IPA.

Having the opportunity to live in an English-speaking country I have been a witness of how a simple phoneme that was pronounced incorrectly may lead to confusion or even a complaint. Nowadays, I pay more attention to the teaching method of the use of IPA and I enrich my knowledge every time that I read a study about the impact of using the IPA in students. The effectiveness of the IPA as a pedagogical tool for developing English pronunciation skills has garnered significant attention in recent years. Research studies have explored the impact of incorporating IPA-based instruction in language classrooms. These studies often highlight the IPA's role in fostering phonetic awareness, aiding learners in recognizing and producing sounds that may be absent or distinct from their native languages (Brekelmans, 2017).

Teachers should keep up to date with the research on how the use of IPA enhances English pronunciation and do everything in their power to master those symbols and then teach them to the students. In a study conducted by Suryaleksana et al. (2022), the investigation aimed to discover the effects of incorporating International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols encompassing 44 distinct sounds. The study also aimed to comprehend the challenges that English as a Foreign Language students face during their learning process such as phonetic symbols and its causes to enhance their pronunciation skills.

According to Riza and Kawakib (2021), the use of the International Phonetic Alphabet as a tool for developing English pronunciation skills can be highly effective. Its effectiveness lies in several key benefits: precision, visual aid, systematic approach, universal applicability, error identification, self-study, phonemic awareness, and listening skills. However, the same authors remark that the effectiveness of using the IPA for pronunciation development also depends on how it is integrated into the curriculum and the learner's motivation and engagement. Simply introducing IPA symbols without appropriate guidance may not yield the desired results.

Additionally, effective pronunciation instruction should involve guided practice, feedback, and opportunities for learners to apply their knowledge in real communication contexts. The correlation between the use of the IPA and the improvement in pronunciation is clear, so teachers or heads of schools should give a high priority to include this pedagogical tool in the curriculum design.

In sum, when used effectively within a well-designed curriculum, the IPA can be a highly effective tool for developing English pronunciation skills. It provides learners with a systematic and precise approach to mastering pronunciation, helping them achieve greater clarity and accuracy in spoken English. The main argument of this final concept is that if learners wish to develop better pronunciation, they must learn the IPA.

FINAL REFLEXIONS

My research addressed exploring the benefits of the IPA as a tool for developing English pronunciation skills through a qualitative research method. In the next lines, I will summarize the most outstanding benefits of the use of the IPA founded in the study.

First, the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is a group of 44 symbols created to represent the sounds of languages worldwide. The educational literature and several studies confirm that the IPA is a teaching method and an effective pedagogical tool for mastering English pronunciation in English learners.

The advantages of using the IPA in improving English pronunciation, are the following:

- ✓ The IPA is a great pedagogical tool to practice the phonemes.
- ✓ The IPA offers visual clarity of the 44 English phonemes.
- ✓ The IPA is precisely the representation of sounds.
- ✓ The IPA is essential to engage in meaningful classroom conversations
- ✓ The IPA can provide more effective pronunciation learning.
- ✓ The IPA helps learners improve their listening and speaking skills
- ✓ The IPA is useful for auditory perception (connecting symbols with sounds)
- ✓ IPA drills improve pronunciation skills.
- ✓ The IPA helps to reproduce the phonetic patterns of English words.
- ✓ The IPA has the potential to enhance phonemic awareness.
- ✓ The IPA empowers them to articulate and reproduce sounds with precision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Finally, based on the facts presented above, my recommendations for educational purposes are that Ecuadorian teachers should explore more about the IPA to be able to include it in the curriculum in the light of mastering pronunciation in English learners. In the same way, I recommend the design of a new didactic material, easy to use and handle, for pronunciation training exercises using the IPA.

I recommend to design the creation of an innovative material such as flash cards with the symbols of phonetic chart. This material with a visual representation of the 44 English sounds may help learners and teachers to practice pronunciation anytime and anywhere.

To conclude, these flashcards should contain an instructional guide of how to use them, teaching strategies, a set of drills, benefits of using IPA, games, and engagement activities to avoid boredom in the classroom. And of course, even more important in an IPA class: always have fun!

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CERTIFICADO ANTIPLAGIO

En mi calidad de Tutor del Informe de Investigación, **“THE USE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET (IPA) AS A TOOL FOR DEVELOPING ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION”**, elaborado por el maestrante Lic. Daniel Fernando Guevara Gavilanes, egresado de la **MAESTRÍA EN PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS**, de la Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, previo a la obtención del Título de Magíster en **MAESTRÍA EN PEDAGOGIA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS SEGUNDA COHORTE**, me permito declarar que una vez analizado anti-plagio COMPILATIO, luego de haber cumplido los requerimientos exigidos de valoración, el presente proyecto ejecutado, se encuentra con el 2 % de la valoración permitida, por consiguiente, se procede a emitir el presente informe. Adjunto reporte de similitud.

Atentamente



Firmado electrónicamente por:
ÍTALO RIGOBERTO
CARABAJO ROMERO

Lcdo. Ítalo Carabajo Romero, MSc.
C.I: 0920688876
DOCENTE TUTOR

ANEXES

Anexe 1: Certificado de Antiplagio



CERTIFICADO DE ANÁLISIS
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Similitudes


0% Texto entre comillas
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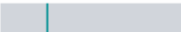
Depositante: ÍTALO RIGOBERTO CARABAJO ROMERO
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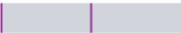
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