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## DEBTOR COMMUNICATIVE STRATEGIES ANALYSIS IN “CONFESSION OF A SHOPAHOLIC” BY S. KINSELLA

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*The anthropocentric nature of modern linguistics has led to the need to study not only the regularities of human communication but also the ways of their use in various communicative situations.*

*The main communicative strategies and the specifics of the DEBTOR's language means were characterized in this article. The article discusses the effectiveness of the chosen tactics in the communication process. The paper readdresses the phenomenon of a communicative strategy and tackles the ways the chosen strategies control the communicative process aimed at achieving communicative goals and the selection of speech techniques that allow achieving the set goals in a specific situation. Special attention is paid to the analysis of behavioral activities and verbal means used by a DEBTOR in Sophie Kinsella's novel "Confessions of a Shopaholic".*

*The paper argues that DEBTOR's communicative strategies depend on the specific situation and psychological characteristics of the addressee.*

*The material of the study is presented in the form of the types of speech strategies in the framework of the communication process in Sophie Kinsella's novel "Confessions of a Shopaholic". The objects of analysis are communicative strategies as a set of speech actions.*

*The relevance of the study is determined by the need to establish an inventory of communicative strategies for successful communication as the main component of the debtor, the importance of identifying the most productive strategy, and the formation of positive behavior during communication.*

*The article highlights the following strategies that are productive in DEBTOR'S speech: Termination, Topic Control, Topic Shifting, and Repair Strategy. Such strategies as Nomination, Restriction, and Turn Taking belong to the least productive ones.*

*The result of the study is the matrix of 7 types of communicative strategies from the most frequent to the least used in DEBTOR's speech.*

*From the perspective of research, there may be the establishment of communicative strategies in political discourse, politicians' speeches, and thematic webinars to discuss various aspects of the problem.*

**Keywords:** communicative strategy, debtor, nomination, restriction, turn-talking, topic control, shifting, repair, termination.

### ***Шабельник К.О., Бобер Н.М. Комунікативні стратегії боржника у романі Софі Кінселли “Зізнання шопоголіка”***

*Антропоцентризм сучасної лінгвістики зумовив необхідність вивчення не лише закономірностей людського спілкування, а й способів їх використання в різних комунікативних ситуаціях.*

*У статті схарактеризовано основні комунікативні стратегії й специфіку мовних засобів БОРЖНИКА та досліджено ефективність обраних тактик у процесі спілкування. Крім того, у дослідженні висвітлюється феномен комунікативної стратегії та розглядаються способи управління обраними стратегіями комунікативним процесом, спрямованих на досягнення комунікативних цілей, а також вибір мовленнєвих прийомів, які дозволяють досягти поставлених цілей у конкретній ситуації. Особливу увагу приділено аналізу біхевіоріальних дій і вербальних засобів, які використовує БОРЖНИК у романі Софі Кінселли «Зізнання шопоголіка».*

*Проаналізований матеріал дозволяє твердити про те, що комунікативні стратегії БОРЖНИКА залежать від конкретної ситуації та психологічних особливостей адресата.*

*Матеріал дослідження представлено у вигляді типів мовленнєвих стратегій у рамках комунікаційного процесу в романі Софі Кінселли «Зізнання шопоголіка».*

*Об'єктом аналізу є комунікативні стратегії як сукупність мовленнєвих дій.*

*Актуальність дослідження зумовлена необхідністю встановлення інвентарю комунікативних стратегій для успішного спілкування як основного компонента боржника, важливості визначення найбільш продуктивної стратегії, формуванні позитивної поведінки під час спілкування.*

*У статті висвітлюються такі продуктивні стратегії в мовленні БОРЖНИКА: Припинення розмови, Тематичний контроль, Зміна теми та Налагодження комунікації. До найменш продуктивних відносяться такі стратегії як: Номінація, Обмеження, Чергування.*

*Результатом дослідження є матриця 7 типів комунікативних стратегій від найбільш до найменш вживаних у мовленні БОРЖНИКА.*

*Перспективою подальших досліджень вбачаємо у застосуванні комунікативних стратегій у політичному дискурсі, виступах політиків і тематичних вебінарах для обговорення різних аспектів проблеми.*

**Ключові слова:** комунікативна стратегія, боржник, номінація, обмеження, чергування, тематичний контроль, зміна теми, налагодження комунікації, припинення розмови.

