




Student views on the maintenance of peace education in glocal second language setting

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Abstract

Peace has been an indispensable notion in the lives of mankind ever since the existence of community life. Having such a significant place in human life, peace has turned into a concept with relevance almost in every aspect of life and language education is not an exception. Though peace education has been covered in an increasing number of studies in foreign language education, there is a further need for studies on peace education in second language learning settings. Therefore, this qualitative case study, from a glocal perspective, is intended to examine the views of 12 learners of Turkish as a second language with different cultural backgrounds regarding the maintenance of peace education in their language learning process in the glocal setting. The data were collected through open-ended questions. The results of the content analysis revealed that the participants appreciated available chances of observing and experiencing the target culture and other cultures presented by their friends. They were also glad to be able to introduce their cultural peculiarities to the local people and other friends. The available opportunities were contributory since they encouraged the participants to develop empathy and understanding, promoting their conceptions of peace. In addition, the content of language materials was considered useful and contributory in raising awareness for peace.

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1. Introduction

Globalization is a concept defining the interconnectedness of nations of the world and has gained a new dimension with the increase in communication and travel in the modern age. The emergence of this dimension highlighted the value and significance of local characteristics and identities of every nation and society besides their global existence in the broader sense. The existence of local characteristics, cultures, traditions and values in international connections of various types has paved the way for the notion of glocalization. Stressing the invaluable status of the local in the global arena, the term glocalization can be defined as the combination of global which is an all-encompassing mindset uniting peoples all around the world and local which places much emphasis on the unique characteristics of

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each nation in a more detailed sense. Within this concept of glocalization, the major aim is to respect and preserve the peculiar features of each and every nation.

Originating in Japan to refer to the adaptation of farming techniques to local conditions (Robertsob, 1995), glocalization, as a recent term, has entered the lexicon as a conceptual model (Khondler, 2013) and showed its influence in different issues ranging from agriculture to business world. Education is also one of the domains in which the effects of glocalization can be observed and discussed because of the expanding facilities enabling a number of students from different parts of the globe to interact with each other. Especially in higher education, internationalization has gained momentum in the last few decades and most university campuses have been international learning environments where different cultures coexist in a peaceful atmosphere. As a result, glocal, or cosmopolitan campuses hosting students from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds have occupied their unique places in the agendas of educational authorities.

Setting out from the reality of growing expansion of glocal campuses worldwide, this case study is intended to investigate the views of a group of foreign learners regarding the importance of peace education in a glocal campus in the process of receiving second language education. This study is to touch upon a not-yet examined aspect by centering on the conception of peace and peace education in a glocal second language learning setting where learners are offered the advantage of having social and cultural interaction while receiving language education at the same time. The context of this study was a second language learning environment which offers learners an atmosphere where they can be exposed to and practice the language inside and outside the classroom environment unlike a foreign language learning context where language is mostly available in the formal classroom context. What makes this context unique is that it was a glocal second language learning setting where students from different cultures met for educational purposes creating an environment with local and global perspectives.

1.1. Literature review

Peace has been a prominent notion in the lives of human beings ever since the existence of life on earth. The concept started to gain particular significance especially when people led their lives in communities of various populations necessitating them to live in harmony with each other despite conflicting situations. It can be stated, therefore, that one of the main aims of community life has been to establish and maintain peace by keeping the interactive channels open for interlocutors (Dörnyei & Murphey, 2009).

It is an undeniable fact that peace can be basically maintained by sticking the concept of peace in the minds of people the world over (Köylü, 2004). In light of this vision, peace education has entered the conceptual lexicon as a concept receiving increasing attention. Research has suggested peace education as an area needing detailed investigation for the maintenance of peace through education as a common and effective channel (Guetta, 2013; Haavelsrud & Stenberg, 2012; John, 2018; Reynolds, der & Myers-Walls, 2017; Omeje, 2015; Synott, 2005). These studies, most of which were conducted or which suggested new applications or processes in university contexts, have highlighted the importance of peace education.

