

How to Cite (APA Style):

Wahid, A., Syamsuri, A. S., & Syakur, A. (2022). Repetition markers in junior high school students' essays. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture*, 7 (2), 266-278. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/e.7.2.266-278>

Repetition markers in junior high school students' essays

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Received:
27 January 2022

Revised:
26 June 2022

Accepted:
28 August 2022

Published:
31 August 2022

Abstract

Repetition plays an important role in an essay because it functions to connect one proposition to another in an essay. However, junior high school students as writers are still often found using repetition markers that do not show a clear function as a means of affirmation and their appearance in student essays tend to be boring for readers. This study aims to identify and explore the form of using repetition as a marker of propositional relations in junior high school students' essays. This research uses a qualitative approach and is categorized into the type of discourse analysis research. This study involved 94 eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Balikpapan as research subjects. The data in this study were collected using a technique as proposed by (Sudaryanto, 2015), namely the simak-catat technique and interview technique. The data analysis of this research consisted of three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of this study indicate that there are three types of repetition that are utilized as a means to link one proposition to another in the research subject's essay, namely exactly the same repetition, repetition with shapeshifting, and repetition with a partial disappearance. Among the three categories, exactly the same repetition is dominantly used so that it becomes the hallmark of the research subject's essay. The repetition of elements of the proposition that is repeated is also found in the essay of the research subject, causing boredom or redundancy. The findings of this study have an important contribution for teachers and education practitioners to optimize the literacy culture and students' critical thinking so that they are skilled in using repetition as a marker of propositional relations in written language.

Keywords: *repetition markers; propositions; essays; junior high school students*

INTRODUCTION

Writing essays is one of the important language skills to be mastered by junior high school students. Moreover, currently around 85% of forms of communication are carried out through the use of eclectic media (e.g., text messages, social networking posts, blogs, emails) for daily social interaction,

self-exploration, self-expression, and reflection on current events (Troia, 2014). Writing is a tool that can be used to communicate, share ideas, persuade, record experiences, and entertain others (Freedman et al., 2016). In addition, proficiency in writing can be a bridge for students to enter the world of work and promotions in the workplace (Troia, 2014). Students can also use writing to explore ideas, combat loneliness, and record their experiences (Wahid, 2021). Writing about feelings and experiences, for example, is psychologically and physiologically beneficial (Kellogg, 2008). Therefore, writing as a written language skill is not only a provision for students in the future (in this case to get job opportunities), but also prepares students as agents of change.

Writing is the skill of producing symbols and signs kinesthetically which is needed to provide clear and effective explanations of feelings, attitudes, facts, and thoughts to the recipients of writing (Troia, 2014; Wahid et al., 2020; Wahid & Marni, 2018). Writing is a complex language skill and requires a variety of skills (Candlin & Hyland, 2014; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Gustafson, 2011). It involves language skills, discourse skills, and sociolinguistic skills (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). On the other hand, Raimes (1983, p. 6) explains that there are nine skills needed for an author to make his essay accurate and precise, namely syntax, content, grammar, organization, purpose, audience, and writing process. In writing an essay, every writer needs to organize their writing (Safnil, 2010). In other words, every proposition put forward by the author needs to be linked in order to form a complete and coherent essay. With this wholeness and coherence, the reader will easily understand the message conveyed by the author. Readers can follow the author's propositions or ideas because the sequence of ideas presented is orderly and logical, there are no confusing jumps of ideas from the author (Suyitno, 2012; Wahid et al., 2020).

