

CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR IN FOOTBALL NEWS ON GOAL.COM

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Abstract

This research examines conceptual metaphors as defined by Lakoff and Johnson, focusing on three types: structural, ontological, and orientational. The study analyzes an editorial from *Goal.com* titled, "Arsenal have no margin for error! Gunners told Liverpool showdown is 'must-win' in title race just eight games into 2024-25 season," using a qualitative approach grounded in cognitive semantic theory to explore the nuanced meanings conveyed through metaphor in sports commentary. Known for its in-depth and timely football analysis, *Goal.com* offers insights into how metaphors enhance fans' understanding of competitive sports narratives. Data collection involved close reading and note-taking, identifying instances of structural, ontological, and orientational metaphors, along with their source and target domains and image schemas. Findings reveal five structural metaphors, which use schemas such as Scale and Force to emphasize competitive intensity; four ontological metaphors, drawing on Container, Force, and Existence schemas to illustrate team pressures; and one orientational metaphor, using the Container schema to deepen spatial and relational context in the text. This study highlights the role of sports media metaphors in shaping public perception, making abstract concepts like competition and resilience more tangible. By framing sports challenges in relatable, high-stakes terms, these metaphors foster emotional engagement among fans, creating a shared understanding of a team's journey and pressures and underscoring the powerful influence of metaphor in sports narratives.

Keywords: *cognitive semantics; conceptual metaphor; football news; image schema; sports media*

1. Introduction

Language activities, whether verbal or nonverbal, are integral to human life, serving as a primary means of communication for expressing thoughts, feelings, intentions, and concepts (Zakiyah, 2021). Reading is one such linguistic activity, essential for acquiring information. The availability of news through mass media, magazines, and social media has become both a cultural practice and a necessity, allowing individuals to access timely information. In journalism, metaphor use enhances the reader's experience by adding depth and engagement to otherwise straightforward information. Journalists and writers often employ metaphors, either overtly or subtly, to

create a comparative effect, adding layers of meaning that enrich the reader's interpretation. Analyzing these metaphors provides insight into the author's intentions and enhances our understanding of the discourse (Nuryadin & Nur, 2021).

Language is fundamentally a system of symbols, expressed through sound. Each symbol represents a concept, idea, or thought. Thus, language carries meaning because each symbol embodies a specific idea or thought (Chaer, 2012). Semantics, a core field within linguistics, focuses on the study of linguistic signs and the meanings they convey (Dessiliona & Nur, 2018). Semantics examines language at the level of meaning, complementing other language analysis levels such as phonology and grammar (Chaer, 2012).

Cognitive semantics investigates the relationship between experience, conceptual systems, and the semantic structures embodied by language. Specifically, proponents of cognitive semantics examine conceptual structures (knowledge representations) and conceptualization (Nuryadin & Nur, 2021). Cognitive semantics is a part of cognitive linguistics. Cognitive linguistics is the study of how a person thinks about something expressed through their language (Evans & Green, 2006). Humans have a mind that functions to organize knowledge or information obtained from their own life experiences or the life experiences of others. Each person's life experience is different, and each person's thoughts or cognition are also different. That thought falls within both direct and indirect experiences. The process of thought processing or cognitive processing can produce a metaphor (Syah et al., 2020).

Metaphor is an ornament in a language and not a form of ordinary language. Metaphor is a rhetorical tool that can be used at certain moments to produce a specific effect. Indirectly, metaphor is defined as a form of language that is not normal and requires interpretation from its listeners or readers (Saeed, 2011). Metaphor is something that has another meaning and its main function is to understand, it can be interpreted that metaphor is part of figurative language that compares one thing with another. All human languages use metaphorical meaning to communicate at various levels of abstraction from concrete reality (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008). This theory is the metaphor theory by Lakoff & Johnson, more commonly known as the conceptual metaphor theory. In the context of sports media, metaphors serve as powerful instruments that not only communicate information but also influence audience engagement and understanding. They create vivid imagery and emotional connections, allowing readers to relate to the events being reported.

