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Improving Students' Reading Skills in Understanding English Texts using Culture-Based Text Teaching Materials

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Abstrak

Salah satu faktor penyebab kurang berhasilnya membaca pemahaman dalam bahasa Inggris di SMA adalah teks yang digunakan dalam pembelajaran yang berlatar budaya asing. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan peningkatan keterampilan siswa memahami isi teks bacaan dengan menggunakan model bahan ajar teks yang berbasis budaya local. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian tindakan kelas dengan langkah pelaksanaan; (1) observasi awal untuk menentukan masalah penelitian dan pengumpulan data; (2) menyusun rencana tindakan penelitian, merumuskan model bahan ajar (3) pengembangan materi ajar; (4) melaksanakan tindakan; (5) melakukan kolaborasi dengan guru bahasa Inggris; (6) menyusun rencana pengajaran; (7) refleksi dan revisi terhadap tindakan; (8) tindakan dalam kelas; (9) penyempurnaan bahan ajar. Subjek penelitian ini adalah dua guru bahasa Inggris dan 28 siswa SMA kelas XI yang sedang belajar bahasa Inggris dengan topic **Reading Comprehension**. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan keterlibatan siswa dalam berdiskusi, inisiatif siswa untuk bertanya semakin tinggi, keaktifan siswa semakin tinggi dalam menggali informasi. Hasil belajar yang ditunjukkan dengan tingkat kemampuan siswa menjawab pertanyaan juga semakin tinggi. Pembelajaran menjadi semakin efektif dan efisien dalam mencapai tujuan pembelajaran.

Kata Kunci: pengembangan, bahan ajar, budaya lokal, dan berfikir kritis.

Abstract

One of the factors causing the lack of success in reading comprehension in English in high school is the text used in learning that is set in a foreign culture. This study aims to describe the improvement of students' skills in understanding the contents of reading texts by using a model of text-based teaching materials based on local culture. This research uses classroom action research with implementation steps; (1) initial observations to determine research problems and data collection; (2) formulate research action plans, formulate models of teaching materials (3) development of teaching materials; (4) carry out the action; (5) collaborate with English teachers; (6) draw up a teaching plan; (7) reflection and revision of actions; (8) classroom action; (9) improvement of teaching materials. The subjects of this study were two English teachers and 28 high school students in class XI who were studying English with the topic of Reading Comprehension. The results showed an increase in student involvement in discussions, higher student initiative to ask questions, higher student activity in digging information. Learning outcomes indicated by the level of students' ability to answer questions are also getting higher. Learning becomes more effective and efficient in achieving learning objectives.

Keywords: development, teaching materials, local culture, and critical thinking.

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INTRODUCTION

The capacity to read semester comprehending in English subjects in senior high school. The primary goal is to improve reading comprehension in English. Reading Comprehension is one of the courses that attempt to improve students' abilities to carry out language functions, absorb information, ask and answer questions of varying degrees of difficulty, compare and re-explain text messages, and build language skills, attitudes, and critical thinking.

Systematic text empowerment from the standpoint of readability design, content, and questions that can build the ability to understand the content of reading texts is one strategy to accomplish reading learning that is meaningful and useful for developing abilities in understanding text content. According to the kids' current level of reader competency, the text utilized should be highly legible. Text content is built on messages that can help people enhance their ability to understand what they are reading.

Until now, there has been a trend in which reading comprehension instructional materials have not been prepared to meet the demands of students, and the questions that accompany the text have not been made in a hierarchical level of difficulty (easy, medium, difficult, very difficult, compare, make inferences, evaluate, reason by analogy, and so on). find something outside of the text's content The instructional resources for reading comprehension do not meet the necessary criteria for developing critical thinking and intelligence in order to encourage new information, behavior, and attitudes. The book also does not promote self-confidence, responsibility, rational, critical, and creative information gathering from the environment and other sources, the ability to solve difficulties in daily life or the development of identity. Teaching materials provide a greater emphasis on strengthening language abilities, particularly reading while ignoring cognitive and affective development.

