

**Examining The Relationship Between Self-Efficacy and Speaking Proficiency: A Correlational Study Among English Major Students**

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**ABSTRACT**

This research investigates the correlation between the EFL learners' self-efficacy and speaking proficiency. Considering speaking as essential but problematic language competency, the study in question looks at the impact of self-efficacy on students' proficiency in accomplishing speaking tasks with confidence and efficiency. The study utilized a quantitative correlational technique and comprised 35 second-semester students from a private university in Jakarta. Data were collected using a self-efficacy questionnaire and speaking performance evaluations focusing on pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The findings demonstrated a strong positive correlation ( $r_{xy} = 0.796$ ), the value of  $\text{Sig.} = 0.000 < 0.05$  between students' self-efficacy and their speaking proficiency, indicating that elevated self-efficacy correlates with enhanced speaking proficiency. The results underscore the necessity for students to cultivate confidence and participate actively in speaking exercises. The findings can be a guideline for the teachers to modify the strategies and methods in teaching English, particularly speaking.

**Keywords:** Speaking; Self-Efficacy; Correlational Study

**INTRODUCTION**

English is a widely acquired global language, studied extensively, and used for commercial, tourist, political, and international interactions. It is also a requirement for students at all educational levels, making it a crucial language for global communication. Individuals need to have significant proficiency in oral communication in English since this serves educational and professional purposes.

Communication is the act of exchanging information or creating entertainment through the use of speech, writing, and other means (Shabir et al., 2015). Communication is the social process that changes people's knowledge, conduct, and attitude by providing accurate and technical information. In the 21st century, communication has emerged as a fundamental element of the learning process, especially within the realm of English Language Teaching (Widodo & Mustofa, 2024). Globalization and the growing demand for active learning have made communication a crucial aspect of the educational process.

Tarvin (2015) in Puli Quito (2023) stated that communicative competence involves using language effectively and fluently to complete social tasks, resulting in culturally acceptable communication, which involves an interactive process where meaning is created through the production and reception of processed information. The significance of improving communicative skills has been emphasized at this time. Research from Saudi Arabian colleges reveals that competent oral English skills facilitate tacit knowledge transmission inside businesses, hence enhancing mentorship, communication, and collective learning (Bhatti & Basri, 2024). In a variety of professional sectors, such as business, education, technology, and healthcare, the ability to speak English is crucial for cross-border networking, career advancement, information access, international conference participation, and journal publication. Higher competence and confidence are frequently associated with fluency in spoken English. Finally, fluent spoken English is no longer an option; it is a strategic advantage that enables professionals in today's globalized world.

Research on English-speaking education has markedly intensified in the past decade, highlighting its escalating significance in higher education and driving curricular changes centered on communicative ability (Susilawati, 2024). Saptiany & Prabowo (2024) revealed that English for Specific Purposes (ESP) programs emphasize the importance of developing speaking proficiency for students' academic and professional success, enabling them to effectively function in practical situations. Proficient speaking skills are essential for cross-cultural relationships, interviews, international cooperation, and success in English-speaking educational settings. Online platforms and remote communication require enhanced fluency and clarity for effective virtual engagement.

This research focuses on the persistent gaps in speaking proficiency and self-efficacy observed among Indonesian EFL learners. Even after several years of formal instruction, many students still find it challenging to speak the language fluently and with assurance. These struggles are often linked to a declining belief in their own speaking capabilities, which in turn hampers their effectiveness in both classroom activities and everyday communication. The study therefore seeks to clarify the strong connection between learners' self-efficacy beliefs and their speaking performance, with the goal of showing that bolstering self-efficacy can, in turn, foster greater speaking proficiency among Indonesian EFL students.

