Literacy in EFL Classroom: In-Service English Teachers' Perceptions and Practices from Multiliteracies Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The concept of literacy has evolved significantly over the years, with the advent of new technologies and the changing needs of society. In the context of ELT, the study of literacy conceptions and practices is still under-explored. Therefore, this study aims at exploring inservice English teachers' perceptions and practices of literacy in ELT settings from a multiliteracies perspective. This research used a qualitative case study. The data were taken from in-service English teachers from one of the state high schools in Surabaya, Indonesia through interviews, observation, and document review. The data were then analyzed using thematic analysis. The result indicated that the in-service English teachers perceived a general conception of literacy, a skill-based conception of literacy, and literacy as social practice. In general, the English teachers lacked an understanding of the concept of literacy comprehensively and they associated literacy with skills. In addition, concerning literacy practices from a multiliteracy perspective covered the integration of multimodal in the use of media, the use of technology in teaching and learning activities, and a variety of literacy instructions. Despite some difficulties, the teachers utilized multiple modes of media and technology. This study might have implications for the understanding of the conception of literacy and teaching practices in an EFL setting.

Keywords: literacy, multiliteracy, EFL, in-service English teacher

INTRODUCTION

Literacy competence is foundational, not only for school-based learning but also for students' psychosocial moral, physical activity, professional success, as well as productive and gratifying participation in social and economic activity (Rowee, 2005). The current millennial era requires students to be able to master many skills not only speaking, reading, and writing as basic competencies to study and work in society but also new literacy, namely literacy data, technological literacy, and human literacy. This ability can be realized if learning integrates multiliteracies or multimodality.

Literacy skills are critical to physique knowledge in any subject, particularly in English. Development of that technology has redefined literacy that includes new forms of literacy made possibleby digital technologies. Scribner and Cole (1981) stated that literacy is purely the ability to read and write in specific scripts but consists of the capability of applying the knowledge for specific determinations and backgrounds.

In addition, new literacy refers to using technology to research locate, estimate, and communicate information and there are other skills in new literacy. These new forms of literacy are required to succeed in the 21st century. It is imperative to investigate how teachers are prepared to strengthen students' new literacy skills to facilitate their learning in English.

Paxton & Frith (2014) recommended that reading and writing are critical skills in the teaching and learning process of any topic and in manipulating the syllabuses. As we know literacy is the ability of reading and writing. In learning English, we cannot only write and read but also have other English skills or competences such as speaking, listening, vocabulary, and grammar. And they should be supported using technology.

The assistances of reading and writing have a solid correlation in which reading skill can back the writing skill (Krashen, 1990). Sometimes the English teacher only teaches their student two skills, and it will impact their next level of studying in English. For example, when students were in the pandemic COVID-19, students learnt English in the virtual world, so it means the educator should facilitate their students how to study English with technology such as YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, etc. Moreover, the students make their presentation or do their assignment creatively. The activities correspond with 21st-century education.

The concept of English literacy education should be adapted to the student's needs and their practices in English language learning. From that information, the concept of new literacy makes students and teachers creative. Hence, this challenges teachers to advance their understanding toward literacy concepts and pedagogical approaches and contextualize their classroom activities to the real world (Navehebrahim, 2011). Moreover, multiliteracies accommodated extra forms of literacies that consist of oral, audio, spatial, information literacy, and visual literacy which means that students can study the skill and knowledge through different kinds of communication (Burke & Hardware, 2015).

Despite the recent growth of studies related to literacy and its practices (Abdulatief et al., 2018; Chiu, 2015; Parlindungan, 2017; State et al., 2013; Wahyudi, 2016), little attention has been given to EFL education which is contextualized with the today's nature of literacy and multiliteracy perspectives. To bridge the gap, this study aims at exploring in-service English teachers' perceptions and practices of literacy in ELT settings from multiliteracies perspectives.

The Nature of Literacy

Literacy is now generally understood as a multipart and cultured concept that is multimodal and multifaceted, and that contains multiliteracies. Functionally, existence literate includes the ability to function in implication- creation processes to produce text—to kind meaning with language, and to consume text—to obtain meaning from language. Such abilities are crucial for full participation in daily life—as individuals and in communities (Doyle, 2011). Hence, in educational backgrounds, literacy includes knowledge and skills. Students need to access, understand, analyze, and assess information; make meaning; direct thoughts and emotions; extant ideas and opinions; interact with others; and participate in activities at school and in their lives outside school, Literacy practices change according to the form of literacy essential in specific contexts and for specific purposes.