## **Introduction**

Modern linguistics focuses on a number of issues while the phenomenon of "communicative strategy" appears to be one of its key concepts. The

communicative function of a language system is recognized as basically the primary one. The use of language for the communicative purposes is considered to be a form of human activity. The organization of interpersonal communication among people combined with common activities is expected to be structured and logically determined. In relation to this emphasis, the study shifts systems from language as multiple elements to a communicative product with a high degree of success in communicative interaction.

Considering the fact that present-time people have become extremely interested in the notions of communication and in the steps to make it successful, such researchers as Littlemore, J. (2003), Poseidon, N. (2018), Cook, M., Lally, C., McCarthy, M., & Mischler, K. (2007). have investigated the topic and conducted lots of researches.

At the same time, the buyer-seller relationship has grown. Many customers are eager to buy everything and do not control their desires. A new era of debtors has appeared. The last do everything possible to achieve the purchase and use some communication strategies as a powerful tool to do it.

Even though there are a lot of linguists who are interested in communicative strategies, a few complex articles on debtors' communicative strategies were found. It causes the importance of our study.

The paper **aims** to determine the most common communicative approaches in debtor behavior based on S. Kinsella's novels by analyzing the replicas in the communicative context and trying to single out those that are used as a tool for achieving a goal.

## **Theoretical background**

### **1.1. Pragmalinguistic description of communicative strategies**

Scientists call communicative strategy a way of organizing speech behavior following the idea and intention of the communicator. They agree that a communicative strategy is determined by a set of speech actions to achieve a communicative goal.

It should be noted that a communicative strategy is an important part of reporting an idea and conveying a message between interlocutors. They provide sketches to be confident while having a conversation with friends, family, the public, contributors, or colleagues.

For successful communication, an effective strategy is an imperative. Apart from that, communication strategies are prevalent while conducting the message in

different forms whether it is verbal, non-verbal, visual, written, or feedback communication. All people have some sort of methods to portray their core message to the community in both: everyday life and something more formal like business or politics. Without having a strategy that effectively reaches the predetermined target audiences, there is no way that the individuals or organizations will reach many people.

If the person is going to spend time to figure out their key messages it would be best to develop a strong communication strategy. Furthermore, this would guarantee the time was not wasted and the message will reach the public sector in the easiest way. (Cook, Lally, McCarthy & Mischler, 2007).

According to Jeannete Littlemotre (2003) communication strategies are the steps taken by people in order to enhance the effectiveness of their communication. They are defined as "potentially conscious plans" which are used by an individual to solve a problem in order to reach a specific communication goal. It is believed that communication strategies play an important role in the development of strategic competence; therefore, one can define communication strategies within strategic competence framework.

Strategic competence is "verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence. (Maleki, 2010).

As M. Oliyari, I. Danylyuk, A. Zagnitko, L. Zubenko argue, significance and effectiveness of communication in human life and are dictated by some key aspects. In order to have successful communication it is essential to:

- Outline objectives and define key message to ensure that recipients and conversation partners feel consulted and have ownership of the strategy.
- Broadcast the message to make the means of communication successful.
- Arouse interest to hold recipient's attention.
- Find vehicles for communicating information for a specific purpose.
- Specify the mechanisms that will be used to obtain feedback on the strategy.
- Capture feedback to get the result of conversation. (Petsy, Gherges, Cuciu & David, 2012).

That is why speakers should remember, communication strategies do not have to be formal written documents. They simply, require some time to analyze communication issues and single out the best approach to communicate some information. Such an approach is especially true for stress taking situations to be

confident in them and clean up or avoid all possible problems. However, a formal written strategy will be useful for companies or other groups needed to ensure that all recipients are reached and all key messages are communicated effectively.

## 1.2. Linguistic features of communicative strategies

Distinct classifications of communicative strategies are followed for manipulating the semantic code of the message and the form of its expression in different communicative spheres and situations.

Since the communication strategy is believed to be a key factor in successful communication, this phenomenon has been given considerable attention in all kinds of research.