English-speaking proficiency is an essential issue in education, as it is the most challenging skill to develop (Tiana et al., 2024). In academic settings, proficient speaking improves critical thinking and enables students to articulate their comprehension during presentations, debates, and oral assessments. Besides, speaking is a fundamental ability in language acquisition, alongside listening, reading, and writing. Conversely, speaking requires immediate production of language and comprehension, rendering it especially difficult (Aziez et al., 2024). Students frequently encounter challenges due to limited vocabulary and pronunciation issues, impeding their capacity to articulate ideas fluently and accurately in English (Malik et al., 2025). Additionally, Islam (2023) stated that speaking anxiety stemming from fear of errors, diminished self-confidence, and unsupportive classroom settings further diminishes participation and hinders fluency advancement. Other factors that contribute to speaking mastery include self-efficacy beliefs (Phipps, 2024). As Bandura (1997) in (Derakhshan & Fathi, 2024) said, individuals will not achieve success in a task unless they have confidence in their ability to get the intended outcome.

Self-efficacy, as a significant individual-difference variable, has been extensively examined in L2 situations, particularly its correlation with positive psychology components. Self-efficacy is acknowledged as a significant predictor of second language proficiency (Raoofi et al., 2012). Besides, Krashen (1982) in Yuan et al (2024) proposed that an individual's confidence in their capacity to learn and utilize a foreign language proficiently is essential for successful language acquisition. A strong sense of self-efficacy enhances one's capacity to cope with anxiety and reduce negative thoughts. Bandura (1997) revealed that Individuals' views on self-efficacy can impact how they respond to stressful events, such as public speaking (Paradewari, 2017). Furthermore, it has been recognized that emotional elements play a part in language acquisition. Affective elements are recognized as important in language learning. Research suggests that self-efficacy can reduce anxiety, increase motivation, and enhance second language competency.

Self-efficacy was favorably and strongly connected with course performance, and gains in self-efficacy were positively and significantly associated with changes in total grade point average (Cavanagh et al., 2019). Yuan et al (2024) research has found a positive relationship between speaking self-efficacy and speaking scores. This association highlights the necessity of adopting instructional practices that improve and prioritize self-efficacy among EFL learners. Another study by Joni & Wirastuti (2018) found that self-efficacy significantly impacts students' speaking ability, with a basic contribution of 91%. The four self-efficacy criteria, with psychic and emotional state being the most dominant, significantly influence students' speaking abilities. Raoofi (2012) cited in Mei et al (2023) claimed that students with high levels of self-efficacy are associated with better performance in foreign language acquisition compared to low levels of self-efficacy. In addition, the study conducted by Widodo & Mustofa (2024) shows that an association exists between students' self-efficacy and their oral communication abilities, evidenced by a significance rate surpassing 0.6. The level of self-efficacy strongly impacts

students' success in oral communication tasks. Examining the connection between speaking self-efficacy and speaking competency among Indonesian students in English education is essential as interest in spoken English and self-efficacy among EFL learners, educators, and linguistic academics continues to develop.

Strong and positive relationships between self-efficacy beliefs and overall academic achievement and spoken performance have been reported in previous studies (Cavanagh et al., 2019; Yuan et al., 2024; Joni and Wirastuti, 2018; Raoofi, 2012; Widodo and Mustofa, 2024). However, these studies tend to sample from various cultural and academic levels in many educational settings, and do not isolate English speech as the main element of study. Not many studies at present specifically correlate oral performance with self-efficacy of Indonesian EFL learners. Furthermore, very few empirical research studies have ever examined influence of self-efficacy on speaking performance in a formal academic environment, particularly among the country's tertiary level student population in a country such as Indonesia. This study therefore attempts to bridge this gap by collecting context-appropriate data that show a strong connection between measured proficiency and confidence in speaking English among Indonesian students enrolled in EEPs. Besides making a contribution to the theory literature, the findings are expected to have pedagogical significance in terms of designing an EFL curriculum for the Indonesian context.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking proficiency refers to the effective use of spoken language for communicative purposes, emphasizing its interactive and purposeful nature while acknowledging the variability in successful performance. It is a fundamental aspect of communication (Fulcher, 2019). An important ability that should be prioritized in both primary and secondary language development is the ability to speak effectively. The attainment of speaking proficiency is of utmost importance in the learning of a second or foreign language (Ghafar & Raheem, 2023). According to Hasnain & Halder (2024) contemporary studies use the Complexity–Accuracy–Fluency (CAF) triad to describe speaking proficiency. It identifies linguistic complexity, accuracy, and fluency as interrelated constructs that define a speaker's oral ability, including syntax, vocabulary, and delivery speed. An excellent approach for learners to improve their speaking skills is through activities that include listening and repetition.