The recent study (Alzawaydeh & Alghazo, 2018) analyzes how conceptual metaphors are used in football news headlines across English and Arabic media. The study, using a sample of 400 headlines (200 from each language), applies the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) to categorize and compare metaphorical expressions in each language, focusing on how football is depicted through metaphors that connect it to various concepts. The findings reveal that "FOOTBALL IS WAR" is the most prevalent metaphor in both English and Arabic, indicating a shared perception of football as combative and competitive. Additionally, metaphors related to violence, human activities, and emotions were common in both languages, although Arabic headlines exhibited a slightly higher frequency of metaphorical expressions.

The research objective of this study is to investigate how metaphor functions within language, specifically in news and media discourse, to convey complex ideas in an engaging and accessible manner. The study aims to analyze the role of metaphors as cognitive tools that structure human thought and communication, following Conceptual

Metaphor Theory by Lakoff and Johnson. It seeks to understand how metaphors influence readers' perceptions, making abstract concepts more relatable and enhancing the impact of news writing by providing depth and clarity to the author's intent.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Sport News

Sports news is one of the main fields for the media to carry out its function. Sports are loved by various groups. This factor is what ultimately makes the media both national and local use it for a profit (Santosa et al., 2014). In sports journalism, audiences often focus primarily on the players and their performance in the game. However, sports also have intriguing dimensions beyond the action on the field. These include insights into a player's or coach's origin, their personal background, and even the physical or psychological impact of intense involvement in sports. (Ramadhanti et al., 2021).

At times, sports events have the power to unite diverse groups of people. For instance, the pursuit of the Thomas Cup brings Indonesians together, united by a sense of nationalism. Similarly, through extensive media coverage, global events like the World Cup resonate far beyond the participating countries, as people worldwide share in the excitement, even if their own nations are absent. Sports journalists, in particular, have a unique opportunity to employ interpretive and critical reporting techniques, such as argumentation. They must also be adept at presenting match results, scores, and statistical data—elements typically showcased in sports coverage—to enhance the reader's understanding of the game. (Kusumaningrat, 2006).

2.2 Conceptual Metaphor

Conceptual metaphor is the result of a mental construction based on the principle of analogy that involves the conceptualization of one element in terms of another. Conceptual metaphor involves the transfer from the source domain to the target domain, so the second domain is understood in relation to the first. This metaphor theory is better known as the conceptual metaphor theory (Conceptual Metaphor Theory/CMT).

In this concept, there are two conceptual domains, namely the source domain and the target domain. The source domain is used by humans to understand abstract concepts in the target domain; the source domain generally consists of things commonly found in everyday life. The source domain is more concrete, while the target domain is more abstract. Metaphor organizes relationships between objects and creates an understanding of a particular object through the understanding of another object. In other words, the source domain is used by humans to understand abstract concepts in the target domain. Conceptual metaphors have three components: the source domain, the target domain, and the mapping (Lyra, 2018).

Metaphors consist of three types, namely structural metaphors, orientational metaphors, and ontological metaphors. Structural metaphor is a concept formed metaphorically by using another concept. This structural metaphor is based on two domains, namely the source domain and the target domain. Structural metaphors are based on systematic correlations in everyday experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008).

Oriental metaphors are metaphors related to spatial orientation, such as up-down, in-out, front-back, and so on. This spatial orientation arises from the fact that we have bodies and bodies function in a physical environment. This metaphor is more based on human physical experience in orienting direction in daily life, such as up and

down measured from human physical experience. Orientational metaphors reflect different spatial concepts according to the physical experiences or culture of their society (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008). Therefore, orientational metaphors differ in each culture, because of what is thought, experienced, and done by someone raised in a different culture. Orientational metaphors give a concept a spatial orientation, for example: happy is up, health is up (Nuryadin & Nur, 2021).

Ontological metaphor is a metaphor that views events, emotional activities, and ideas as entities and substances. For example, in the metaphor "the mind is a machine" in the sentence "My mind just isn't operating today." An ontological metaphor is a metaphor that conceptualizes thoughts, experiences, and processes of abstract things into something that has physical properties. In other words, ontological metaphors treat abstract nouns as concrete nouns (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008).