We consider it is significant to highlight and analyze the classification “7 Types of Communicative Strategies” that was offered by Poseidon Nip (2018). Since communicative strategies are normally enacted at the text / discourse level, we have identified the following strategies in the above mentioned text. We analyze units from a customer corpus comprising discourse construals of Becky Bloomwood from (Kinsella, 2003).

**The first one is Nomination.** Using this strategy an interlocutor presents a particular topic clearly, truthfully, and says only what is relevant when introducing a topic at the beginning of a Communicative Situation. It is a strategy that can also be used any time during the course of an interaction as a way of continuing the communication. When this strategy is used, the topic is introduced in a clear and truthful manner, stating only what is relevant to keep the interaction focused.

Vivid examples of the description of the Nomination Strategy are:

*Have you noticed the weird weather lately? Is this because of global warming?*

*I was late for class again! The MRT stopped midway. What is wrong with the MRT?*

**One more popular strategy is Restriction.** It constrains the response or reaction within a set of categories. A strategy that constrains or restricts the response of the other person involved in the communication Situation.

The listener is forced to respond only within a set of categories that is made by the speaker.

Vivid example of the description of the Restriction Strategy is:

*They say that the Philippine economy is getting better. Only the stupid thinks that, right? (No one wants to be stupid.)*

People use strategies of turn-taking when they have an intention to speak because it is one's turn.

**Turn-taking Communicative Strategy** requires that each speaker utters only when it is their turn during interaction. Knowing when to talk depends on watching out for the verbal and nonverbal signals the next speaker that the previous one has finished or the topic under discussion has been exhausted and a new topic may be introduced. At the same time, it also means that others should be given the opportunity to take turn. Turn-taking Communicative Strategy uses either an informal approach (just jump in and start talking) or a formal approach (permission to speak is requested).

Vivid examples of the description of the Turn-taking Strategy is:

*I agree with the point just made. But may I add that OFWs would rather be home and work here so they could be with their families.*

As for **Topic Control** strategy, it keeps the interaction going by asking questions and eliciting a response. This is simply a question-answer formula that moves the discussion forward. This also allows the Listener or other participants to take turns, contribute ideas, and continue the discussion.

Vivid example of the description of the Topic Control Strategy is:

*How do you often ride the MRT, Tony?*

**Topic Shifting** strategy is used while introducing a new topic followed by the continuation of that topic. is the strategy that is useful in introducing another topic. This strategy works best when there is follow-through so that new topic continues to be discussed. This is also used in Repair Communicative Strategy.

Vivid examples of the description of the Topic shifting Strategy are:

*This is a battle with corporations that continue to pollute the environment.*

*But this is also a battle with man himself, who continues to act as if there is another Earth we can move to once this Earth dies.*

We have already learned that communication can be easily broke down. Thus, the

**Repair Strategy** is in need. It helps to overcome communication breakdown to send more comprehensible messages. Repair Communicative Strategy that includes requesting clarification, not acknowledging, topic shifting, not responding, repeating, recasting and adding. One requests clarification by asking questions or using eyebrows , eyes, head or shoulders to show that the Message could not be understood. By not acknowledging the new situation, the situation already in progress will continue.

Vivid example of the description of the Repair Strategy is:

*Were you uh you were in the room when it happened?*

*Yeah.*

Lastly, there is **Termination** that is using verbal and nonverbal signals to end the interaction. Lastly, Termination Communicative Strategy ends the interaction through verbal and nonverbal Messages that both Speaker and Listener send to each other. Sometimes the Termination is quick and short. Sometimes it is prolonged by clarification, further questions, or the continuation of the topic already discussed, but the point of the language and body movement.

Vivid example of the description of the Termination Strategy is:

*See you in class.*

*See you later.*

### **1.3. Modes of communicative behavior of the debtor**

Disclosing debtor personality, it is necessary single out the fact that we analyze people's behavior with addiction.

Addiction is defined as a process when a person does not have control over something.

In our study we deal with addiction to shopping since a debtor cannot control their costs and desire to overspend money on useful purchases. (Dill & Holton, 2014).

We consider that the debtor groups are those of the high interest in respect of communication strategies. They are highly motivated to reach their goals, i.e. make a purchase or pay a debt.