Berger's (2020) research on CEFR-based descriptors for academic speaking identifies six categories for certifying proficiency levels in EFL contexts: language resources and fluency, pronunciation and vocal impact, presenting structure and content, genre-specific presentation skills, content and relevance in interactions, and interaction skills. These categories offer a more nuanced operationalization of speaking proficiency. Speaking is also affected by affective factors, including emotions such as self-esteem, empathy, motivation, and attitude, as well as performance-related characteristics, all of which contribute to an individual's

comfort with speaking performance (Tiana et al., 2023). Najha & Sailun (2021) in (Tiana et al., 2024) proposed that speaking is a regular activity that entails two individuals engaging in interaction through verbal communication to communicate meaning. It is widely believed that this is a socially influenced and contextually specific mode of communication.

Bandura (1997) in Allagui (2024) defined self-efficacy as people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances. Bandura also revealed that self-efficacy influences a person's persistence, effort, and activity selection. While people who think they are capable of completing a task are more likely to do so, those who have poor self-efficacy may avoid it (Artino Jr, 2012). According to Bandura (2012), in Derakhshan & Fathi (2024) self-efficacy is the individual's conviction that they can effectively complete a particular endeavor to achieve specific results. To successfully transfer oral communication skills from academic to professional settings, students must have high oral communication self-efficacy. Additionally, self-efficacy was found to be a significant predictor of motivation, showing that students who have higher levels of self-efficacy are more motivated to engage in learning activities (Zhang et al., 2023). Thus, Self-efficacy is a personal belief in one's ability to organize and execute actions for specific performance goals, often referred to as task-specific self-confidence, and is a crucial element in motivation and learning theories.

Self-efficacy, as indicated by the CAF framework and CEFR-based descriptors (Berger, 2020) are proven to play a very pivotal role in the speaking skills related to EFL learners in this study. Speaking is an affective and dynamic activity (Tiana et al., 2023) and students are required to own the language, with confidence, to communicate appropriately and meaningfully in real time. Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1997) in Allagui (2024) is particularly relevant here—in that, in the case of high self-efficacy students, such students are more likely to persist in speaking tasks, invest more effort, and engage in activities that promote language use such as repetition, interaction, and structured oral performance resulting in fluency, accuracy and use of vocabulary. In the present study, students who believed that they had the ability to succeed in spoken activities performed better in the basic components of speaking, such as pronunciation, grammar, and understanding. This is consistent with the findings of Zhang et al. (2023), who argue that high self-efficacy predicts high levels of motivation and engagement, meaning that students' confidence in their speaking abilities was reported to have a direct impact on the quality of their oral English. It follows, then, that believe in self-efficacy is not merely a peripheral but central force in student speaking development, and that this becomes especially evident for early-semester learners learning to constitute both their academic and communicative selves within an EFL context.

## METHOD

### Design and Sample

This study is quantitative, employing the survey technique, and it has a correlational research design. The purpose of this study was to determine how two variables were correlated. While Y is the dependent variable, measuring speaking proficiency, and X is the independent variable, it may be thought of as students' self-efficacy. The study was carried out at a private university in Jakarta. Because a speaking or social conversation subject was taught in the second semester, thirty-five samples of students in this semester were chosen by using a simple random sampling technique in which each student in the population has an equal chance of being selected. From a list of 100 students majoring in English Literature in the second semester, a list of all students, and then randomly select using an application to get a sample of 35 students. This is done so that the research results represent the population and avoid bias.