According to initial observations made by researchers in reading comprehension learning, the condition of the text as teaching materials used does not encourage students to have a happy attitude toward reading texts, does not build a reading culture, does not educate intellectually, emotionally, and socially, does not build an attitude of love for local culture, local wisdom, character values, strong identity, and does not encourage the improvement of creative, logical, and critical thinking skills, and does not encourage the improvement of creative, logical, and critical thinking skills.

The texts used in language lessons are still not interesting, fun, educating, or even boring, and extracting text content in the form of questions that do not build critical thinking, reading texts that are not in accordance with the needs and environment of students, texts that do not take into account the interests and psychology of the child, and texts that do not even contain character-building context. The resources employed in language education fail to provide the groundwork for critical thinking, self-awareness and are disconnected from the realities of students' lives (Sarumpaet, 2003).

Reading teaching materials, on the other hand, has not encouraged students to have critical thinking skills, as evidenced by the quality of exercises, questions, assignments, quizzes, and semester exam questions. Teaching materials also do not encourage students to think creatively, have a curious attitude, draw intellectual conclusions, or conduct a character value analysis. This demonstrates that the nation's Reading Comprehension teaching materials are not yet equipped to produce students with divinity, noble character, and personality in accordance with the ancestral culture, as well as critical thinking skills.

Using teaching materials or reading texts based on local culture, the quality of teaching Reading Comprehension should be increased, based on the major themes outlined above. Action research is needed to design Reading Comprehension teaching materials in English lessons that are combined with the development of character values to increase critical thinking abilities.

The link between culture and language is recognized in language teaching (Pulverness, A., & Tomlinson, 2003). It has been highlighted that language training is neither accurate nor complete without cultural studies.

If they don't know anything about the individuals who speak the target language, language acquisition doesn't appear to make sense. "The necessity for cultural literacy in language training is a truth," Bada, M. A., & Altman (2000), arguing that "most language learners who are not exposed to cultural components have considerable difficulty in transmitting meaning to native speakers."

In the relationship between culture and language, we see some remarkable comments; for example, (Jiang, 2000; Kitao, 2020) suggests that there are several benefits of teaching culture as follows: 1) Culture gives students a reason to learn the target language and realizes meaningful language learning (Stainer, 1971; Kitao, 1991); 2) From the learner's perspective, providing access to the cultural aspects of language, learning culture will help students relate abstract sounds and forms of language to real people and places (Chastain, 1971; Purba, 2011); 3) Culture does have a big role because students like culture-based activities such as singing, dancing, role-playing, doing research in the country and society, etc. Cultural studies increase the interest of learners not only their curiosity about and interest in targeting countries but also their motivation. McKay (2003), on the other hand, claims that culture has an impact on language education in two ways: linguistic and pedagogical. Linguistically, this has an impact on the semantic, pragmatic, and discourse levels of language. The cultural content of the language material and the cultural background, this has an impact on the choice of language material from a pedagogical standpoint. Most people are so ethnocentric that when they begin learning another language, their own cultural restrictions hinder them from perceiving the world in new ways. Studying various cultures based on local cultures might help you overcome the constraints of monoculture perspectives and enter the domain of different perspectives.

Language learners and the learning process benefit from culture-based language learning because it humanizes and motivates them. They assist pupils in recognizing similarities and differences among various ethnic groups. The majority of L2 students today live in monolingual and monoculture environments around the world. As a result, they become culture-bound individuals who make early and improper value judgments about their own and others' cultural qualities. This can cause people to regard others who speak the language they are learning as weird and even disrespectful, which can demotivate them from learning the language.

Smith (1981; Inan, 2021) who emphasizes English's international status, lists several reasons why culture is not required in English language instruction: there is no need for L2 speakers to internalize the cultural norms of native speakers, international languages are not nationalized, and the goal of international language instruction is to facilitate the communication of ideas. Furthermore, the culture of English-language learners is reflected in the media (McKay, 2003). In order to teach a language, it is necessary to have a basic understanding of culture. Teaching language, according to Thanasoulas (2001; Ogawa, 2013), is synonymous with teaching culture, and anyone active in teaching language is likewise involved in teaching culture.