One of the first studies that gives a closer look to debtors' behavior was performed by Livingstone & Lunt (1991). According to them, there are a lot of factors that influence debtors' behavior such as demographic information, economic context, and psychological factors. Attitudinal factors towards money psychological factors for instance coping strategies and consumer pleasure were found to be important predictors of debt repayment.

Shopaholics have a fundamental motivation to evaluate their opinions and abilities by comparing themselves to similar others. If a discrepancy is detected, individuals experience social pressure towards uniformity, and action will be taken to reduce the discrepancy. Social comparison has been implemented as a mechanism to influence behavior in a wide range of different contexts, such as medical decision-making and financial decisions. Another factor that has been found to have an influence on decision-making behavior is timing. Depending on

whether a person is faced with the decision situation in the morning or in the evening, the final choice can be different.

Usually, debtors quickly react to messages. Those who are in a better position try to pay as fast as possible, they just do not have the schedule to repay everything in time. But those who are in a more difficult situation try to find excuses or even ignore the debt collection agency.

Reactions include any payment page visit, taking an installment plan or making a promise to pay, any inbound communication, or any direct payment to trigger reactions. (Ghaffari, Kaniewicz & Stricker, 2021).

## **2. Results and discussion**

### **2.1. Nomination communication strategy matrix.**

The strategy of nomination emerged to be one of the rarest. The main character of the book doesn't tend to deliver the messages clearly and according to the topic. She doesn't always tell the truth and prefers to have rather emotional short conversations devoted to the variable topics than present her thoughts clearly.

Five examples of this communicative strategy were presented:

- (1) *"Everyone's a sucker for a sale. Even rich people." – I say. .*
- (2) *You're getting the one I liked best!" .*
- (3) *"Oh no." I pull what I think is a very convincing face. "I hate flashy places. Much better to have a nice quiet pizza together." .*
- (4) *"Quite an unpleasant fellow, I would say. He was really quite aggressive toward me." .*
- (5) *I have to admit, I feel quite flattered that Zelda's come down to get me her-self. I mean, she obviously doesn't come down for everyone. .*

Replicas above are considered to be examples of nomination since everything is told according to the topic, very clearly and even sincerely. The character does not set the purpose of the conversation. But everything that is said is relevant and helps to continue the topic. Also, interlocutors signal that the topic is interesting. As a result, the majority try to proceed with it.

### **2.2. Restriction communication strategy matrix.**

Restriction strategy is rather rare in the novel. It is used when there is a need to conduct the message quickly during a short period of time.

Five examples of restriction communicative strategy were found.

- (1) *"Becky Bloomwood, Successful Saving , " I say. .*



(2) *“Who knows?”* .

(3) *Don't say “nothing.” Never say “nothing.”* .

(4) *Hang on. It's not some polite way of saying he thinks I'm stupid, is it? Or a liar?* .

(5) *Hair and makeup! This is so cool!* .

Replicas above are considered to be a response or reaction within a defined set of categories. They are aimed to stop the flow of discussion in the case when a topic is uncomfortable or the interlocuter has no intention to speak a lot and develop the topic. The last consider the topic to be too obvious to speak about it or vice versa and has nothing to say in response but does not want to keep silent.

### **2.3. Turn-Taking communication strategy matrix.**

The strategy of turn-taking is also used in the text . It is considered to be not a debtor's trait but one that belongs to a well-behaved person. She is trying to support the conversation and not be rude.

Six examples of turn taking communicative strategy were found:

(1) *“That's it,” says Elly, and sinks into the chair beside me.* .

(2) *“Rebecca,” she says coolly, grasping my hand. “You're on Successful Saving, aren't you?”*

*“That's right,” I say, equally coolly.*

(3) *“I know they did,” I reply haughtily. “I read it in the FT.” And before he can say anything else, I walk off, to talk to Elly.*

(4) *“Luggage,” I explain.*

(5) *“Ahm . . .” I say, glancing hurriedly at the menu. “I think I'll just have . . . erm . . . fish cakes. And rocket salad“.*

(6) *“Oh,” I say, a little taken aback. I mean, not that I'm against drinking, obviously—but it isn't even five o'clock yet. “Well – OK then”.*

All characters in the text are representatives of modern society where politeness is a key moment of communication. That is why it is not a problem for them to speak according to their turn and not interrupt others. Due to this strategy interlocutors have the ability to speak equally and conduct the idea completely.