### Instrument and Procedures

The study examined students' self-efficacy using a 24-item survey questionnaire developed by Idrus and Sivapalan (2007). The first dimension assessed students' perceived *ability* in speaking English, including participation in discussions, communication with instructors, and peer conversation. The second dimension evaluated students' perceptions of *activity* English verbal communication, such as theater, debates, oral presentations, and in-class discussions. The third dimension assessed students' *aspirations* concerning English speaking, with the dependent variable being their speaking proficiency. a Likert scale with four points, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Four scales—(3) strongly agree, (2) agree, (1) disagree, and (0) strongly disagree—are used to measure the instrument utilized in this study. The speaking score was determined using five criteria: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and understanding, as outlined by Harris (1974) in Tiana et al. (2023). The researcher and collaborators evaluated the speaking test, which was verified by an independent expert. The Pearson Product-Moment formula was employed to assess the validity of the questionnaire, while the Cronbach's Alpha formula was utilized to evaluate its reliability (Arikunto, 2019). A sample of 20 students was first employed to verify the instruments' validity and reliability before collecting data from the remaining 35 students. The questionnaire had 14 valid questions out of 24 total, and it was reliable ( $r_{obs} 0,790 > r_{table} 0,444$ ).

### Data Analysis

Before testing the hypothesis, a prerequisite test must be conducted to get reliable and impartial data. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was employed to assess normality. The data are regularly distributed if the significance value exceeds the significance level (normally 0.005). A Mean-Test for Linearity was conducted by

examining the significance value of linearity. If it is less than 0.05, the model is linear, as stated by Priyatno (2013) in Tiana & Lestari (2022). A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted using SPSS 20.0 to ascertain the relationship between variable X (students' self-efficacy) and variable Y (students' speaking proficiency). This analysis is employed to determine the relationship between two variables, specifically when the data types are interval or ratio, and both must follow a normal distribution. The Pearson correlation is a statistical technique employed when two variables are assessed on interval or ratio scales and the data follows a normal distribution. It quantifies the magnitude and orientation of a linear association between the variables. To obtain precise findings, it is essential to assess linearity prior to doing the Pearson correlation, as non-linear correlations may give misleading results. According to Sugiyono (2017) the interpretation of the correlation coefficient results is as follows: 0.00-0.199 = extremely low, 0.20-0.399 = low, 0.40-0.599 = moderate, 0.60-0.799 = strong, and 0.80-1.000 = very strong. In real life, this means that students who are more confident in their ability to learn tend to do better on speaking activities. So, the number shows how tightly linked the two variables are in real life: the greater the coefficient, the stronger the link between how much students believe in themselves and how well they communicate.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

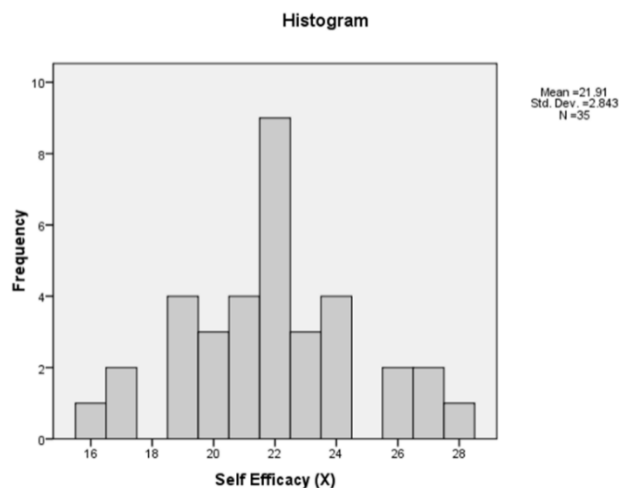
### Data Description

Self-efficacy is the independent variable in this study; the dependent variable, speaking proficiency, is denoted by X and Y. The lowest and highest scores, as well as the mean, standard deviation, and other relevant statistics, were calculated using the provided data description and the histogram as follows.