Repetition is one of the markers of propositional relations that plays an important role in creating texture, as stated by Halliday & Hasan (1976, 1985), and 'enhancing the coherence of the whole text'. A proposition is an idea or idea expressed in the form of a sentence in an essay (Amaliah et al., 2015; Anderson, 1974; Yekovich & Manelis, 1976). Repetition serves to link propositions so that the essay becomes coherent (Briesmaster & Etchegaray, 2017; Das & Taboada, 2017; Ghufon, 2012; Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Hoey, 1991; Karadeniz, 2017). Repetition is related to the repetition of some elements or all of the elements contained in a range of propositions in front of them (Suyitno, 2012). Wijana (2006) explains that "repetition is the use of form repeatedly, either in whole or in part, in a sentence or group of sentences in a paragraph or discourse". In an essay, the repeated elements can usually be in the form of linguistic units such as words, phrases, or propositions/clauses. The repetition of language units is intended to emphasize key words or maintain ideas or topics being discussed in an essay (Rani et al., 2013; Suyitno, 2012). Repetition plays an important role in showing that the element of the sentence proposition that is repeated in an essay is the element that is of importance. Emphasis is given to this repetition so that readers of the essay can pay attention to the topic or idea discussed by the author (Wijana, 2006). However, further Wijana explains

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that repetition if it is not clear or will actually appear as a weakness or inability to vary speech, lack of vocabulary, weak mastery of the author's language (Wijana, 2006). Elements of sentence propositions that are always repeated tend to bore the reader (Rani et al., 2013; Wijana, 2006).

Junior high school students as writers are allowed to use repetition as a marker of propositional relations in their essays. This is 'possibly' done by junior high school students because repetition is the easiest linguistic tool to do in relating one proposition to another (Ghasemi, 2013; Hinkel, 2001; Rani et al., 2013; Wijana, 2006). In addition, junior high school students are language learners who are at the stage of learning to express propositions in writing. Therefore, there is a tendency that the essays produced by students are still similar to their spoken language due to the lack of vocabulary and the weak mastery of students' written language. Even so, the propositions produced by junior high school students on the one hand will show logical propositional relations (coherent) and deviant propositional relations on the other hand. All of this can happen because the realization of written language written by junior high school students is influenced by many factors such as situations, language input, learner characteristics, learning processes, and language production (Ellis, 1994). Thus, it is very important to identify the characteristics of repetition as a marker of relations in the essays of junior high school students.

Repetition as a marker of the relation of sentence propositions in an essay has been widely studied by previous researchers. Setiawan & Taiman (2021) reported that the repeat marker was the most common or dominant form used in the essays by An Nasher Cirebon Health Medical Laboratory students. Guthire (2008) reports that the use of lexical repetition is the most widely used to maintain cohesion in Latino English-Language youth narrative texts. Adeyemi (2017) reports that Nigerian students show weaknesses in the use of conjunctions and repetition devices. Furthermore, Wijana (2006) found that in students' writings or essays it was found that repetition was not at all clear in carrying out its function as a means of emphasis, because it was motivated by the inability of students to vary lingual units. This research and several previous studies have similarities, namely they both examine the relationship of sentence propositions using the repetition marker theory framework by Halliday & Hasan (1976; 1985). Meanwhile, the difference lies in the type of essay used as the unit of data analysis. This study focused on the form of repetition contained in essays written by junior high school students. Thus, the focus of this research are two topics of study that can fill and enrich the repertoire of discourse studies in the context of writing for junior high school students.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative research approach. This study was chosen because this research is relevant to the characteristics of qualitative research, namely having a natural context and the phenomenon being studied through the collection of empirical data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This type of research is categorized as discourse analysis research

because it examines a language unit that is at the text level, above sentences, and in certain types of discourse (Brown & Yule, 1983; Kohlani, 2010). Because this research uses the type of discourse analysis research, this research uses the relevant methodology by borrowing the analytical model, namely repetition markers proposed by Halliday & Hasan (1976, 1985). This analytical model is used to explore, describe, and explain repetition as a marker of propositional relations in junior high school students' essays.

This study involved 94 junior high school students of State 1 Balikpapan who were in parallel classes, namely grades VIII.1, VIII.2. and VIII.3 as research participants. The participants were aged between 13-14 years. Participants in this study were selected using the purposive sampling method on the grounds that they are language learners who are in the developmental stage, or are in the transitional stage from childhood to late adolescence. In addition, participants also have the capacity to think such as the ability to think logically, abstractly, and complexly (Schunk, 2012). Therefore, participants are seen to be able to produce logical, systematic, and complex essays.

