

## ANALYSIS OF IMPOLITENESS STRATEGIES USED BY ENGLISH TEACHERS AT PRIMARY LEVEL AND IMPACT ON DROPOUT RATE OF STUDENTS IN KPK

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### ABSTRACT

Politeness is the most important aspect of the classroom and its environment. Impoliteness can create disturbance and unfriendly circumstances in the classroom for the students and teachers as well. This research focuses on identifying the impoliteness strategies used by English teachers in the classroom at the primary level in KPK public schools. The research also explores the impact of impoliteness strategies on the students and the rise in the dropout rate due to the behavior of the teacher. The researchers have used a mixed method of both the qualitative approach and the quantitative approach for the data collection, which involves almost 20 teachers for observation and 10 for random interviews. Similarly, 10 students were interviewed who had dropped out from different districts of KPK like Peshawar, Nowshera, and Mardan. Data was collected through observation and recording classroom lectures. The main types of analysis used in the research were discourse analysis for classroom observation, thematic analysis was used for teachers', and descriptive analysis for students' interviews. The model of Jonathan Culpeper's (2005) was applied to the collected data. The research explored that there were a lot more impolite teachers in the selected and limited location. Most of the teachers used positive and negative impoliteness, which resulted in the dropout of the students. On the other hand, dropout students have been interviewed who cited a major reason for the dropout as the harsh behavior of the teacher. As a result, the study concludes that teachers must use polite behavior in the class and they must be kind to the students to the environment of the class could be friendly. The current research recommends the training of those teachers who use such practices as well as new teachers to avoid harsh and impolite behavior in the class, specifically at the primary level in KPK.

**Keywords:** discourse analysis, dropout, impoliteness strategies, politeness

### INTRODUCTION

Children spend most of their time in classrooms. They learn many skills that may help them accomplish their goals in the future. These skills help them in becoming a useful person for society. It is the classroom that enables them to understand every aspect of life, set some goals for

the future, and learn skills. For achieving such success in life, teachers are the facilitators who may set the paths for them. Therefore, the environment of the classroom should be more respectful for the students. The interaction of teachers and students should be encouraging and

effective. A teacher has a key role in maintaining a peaceful and learning environment. They have a lifelong impact on the lives of the students. According to Malik (2020), politeness is a main component of a classroom that a teacher should possess in maintaining the learning environment. In the classroom, the students not only learn but also improve their self-perception through interactions, which they learn from their mentors and teachers the way they interact with other people. Impolite behavior of the teacher increases the rate of dropout of the students. Impoliteness may be approached from the perspective of verbal aggression, verbal abuse, and emotional frustration.

### **Background of the Study**

Primary education is the basic and essential need of a society. It is the primary level of school that teaches a child basic skills and classroom manners. The learners develop their cognitive, social, and psychological skills at the primary level. It prepares the child for moving on to the higher level and getting an education. In Pakistan, primary education is the basic right of every Pakistani child. According to the Ministry of Education (1992), primary education is compulsory for every child in Pakistan. Grades 1–5 were the main emphasis of national education policy (1998–2010).

According to the elementary and secondary education department, KPK (2024), the primary dropout rate of the students is facing significant challenges. It is approximately 70%, and districts like Kohistan, DÍ Khan, and Tank have an even dropout rate of almost 80% at the primary level. The main reasons for the dropout are natural disasters like COVID-19, floods, etc., but impoliteness strategies are also a minor factor for the dropout of students. Shahrukh, Rehana, & Hussain (1987) further elaborated that verbal aggression, corporal punishments, and harsh behavior of teachers and facilitators towards students may be the main reasons for the dropout.

On the other hand, Amit and Vijay (2014) explain that teachers perform multitasks in the schools, which may raise expectations from them and become stressful and burdensome for the teachers. According to the research, the burdened environment of the teachers and mentors makes them harsh and rude. They further

elaborate that the size of the classroom must be small if the focus is quality education and a friendly environment (Amit & Vijay, 2014).

This type of personality causes problems for the students themselves and teachers. It also creates disturbance in the classroom, says Arlow (1999). On the other hand, when teachers's appreciation and admiration help them in growing and development.