Peace education can be outlined as the process of “creating preventive structures and conditions that better align educational policies, pedagogies and content toward peace, social justice, and human rights principles” (Brantmeier & Bajaj, 2013, p. 141). This definition can be said to have the implication that peace education is the dynamic intended to make positive changes through which all nations can lead their lives in harmony. Considering the scope of peace education, Ashton (2007) maintains that providing learners with different definitions of peace and introducing them some ways to deal with conflicting cases to promote peace should be the main components of peace education. A more detailed analysis of the scope of peace education shows that an analytical cultural examination is also involved

in peace education (Zemblays & Bekerman, 2013). This cultural analysis aims to value the existence of cultural diversity over the world and is; therefore, in line with the concept of glocalization which unites local cultures within the global sense.

A detailed examination of research on peace education reveals that though there has been mounting attention towards peace education covering tertiary contexts, there is still room for studies on peace education integrated in language education process. Essentially existing as the main medium of communication among people, language can be considered as a fundamental tool through which people can be educated regarding the significance of peace. This aim can be achieved with the help of language education. The underlying notion in this supposition is that language teaching can broaden the horizons of people and motivate them to contribute to formation and maintenance of a peaceful world through healthy communication. Language education is a specific sphere in which this purpose can be achieved (Arıkan, 2009;) as language is among the key tools to maintain human interaction. Language educators, in this sense, are expected to integrate peace into their language content and seek ways to promote peace education (Bajaj, 2015).

Language education comprises the presentation of cultural content besides the linguistic one; therefore, peace education can be integrated in language classes for the promotion of glocal awareness and understanding. Language education can serve for the purposes of peace education by raising emphatic awareness towards other cultures developing the sense of constructive relationships among peoples of the world. Since language content is appropriate for the presentation of peace, it is possible through language education that learners can be trained “for a better understanding of others, in other words, to lay foundation stones in the building of a peaceful world, preparing people for a global world” (Mirici, 2008, p. 345). So, language educators can help learners develop an appreciation of diversity of any kind and consider diversity not as a source of potential problem but as a source of richness for humanity, which is expected to promote peace in glocal terms.

Pointing to the communicative nature of languages, Brown (2000) maintains that people are social beings and “the chief mechanism for maintaining the bonds of society is language” (p. 152). In the light of the place and value of language in maintaining sound and healthy interaction among people encouraging peaceful social atmospheres, the perusal of literature presents us relevant research on peace in language education. Examining the content of some reliable EFL course books, Mirici, İltter, Er, Saka and Aksu (2004) concluded that most of the content of these materials focused on the presentation of language-related aspects while there was limited emphasis on peace displayed in units. Sharing a similar perspective in terms of the examination of course books as regards peace content, a recent study conducted by Gebregeorgis (2017) presented an analysis of peace values and prejudices in a ninth grade English course book. The discourse analysis at textual and contextual levels revealed that examples of inner, social, and environmental peace were available in the material while there were some items violating gender equality.

Suggesting the integration of a humanistic dimension in teaching English as a foreign language, Mirici (2008) conducted an experimental study with an aim to investigate the effectiveness of basic educational terminology in raising pre-service teachers’ awareness of the notion of peace. The researcher identified some commonly used items in ELT and adapted their definitions in a way aiming to increase the participants’ awareness of peace. At the end of the experimentation process, the researcher concluded that the adaptation in the definitions of the items contributed to the participants’ understanding of peace and increased their awareness.

Arıkan (2009) specifically focused on peace education from the environmental standpoint. The researcher contextualized English grammar content to cover issues related with environmental peace education aiming to raise the participants’ awareness of global matters. The results obtained from the ELT undergraduates and tenth-graders revealed that the contextualized form of grammar instruction

involving environmental issues contributed to the understanding of environmental peace in language learners. In a review study centering on peace education in foreign language learning context, Takkaç Tulgar (2017) suggested the integration of peace into language course materials. The researcher stressed the importance of developing an understanding of peace and stated that peace education provided in educational contexts can stimulate positive attitudes and actions resulting in peaceful environments. Considering the process of peace education with young learner profile, Lewsader and Myers-Walls (2017) suggested a model for peace education curricula in line with children's developmental stages based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. Suggesting two sample lessons integrating peace in lesson content, the researchers underlined the significance of involving peace in education starting from the early levels.