The data collection in this study used a *simak-catat* (listen-note) technique and an interview technique (Sudaryanto, 2015). The *simak-catat* technique was used after the essay as a source of research data obtained from the research participants. The essay as a source of research data was obtained by giving the task of writing an essay to the research participants. This was done because the documentation regarding the compositions of class VIII students of SMP Negeri 1 Balikpapan was not available. The assignment in this study was carried out by giving instructions and orders to write essays to research participants. Furthermore, after the research participants' essays were obtained, the essays were retyped in Microsoft word form. This is done so that research data is easier to analyze quickly. After that, data collection was carried out using the listen method by reading the data sources in passing without coding, reading the essays repeatedly and providing codes according to the research focus, and categorizing and transferring data into the data collection matrix. The coding activity was carried out by giving a code to the analyzed data. The code used consists of four parts: the first, second, and third parts are the identity of the essay which refers to the name of the student's initial letter, class, and paragraph. The next section is the identity of the analyzed data (Example: AW/8.1/P.1/PR). The data code is defined as follows: AW is Abdul Wahid, 8.1 is class, P.1 is paragraph 1, and PRR is repetition marker.

Data analysis in this study used the model of Miles et al. (2014), which consists of four flow activities, three of which are used in the data analysis process of this research, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. First, data reduction, at this stage the data is read intensively to sort, select, categorize, and focus on important parts related to the main focus of the research. Second, data presentation is the compilation of a set of information that gives the possibility of drawing conclusions and drawing actions. The presentation of the data in this research is technically in the form of narrative text and tables. The form of presentation is done to find out the data collected is appropriate and sufficient, or still needs to re-analyze the data. Third, conclusions are made by discussing the findings of the data

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with existing theories. The conclusion is drawn continuously, if new findings related to repetition have not been obtained by the researcher.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

From the analysis of the data on the essay of the research subject, it is known that there is repetition as a sign of the relationship between propositions. There are three types of repetition that are used to mark the relationship between propositions in the research subject's essay. The three types of repetition are exact repetition, repetition with a change of shape, and partial repetition. The results of the classification of repetition data in the essays of research subjects are presented in the following table.

Tabel 1. Repetition markers in junior high school students' essays

Number of data	Repetition Markers	The form of repetition markers used	Frequency
94 essays written by the eight-grader students at SMP Negeri 1 Balikpapan	Exactly the same repetition	The repetition of words in the noun category	267
	Repetition with shapeshifting	Repetition by changing word form from adjective to verb	105
		Repetition with changes in word form due to acronyms	85
	Repetition with partial obliteration	Repetition with the omission of some elements of the proposition	78

Exactly the same repetition

Exact repetition occurs if the elements of the previous proposition are the same as the elements of the next proposition. In other words, the same exact repetition is repetition that is carried out using lingual units (sentence proposition elements) which morphologically or syntactically have the same form. Such repetition can be seen in the following data.

- (01)(a) After entering the gate, students must turn left to go to **the library**.
(b) **The library** is to the right of the biology laboratory. (c) In front of **the library** there is a reading cafe, shoe rack and trash can which is divided into three, namely organic, inorganic and B3 (ANA/8.1/P.1/PRPU)
- (02)(a) SMPN 1 Balikpapan has many facilities. (b) One of them is **Green House**. (c) **Green House** is a place to plant flowers and various plants. (d) The location of the **green house** is in front of the biology laboratory next to the reading cafe and near the library (A/8.3/P.1/PRPU)

In data 01 above, it shows that there is an exact repetition. The repeated form of place names, namely **the library**. This place is repeated completely in every proposition. In proposition (a) it is stated that students after entering the

gate (SMP Negeri 1 Balikpapan) must turn left to go to the library. In proposition (b) **the library** is repeated. It was stated that the location of the library was to the right of the biology laboratory. Furthermore, in proposition (c) **the library** is repeated. It was stated that at the front of the library there was a reading cafe, shoe rack, and a trash can. The repetition of **the library** on the three propositions in data (01) can serve to emphasize that place. In addition, it becomes a marker that marks the relationship between propositions in the essay of the research subject.