Literacy Practices in ELT Context

Literacy practice is understood to mean how people use written language in their everyday lives. These practices involve values, attitudes, feelings, and social relationships and so cannot be simply defined as observable behaviors (Street, 1993). A study about literacy practices by Nabhan and Hidayat (2018) found that the greatest contributing students commonly employed on-screen text and digital devices as an alternative to written paper in their reading and writing actions. It means the teacher is still secondhand traditional literacy concept that is print-based literacy, and it is supported by digital and multimodal literacy to make their student interested in what will they do in reading and writing activities.

Multiliteracies were defined as literacies that included text, images, sounds, and other modalities. Further, the New London Group (NLG) proposed a multiliteracies pedagogical approach in which is inclusive collection of linguistic, cultural, and scientific perspectives, tools, and strategies are used to improve and prepare today's students for a globalized world. The NLG (1996) argued that —several methods are stimulated to be used in different methods of appearance (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011) and different technologies and communicative tools allow different modes to be used for different purposes. This new literacy pedagogy was contrasted with traditional pedagogical approaches that focused on a mono-modal approach to learning, through text alone. The study by Nabhan (2019) revealed that using the multiliteracies framework to teach writing gives teachers the chance to embrace the many digital technologies and meaning-making modes, develop texts, and display them in multimodal and innovative ways. Moreover, the multiliteracies practices also aided in enhancing students' writing ability, lowering the likelihood of plagiarism, and increasing the amount of legitimate work.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative case study to address the research questions regarding inservice English teachers' perceptions and practices of literacy in ELT settings from a multiliteracies perspective. A Case study was utilized since it was used to generate an indepth and multifaceted understanding of complex problems in real-life contexts.

The data were collected through semi-structured interviews of in-service English Teachers from one of the high schools in Surabaya, Indonesia. The interviews were conducted on November 23, 2020. They were four English teachers who were voluntarily involved in the study. The rationales for the teachers' selection were the teaching experiences and the researchers' familiarity with the teachers. The interviews consisted of several questions regarding their perceptions of literacy and how they practiced literacy in their EFL classroom. To support the main data of the interviews, the researchers also administered observations when the teachers were teaching the students. The observations were done four times on November 23-26, 2020, and qualitative notes of observations were taken. Additionally, the researchers also conducted document reviews of the teachers. Teachers' lesson plans were selected and reviewed to give additional data on the research. Therefore, the data of the study were validated using data source triangulation of interviews, observations, and document reviews.

After the data were obtained, the data were then analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was used since it is often used to analyze data in primary qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Additionally, thematic analysis can provide core skills that would be useful in managing different forms of data sets and for generating definitive knowledge. The researchers followed a six-step process including familiarization to know the data. It was important to get a thorough overview of all the data. The next process was coding meaning highlighting sections of the text – usually phrases or sentences – and coming up with shorthand labels or "codes" to describe their content. Generating themes is themes are generally broader than codes. Reviewing themes was to make sure that the themes were useful and accurate representations of the data. After that, researchers defined and named themes. The final process was writing up a thematic analysis which required an introduction to establish the research question, aims, and approach.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

In-Service English Teachers' Perceptions of Literacy in ELT Setting from Multiliteracies Perspectives

Based on the data obtained, the results revealed three themes regarding in-service English teachers' perceptions of literacy in the ELT setting from multiliteracies perspectives, including a general conception of literacy, a skill-based conception of literacy, and literacy as social practice.

General Conception of Literacy

The teachers responded that they understood the nature of literacy in general, including the ability to read and write. The teacher explained that "Literasi itu kemampuan membaca dan menulis dalam melaksanakan tugas- tugas pembelajaran baik di sekolah maupun di luar sekolah" (T.1). "Literacy is the ability to read and write in carrying out learning tasks both at school and outside of school" (T.1). The teacher said that the definition of literacy was ability to read and write in carrying out learning process. So, the teacher perceived the traditional definition of literacy.