1.2. Research perspective

Relevant literature reveals that the concepts of peace and peace education have recently received increasing attention in the educational arena, language education in particular (Arıkan, 2009; Mirici, 2008). However, those studies on peace education in language teaching have been conducted in foreign language learning contexts, leaving room for further research on peace education in second language learning contexts. Therefore, the research perspective of this qualitative case study is to examine peace education from a different angle emphasizing the value of the concept in second language learning environment. In addition, this study aims to examine peace education in second language learning in an atmosphere which holds the characteristics of glocal setting where language learners from different countries can interact with each other besides the target culture. This study is intended to contribute to the area of peace education examining the views of foreign learners regarding peace education in a glocal second language learning setting.

2. Method

This study adopted a qualitative case study research design as it aimed to gain in-depth understanding (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) of the views of foreign learners in the glocal second language learning environment on the inclusion of peace in language education. The following research questions directed this study:

Research Question 1. What are the views of foreign learners of Turkish regarding peace education in glocal second language learning setting?

Research Question 2. What are opportunities promoting peace education in glocal second language learning setting?

2.1. Sample / Participants

The participants in this study were 12 learners of Turkish as a second language. These participants received preparatory language education in Turkey for a year before they took part in the study. They were from Russia, Iran, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and they were considered as representatives of their countries. They were receiving scholarship funded by Turkish government to follow their undergraduate or graduate studies in Turkey. Therefore, before starting education in their departments, these participants were supposed to take Turkish preparatory education for a year.

The setting where the study was conducted was a Research and Application Center in one of the state universities in Turkey (AtaTömer) providing a year-long Turkish education for foreign learners of Turkish. The context displayed the characteristics of a second language learning environment as the target language for the participants (Turkish) was the common and official language in the country. In

addition, the setting was a glocal setting where the participants could experience the interaction between the target culture and the national cultures brought to the learning environment. In such a setting, it was possible for the participants to observe and experience target culture in its authentic context while presenting their cultural peculiarities to local people as well as other learners from different nationalities in the institution.

2.2. *Instrument(s)*

As this was a qualitative case study, it was essential to gain in-depth understanding of the issue under discussion. For this purpose, the researcher adopted open-ended questions to reach an understanding of the views of the participants considering the maintenance of peace education in the glocal second language learning setting. In the light of the previous research as well as her informal observations and dialogues with the foreign learners in the institution, the researcher prepared the following open-ended questions to collect data:

1. What are the advantages of receiving language education in Turkey in the development of your understanding of the target culture (Turkish)?
2. What are the advantages of receiving language education in Turkey in the development of your understanding of other cultures (those of other students in the learning setting)?
3. What are the advantages of receiving language education in Turkey in terms of presenting your cultural values to other people (local people and other students)?
4. What kind of content is available in your language education process in terms of peace?

To ensure the validity of the questions, the researcher consulted to field experts (native instructors teaching Turkish in the institution).

2.3. *Data collection procedures*

The data were collected at the end of the preparatory language education so that the participants could have a year-long experience in which they could observe and experience the target culture and they could also have sharings of various types with friends from different cultural, social, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. This process was thought to provide a chance for the participants to get familiar not only with the target culture but also with other cultures brought to the learning setting by the participants. The duration of language education was long enough for the participants to get a reciprocal understanding of internationalization in education, friendship between individuals from different nations, respect for other and other cultures, appreciation of peace and glocal second language setting in which all these took place. As they were at B2/C1 level of language proficiency, the participants were asked to answer the questions in the target language, Turkish. The data obtained from the participants were translated into English and a native-speaker did the proofreading.

The data were analyzed through content analysis. Perusing the written answers of the participants several times, the researcher identified common aspects in the participants' answers forming the common codes.

3. Results

The analysis of the answers to the open-ended questions provided by the participants revealed, in the broad sense, that the glocal second language learning environment offered an atmosphere in which the participants could experience the sense of social and cultural sharing and contribution. This increased

their awareness regarding other cultures and contributed to their appreciation of peace. The results are presented in the light of the research questions exemplified with extracts from participant comments.

1. What do you perceive as the advantage of receiving language education in Turkey in the development of your understanding of the target culture (Turkish)?