In data 02 above, there is also an exact repetition. An element that is repeated equally precisely is the name of the **Green House** place. In proposition (a) it is stated that there are many facilities at SMPN 1 Balikpapan, and in proposition (b) it is stated that one of the many facilities is a **Green House**. In proposition (c) the name of the **Green House** place is repeated. There the name of this place is explained as a place to grow flowers and various types of plants. Furthermore, in proposition (d) the **green house** is repeated again. It describes the location of the green house. The repetition of place names in data (02) is the same as what happened in data (01), namely to emphasize place names as well as to act as markers of relations between propositions so as to form unity and cohesion in the essay of research subjects.

Repetition with shapeshifting

Repetition with a change in form is related to repetition which is marked by a change in form in the element of the repeated sentence proposition. The change in form is caused by grammatical linkages, for example, elements that are repeated are in the form of verbs and elements whose repetition must be in the form of nouns. In other words, repetition with changes in form occurs when the repeated linguistic units undergo form modification, both morphologically and syntactically. This kind of repetition in the research subject's essay can be seen in the following data.

(03)(a) The UKS SMPN 1 is spacious and **clean**. (b) Every day the KKR children **clean up** and tidy up the UKS room so that the UKS stays **clean** and tidy (NMK/8.3/P.2-3/PRPU)

(04)**The library** is located on the west side of the entrance to the front gate of SMPN 1 Balikpapan. (b) On the right side of *perpus* there is a biology lab room and above **the library** there is a Lab. The computer that is usually used as a UNBK room (ZDNA/8.1/P.2/PRR.PB)

Data 03 above shows that there is repetition with changes in shape. In proposition (a) there is the use of the word clean which belongs to the adjective class. This word is repeated in proposition (b) by changing the form to clear which belongs to the form of verbs. So here there is a change in the form of the word from an adjective to a verb. The repetition is a sign that the two propositions in the data (3.50) have a relationship.

Data 04 above also shows repetition with changes in word form. In proposition (a) there is the use of the word **the library** which belongs to the noun class. This word is repeated in proposition (b) with a change in form due to the acronym of the research subject so that it reads, **library**. So here there

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is a change in the form of the word from a noun to an acronymized noun. With this repetition, it shows that propositions (a) and propositions (b) in data (4) above are related to each other so as to form a unified topic in the essay of the research subject.

Repetition with partial obliteration

Repetition with partial deletion occurs when the repeated linguistic units experience the loss of some form, both morphologically and syntactically. In the research subject's essay, such repetition can be seen in the following data.

- (05)(a) **SMPN 1 Balikpapan** is one of the favorite schools in Balikpapan. (b) Apart from being famous for its outstanding students, **SMP 1** (~~Balikpapan~~) also has adequate and complete facilities. (c) One of the facilities provided by **SMP 1** (~~Balikpapan~~) is the school field (ATH/8.1/P.1/PRPU).
- (06)(a) **The laboratory of biology SMPN 1 Balikpapan** is located next to the school, next to the library. (b) **The laboratory** (~~of biology SMPN 1 Balikpapan~~) is also located close to the gate (MR/8.2/P.1/PRR.PS)

In data 05 above, there are repetitions with partial disappearance. The element that is repeated is the name of the place, namely **SMPN 1 Balikpapan**. In proposition (a) it is stated that SMPN 1 Balikpapan is one of the favorite schools in the city of Balikpapan, and in proposition (b) it is stated that **SMP 1** in addition to having outstanding students also has adequate and complete facilities. In proposition (b) the name of the place, namely **SMPN 1** is repeated by the research subject. However, the name of the place is not repeated in its entirety. The research subject omitted some words from the name of the place. The word that is partially deleted is Balikpapan which occupies the function as the subject argument in the proposition. So, here there is dissipation as an element of the argument of the subject of the proposition and becomes a sign that the propositions (a), (b), and (c) in the data above are related to each other so as to form cohesiveness in the essay.