As for the debtor, she is an accomplished person and she respects others. Still, the strategy is not always followed by her, since she is very emotional and sometimes interrupts others.

#### **2.4. Topic Control communication strategy matrix.**

In the following sentences, examples of Topic-Control communication strategies are presented. The debtor asks a lot of questions in order to lead the conversation and avoid all awkward moments.

Seventeen examples of topic-control strategy were presented.

- (1) *“So how come you’re so smart?”*
- (2) *“Have you got an interview? ”*
- (3) *“And what sector would that be? The Crap Investments Sector? The Lose All Your Money Sector? ”*
- (4) *“Why not try the travel section for a walking book? ”*
- (5) *“Elly! Have you got an interview? Tell me!”*
- (6) *“ So, Clare,” I say, as she puts the phone down, “how was your weekend?”*
- (7) *“So—what’re you after?”*
- (8) *“ What exactly—” I lick my dry lips. “What exactly did he say?”*
- (9) *“And...andwhatdidesay?”*
- (10) *“So,” I say cautiously, and both their heads jerk up. “You’re both well, are you?”*
- (11) *“Well, anyway,” I say, trying to get off the subject of my stalker. “How are you?”*
- (12) *“Mum, stop it!” I cry. “I don’t want them, OK?”*
- (13) *“What about my article?” I wail piteously. “Did you like that?”*
- (14) *“Yes,” I say smugly. “It looks good, doesn’t it? Have you seen my byline? ‘By Rebecca Bloomwood. ”*
- (15) *“Oh, right,” I say, and pause. “But they’re not your client, are they?”*
- (16) *“So,” I say cautiously, and both their heads jerk up. “You’re both well, are you?”*
- (17) *“What exactly—” I lick my dry lips. “What exactly did he say?”*

This communicative strategy is used to steer the conversation in the needed flow. It is extremely useful for debtors since helps them to control their talk and feel confident while speaking. Apart from that using this communicative strategy benefits debtors to avoid the trap.

#### **2.5. Topic Shifting communication strategy matrix.**

The next replicas are examples of topic-shifting communicative strategy. The debtor avoids direct answers and tries to change the topic. Thus, they build a

platform for choosing the topic and get the opportunity to have more time in order to come up with the answers.

Thirteen examples were presented:

- (1) *“So how come you’re so smart?”*
- (2) *“I always look smart,” she parries. “You know that.”*
- (3) *“What’s going on?” says Fenella, appearing at the door. “Nothing!” I hear myself say. “We’re going out for a titchy and then on to sups.”*
- (4) *“Well,” I say, trying to give a nonchalant smile. “You know. **I’m quite busy** with my job and everything.”*
- (5) *“Yes, actually **we’ve been quite busy** lately,” I say coolly.*
- (6) *“Well,” I say, playing for time. “It depends. They all look great.”*
- (7) *“To be honest,” I say, “this isn’t really my field.”*
- (8) *“Not me!” I say. “I’d far rather be . . . out on the moors, riding along. With a couple of dogs running behind.”*
- (9) *“My Denny and George scarf!” I cut in brightly, before he can say anything else. “Yes, that’s lovely, isn’t it? It was my aunt’s, but she died. It was really sad, actually.”*
- (10) *“The photo’s good, don’t you think?”*
- (11) *“Sure,” I say, trying not to sound too thrilled. “In fact . . . I’d probably prefer it to finance.”*
- (12) *“I don’t know what you mean,” I say, playing for time.*
- (13) *“Oh,” I say, starting slightly. “Yes, everything’s great. Lovely! Oh, and guess what? I just bought the most wonderful.”*

The utterances above are meant to shift the topic. The shift is conditioned by the speaker’s willingness to continue with the general topic. The shifter does it to be able to protect her point of view and tell her own truth.

## **2.6. Repair Strategy communication strategy matrix.**

Apart from that, samples of repair strategies were found. The debtor does not need to be in uncomfortable situations since during them all secrets remain to be opened. Moreover, the character has a bright soul and wants to spend time in a pleasant atmosphere. That’s why she has both intrinsic and extrinsic kinds of motivations to break the ice.