Additionally, another teacher stated, "Literasi itu merunjuk pada kemampuan dan keterampilan seseorang atau individu dalam membaca, menulis, berbicara, menghitung dan memecahkan masalah pada tingkat keahlian tertentu".(T.2). "Literacy refers to the ability and skills of a person or individual in reading, writing, speaking, calculating and solving problems at a certain skill level." (T.2). The teacher explained that literacy refers to the ability and skills of a person in reading and writing but also in speaking, calculating and solving problem. The participant also added the need for literacy in today's digital technology. The teacher explained:

Literasi itu kemampuan membaca, menulis yang harus dimiliki untuk menunjang siswa atau peserta didik dalam proses pembelajaran disekolah atau di luar sekolah. Karena memang kemampuan literasi ini sangat di butuhkan karena dalam era serba teknologi ini kemampuan itu kalau kita tidak memiliki kita bisa tertinggal (T.3)

Literacy is the ability to read and write that must be owned to support students or learners in the learning process at school or outside of school. Because this literacy skill is needed, because in this technological era, if we don't have it, we can be left behind (T.3).

From the information, the teacher said that literacy was the ability to read and write and should be supported with the technology. It means the teacher should engage the teaching and learning process using technology. In addition, the teacher said that:

Sedikit banyak paham, konsep literasi itu atau multiliterasi kemampuan membaca, menulis dan kemampuan menggunkan media, IPTEK bisa menggunkan handphone, computer, laptop, untuk menunjang keberlangsungan hidupnya, karena kalau pelajar ya keberlangsungan belajar supaya sukses di bidang tersebut menggunakan kemampuannya (T.3)

In a sense, the concept of literacy or multiliteracies of reading, writing, and the ability to use media, science and technology, cellphones, computers, and laptops to support their survival. Therefore, students will be successful in the fields using their abilities (T.3)

In other words, the teacher further elaborated that the concept of literacy or

multiliteracy was the ability to use media, science, and the use of technology to support the learning process. It is related to what students' need in the new era of technology. Moreover, the teacher explained that, "Literasi adalah kemampuan seseorang untuk menggunakan membaca, menulis, menyimak dan berbicara untuk meningkatkan kemampuan berpikir dan berkomunikasi. Sedangkan multiterasi adalah kemampuan literasi seseorang dalam bentuk audio, visual maupun bentuk lainnya".(T.4). "Literacy is a person's ability to use reading, writing, listening, and speaking to improve thinking and communication skills. Meanwhile, multiliteracy is a person's literacy ability in audio, visual and other forms" (T.4).

From the above statements, most of the teachers suggested the general conceptions of literacy. The responses tended to explain the concept of literacy in the basic definition of the ability to count, read, write, and use technology. The understanding of literacy should go towards a more comprehensive nature of literacy using the perspective of multiliteracies.

Skill-Based Conception of Literacy

Most of the participants suggested that literacy was the ability to read and write. This was stated by one of the teachers, "kemampuan membaca dan menulis dalam melaksanakan tugas- tugas pembelajaran baik di sekolah maupun di luar sekolah" (T.1) "The ability to read and write in carrying out learning tasks both at school and outside of school" (T.1). The teacher added that the ability to read and write was used not only at school but also out of the school.

The competences related to skills were also reflected to another teacher, "kemampuan dan keterampilan seseorang atau individu dalam membaca, menulis, berbicara, menghitung dan memecahkan masalah pada tingkat keahlian tertentu" (T.2). "The ability and skills of a person or individual in reading, writing, speaking, calculating and solving problems" (T.2). It means the student should have the other skills such problem solving. Additionally, another teacher explained that "kemampuan seseorang untuk menggunakan membaca, menulis, menyimak dan berbicara untuk meningkatkan kemampuan berpikir dan berkomunikasi" (T.4). "a person's ability to use reading, writing, listening and speaking to improve the thinking and communication skills" (T.4). The statements focused on the use of the skills to improve their thinking skills and how the students communicated with others.

From those responses, the researcher concluded that a skill-based conception of literacy was perceived dominantly regarding the nature of literacy. The skills included the ability to count, read, write, speak, listen, communicate, solving the problem.