In data 06 above, there are repetitions with partial disappearance. The element that is repeated is the name of the place, namely the **Laboratory of Biology SMPN 1 Balikpapan**. In proposition (a) it is stated that the laboratory of biology SMPN 1 Balikpapan is next to the library, and in proposition (b) it is stated that the laboratory is also close to the gate. In proposition (b) it is the name of the place, i.e. the Laboratory is repeated by the research subject. However, it is not fully reproduced. The research subject omitted some words from the name of the place. The word that is partially deleted is the biology of SMPN 1 Balikpapan which functions as the subject argument of the proposition. So here there is a dissipation as an element of the argument of the subject of the proposition and becomes a sign that the proposition (a) and proposition (b) in data 06 above are related to each other so as to form cohesiveness in the essay of the research subject.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that repetition is used by research subjects as a propositional marker in their essays. There are three types of repetition

used, namely exact repetition, shape change repetition, and partial repetition. The results of this study are different from the findings of previous studies regarding the type of repetition used in students' essays (Ghasemi, 2013; Ghufron, 2012; Guthire, 2008; Halliday & Hasan, 1976, 1985; Llach & Catalan, 2007; Stokes et al., 2004). The repeater is one of the dominant propositional relation markers that appear in the research subject's essay. This dominance occurs because the repetition relation marker is the easiest way used by research subjects in relating one proposition to another. In other words, research subjects tend to choose to use repetition as a strategy to convince readers that the topic they are talking about is still well controlled (Kadiri et al., 2016). That is, the development of the topic of the essay is still there and remains focused on the same central idea.

Of the three types of repetition used by research subjects, exact repetition is the dominant type of repetition used by research subjects than repetition with changes in shape and repetition with the omission of several forms. This shows that the same exact repetition is a characteristic of research subjects in linking between propositions in their essays. This finding is slightly different from the research of Keenan, who concluded that the repetition cohesion device is one of the most dominant tools used by children at the age of 2.9 years (Keenan, 1983). In addition, according to Keenan (1983), repetition is a characteristic of children's conversational discourse. On the other hand, recently Mora et al. (2021), claimed that repetition in adolescent writing decreased across grade levels, while pronouns and demonstratives appeared more frequently in narrative writing than in argumentative texts. The dominance of repetition use does not seem to end in childhood, but continues in early adolescence. This is possible because early adolescence is in the transition period from childhood to late adolescence (adulthood). The research subject in this context is in the category of early adolescence. Because of that, repetition relation markers (especially exact repetition) are still dominantly used by research subjects as a means to link between propositions in their essays.

Repetition plays an important role in an essay. Repetition is one way to build or maintain a cohesive relationship between propositions between sentences. The relationship is built by repeating as a sentence proposition (words, phrases, clauses/propositions). Repetition means defending the idea or topic being discussed. By repeating means the topic in a range of first propositions with the propositions that follow are interrelated. However, if there is no emphasis on repetition, it will appear as a weakness or inability to vary speech, lack of vocabulary, and weak mastery of the author's language (Liu & Qi, 2010; Wijana, 2006). The part (element) of a sentence proposition that is always repeated will cause boredom for the reader. This kind of repetition is often found in the essays of research subjects. This is as shown in the following data.

One of the facilities provided by SMP Negeri 1 Balikpapan is a **library**. The **library** in the west of the school has complete facilities. The **library** is next door to the biology lab and toilets. In front of the **library** there is a reading cafe. Behind the **library** there is a UNBK room (GNA/8.1/P.1/PRPU).

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The data above shows that repetition is the most preferred relationship marker by research subjects to relate one proposition to another. Research subjects use **library** repetition in each range of sentence propositions because with such repetition they can be sure that the propositions conveyed, the meaning is exactly what they intended to be communicated. In addition, **library** repetition was carried out because the research subjects did not have sufficient vocabulary to restate the topic using other words. This can be proven based on interviews conducted with research participants. The interview data are presented below.

I don't have any other vocabulary, sir, besides the word library (GNA/8.1/P.1/WCR).