The relationship between teachers and students decides the academics, behavior, and progress of the children. The way they communicate and interact with each other as well as other students may help them in learning. Perels and Cole (2007) explain that teachers with friendly behavior have a greater chance of success in learning than those with rude behavior. The current research explores how the teachers use impoliteness strategies, which at the end results in the dropout of the students from the schools. Moreover, teachers with rude behavior have a negative impact on the performance and personalities of the students at primary public schools in KPK.

### **Problem Statement**

Researchers have explored the impolite behavior and language of teachers in the classroom and its impact on their behavior, performance, and personalities. As a result, the behavior of teachers leaves a negative mark on the personalities of students. It may also be the cause of students dropping out of the schools. To prevent dropout of students, the government of KPK has been working on it as well as to train teachers to avoid aggressive behavior towards students at primary level. So, the current research explores the strategies of impoliteness used by teachers in the classroom. It also explores the impact of impoliteness on students and their dropout rate in public schools of KPK at the primary level.

### **Research Objectives**

The present research study intends to:

1. To find and analyze the use of strategies of impoliteness by English primary school teachers (PSTs) in public schools of KPK.
2. To find the impact of teachers' impoliteness and students dropout rate in public schools of KPK.

### **Research Questions**

1. To find the strategies of impoliteness by the English primary school teachers in the public sector in KPK?
2. To Find the impact of impoliteness on students and their dropout rate in public schools in KPK.
- 3.

### **Significance of the Study**

A lot of research work has been done on finding the reasons for the verbal aggression of the teacher and its impact on the student's personality, performance, and dropout rate. Currently, KPK has almost 1,42,000 primary teachers. Many of them are English language teachers who were found using impoliteness in the classroom. In the interview, when they were asked for the reason for dropout, the most prominent reason highlighted by many was the harsh behavior of teachers. The current research will help raise awareness among those English language teachers who are teaching at the primary level but are unaware of avoiding verbal aggression on students. The aim of the research is to make teachers aware of the need to avoid impolite strategies in the classroom and their impact on the personalities and performance of the learners. The researchers themselves are public school teachers. This research has contributed a lot to their own professional development. Moreover, this research may help the KPK directorate of education in future trainings of teachers.

### **Delimitation**

The research is limited to find the strategies of impoliteness used by the primary English teachers at public sector of KPK. The teachers with experience of two to three years or less have been taken as a sample for the current research. The research is limited to the districts of Peshawar, Mardan, and Nowshera in the KPK, Pakistan.

### **Literature Review**

The learning atmosphere would be friendly when teachers avoided aggression and impoliteness. The students would learn quickly as well as be confident. Rude and impolite teachers may lead to a lack good relations between students and teachers. The teacher must know the

emotional intelligence so they can better evaluate the aptitude of the students. But impolite teachers create an unfavorable learning environment because they use strict and sarcastic language, which demotivates and discourages the students. The student lacks self-confidence and emotional, physical, and psychological strength due to the rude behavior of the mentor. This process leads to a damaged personality in the student.

Acikgoz (2003) says that a teacher is a role model for their students. They observe each and every action of the teacher, even if they try to imitate what the teacher verbally explains. It means teachers have a great impact on student personalities. Therefore, a teacher must behave politely rather than impolitely. According to Thomas (1995), politeness is a basic human need to be happy. On the other hand. Verbal aggression and rude behavior are defined as impoliteness. The sarcastic and insulting comments lead to failure of the students and raise the dropout rate. To avoid such strategies, the environment of the classroom must be conducive and friendly. Gozutok (1993) explains that 30% of the teachers have negative behavior to handle the classroom. Current research observes more impoliteness of male teachers than female teachers. So, a supportive teacher must have several qualities that are mentioned in the next paragraphs.

To begin with, the teacher is a classroom manager. It is a teacher who manages the classroom on the one hand and the academics of the students on the other hand. According to some researchers, it is the strictness of teachers that helps them in controlling the classroom, but some researchers believe that politeness is a key that has been found in teachers. Abisoye & Tunde (2001) further explain that in their comparative study of public and private teachers' impoliteness strategies are different. They found that private schools mostly use positive politeness and public schools use impoliteness. Secondly, teacher is a motivator. They appreciate students and encourage them to do a task. The teacher motivates them for their future goals. Teacher politeness and impoliteness have great impact on their performance, says Hassan et al. (2017). Last but not least, teacher politeness to the student is a main component of the student's performance and personality building. Impoliteness of teacher may

harm the students and mostly drop the school at an early age.