Language speakers, according to Philips, S. U., Cazden, C. B., John, V. T., & Hymes (1972; Kaharuddin, 2018), require more than grammatical skills to communicate effectively in a language. They also need to understand how members of the speaking community utilize language to attain their objectives. Linguistic and pragmatic competence is the two fundamental characteristics of communicative competence. The category of pragmatic characteristics of communication competence includes cultural competence. It is defined as the ability to comprehend conduct through the eyes of members of a culture. Understands all aspects of culture, but especially the social structure, values, and beliefs of society, as well as how things are thought to work. Thus, the importance of research related to culture-based language learning has a humanizing and motivating effect on language learners and the learning process. This is because it helps students to observe the similarities and differences between different cultural groups.

RESEARCH METHODS

A classroom action research design was used for this study. Two English teachers and 30 third-grade children were the participants in this study. Through a sequence of acts, this classroom action research (CAR)

aims to improve students' knowledge of the discourse's substance. Actions are carried out in three steps over three cycles, with each cycle learning as it goes. The following measures were taken to conduct this study: (1) preliminary observations to determine research problems and data collection; (2) formulate research action plans, formulate models of teaching materials; (3) development of teaching materials; (4) action; (5) collaborate with English teachers; (6) draw up a teaching plan; (7) reflection and revision of actions; (8) classroom action; 9) Enhancement of instructional materials Two English professors and 28 high school students in class XI who were learning English with the theme of Reading Comprehension were the subjects of this study. Teaching materials in the form of local culture-based literature, lesson plans, observation sheets, and written test kits were employed in this study.

Observation, field notes, and document analysis were used to collect data for this action research. (3) document analysis is a technique for observing the development of students' abilities in understanding the content of the text, and interviews were conducted with teachers and students to obtain information and input about the difficulties teachers and students encountered in learning using texts based on local culture. Excellent at responding to queries. The data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It can be argued that there is an increase in student engagement behavior during the learning process after doing some activities in cycles I, II, and III in learning Reading Comprehension developed utilizing culture-based texts. The following table depicts the progression of student participation in studying Reading Comprehension.

Table 1
Student participation behavior in Learning Cycles I, II, and III

No	Success Indicator in students Action Learning	Cycle Indicator Frequency									Total Percentage % Cycle								
		I			II			III			I			II			III		
		P1	P2	P3	P1	P2	P3	P1	P2	P3	P1	P2	P3	P1	P2	P3	P1	P2	P3
1.	Ask the teacher	1	1	2	2	4	6	3	5	10	3.33	3.33	6.67	6.67	13.33	20	10	16.67	33.33
2.	Answer the teacher's questions	0	1	2	1	2	3	2	2	3	0	3.33	6.67	3.33	6.67	10	6.67	6.67	10
3.	Answering questions from friends	1	2	3	1	1	2	2	2	3	3.33	6.67	10	3.33	3.33	6.67	6.67	6.67	10
4.	Give opinion	1	3	4	2	3	4	2	3	4	3.33	10	13.33	6.67	10	13.33	6.67	10	13.33
5.	Group work / discussion / dialogue	2	3	4	2	3	4	3	3	4	6.67	10	13.33	6.67	10	13.33	10	10	13.33
6.	Accuracy in completing tasks	1	2	3	2	3	4	3	4	5	3.33	6.67	10	6.67	10	13.33	10	13.33	16.67
	Amount	6	12	18	10	16	23	15	19	29	20	40	60	3.33	53.33	76.67	50	63.33	93.34

The data in the table above shows that the behavior of student participation in learning using a cultural text-based Reading Comprehension learning model that is managed through classroom action research has increased the quality of learning. This can be interpreted that learning in the first cycle of action can be improved and refined in the second and third cycles. The impact of using cultural-based reading texts can increase activity, interest and be able to dig up information more quickly and precisely. This shows the experience of students in answering problems that require answers so that student learning outcomes increase.

The conclusion stated that there was an increase in student participation in learning Reading Comprehension using culture-based texts could be seen from observing the actions taken in the first cycle. It could be stated that at the first meeting students were actively asking the teacher only one person with a percentage (3.33%). At the second meeting, there was only one student (3.33%) who actively asked the teacher, and at the third meeting, there were 2 students (6.67%). There are no students who can answer the teacher's questions at the first meeting. In the second meeting 1 student (6.67%). Students who can answer questions

from friends, the first meeting 1 student (3.33%) the second meeting 2 students (10%). Students who gave opinions at the first meeting 1 person (3.33%) the second meeting 3 students (10%) the third meeting increased to 4 students (13.33%) who gave opinions about problems proposed by friends or groups. Completion of assignments given with good criteria and on time collects assignments at the first meeting 1 student (3.33%) the second meeting 2 students (6.67%) at the third meeting becomes 3 students (10%).