2.3 Image Schema

Besides discussing the types of metaphors, cognitive semantics also addresses the image schemas formed from a metaphor. Image schemas are an important form of the conceptual part of cognitive semantics. Image schemas are a structure of meaning formed from experiences generated by how the body interacts with the world. That experience serves as a tool for understanding abstractly and grasping a truth (Saeed, 2011). The image schema according to Croft and Cruse (2004) is divided into seven parts, which are arranged in the following table.

Image Schema	Type
Space	Up-Down, Front-Back, Left-Right, Near-far, Center-Periphery, Contact
Scale	Path
Containers	Containment, In-Out, Surface, Full-Empty, Content
Force	Balance, Counterforce, Compulsion, Restraint, Enablement, Blockage, Diversion, Attraction
Unity/Multiplicity	Merging, Collection, Splitting, Iteration, Part-Whole, Mass-Count, Link
Identity	Matching, Superimposition
Excistence	Removal, Bounded Space, Cycle, Object, Process.

Table 1. Cruse and Croft image schema

3. Research Method

This research is conducted by means of descriptive qualitative method. Murdiyanto (2020) explains that qualitative research is descriptive in nature and tends to use analysis with an inductive approach. Qualitative research is a research that emphasizes problems in social life based on realistic conditions or natural settings that are holistic, complex and detailed. This is in line with the opinion of Moleong (2016) that qualitative research is research that aims to understand phenomena about what is experienced by research subjects holistically, and through description in the form of words and language, in a specific context and natural methods. The data source is the editorial entitled *"Arsenal have no margin for error! Gunners told Liverpool showdown is 'must-win' in title race just eight games into 2024-25 season"* on goal.com on October 26, 2024 and the data are texts containing sport metaphorical expressions. This article was chosen as the object of research because it was published before Arsenal's match in the Premier League, where it presents the opinion of football analyst Graeme Souness

about Arsenal needing to win the next match to maintain the points gap with Liverpool. This article provides readers with insight into the upcoming Arsenal match. The secondary sources of data are taken from other related references.

In data collection, the method used is the observation method followed by the note-taking technique. The observation method is conducted by observing, specifically by observing language use (Sudaryanto, 1993). In this data collection, the objects of study are all writings that contain metaphorical expressions. The note-taking technique is used to record all collected data, which is then classified based on the types of metaphors by Lakoff & Johnson and the types of image schemas according to Cruse & Croft's theory (2004). Subsequently, the conceptual meanings are examined using Lakoff & Johnson's theory (2008).

4. Discussion

The presentation of the research results is organized based on the types of metaphor categories found. In this study, 10 data were found that include metaphorical expressions in the editorial entitled *"Arsenal have no margin for error! Gunners told Liverpool showdown is 'must-win' in title race just eight games into 2024-25 season"* on goal.com on October 26, 2024.

No.	Conceptual Metaphor Type	Frequency	Image Schema	Frequency
1.	Structural Metaphor	5	Scale/Path	4
			Force/Compulsion	1
2.	Oriental Metaphor	1	Containers/Containment	1
3.	Ontological Metaphor	4	Force/Balance	1
			Excistency/Cycle	1
			Containers/Containment	1
			Existence/Object	1

Table 2. Conceptual Metaphor and Image Schema in article on this study

The research results generally show that structural metaphors are the most commonly found, with 5 instances of structural metaphor usage and then 1 use of orientational metaphor and 4 uses of ontological metaphor. The image schemas found in the metaphor are six image schemas, namely the Scale/Path schema, the Force/Compulsion schema, Force/Balance, Excistency/Cycle, Containers/Containment, Existence/Object. The following is a presentation of the analysis results of structural, orientational, and ontological metaphors found in the *"Arsenal have no margin for error! Gunners told Liverpool showdown is 'must-win' in title race just eight games into 2024-25 season"* article on goal.com of October 26, 2024.