Impoliteness means the way the teacher behaves toward the students, like usage of sarcastic language, strictness, and rudeness, which leads to self-doubt and a lack of self-confidence in the student. Impoliteness in language has been found frequently in the teachers and is considered a part of the academic performance of the students. Derek Bousfield (2006) explains that there are many research studies present on the politeness of the teacher, but less work on impoliteness has been done or it has been neglected. He has researched impoliteness in learning and education. He termed impoliteness as a poor cousin of politeness. Foucault (1980) says strictness and power work more than politeness. Impoliteness helps in maintaining the environment. According to Jonathan Culpeper (2005), impoliteness is of three types. It is positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, and bald on record impoliteness. Positive impoliteness means to damage the learner's positive face. For example, to ignore someone. Negative impoliteness means to threaten the learner by negative face want. For example, making fun of them. Lastly, bald on record, impoliteness means to directly use rude or sarcastic language to damage the learners wants.

Furthermore, impoliteness in social contexts happens when the speaker sounds rude and disrespectful. It affects the relation of student and teacher in a social context. According to Eelen and Ida (2001), there are two main stages of impoliteness. In the first stage, people observe the behavior, and in the second stage, they analyze it to understand. Foucault (1998) explains that power is linked with impoliteness, and it controls the listener. It means power influences people through interactions and the flow of information. People use this knowledge to practice power and freedom. In the view of Dobs (2014), politeness in academics is useful for shaping the identity of children as well as influencing them. Impoliteness and identity shaping are interrelated. Identity is constructed in the classrooms. There are three types of identity construction in the classroom. First, discourse identity means the use of language by a teacher and resistance of a student's confidence and counterreply through language. Second, situation

identity, in which the student rejects the impolite behavior of the teacher to protect himself. Last, transportable identity means rejection of impolite behavior through shift in discussions. In short, impoliteness in classrooms shapes identities. But the strictness of the teacher may also be a big reason for dropouts of kids from the schools in KPK and Pakistan.

Dropout means when a student leaves school in the middle of a program or session without completing it. There are various causes of dropout. Majorly, the reasons for the rise in dropout rate of students at the primary level are lack of well-trained teachers, use of impoliteness strategies of teachers, corporal punishments, and lack of communication between teacher and student (Mohsin, 2004). The current research aims to highlight the role of impoliteness teachers and its impact on the performance of students in academics and daily life. For analyzing the data and collected information, the researchers used Jonathan Culpeper's model of impoliteness.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Recently, pragmatic studies have highlighted the relationship between teachers and students and the way they communicate and interact with each other. According to Cohen & Olstain (1993), they shed light on the impact of impolite behavior of teachers towards learners. He says the learners can make pragmatic mistakes although they have command of the linguistic skills. The reason is obvious: they have cultural and social differences. A model of Culpeper impoliteness has been used to analyze the events that occurred in classrooms.

### **Culpeper Model of Impoliteness**

The Culpeper model of impoliteness (2005) has been applied to analyze the teacher impoliteness strategies towards students. Culpeper defines impoliteness strategies as to threaten someone's facial expression, social identity, and to create disharmony. These actions are sometimes intentional or sometimes unintentional. There are three main types of impoliteness strategies.

1. **Positive impoliteness:** it is the strategy used to threaten the positive face of the learner.

2. **Negative impoliteness:** It means to harm the negative face of the learner.
3. **Bald on record impoliteness:** it is the face-threatening actions.

So, verbal impoliteness means threatening the learners face and identity through language. It harms the learning environment of the classroom. Current research will also aim to analyze the environment of the classroom and use of impoliteness strategies, which ends in a high dropout rate of the students.

### Research Methodology

The current research has used both a qualitative and quantitative approach. A qualitative approach involves the collection and interpretation of the selected data. More specifically, the descriptive qualitative method includes data collection through interviews, recorded lessons, and questionnaire distribution to the English primary teachers. At the end, numerical data would be analyzed and described. On the other hand, a quantitative method is used to collect the data to explore how impolite teachers behave in the classroom.