Overall, the number of learning participation behaviors in Action Cycle I, in doing assignments in the form of exercises, only 11 people (36.67%) achieved the average value of the completion limit, there were still 19 students (63.33%) who had not the complete average.

Based on the results of the research for the first cycle of Action, it can be categorized as less successful. Based on the results of observations and learning outcomes, steps to improve learning are arranged by correcting things that are not good in learning cycle I. Improvements made can be seen in teaching and learning activities carried out in cycle II and the results can be seen in the following section

In the second cycle of action, students are expected to be more active and able to use time as efficiently as possible, able to use the correct language in conveying problems, questions, answering questions, expressing opinions, completing tasks and exercises given as much as possible. The deficiencies found in the learning in cycle II were corrected in a number of ways so that in the next cycle the learning outcomes would be better.

The third action cycle was carried out in three meetings. The first meeting was on 01 August 2019, the second meeting was on 04 August 2019, and the third meeting was held on 07 August 2019, 30 students attended (100%).

After observing the results of the Action II cycle research, it can be concluded that the variables measured based on Table 10 are known that at the first meeting 2 students (6.67%) the second meeting 4 students (13.33%), and the third there were 6 students (20%) actively answered the teacher's questions, the first meeting was 1 student (3.33%), the second meeting was 2 students (6.67%), the third meeting was 3 people (10%). Students who can answer questions from friends at the first meeting are 1 student (3.33%), the second meeting is 1 student (3.33%), the third meeting is 2 people (6.67%). Students who give opinions at the first meeting are 2 students (6.67%) second meeting 3 students (10%) third meeting 4 students (13.33%). Students who gave opinions about the results of the hypothesis of friends or groups and the accuracy of collecting assignments at the first meeting 2 students (6.67%) the second meeting 3 students (10%) at the third meeting 4 students (13.33%) in the accuracy of collecting assignments.

The behavior of participation in learning activities in the cycle of Action II Increasing the frequency of student participation in learning 23 people. Thus, it can be stated that the learning participation behavior in the action cycle II category was quite successful and there was an increase in student activity compared to the action cycle II only 18 people (60%) achieved the average value of the completion limit.

Based on table 10, it is known that the behavior of student participation in completing the practice questions given at the end of each meeting, many students have reached the average value of the completeness limit, which is 18 students.

Student learning behavior in completing the exercise in the second cycle of learning has been categorized as quite successful. From the implementation of Reading Comprehension learning with cultural-based texts that have been carried out and need further action in cycle III.

After observing the results of the action research cycle III, it can be stated that in the variables measured based on Table 15 it is known that at the first meeting 3 students (10%) the second meeting 5 students (16.67%), and the third meeting there were 9 students (30%) who actively ask the teacher, the first meeting 2 students (6.67%) the second meeting 2 students (6.67%) the third meeting 3 people (10%) who can answer the teacher in Reading Comprehension learning, to his friends who answered questions from friends the first meeting 2 students (6.67%) the second meeting 2 students (6.67%) the third meeting 3 people (10%) who gave opinions,

At the first meeting, 2 people (6.67%) the second meeting 3 students (10%) the third meeting increased to 4 students (13.33%) who gave opinions about the results of the hypothesis of friends or groups and the accuracy of collecting assignments, at the first meeting 3 students (10%) the second meeting 3 students (10%) at the third meeting 4 students (13.33%) in the accuracy of collecting assignments the first meeting 3 students (10%) the second meeting 4 students (13.33%) the third meeting 5 students (16.67%).

There were 28 students or 28 frequencies (93,34%). Thus, it can be said that the behavior of student learning participation in the third cycle of action learning is categorized as very successful. There are 27 students (90%) who have received an average completion limit, meaning that there are only 3 students (10%) who have not completed the act of participating in the act of learning students in cycle III completing the exercise. The behavior of students' act of learning in solving practice questions, the behavior of student participation in learning in cycle III can be categorized as very successful. From the diaries, it is known that students in expressing opinions, answering questions, explaining, and asking questions have used regular words, and feelings of inferiority have decreased.