4.1 Structural Metaphor

Structural metaphor is a concept formed metaphorically using another concept. This structural metaphor is based on two domains, namely the source domain and the target domain. Structural metaphors are based on systematic correlations in everyday experiences. Here is a data from the *"Arsenal have no margin for error! Gunners told Liverpool showdown is 'must-win' in title race just eight games into 2024-25 season"* article on goal.com of October 26, 2024 that contains structural metaphor.

Data	Sentence	Source Domain	Target Domain	Image Schema
1	“Ahead of Arsenal's home fixture against early pace-setters Liverpool”	Pace-setters	Leading	Scale: Path
2	“Reds legend Graeme Souness believes this match could have huge ramifications on the Premier League title race , just eight games into the season”	Title race	Competition	Scale: Path
3	“An away win would take Arne Slot's men seven points clear of the Gunners and the Scot believes that could be terminal for the north London side”	Terminal	Life-and-death situation	Scale: Path
4	“We are only eight games into the season, but this already feels like a ' must-win ' for Arsenal”	‘must-win’	Must accomplish to stay competitive	Force: Compulsion
5	“They are seeking their first league title since 2004 and if they want to reclaim that prize , winning games like the Liverpool one may be key”	Reclaim that prize	Regaining the league title	Scale: Path

Table 3. Structural Metaphor Data

On data (1) in the sentence “Ahead of Arsenal's home fixture against early pace-setters Liverpool,” the phrase “early pace-setters” contains a structural metaphor. The concept of "pace-setting" is derived from racing, where some competitors set a fast speed that others must keep up with. Using “pace-setters” to describe Liverpool suggests that they are currently performing at a high level in the league, effectively leading or guiding the competition. This metaphor frames the competitive aspect of sports in terms of a race, making it easier to understand the dynamics of teams' performances relative to one another. Overall, it emphasizes Liverpool's current standing and the challenges Arsenal faces in the upcoming match. On data (1) the phrase “early pace-setters” primarily evokes the Path image schemas. This schema relates to the notion of movement along a path or trajectory. "Pace-setters" implies Liverpool is setting the pace in a metaphorical race or journey, positioning them as leaders along this competitive path.

On data (2) in the sentence “Reds legend Graeme Souness believes this match could have huge ramifications on the Premier League title race, just eight games into the season”. Here, the Structural Metaphor of a "title race" conceptualizes the league season as a competitive journey with a defined finish line (winning the title). This metaphor suggests that early performances affect the outcome of this race. On data (2) the term "title race" draws primarily on the Path image schemas. This schema conceptualizes the

competition for the title as a journey with a starting point, a path, and an endpoint or goal. The "title race" suggests teams are moving along a metaphorical path throughout the season, aiming to reach the "goal" of winning the Premier League title.

On data (3) in the sentence "An away win would take Arne Slot's men seven points clear of the Gunners and the Scot believes that could be terminal for the north London side," the phrase "could be terminal" represents a structural metaphor. Here, "terminal" is used to convey the idea that a loss could lead to a serious or even catastrophic outcome for the north London side (Arsenal). In this context, "terminal" is often associated with finality or a critical state, as in medical or existential terms. It suggests that the loss could have dire implications for their chances in the title race. On data (3) the word "terminal" primarily evokes the Path image schemas. This schema is reflected in the idea of progress along a path, representing the season or journey toward the end goal. The use of "terminal" implies reaching a critical point on this path where progression or hope for success could be halted.

On data (4) in the sentence "We are only eight games into the season, but this already feels like a 'must-win' for Arsenal," the phrase "must-win" represents a structural metaphor. Here, the term "must-win" frames the match as a critical event that cannot be lost, emphasizing the urgency and necessity of the outcome. This metaphor suggests that the match carries significant weight for Arsenal's prospects in the league, conveying a sense of high stakes. The use of "must" implies an obligation or requirement, which adds to the intensity of the metaphor. Overall, it effectively conveys the pressure and importance of the match within the context of the season, making the competitive scenario more relatable and urgent. On data (4) the term "must-win" primarily reflects the Compulsion image schemas. This schema is based on the experience of external forces or pressures compelling a specific action. "Must-win" implies a necessity or obligation for Arsenal to win, suggesting strong external or internal pressures that make winning seem essential.