#### 1. Sample and Sampling Technique

The current research aims to find the impoliteness strategies of teachers used in the classroom and their impact on the students's high dropout rate in KPK. A total of 20 teachers has been taken as a sample. The teacher was both male and female from the selected districts of KPK. They had experience of almost 2 years minimum, and interviews have been conducted for teachers. On the other hand, 10-12 dropout students were also asked randomly. For sampling and collection of data, purposive sampling and random sampling were used for teachers and students.

#### 1. Data collection

The researchers used two main methods to collect data, i.e., the classroom environment, observation, and interviews. For observing the classroom environment, the researchers have watched lectures keeping in mind the observation checklist and recordings to note the learners and facilitator interactions. On the other hand, the researcher interviewed teachers as well as

dropout students. They asked the different open- and closed-ended questions to record their responses. Furthermore, for the analysis of teachers' responses, thematic analysis was used, but for the students's feedback from interviews, descriptive analysis was used. For the dropout students from the past 3-4 years, data has been collected and used. All the analysis of the research was based on Jonathan Culpeper's (2005) model of impoliteness.

#### 1. Data Analysis Method

There are two main methods used in data analysis. For classroom observation, the researchers have used the discourse analysis method. In the discourse method, the first method was to observe and record the data of 20 teachers of primary public schools in KPK for two to three weeks. After collecting the data through audio and video recording, convert it into written text for transcription. Then choose the relevant data to impoliteness strategies. Jonathan Culpeper's (2005) model of impoliteness has been applied to the research. The second method was interviews. In which thematic analysis has been used for teachers' interviews. Thematic analysis includes familiarization, deductive coding, deductive themes, reviewing theming, defining themes, and writing up. Similarly, for the dropout student, the descriptive analysis method has been used.

#### 1. Data Analysis

Data analysis includes the analysis of English teachers at the primary level in KPK. Three main methods were used in the analysis:

1. **Discourse analysis:** For classroom observation. According to Gee (2011), discourse analysis explores how the teacher and students used language to achieve goals in society. In the current research, the researchers will analyze the impoliteness strategies of teachers in the classroom.
2. **Thematic analysis:** For analyzing teachers' interviews. A total of 15 classroom observations were used to collect data in the selected districts of KPK.
3. **Descriptive analysis:** for analysis of dropout students' interviews.

**Table 1**  
**Basic Details of the Teachers for Classroom Observation**

Variables	Category	Frequency
Gender	Male	10
	Female	10
Academic	BA	3
	MA/ BS	6
	M.phil	1
Professional	B.ed/ M.ed	6
Subject	English	20
Teaching experience	2-3 years	10
	4-5 years	6
	More than 5	4

**Data Selection, Transcription and Interpretation**

After the selection of the data, selected transcriptions from the classroom were observed, interviewed, and analyzed from the perspective of impoliteness strategies of Culpeper (2005). After that, impoliteness strategies were identified in the selected data and decoded the dropout rate and the strategies used in the classroom.

**Analysis of Impoliteness Strategies Used by English Teachers at Primary Level**

Impoliteness means attacking the facial expression and self-esteem of the listeners, says Archer (2008). The speaker uses aggressive words to the listener to harm his image. According to Culpeper (2005), it is mostly used in close relations as well as connected to power. This type of power is frequently used in the classroom. The harm of self-esteem and the listener's image can be for students in the classroom environment. There are four types of Culpeper's model, i.e., positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, and bald on record impoliteness.

**Table 2**

S.n	Example	Type of impoliteness	No. of Male Utterances	No. of Female Utterances	Total Utterances
1	No greetings	<b>Positive Impoliteness</b>	3	2	5
2	Don't behave foolishly	P.I	4	2	6
3	Your performance is shameful	P.I	6	5	11
4	Don't sit here	P.I	3	2	5
5.	You are incorrect	P.I	11	9	20
	<b>Total</b>		<b>27</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>46</b>
1.	Oh how right you are (sarcastic)	<b>Negative Impoliteness</b>	6	3	9
2.	Wow what a genius you are (sarcastic)	N.I	1	3	4
3.	You have got full marks (sarcastic)	N.I	4	5	9
4.	Your writing is flawless (sarcastic)	N.I	5	3	8