Furthermore, we can see the values of student training results in the three cycles of action in the following table:

Table 2
Data on Student Practice Values in Learning Cycles I, II, and III

No	Value Range	Practice Value																	
		Frequency									Amount %								
		I			II			III			I			II			III		
P1	P2	P3	P1	P2	P3	P1	P2	P3	P1	P2	P3	P1	P2	P3	P1	P2	P3		
1.	90 – 100	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	2	4	0	0	0	3.33	6.67	3.33	6.67	13.33	
2.	80 – 89	1	2	3	4	6	8	10	12	14	3.33	6.67	10	13.33	20	26.67	33.33	40	46.67
3.	70 – 79	3	6	8	5	6	8	7	8	9	10	20	26.67	16.66	20	26.67	23.33	26.66	30
4.	60 – 69	15	14	13	14	13	11	6	4	2	50	46.66	43.33	46.66	43.33	36.67	20	13.33	6.67
5.	50 – 59	5	3	2	4	2	1	5	4	1	16.67	10	6.67	13.33	6.67	3.33	16.66	13.33	3.33
6.	<50	6	5	4	3	2	0	0	0	0	20	16.66	13.33	10	6.67	0	3.33	0	0
Amount		30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	99.99	99.99	100	99.98	100	100	99.98	99.99	100
Average											53.63	58.53	62.33	65.96	69.23	72.00	75.4	76.00	77.88

The table above shows that the value of practice questions in learning developed by the culture-based teaching material model and managed through classroom action research in 3 cycles, actually shows an increase in the quality of learning. From the first action cycle to the second action cycle and to the third action cycle, it can be interpreted that the first action cycle can be improved and perfected in the second learning cycle, as well as the third learning cycle. This means that the model of culture-based teaching materials is in accordance with the development of students and can arouse student interest or activity so that student learning outcomes increase.

Based on the results of the analysis contained in table 19 and table 20 above, it can be seen that the participation behavior of students' learning actions increases from each cycle of action. In terms of practice value, the average learning cycle of the action cycle also increases from each cycle. Thus, based on the established success indicators, it can be stated that learning developed through a culture-based teaching material model that is managed through classroom action research using three action cycles can increase the behavior of participating in learning actions so that student learning outcomes increase.

The results of classroom action research that have been achieved show that the learning model can increase student participation, activeness, and learning outcomes in Reading Comprehension subjects in English subjects with the material Eating Habit in Indonesia. This shows that culture-based texts are effective and efficient for increasing students' Reading Comprehension and critical thinking skills. Reading materials that are close to students' lives, especially those related to culture, become interesting, fun, and can improve critical thinking.

The success of learning Reading Comprehension by using a text-based culture that is centered on students in increasing student activity in learning. This is in line with the view that the aim of teaching English in Indonesia is to enable students to read texts in English. Reading texts based on local culture actually makes learning to read more meaningful and can understand the contents of reading easily and in a fun, interesting, and intellectual way for students. Reading texts explain a lot of cultural features that students have so a lot of cultural information may be unconsciously related to teaching materials in the form of culture-based texts.

There are several reasons that make Reading Comprehension learning based on local cultural texts more effective and efficient, including; (1) learning using social interaction information centered on students' daily lives. Situational and emotional factors/student circumstances are more touching and close to students' lives. This is different from the fact so far that teachers only use teaching materials that are far from the concept of student life, making it difficult for teachers and students to internalize teaching materials. On the other hand, texts based on local culture are seen as more appropriate, easy to internalize, and not difficult to understand the contents of reading texts for students.

Second, during the learning process using the model of teaching materials for Reading Comprehension based on cultural texts, the teacher plays a bigger role as a source of information about culture related to teaching materials, namely providing comparisons to students in explaining the position of culture. Teachers can easily assist students in formulating and explaining each term in the reading text. Teachers and students find it easier to choose and develop assumptions that will be used as well as effective and objective ways of thinking. This can realize the teacher's role in learning as a facilitator, not as an instructor.