Seven examples were presented:

- (1) *“That’s me!” I say brightly, and give a little laugh. .*
- (2) *“Tom, what’s going on?” I say, and give a little laugh. .*

- (3) *And how do you acquire all this knowledge? .*  
(4) *“Oh, we just pick it up along the way,” I say smoothly. .*  
(5) *“I’m fine, really,” I say, softening. “I just want to stay here for a while. Get away from it all.” .*  
(6) *“Oh, right,” I say, brightening. “That might do.” .*  
(7) *“You mean—after what you said on Morning Coffee? .*

The character uses this strategy in order to avoid communication breakdown and save the pleasant atmosphere in which nobody wants to break it. As a result, no unneeded questions are asked.

### **2.7. Termination communication strategy matrix.**

Examples of termination communicative strategy appeared to be very common in the text. Debtors keep their heads busy due to the fact that they are not well-organized people. That is why they tend to end their speech quickly with help of verbal and non-verbal signs. Both examples were singled out during research.

Twenty examples were presented:

- (1) *I give a huge sob and put my plate on the floor. .*  
(2) *“That sounds great,” I say. .*  
(3) *“Thanks, Suze,” I say in a suddenly thickened voice – and as I give her a big hug. .*  
(4) *“Well, never mind,” she says dramatically. .*  
(5) *“Of course not,” I say, and roll my eyes. .*  
(6) *“Right,” I say, and swallow. “Great.” .*  
(7) *I swallow hard. “Well, I’m not.” .*  
(8) *“OK,” I say after a pause. “Fine.” .*  
(9) *“OK,” I say. “Well, I’ll . . . I’ll see you later.” .*  
(10) *“Fine,” I mumble. “Fine, thanks.” .*  
(11) *“Look-ing forward to it already!” .*  
(12) *“Fine,” I say lightly. “Just reading a letter.” .*  
(13) *“Thanks,” I say, giving him a businesslike smile. .*  
(14) *“Mmm.” .*  
(15) *“Mmm,” I say, trying to sound as though I agree with him. .*  
(16) *And I stare at him, unable to move. .*  
(17) *I’m sorry,” I say in a wobbly voice, and stand up. “I haven’t got time for lunch after all.” .*  
(18) *“Fine,” I say curtly. “Fine, I’ll do that.” And I put the phone down. .*

(19) *“Well – bye then!” I say, trying to sound casual, as though I always ride around in a chauffeur-driven car. “See you later!”* .

(20) *“Gosh,” I say. .*

The debtor uses both verbal and nonverbal signs to end the conversation. She does it very politely but quite often.

### Conclusions

The range of well-chosen communication strategies and canons of behavior serves as the basis for effective communication of a young woman that has a shopping addiction.

It was analyzed that the main character of the novel proficiently applies seventy-three syntactic and stylistic techniques that help her to achieve own goals. This analysis confirms the constant struggle of habits and addictions, where the spiritual world is replaced by the material world.

Such strategies as Termination, Topic Control, Topic Shifting, and Repair Strategy appeared to be the most common since they are the most effective while reaching a particular aim. As for Nomination, Restriction, and Turn Taking they are rather expressions of politeness but useless in obtaining particular reasons.

Table 1: Matrix of communicative strategies of the DEBTOR

<b>Communicative strategy</b>	<b>Frequency dimension of communicative strategy in Sophie Kinsella's novel "Confessions of a Shopaholic".</b>
Termination	20 ↓
TopicControl	17
TopicShifting	13
RepairStrategy	7
Turn-Taking	6
Restriction	5
Nomination	5
<b>The total number of presented strategies in the novel</b>	<b>73</b>

Analyzing 7 communicative strategies in the novel, it was found that the Termination strategy is the most productive among other described strategies of communicative discourse. The frequency of use in the corpus is 20 cases. This suggests that debtors belong to the category of people that prefer to stop the conversation if it occurs to be uncomfortable. Such situations are pretty common in

their lives considering the fact that they tend to lie to achieve a goal (for example to borrow money) and very often create their own communicative trap where the truth can be relived.

The least productive communicative strategies turned out to be: Nomination, Restriction, and Turn-taking. Five-six cases were found in use. These strategies belong to those that are difficult to use in order to manipulate the topic. They are rather examples of respect and the general ability to communicate in society. That is why the debtor uses them but they are not the most vivid illustrations of her communicative style.

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