5.	You have topped the test (sarcastic)	N.I	6	5	11
	<b>Total</b>		<b>22</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>31</b>
1.	You will fail again	<b>Bald on Record Impoliteness</b>	7	3	10
2.	Your hand writing is terrible	B.R.P	10	7	17
3.	Your uniform is very untidy	B.R..P	3	5	8
4.	You are going to fail this time	B.R.P	7	3	10
	<b>Total</b>		<b>27</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>45</b>

**Analysis**

**1. Discourse Analysis**

**a. Positive impoliteness**

The analysis shows that greetings like ‘good morning’, ‘hello’, and ‘assalam o alaikum’ create the positive environment of the class, but few teachers were observed who already skipped greetings and started the class with a negative energy like hurry up and take out your books, which shows a little disrespect towards the students. There were other sarcastic remarks like ‘don’t act foolishly’ (6 utterances). It can hurt and discourage the student’s confidence and self-esteem. Phrases like ‘you are incorrect’ (20 utterances), ‘you are wrong’, and ‘your performance is shameful’ (11 utterances) are discouraging comments that have been recorded frequently. This comment can humiliate the students. Impoliteness from the teachers can damage the student’s confidence, motivation, and overall performance, which leads to the dropout of the students from the school at an early age.

**b. Negative impoliteness**

Most of the teachers frequently use negative impoliteness. In the current research, instances like ‘you are right’ (9 times) and ‘what a genius you are’ (4 utterances) have been observed in the classroom environment. This phrase may harm the self-confidence of the student. It is humiliation from the side of the teacher towards the student. Similarly, authoritative and sarcastic language is commonly used in the classroom. Instances like ‘you have topped the test’ (11 utterances) and ‘you have got full marks’ (9 utterances) have been observed

frequently in the classroom and the teachers. Teachers all the time behave like dictators and give instruction in most cases. They use impolite behavior to align and keep discipline in the class. This impoliteness leads towards rudeness and humiliation of the students without realization. It lowers not only the confidence and motivation but also threatens the performance and personality of the student. ‘You have topped the class’ and ‘your writing is perfect’ such phrases and instances mock the students, which results in low confidence. Swan (1987) explains that positive impoliteness may improve the performance of the student, but negative impoliteness leads to harming them.

**c. Bald on record impoliteness**

According to Winaynato (2017), bald on record, impoliteness means a very clear and direct form of impoliteness towards students, which harms their self-esteem and confidence. This strategy was also observed in the classroom environment through instances like ‘you will fail again’ (10 utterances), ‘your handwriting is terrible’ (17 times), and ‘your uniform is very untidy’ (8 utterances). Teachers used direct and rude language to humiliate the students in the class in front of other students and friends. These impolite phrases can be changed to polite phrases to improve the behavior and performance of the students. Burden (1995) says flexible teaching strategies may reduce the improper behavior of the students. The researchers observe that the most frequent comments in the classroom are ‘you will fail again’ and ‘you will not achieve this time’. Teachers use it more commonly to

humiliate the students. These rude and direct phrases result in demotivating the students. To build a friendly and good relationship with the student's teacher, she must inspire them and then make them learn in the class to improve their performance and personality.

## **2. Thematic Analysis English Teachers at Primary Level**

Thematic analysis has been done by the researchers to analyze impoliteness strategies used by public teachers in KPK. 8-10 interviews were conducted in different districts of KPK, like Peshawar, Mardan, and Nowshera. The teachers were named as A, B, C, D, and E. They were asked a few open and closed-ended questions,

### **Responses of Teachers**

Almost 5-10 teachers were asked for the questions and everyone replied differently for various questions. Some answers have been interpreted and analyzes here by the researchers. For the first question i.e. "How would you respond to a student if he throws trash in the class?" A, D and C teachers replied that they will ask the student to pick up the trash but teacher B replied that he will ask to pick up the trash for by using authoritative approach. Third question is "what would you do for maintaining discipline in the class?". According to the interviewees a teacher in the class must be strict otherwise class will not be uniform. To maintain discipline in the class teacher must give some punishment so fear in the students could be inculcated. It is an impolite strategy and specifically negative impoliteness. It could discourage and demotivate the students. If a teacher is insulting a student all the time students may lose interest in the class and learning. Classroom is a place where a child spends half of his day. So, the environment must be friendly. Impoliteness strategies are commonly used in the classroom as the current research observed and explored in various classrooms. It makes the learning process difficult for the students and make them leave the school an easy option. The alternate for rude behavior is that a teacher must be friendly and classroom environment must be polite and good which will help the student in fast learning and emerging a good personality.

and their answers were recorded for later transcription of the relevant data. Jonathan Culpeper's (2005) model of impoliteness was applied to the collected relevant data. The most commonly asked questions from the interviewees were:

Q.1. How would you respond to a student if he throws trash in the class?