As the participants were receiving language education in an authentic setting, they had ample chances of exposure to the culture of the target language. These opportunities were appreciated as they enabled the participants to observe the target culture as it originally existed. In addition, by experiencing the target culture with local people, the participants could start to know the social and cultural aspects in the target setting in a better way. The available chances of observing the target culture within and outside the borders of the learning setting helped the participants build emphatic understanding towards the local people and the target aspects. Considering the advantage of identifying similarities and differences between her own culture and the target culture, one of the participants indirectly referred to the equality of human beings and provided the below comment:

“I am happy to learn Turkish in Turkey because here I can observe the culture of the society in addition to learning the language. This is a great chance for me to learn the target language in a more comprehensive way. I know much more about the target culture and I believe this helps me realize that there are many common aspects between my culture and target culture. Now, I feel that though we have different social or cultural backgrounds, we have many common human characteristics.”

The participants also referred to the available chances of interaction with the local people and culture inside and outside the learning context. The learning process in the glocal second language setting provided chances for the participants to communicate with each other, through the target language, and experience the sense of emotional, social and cultural sharing. Being aware of the contribution of this opportunity, a participant expressed that with the help of this language learning experience, he developed more positive attitudes towards local people and culture and had a feeling that relationships and connections should improve between individuals in the modern world:

“In the language learning setting, we can interact with many local people. When I think of this opportunity, I can realize that it is invaluable for us to have social and cultural sharing with the target people because, in this way, they can learn our culture better and we can learn theirs better. Through this language learning process, I feel that I have developed an emphatic perspective towards the target culture and people.”

2. What do you perceive as the advantage of receiving language education in Turkey in the development of your understanding of other cultures (those of other students in the learning setting)?

Besides being exposed to the target culture, the participants could also observe different cultures represented by their classmates or the other students receiving education in the institution. Their comments to this question mirrored the positive experiences in the process of sharing the environment with individuals from different cultures and developing the sense of empathy. Cultural or ethnic diversity became a source contributing to the participants' understanding of the world as they were glad to interact with each other and learn new cultural content from their peers. The following comment can illustrate the positive attitude of a participant regarding the experience of learning new cultural dimensions from her friends:

“Here, there are many students from different countries and this means there are many different cultures. In such an atmosphere, there are many new things to learn about diverse cultures. This is, I believe, a great source of richness. The more we know about others, the better we can understand others and develop empathy.”

A participant also directly referred to the concept of peace in her comment maintaining that the experience of cultural sharing helped them develop empathy and, this empathy turned into an

understanding of peace in human relations. The participant also added that if she had learnt Turkish in her own country, she might not have developed this perspective:

“I have developed a sense of empathy towards the cultures I have interacted with. Now, I realize that with this experience, I have more respect towards different cultures and I know that we can live in harmony with each other. I am sure that I could not have developed this perspective if I received Turkish education in my own country.”

3. What do you perceive as the advantage of receiving language education in Turkey in terms of presenting your cultural values to other people (local people and other students)?

While learning new things about the cultures of their friends, the participants also presented unique aspects of their own cultures. In this way, they became active participants in the new community and contributed to the maintenance of the glocal setting. While introducing a new culture, the participants offered a global perspective as also expressed in the below comment:

“I feel I am really lucky to learn Turkish in this context. Here, I and my friends can present our cultural aspects to the local people and other students. It is great to be a part of this atmosphere. I feel I am contributing to this society and to the whole world as an active social member.”

Sharing a similar perspective, another participant commented that in this glocal language learning environment he could feel free to introduce his culture while still respecting others. He added that through this experience he could have the chance to present his culture to others and this experience aroused the need for peace in his viewpoint:

“In this language learning context, there are many people coming from different countries contributing to cultural richness. I can present my culture and they can present theirs. One of the most important gains I have obtained through this experience is that whoever we are or wherever we come from, we are equal; so, we should learn how to live in peace.”