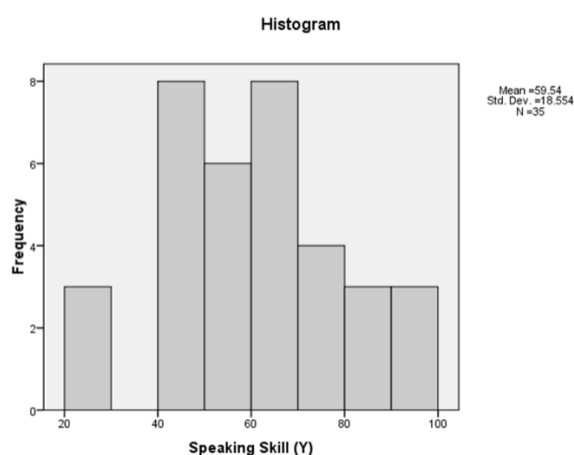
*Table 1. Data Description*

No.	Statistics	Students' self-efficacy	Speaking
1	Mean	21.91	59.54
2	Median	22.00	60.00
4	Std. Deviation	2.84	18.55
5	Variance	8.08	344.25
6	Minimum	16	24
7	Maximum	28	96

Table 1 provides that students' self-efficacy averages 21.91, with a minimum of 16 and a maximum of 28. Speaking average is 59.54, with a minimum of 24 and a high of 96. The statistics for students' self-efficacy and speaking proficiency are provided in the histogram below.



*Figure 1. Students' Self-Efficacy Hostogram Chart*



*Figure 2. Speaking Proficiency Histogram Chart*

### **Prerequisite test**

The hypothesis was tested using a prerequisite test, which ensured unbiased and accountable data. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used for normality, while the Mean-Test was used for linearity. The research's requirement test results are presented.

#### **1) Normality Test**

The normality test is performed to evaluate the normality of the data, which is the process of determining whether the data follows a normal distribution. Data normality is crucial because data that is normally distributed is broadly considered to be representative of the population. The normality test uses the Shapiro-Wilk



method, calculated with SPSS software. The Shapiro-Wilk method is preferred for datasets with fewer than 50 samples (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). The test is conducted for each variable.

*Table 2. Normality Test*

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Self Efficacy (X)	.145	35	.060	.968	35	.403
Speaking Skill (Y)	.104	35	.200*	.975	35	.584

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

The data is considered normally distributed if the Asymp. Sig value exceeds 0.05. Table 2 presents the results of the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, demonstrating that all research variables—self-efficacy and students' speaking proficiency—are normally distributed, with Asymp. Sig (2-tailed) values of 0.403 and 0.584, respectively.

## 2) Linearity Test

This test is employed to assess the existence of a linear relationship between variables. The assessment employs the Mean-Test for Linearity inside SPSS. Two variables exhibit a linear connection if the significance value in the Linearity section is below 0.05. Alternatively, another hypothesis posits that if the significance value for Deviation from Linearity exceeds 0.05, the two variables exhibit a linear relationship.

*Table 3. Linearity Test*

ANOVA Table							
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Speaking Skill (Y) * Self Efficacy (X)	Between Groups	(Combined)	8771.352	10	877.135	7.177	.000
		Linearity	7407.905	1	7407.905	60.610	.000
		Deviation from Linearity	1363.447	9	151.494	1.239	.318
	Within Groups		2933.333	24	122.222		
	Total		11704.686	34			

The table 2 indicates that the relationship between self-efficacy (X) and students' speaking proficiency (Y) is linear, as evidenced by a linearity significance value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05.

## Pearson Correlation Test

The Pearson correlation analysis assesses the connection between two variables, requiring both to be measured on an interval or ratio scale and to exhibit a normal

distribution. The objective is to determine the strength of the link and its significance. The correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) varies between 0 and 1 or 0 and -1. The proximity of the value to 1 or -1 indicates the strength of the relationship. Conversely, a number approaching 0 indicates a weaker relationship. The results are presented in the tables below.

*Table 4. Pearson Correlation Test*

		Self Efficacy (X)	Speaking Skill (Y)
Self Efficacy (X)	Pearson Correlation	1	.796**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	35	35
Speaking Skill (Y)	Pearson Correlation	.796**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	35	35

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Variable X exhibits a positive correlation with Y (coefficient correlation 0.796), as indicated by table 4. The correlation is classified as strong. The significance value (Sig 2 tailed) of 0.000 indicates that there is a significant correlation between X and Y. This is due to the fact that the value of Sig is less than 0.05.