Learning to read comprehension using reading texts that are close to students' daily lives can increase student activity, by increasing student creativity and activeness it can improve learning outcomes. This can be seen from the behavioral data of learning participation in the following learning.

In the first cycle there were 18 students (60%) categorized as sufficient, in the second cycle there were 23 students (76.67%) categorized as successful, and in the third cycle, there were 28 students (93.34%) categorized as very successful. The results of the evaluation carried out by researchers at the end of the action cycle we can see from the data on the average value of student practice in the first cycle of learning the average value obtained by students is 62.33 categorized as sufficient, in the second cycle the average value of students is 72.00 categorized successful and in the third cycle the average score of 77.83 students was categorized as successful.

The success of learning Reading Comprehension using local culture-based texts is due to the fact that when talking about language, culture will always be discussed automatically. This is due to the fact that language and culture are closely related (Brown, 2001). For example, when the Javanese speak of 'rice' the meaning can vary from *pari*, *gabah*, *rice*, *sega*, to *groats*, *upa*, *las*, etc. This is simply because 'rice' is the staple food of the Javanese and as a result, is so closely related to Javanese life that they name it differently according to the context in which it exists. On the other hand, because snow is not a part of Javanese life because there is no snow in Java, they only translate 'snow' into the snow while for Eskimos whose lives are always surrounded by snow, the word 'snow' has more than 60 names (Seeley, 1993; Lestari, 2010).

According to Smith (1976; McKay, 2004) international language by definition is not related to a particular culture because it refers to an international language: (a) non-native speakers do not need to internalize the cultural norms of native speakers of that language, (b) international languages become "nationalized," and (c) the aim of teaching international languages is to facilitate the communication of students' ideas and culture in the medium of the English language. That is why, in the Indonesian context where English is a foreign language, various English cultures need to be introduced to sensitize students to the practices of other cultures in order to develop their intercultural communication skills (McKay, 2003). This can be done by including activities in the curriculum that make students reflect on their own culture and consider alternative views from other cultures.

For example, when discussing a text (1), the teacher could ask students what they usually have for breakfast or for a party, especially for a birthday party. After that, a discussion about what they had for breakfast that morning or at the party and why they had the same or different menus. Each student may have different reasons for it and the teacher can explain to students that it is normal to be different from others. If students in the class may have different menus due to the availability of food in the area, their favorite menus, certain dietary restrictions due to religion, health, age, etc. People in different regions and countries may also have different menus and such. The difference is acceptable because it is something cultural.

Language and culture learning can be done in an integrated manner when the teacher teaches any language skill. Learning is related to language cultural values is not effectively carried out through lectures. Learning languages through interesting, fun, and intellectual culture using various texts of cultural activities that are close to students' lives.

The general aim of teaching English in schools, whether in elementary, junior, or senior high school, is to enable students to communicate in acceptable English, both orally and in writing. To help students achieve their goals, English language learners should be equipped with knowledge of the culture in addition to the language component. Awareness of the cultural aspects of the language makes it easier to understand the topics and situations they encounter while reading or listening. In addition, exposure to the culture of people who speak the language being studied also leads to increased understanding and tolerance (Zoreda, M. L., & Vivaldo-Lima, 2008).

There are two main factors that influence the success of language teaching through culture-based texts in language classes, including: (1) understanding what "culture" is being taught and what methods are used. The teacher's task is to make students aware of cultural differences and help students become communicatively competent and (2) the content of the text being taught must contain cultural elements (Wandel, 2003; Tran, 2010). This shows that reading text designs not only present linguistically correct texts, but they must also present acceptable language cultural values. Similar conditions also occur in Indonesia. This fact reveals that teachers when teaching languages are not effective and efficient if cultural values are ignored in learning Reading Comprehension.

CONCLUSION

According to the findings of this case action research, learning to read comprehension in English classes utilizing a culture-based teaching material model has an impact on the intensity of student learning involvement behavior. Critical thinking abilities can be developed by the intensity of learning activities, such as involvement in higher learning, taking the initiative to ask and answer higher questions, and the activities supplied. Students' ability to explore information from reading texts, on the other hand, is improving. The exercises in the form of exams to understand the contents of the reading text demonstrate this.

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