4. What kind of content is available in your language education process in terms of peace?

As regards the integration of peace in language content, the participants noted that they were exposed to the concept of peace sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly throughout their second language education. They were glad that their instructors benefitted from every opportunity to impose the reality that everybody is and should be equal no matter what their backgrounds are. In such an atmosphere, the participants stated that they naturally developed empathy and understanding towards differences and this contributed to their appreciation of peace as reflected in the following comment:

“While teaching us Turkish, all of our instructors had positive attitudes towards us. They always encouraged us to introduce our cultures. While doing this, they, implicitly and explicitly, taught us how to listen to others and respect their unique characteristics. I believe their attitudes and teaching style showed us how to respect people and this is what increased our understanding of peace.”

The content of language materials was also appreciated by the participants as they expressed that the course book they were using, the materials their instructors were bringing to the class and the activities they were doing were all rich in social and cultural content providing new information not only about the target culture but also about different cultures. Therefore, the language classes were also rich in peaceful content as stated in the below remark:

“The materials and the activities in our language classes were very useful. While teaching the target language, they also showed examples of target culture and other cultures. I think the materials imposed us the idea of diversity in a positive manner and raised our appreciation of peace.”

The overall results obtained from the participant comments reveal that learning the target language in the glocal second language setting was an advantage for the participants. In this context, they observed and experienced the target culture and other cultures. In addition, they were able to present their own cultural and national characteristics. As also appreciated by the participants, such an atmosphere of

linguistic, social, and cultural sharing would not have been possible if they had learnt the target language in their own countries. Considering this experience from a glocal standpoint, one can say that the glocal learning environment promoted an understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity, which stimulated the development of peace through language education.

4. Discussion

The results of this study can be said to reveal three main areas of discussion: the opportunities for being exposed to and interact with the target culture and other cultures, the available chances to introduce peculiar cultures, and raising awareness of peace through language education.

From a glocal standpoint, one of the outstanding conclusions in this study is related to the opportunities to be exposed to the target culture and other cultures in the glocal second language learning environment. It is, as expressed by the participants, a great chance to observe and experience the target culture in its natural setting while learning the target language. This conclusion seems to echo the inseparable relationship between language and culture. Within this process, the participants had the chance to sustain their language development by experiencing the language of culture and culture of language at the same time.

In the glocal second language setting in this study, the participants also encountered live examples of other cultures represented by their friends in the institution. They learned many new things about different cultures around the world. This can be considered as an international experience as suggested by Firer (2008), who proposed a framework of virtual international peace education. The cultural diversity did not become a source of confusion or conflict for the participants in this study. On the contrary, the rich variety of cultures promoted awareness and appreciation of differences. This conclusion can be considered within the purposes of peace as one of the fundamental aims of peace is to appreciate cultural diversity (Firer, 2008). In addition, this experience enabled the participants to build respect at intercultural level, an aspect which was proposed as an essential dimension in global citizenship education by Toh and Cawagas (2017).

The second conclusion revealed through the results is about the availability of chances for the participants to introduce their own cultures to local people and to the other students in the institution. Through their language learning experience, all the participants expressed their gratitude to find chances to present their cultural values in different contexts. This opportunity can be said to have contributed to the maintenance of a glocal atmosphere in which foreign learners could participate in and contribute to the formation of a glocal community reflecting various cultural characteristics while they could preserve their national, social and cultural identities at the same time. As also proposed by Guetta (2013) and Lewsader and Myers-Walls (2017), the participants in this study could feel free to be active participants in peace learning. Considering this experience from the glocal perspective, one can express that the second language learning setting enabled the participants to engage themselves in a community of cultural sharing where they can adopt global identities as global citizens and local identities as representatives of a particular culture.

The third conclusion is related with the integration of peace in the process of second language education. The participants in the study appreciated the existence of peace-promoting content in the language materials and activities and the opportunities provided by their instructors for the presentation of cultural aspects, which again contributed to the development of an understanding of peace. The encouragement in the language learning environment regarding the appreciation of diversity was the dynamic motivating the participants to develop a peaceful mindset and to adopt a positive and humanistic outlook towards diversity of any kind. As to the role of language education in promoting peace, Balasooriya (2001), Wendern (2007) and Gulati and Pant (2013) express that language materials

are tools through which students' feelings and attitudes can be changes for positive and suggest the integration of peace content in language education materials. Since peace is one of the main aims for the sustainability of a peaceful world in which ideal and healthy social, cultural and ecological relationships can be established, education in general and language education in particular is expected to go beyond the transmission of academic knowledge and to play an active part in conveying peace-laden values to learners. Gebregeorgis (2017) maintains that if students are expected to develop an open-minded perspective and mutual understanding, "education has to go beyond the mechanics of memorizing facts and knowledge production" (p. 54). If peace education is "the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, youth, and adults to prevent conflict and violence" (Fountain, 1999, p.1), then language education should be designed and developed accordingly.