Q.2. What would you do if a student has been caught while cheating?

Q.3. What would you do for maintaining discipline in the class?

Q.4. Do you think impolite behavior of the teacher is the main reason for dropping out of school?

next couple of days which is the use of negative impoliteness. It will make the student upset. On second question "what would you do if a student has been caught while cheating?" different teachers had different response. Teacher B replied that she will tell that to the principle because cheating is not a good practice. And teacher A replied that he will tell that to their parents to control their behavior. Again, it is impolite strategy to control and dictate a student

### **a. Descriptive Analysis:**

Dropout refers to when a student leaves an institute without completing his education. Major reason for this dropout is impolite behavior of a teacher or parents without considering the child's mental health. To address the issue, it is crucial to take help from those experiences which have been observed in the classroom for more than two weeks. Their week mental status, lack of motivation and support make them leave the school. The current research will explore the reasons for the dropout of students by interviewing and observing them. 10-12 interviews were conducted from the selected districts and asked for the reason of the student's dropout. They themselves were dropout students. Most common reason cited by the students were poverty, shifting of place, lack of interest in the studies and harsh behavior of teachers. The dropout rate at public primary schools in Peshawar is approximately 14%, Mardan 17% and Nowshera 13%. And dropout due to harsh behavior of teachers is 5-7% in these selected districts of KPK. According to government of KPK and Pakistan education statistics for 2022-



2023 there are approximately 21000 primary public schools in KPK and the dropout rate is 27%. During the survey of the current research 8-10% of dropout due to harsh behavior of the teachers has been found in KPK using the purposive and random sampling techniques. Despite their focus on enrollment and quality education impolite behavior of teachers is a major issue.

### **Findings**

Findings of the current research are:

1. the researchers have observed that impoliteness strategies used in the classroom by the teachers was a common practice at primary level. This strategy is used both by male and female teachers. It has been observed that comparatively male teachers used more impolite strategies than female teachers.
2. Types of impoliteness used in the class were positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness and bald on record impoliteness. Positive impoliteness was the most frequent one.
3. a total of 46 utterances were used as a positive impoliteness, 31 utterances as a negative impoliteness and 45 of bald on record impoliteness.
4. teachers and students were interviewed for finding the reason of rise in dropout in which 8-10% of students cited harsh behavior for the dropout from school.

### **Conclusion**

The research concludes that English primary teachers at public schools in KPK apply impoliteness strategies most frequently in the classroom usually to maintain discipline in the class. They use positive and negative impoliteness strategies towards students which leads to rise in dropout rate in the province. Teacher must be a role model for the students who inspire and motivate them in friendly classroom atmosphere. But unfortunately, impolite and verbal aggression from teachers may damage the self esteem of the student and create negative impact on his performance. The current research studies found that 8-10 % of the dropout rate in KPK is due to harsh behavior of the teacher depending upon the conducted survey in the selected and limited schools and districts of KPK. Overall, teacher polite behavior and friendly

environment many help in improvement of a students' academics, learning and performance.

### **Recommendations**

Recommendations based on the current research are given below;

1. Government of KPK should focus on more enrollments of the children but government must create friendly environment in the classroom.
2. According to the research there are a smaller number of teachers who use impoliteness strategies which can be overcome with more emphasis on training programs of the teachers.
3. Extra work load on the teaching staff may cause impolite behavior of teachers, government must work on this aspect of government primary schools of KPK. It may help in minimizing the dropout rate of students and stress of teachers.

### **4.**

### **Suggestions:**

1. This research is based on primary schools of KPK. Further research can be done to identify the impoliteness strategies of teachers at higher level.
2. The current research is restricted to few districts of KPK, further studies can be done in the whole province or across the Pakistan.

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