Literacy as Social Practice

Literacy as a social practice refers to the understanding that literacy is not just a set of technical skills, but rather a socially situated and context-dependent activity. It is a way of making meaning and participating in social and cultural practices that are specific to particular communities and contexts. This statement was reflected by one of the teachers, "Kalau menurut sepengetahuan saya sejauh ini. konsep literasi ini melibatkan peserta didik, pendidik, kemudian tenaga kependidikan, dan juga orang tua" (T.1). "This literacy concept involves students, educators, and educational staff as well as parents" (T.1). It means that literacy education should involve all stakeholder including students, teachers, staff, and parents. This community worked together to achieve the students' literacy, particularly in the school environment. In addition, another teacher explained that:

Sebenarnya ini masalah kesiapan, tentang kesiapan guru dan muridnya. Kadang-kadang untuk materinya kita itu masih binggug materi yang akan di berikan kepada murid-murid. Dan juga banyak masalah yang terjadi. Termasuk support dari orang tua itu penting sekali. Kelebihannya kita mengurangi paper, kekurangannya banyak murid yang tidak mengerti.(T.2)

Actually, this is a matter of readiness, regarding the readiness of teachers and students. Sometimes for the material, we are still confused about the material that will be given to the students. and also, a lot of problems that occur, including support from parents is very important. The advantage is that we reduce paperwork; the drawback is that many students do not understand. (T.2).

From the statements, it was implied that literacy involved the use of digital technology in the teaching and learning process. The teachers should select appropriate media and materials to deliver to the students. Moreover, a teacher also said, "Pertama anak-anak tidak siap dengan HP, kemudian kuota, sinyal, support orang tua, orang tua yang tidak mengerti teknologi"(T.2). "First the students were not ready with handphone, then internet data, signals, support for parents and parents who did not understand technology" (T.2). In other words, students need to engage with today's need of technology and intensive support from the student's parents.

From this perspective, literacy was seen as a dynamic and complex process that involved not only reading and writing, but also speaking, listening, viewing, and using a range of other modes of communication. It was not just about decoding and encoding written language, but also about understanding the social and cultural contexts in which literacy practices are embedded.

Literacy Practices in ELT Setting from Multiliteracies Perspective

The data analysis revealed three themes regarding the literacy practices in the ELT setting from a multiliteracies perspective covering the integration of multimodality in the use of media, the use of technology in teaching and learning activities, and a variety of literacy instructions.

Integration of Multimodality in the Use of Media

Most of the teachers reported that they used Powerpoint (PPT), audio-visual such as YouTube or audio from the teacher, and images. The teacher said that, "Kemudian video pembelajaran, video pembelajaran itu bisa kita dapat dari MGMP tingkat kabupaten, atau kita sendiri yang membuat" (T.1). "we can get the learning videos, the learning videos from the district level MGMP, or we can make them ourselves" (T.1). Additionally, the teacher said that, "Kita sendiri itu menggunakan atau kita pilih kompetensi dasar apa yang sesuai, kemudian kita menyiapkan RPPnya, menyiapkan video pembelajarannya, kemudian menyaipkan students worksheetnya, kalau misalkan kegiatan inti, kegiatan pembuka, dan kegiatan penutup" (T.1). "We ourselves use or choose what basic competencies are appropriate, then we prepare the lesson plans, prepare the learning videos, then put the students' worksheets, for example the core activities, opening activities, and closing activities." (T.1). From this statement, the teacher said that integration of multimodality in the use of media included videos, images and text for the students that were given by the teacher during the learning process.

Another teacher explained that, "Iya, kita tetap memberikan seperti bacaan-bacaan. Kemudian kita menggunakan media seperti youtube dan lain-lainnya" (T.2). "Yes, we still give readings. Then we use media such as YouTube and others" (T.2). It was

added, "Untuk materinya saya menggunakan Powerpoint dan You Tube" (T.2). "For the material, I use Powerpoint and YouTube" (T.2). Based on the note of observation, the teacher gave their students stimulus before the class started. After the students read the material from the power point, the student was given the video to expand the students' understanding.