The findings and results of the present study indicate a close positive relationship between learners' self-efficacy and their speaking ability with a calculated Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.796. This is commensurate with Bandura's (1997) in Allagui (2024) postulation which argues that the level of performance outcome people have is largely the function of the extent to which they have a belief in their ability. The present study establishes a relationship between self-efficacy and speaking ability where learners who are more self-effective are found to be better speakers. This is consistent with a prior study by Cavanagh et al. (2019), which shows that self-efficacy positively influences academic achievement, and by Joni & Wirastuti (2018) who concluded that self-efficacy strongly contributes to students' speaking ability. The study highlights self-efficacy as a critical component of language learning success by confirming that a strong conviction in one's speaking ability can result in increased speaking performance.

They also parallel research claiming that speaking proficiency is multicomponential and should not be characterized by language ability alone, but also affective variables (e.g. confidence, motivation, and control of anxiety), were considered in the measurement of CEF provisions (Tiana et al., 2023). As stated by Islam (2023), speaking is commonly constrained by nervousness and a fear of errors. Nevertheless, this study seems to confirm the suggestion that self-efficacy alleviates those negative emotions and thus provides opportunities for students to be active and confident in speaking practice.

The relationship detected in this study also provides support for Krashen's (1982) affective filter hypothesis, that students with higher levels of self-efficacy produce less anxiety and perform more efficiently in language acquisition contexts (Yuan et al., 2024). Finally, the practical implications for the teaching of English, particularly with regard to the development of communicative competence in the classroom, are highlighted. According to Tarvin (2015) and Widodo & Mustofa (2024), the importance of the ability to communicate in English is crucial in academic and professional. Consequently, self-efficacy becomes an essential factor in navigating the emotional and psychological obstacles often linked to speaking English as a foreign language.

The researcher's strong correlation implies that students' speaking ability will significantly improve if they are taught with targeted teaching techniques such as relevant feedback, positive classroom atmospheres and frequent speaking exercises. This research highlights that these teaching methods are key to speaking success because they do not just focus on the linguistic aspect, but also contribute to improving learners' self-belief. As a result, language teaching approaches must give self-efficacy a central role if students are to maximize their speaking ability.

The findings suggest that increasing the students' self-efficacy can lead to improved oral proficiency. In practical terms, this means that teachers can promote it by providing students with frequent opportunities for small speaking successes, such as low-risk presentations or structured pair work. The provision of specific, encouraging feedback boosts students' confidence and can help them identify where they are gifted. As well as demonstrating good speaking habits, teachers can create an encouraging environment in the classroom and diminish any reluctance students have to make mistakes. This is enhanced by student empowerment in setting their own goals and monitoring their own progress. This eventually results in enhanced self-belief and speaking task performance.

## CONCLUSION

Evidence of this published association between self-efficacy and speaking performance (Students) can be seen in the significant positive correlation. High achievers in English speaking were found to have higher self-efficacy scores. This highlights the importance of developing students' self-confidence in their language skills to improve their language proficiency. Practice speaking: learners need feedback and to build their confidence in order to become better learners. Researchers looked at how often practicing and feeling strong affected anxiety and performance when speaking. Teachers need to create an environment that encourages students to participate without being afraid of making mistakes. Creative activities, such as providing positive feedback and setting goals, are recommended. A safe, supportive environment is created to prevent negative judgment. Various teaching methods, such as group discussions and role playing, are used to stimulate speaking opportunities. Consistent, constructive feedback and regular assessments are provided to help students recognize progress and areas for

improvement. Collaborative learning, such as pair or group work, is encouraged to build confidence and speaking skills.

Strengthening learners' self-confidence levels by providing them with opportunities to speak through a range of activity types, constructive comments, and positive reinforcement must be considered as part of pedagogical means. To improve English education, policymakers should integrate speaking-oriented programs and self-efficacy-building in language curricula. Future studies should adopt a longitudinal design, involve multiple educational settings, and utilize larger sample sizes to investigate the long-term effects of self-efficacy on proficiency and other abilities. The study suggests exploring mixed method approaches to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy and speaking proficiency, recommending future studies with a larger, diverse sample of participants from various universities, and examining additional variables like cultural background and personality traits that influence self-efficacy and speaking proficiency.

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