To sum, the glocal second language learning setting in this study offered the participants an atmosphere of cultural and social sharing, understanding and respect as well as a context for language learning. This case can be considered unique since such an experience would not have been possible if the participants had learnt the target language in their home countries. With the help of their language learning process, the participants were directly and indirectly engaged in peace-stimulating cases and this ultimately raised their awareness of peace.

5. Conclusions

This case study was conducted to examine the views of a group of learners of Turkish as a second language with different cultural backgrounds regarding the maintenance of peace education in a glocal second language learning setting. The results revealed that the glocal setting offered the participants a number of chances for getting familiar with different cultures in addition to the local culture and enabled them to introduce their unique cultures to others in the glocal community. In addition, throughout their language education, the participants were exposed to peace-promoting content presented in the language materials. These conclusions showed that the glocal second language learning setting served for the purposes of promoting peace by integrating it in the language education process.

In line with the conclusions of this study, the following suggestions can be made for integrating peace education into language education:

- As the world is getting smaller and smaller day by day with constant developments in technology, learners of any language should be encouraged to keep in touch with the rest of the world as much as possible to gain intercultural experiences. The more they interact with other cultures, the more they can learn about them and this will increase their awareness and appreciation of diversity. The result of this process will lead to the establishment of peace among individuals.
- In language teaching-learning contexts, learners should be encouraged to share dialogues and discussions of social and cultural diversity. In this way, they can better internalize the uniqueness of diversity as a source of richness and this will help them develop an understanding of equality among members of all nations, races, religions and political beliefs as well as the need to convince each modern citizen that the basic aim should not be to end wars but to prevent them.
- Language materials should also be revised to involve more comprehensive peace-related content presenting social, cultural and ecological knowledge to learners. The rationale in such designs should be to impose learners the idea of glocal citizenship in which they can feel themselves as valuable members of the whole with the freedom to preserve their own peculiar characteristics.

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Küyerel ikinci dil öğrenme ortamında barış eğitiminin sağlanmasına yönelik öğrenci görüşleri

Öz

Toplumsal yaşamın başlangıcından beri barış insanlık için vazgeçilmez bir kavram olmuştur. İnsan yaşamında böylesine önemli olan barış, hayatın her alanıyla bağlantısı olan bir kavrama dönüşmüştür ve eğitim de buna dâhildir. Barış eğitimi yabancı dil eğitiminde artan sayıda araştırmada konu edilmiş olsa da, ikinci dil öğrenme ortamlarında gerçekleşen barış eğitimi ile ilgili araştırmalara ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Küyerel bir bakış açısı üzerine kurulan bu durum çalışması, farklı kültürel temelleri olan ve ikinci dil olarak Türkçe öğrenen 12 yabancı uyruklu öğrencinin küyerel ortamdaki öğrenme süreçlerinde sağlanan barış eğitimine yönelik görüşlerini araştırmaktır. Veriler açık uçlu sorular ile toplanmıştır. İçerik analizi katılımcıların, hedef kültürü ve arkadaşları tarafından tanıtılan diğer kültürleri gözleme ve deneyimleme fırsatlarını takdir ettiklerini göstermiştir. Katılımcılar aynı zamanda kendi kültürlerini yerel halka ve arkadaşlarına tanıtılabildikleri için memnun olduklarını belirtmişlerdir. Mevcut fırsatlar katılımcıların empati ve anlayış geliştirmesine katkıda bulunarak onların barış algılarını geliştirmiştir. Ayrıca, dil öğretim materyallerinin içeriği de barış farkındalığını artırma yönünde faydalı bulunmuştur.

Anahtar sözcükler: küyerelleşme; küreselleşme; barış eğitimi; ikinci dil eğitimi

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