The teacher explained that, "Biasanya hari rabu saya menyampaikan materi yang berbentuk power point, word, video, ada link videonya, kemudian setelah itu anak-anak saya suruh mendownload, memahami dan mempelajari"(T.3)"On Wednesday, I usually deliver material in the form of power points, words, videos. There is a video link, then after that my students are told to download, understand and learn"(T.3). Therefore, the teacher gave time for their students to study independently. Moreover, the teacher said, "ada tiga yaitu teks, suara dan video"(T.4). "There are three text, audio, and video"(T.4). The teacher taught their students with a text that consisted of images, audio, and video from YouTube.

From the above responses, most of the teachers involved multimodality in the teaching and learning process which included sound, audio-visual, and images to support the learning process. The teacher used audio-visual such as videos from Youtube and images to make students interested in the materials, especially English subjects.

Use of Technology in Teaching and Learning Activities

Most of the English teachers reported that they used Edmodo, Google Form, and WA group because these applications were comfortable and easy to use. "Dalam pembelajaran online itu masing masing sekolah tidak sama. Kalau di sekolah ini kita gunakan Edmodo. Kemudian WA itu selalu, tiap guru menggunkan WA ya"(T.1)."In online learning, each school is not the same. In this school, we use Edmodo. Then for the test, we made a Google Form and Edmodo then WA chat."(T.1). Kinds of technology in teaching and learning activities were Edmodo, Google form and WA chat because the teachers were able to operate them easily, Not only the teachers but also the students could access the material and download it before the class started.

Additionally, the teacher said that, "Itu lewat WA. Dengan memberikan video, lalu memberikan contoh soal lewat WA. Kemudian untuk ulangannya kita buat Google Form, kadang – kadang Edmodo" (T.1). "It is using WA, providing videos, then giving examples of questions using WA. Then for the test, we created a Google Form, sometimes Edmodo."(T.1). The teacher gave an example of the material from videos after that teacher asked the students what the students learned using WA, then the teacher gave the students assignments in Google From that were collected in the following day. The similar responses were also expressed by other teacher, "Dalam pembelajaran online, iya sangat banyak termasuk sekarang yang diguanakan Edmodo, tapi kalau pada umumnya orangorang menggunakan WA, tapi kalau misalnya yang lebih cocok itu kayaknya seperti Edmodo, Google Classroom, semacam itu"(T.2). "In online learning, there are a lot of teachers who used Edmodo. However, in general, teachers used WA. The suitable examples were Edmodo, Google Classroom, something like that" (T.2). The teacher said that using Edmodo and Google Classroom was more suitable for the online learning process. Based on observation and teachers' documents in their lesson plans, the teachers were found to use Edmodo to support the learning process.

Another response was from teacher 2 stating that, "Saya pribadi menggunakan Edmodo lalu untuk materinya saya menggunakan Powerpoint, youtube kemudian menggunakan google form juga. Kolaborasi mana yang cocok untuk digunakan sebagai

materi pembelajaran"(T.2)."I personally use Edmodo, then for the material I use PowerPoint, YouTube then use Google Form as well depending on the collaboration which is suitable for learning material" (T.2). The teacher assumed that Edmodo and Google Form were perfect collaboration in learning process during online.

From the mentioned responses, all the teachers utilized technology in their teaching and learning activities including Learning Management System (LMS), Google Forms and WhatsApp groups in learning process. The technology was used to develop their language skills and prepare them for effective communication in English.

Variety of Literacy Instructions

Literacy instructions in EFL classrooms refers the teaching and learning strategies to help students develop their literacy in English. Most of the teachers reported that they had several literacy instructions. One of the teachers explained, "Kemudian elaborate, bekerja sama itu saling mendukung kita tidak bisa berhasil kalau tanpa kerja sama" (T.1). "Then elaboration, working together to support each other. We cannot succeed without cooperation" (T.1). The teacher emphasized that elaboration was important because the students and the teacher should be working together to make their learning process successful. Moreover, the teacher also enacted collaborative learning in the classroom.

In addition, another teacher also responded, "Kemudian meninjau ulang. Meninjau ulang itu kita tinjau dari hasil hasil misalnya dari hasil puisi siswa, kumpulan-kumpulan puisi anak-anak kita tinjau" (T.1). "Then review. Reviewing the results of the students' tasks. For example, the results of students' writing poetry. The collections of students' writing poetry we review."(T.1). This represents that the teacher reviewed and provided feedback regarding the students' works.