On data (5) in the sentence, "They are seeking their first league title since 2004 and if they want to reclaim that prize, winning games like the Liverpool one may be key," the metaphor "reclaim that prize" can be categorized as a structural metaphor. Here, the concept of a "prize" (the league title) is structured as something that can be obtained or reclaimed, implying it was once held but is now lost. This metaphor suggests that achieving the league title is similar to winning a competition or retrieving an object that was previously owned, making the idea of regaining the title more tangible and understandable. On data (5) the phrase "reclaim that prize" primarily involved the Path image schemas. This schema relates to the idea of moving toward an endpoint or goal. In this context, "reclaim" suggests a journey where the team is trying to return to a previous state of success, indicating progress along a path toward regaining the league title.

4.2 Orientational Metaphor

Orientational metaphors are related to the orientation of human experience, such as up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow and center-periphery. Spatial orientation arises based on human physical experience in organizing direction orientation in life. Orientational metaphors reflect different spatial concepts according to the physical experiences or culture of their society, so this phenomenon exists in all languages. Here is a data from the *"Arsenal have no margin for error! Gunners told*

Liverpool showdown is 'must-win' in title race just eight games into 2024-25 season" article on goal.com of October 26, 2024 that contains orientational metaphor.

Data	Sentence	Source Domain	Target Domain	Image Schema
1	"Given the fine margins of recent seasons in the title race, that would feel like a big lead to give two excellent rivals"	Fine	Margins	Container

Table 4. Orientational Metaphore Data

On data (1) in the sentence "Given the fine margins of recent seasons in the title race, that would feel like a big lead to give two excellent rivals", the metaphor "fine margins" can be categorized as a orientational metaphor. This phrase indeed serves as an orientational metaphor, representing the concept of small differences in performance as a spatial relationship. By using the term "margins," it conveys the notion that the competition is tightly contested and that even minor changes can significantly impact the outcome. On data (1) the phrase "fine margins" primarily evokes the container image schemas. This schema can also be applied here, as "margins" implies boundaries within which results or performances occur. The idea of "fine margins" indicates a limited space or range where significant impacts can arise, framing the competition as tightly contested and emphasizing how small changes can have substantial consequences.

4.3 Ontological Metaphor

Ontological metaphor is a metaphor that conceptualizes thoughts, experiences, and processes of other abstract things into something with physical properties. Ontological metaphor is a metaphor that sees events, emotional activities, and ideas as entities and substances. Here is a data from the "*Arsenal have no margin for error! Gunners told Liverpool showdown is 'must-win' in title race just eight games into 2024-25 season"* article on goal.com of October 26, 2024 that contains ontological metaphor.

Data	Sentence	Source Domain	Target Domain	Image Schema
1	"It is certainly a bigger game for them than it is Liverpool, in terms of how it impacts their season and their immediate welfare "	Immediate welfare	health	Force: Balance
2	"A defeat on Sunday would take some recovering from , and they would have to win some very big matches to get people believing again"	recovering	defeat	Excistence: Cycle

Table 5. Ontological Metaphor Data

Data	Sentence	Source Domain	Target Domain	Image Schema
1	"But that is the price on the ticket if you're a big player at a big club, deal with it! And the best way to do that? It's very simple: go and beat Liverpool"	Buying a ticket	pressures	Containers: Containment
2	"With that there will be talk of their challenge taking a serious dent , and the pressure on the games after, trips to Newcastle and Chelsea, will be huge"	Challenge	Physical object	Excistence: Object