The results of the interview above show that they do not have other vocabulary to replace the word library. In fact, research participants can replace the word library with other words such as reading center and *bibliotek*. As a result, the essays presented by research participants became less interesting, less stylish, and boring.

Repetition tends to be used as a marker of relations between propositions because it is easier to process in the mental dictionary of research subjects. In other words, the dominance of the use of repetition is inseparable from the mental processing aspects of the research subjects in written language. Writing is a challenging skill for research subjects. In compiling propositions into written form, adolescents are usually still difficult to quickly access lexicon knowledge that has been stored in their long-term memory (Gustafson, 2011). Because of the limitations in accessing the lexicon, it seems that this is the trigger for the research subjects to choose the exact same language element over and over again instead of presenting other language elements. It is also as stated by McNamara et al. (2010) that linguistic and cognitive barriers affect the writing process for most adolescents who are at the stage of writing development.

Besides being influenced by mental processing factors, the use of redundant repetition can also arise due to learning input factors. Like other propositional relation markers (replacement, and omission), the distribution of teaching materials related to repetition relation markers is also limited in the textbooks of class VIII students. Repetition or repetition is found in student textbooks. However, the rules governing the use of repetition relation markers in student textbooks are not broadly described. In the student's textbook, there is no form of instruction that shows the role of repetition relation markers between two or more sentence propositions in written discourse. Therefore, there is a tendency for teaching and repetition training not to be obtained in learning by research subjects. This can be strengthened from interviews conducted with language teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Balikpapan. The data from the interviews are presented below.

In my lessons, sir, I rarely give detailed explanations regarding the use of repetition as a liaison between sentences, because the 2013 curriculum emphasizes the structure of the text, sir, rather than writing a text, sir (GR/8.2/WCR)

The results of the interview above show that the teacher did not provide detailed material related to the use of repetition in the process of learning writing skills. This happens because the composition of learning materials in the 2013 curriculum emphasizes the structural aspects of the test rather than writing training to students. As a result, students do not understand well the use of repetition in writing essays.

CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the propositions raised in the research subject's essays are tied through repetition relation markers. There are three forms of repetition used by the research subjects, namely the same exact repetition, repetition of changes in shape, and repetition with partial elimination. The use of dominant repetition relation markers appears as a marker of relations between propositions so as to form unity and cohesion in the essay of the research subject. Even so, the repetition relation markers in the research subject's essays were also found to be used repeatedly, causing redundancy. This is presumably due to the limitation of research subjects to access the lexicon quickly in their working memory when communicating in writing. In addition, the teaching input of repetition relational markers is limited in the learning process in classrooms so that the schemata regarding the rules governing the use of repetition relational markers in written communication have not been obtained by the research subjects. Thus, repetition as a marker of relations between propositions in the essay of research subjects on the one hand shows aspects of cohesiveness and coherence, and on the other hand shows the form of using excessive repetition of relational markers. In this regard, knowledge of the cohesive aspect needs to be emphasized in learning to write in junior high school. Students need to receive adequate training related to the use of cohesive devices so that the problem of tedious repetition in junior high school students' essays can be avoided in various ways as proposed by Wijana (2006), for example using the tools of erasing, substitution, synonymy, hyponymy, collocation, and paraphrasing.

AUTHOR STATEMENT

Abdul Wahid: Designing and drafting research articles, compiling research instruments, and analyzing research data. **Andi Sukri Syamsuri:** Collecting research data: Sorting and classifying data according to the research problem formulation. **Abdan Syakur:** Editing research drafts and collecting references relevant to research articles.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writing of this research article involves many parties. For this reason, the authors would like to thank the leadership of Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar and Universitas Negeri Alauddin Makassar for the assistance provided both morally and materially. The authors also thank the principals, teachers, and students of SMP N 1 Balikpapan for their contributions to the process of collecting research data.

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How to Cite (APA Style):

Wahid, A., Syamsuri, A. S., & Syakur, A. (2022). Repetition markers in junior high school students' essays. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture*, 7 (2), 266-278. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/e.7.2.266-278>

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Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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