Morever, a teacher also conducted guided reading. This corresponds with the teacher's statement, "Jika peserta didik tersebut melakukan kegiatan membaca sebelum mengerjakan tugasnya, maka peserta didik tersebut dapat dengan mudah mengerjakan tugas nya dengan baik" (T.4). "If the students read before doing the task, students can do completed the assignment very well" (T.4). The teacher focused on the activity that helped the students develop their reading comprehensions.

From the statements, most of the teachers employed a variety of literacy instructions that were purposeful and engaging to help the students develop the reading, writing, and digital literacy they need to be successful in English.

Discussion

This study seeks to explore in-service English teachers' perceptions and practices of literacy in ELT settings from multiliteracies perspectives. Regarding the English teachers' perceptions of literacy, most of the teachers perceived that literacy was the ability to read and write. This understanding represents the traditional conception of literacy that is different from today's nature of literacy. Hence, this challenges teachers to improve their literacy understanding, and pedagogical strategies, and contextualize their classroom actions to the real situation (Navehebrahim, 2011). This is to say that concept of literacy should be related to the students' needs in their real life or society. And therefore, the students should have other supporting competencies to survive in their life.

Scribner, S., & Cole, M., (1981) asserted that literacy is not just simply the ability to read and write particular texts, but it includes the competency of implementing the knowledge for specific purposes and contexts. This emphasizes that literacy was not only

the ability to read and write but also how the students can implement literacy in specific contexts. The result of the study suggested that a skill-based conception of literacy was related to a person's ability or skill in reading and writing. Other skills may include speaking, listening, communicating, and solving the problem. The study also found that literacy is a social practice in which literacy is a socially situated and context-dependent activity. It is a technique for giving social and cultural behaviors that are unique to certain communities and situations significance and participation. This result is supported by the study of Bloome and Katz (1997) arguing that researchers in a broad range of fields have defined reading and writing as social practice.

Concerning literacy practices in an EFL setting, multimodality can refer to a new form of communication that provides experiences for language learners. It refers to the use of more than one medium (Mayer & Sims, 1994). Modality modes include more than just language. Multimodality is also called multi-symbol, including spoken language, written language, images, diagrams, space, and various kinds of symbol resources used to construct meanings. From the result of the study, the teachers used various media such as images, audio-visual, sound, and text to make the students interested in their learning activity especially in learning English. Language and image modalities were two enjoyable styles for teachers and students to organize meaning (Wang, 2015). In addition, the teacher gave their students some material consisting of images, text, and audio-visual. Those media could make them have more critical thinking and creativity. In teaching listening and speaking, teachers made full use of resources provided by multiple modalities at culture, content, and expression levels, put real communicative context in class, and used images, videos, and audios provided by auditory sense and visual sense modalities as an actual learning environment. Hence, this challenges teachers to improve their literacy concepts and pedagogical strategies and contextualize their classroom actions to the real situation (Navehebrahim, 2011).

The application of multimodality is considered a phenomenon of communication through many kinds of devices and symbol resources. The study suggested that the teacher used various applications to support their teaching of English. The teachers used Edmodo, Google Form, and WA to be the media in which they can practice at their classroom. The result is in line with the study of Schnaider and Rantatalo (2020) suggesting that focusing on the multimodal layers of a technology use map can give detailed insights into traces, showing how diverse sign systems are imprinted in technological combinations, used differently by people, and consequently influence actions and sign-making activities. Moreover, the multimodal layers approach can also provide hints about the function that transitions between technologies, levels of functions, and properties play in representational signs as well as how such shifts can be understood when traces are connected to people's choices of resources to create meaning.

CONCLUSION

The study has investigated in-service English teachers' perceptions and practices of literacy in ELT settings from multiliteracies perspectives. The findings showed that inservice English teachers recognized three different conceptions of literacy: general, skill-based, and social practice. The English teachers, in general, did not have a thorough understanding of the concept of literacy and they equated literacy with skills. In addition, the teachers practiced literacy through the integration of multimodal in the use of media, the use of technology in teaching and learning activities, and the involvement of a range of literacy instructions. Despite certain challenges, the teachers made use of a variety of

media and technologies. This study suggests the importance of understanding the contemporary conception of literacy, and therefore, it will have an impact on literacy practices, particularly in EFL classroom settings.

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