Table 6. Ontological Metaphor Data

On data (1) in the sentence "It is certainly a bigger game for them than it is Liverpool, in terms of how it impacts their season and their immediate welfare", The phrase "immediate welfare" indeed functions as an ontological metaphor in the context of the sentence. By framing the team's success in terms of "health" or "well-being," it suggests that their performance in this game has tangible consequences for their overall stability and viability in the league. This ontological metaphor emphasizes that a team's success is not merely about points on a scoreboard but also relates to their competitive integrity and future prospects. The idea of "welfare" implies that the outcome of the game can significantly affect the team's morale, confidence, and overall standing in the league, thereby relating the concept of a game to a broader context of survival and health in a competitive environment. On data (1) the phrase "immediate welfare" primarily evokes the Balance image schemas, this schema involves stability and equilibrium. "Welfare" implies a sense of well-being or health, suggesting the team's condition is balanced when things are going well. A change in their welfare would thus affect this balance, indicating a need to maintain stability in their season.

On data (2) in the sentence "A defeat on Sunday would take some recovering from, and they would have to win some very big matches to get people believing again", the phrase "take some recovering from" contain an ontological metaphor. By suggesting that a defeat requires "recovery," the metaphor personifies the emotional and psychological effects of losing, equating it to a physical injury that needs time and effort to heal. This ontological metaphor underscores the emotional toll that a loss can have on the team, implying that the aftermath of defeat involves a process of regaining confidence, morale, and support from fans. It highlights that setbacks in sports aren't just about performance metrics but also involve emotional recovery, reinforcing the idea that success and failure in sports deeply affect the players' and fans' mental and emotional states. On data (2) the word "recovering" primarily evokes the Cycle image schemas. This schema relates to processes that move from an initial state, through change, and back toward an original or improved state. "Recovering" implies returning to a former state of strength or stability, suggesting that the team would need to complete a cycle of recuperation after a setback.

On data (3) in the sentence "But that is the price on the ticket if you're a big player at a big club, deal with it! And the best way to do that? It's very simple: go and

beat Liverpool". The phrase "Price on the ticket" contain an Ontological Metaphor. treats the high stakes and pressures of being a top player as a "price" they must pay, conceptualizing the role in transactional terms. By framing the challenges and expectations of being a top player at a big club in terms of a "price," the metaphor implies that there are costs associated with success, including pressure, scrutiny, and the need to perform at a high level. This transactional conceptualization suggests that to be a "big player," one must accept and endure these costs as part of their role. It emphasizes the notion that success in high-stakes environments requires sacrifices and hard work, similar to paying a price to gain access to an experience or opportunity. Furthermore, the phrase implies a sense of accountability, suggesting that top players must deliver results to justify the "ticket" they've paid for their position, particularly in crucial matches like the one against Liverpool. On data (3) the phrase "price on the ticket" primarily evokes the Containment image schemas. This schema arises from the idea that a "ticket" metaphorically "contains" the experience or benefits associated with being part of a prestigious club, while also enclosing the expectations that come with it.

On data (4) in the sentence "With that there will be talk of their challenge taking a serious dent, and the pressure on the games after, trips to Newcastle and Chelsea, will be huge". In the sentence, the metaphor "their challenge taking a serious dent" is an example of an ontological metaphor. This metaphor effectively frames the abstract concept of a "challenge" as if it were a tangible object that can be physically altered or damaged. By suggesting that the challenge can "take a serious dent," it conveys the idea that setbacks can significantly affect the team's prospects and confidence. This metaphor also allows for a clearer understanding of the implications of a potential defeat: just as a dent affects the appearance and integrity of an object, a setback in their performance can compromise the team's ambitions and momentum. The language emphasizes that the stakes are high and that the psychological and competitive consequences of losing are substantial, particularly when facing subsequent important matches against strong opponents like Newcastle and Chelsea. This framing underscores the idea that challenges in sports are not only about winning or losing but also about how these outcomes influence a team's overall trajectory and mental state. On data (4) the phrase "challenge taking a serious dent" primarily evokes the Object image schemas. This schema conceptualizes abstract concepts (like a "challenge") as tangible objects that can be physically affected. Here, the "challenge" is treated as something solid that can sustain damage, represented by the phrase "taking a serious dent."

5. Conclusion

The study analyzed the metaphors in the article "*Arsenal have no margin for error! Gunners told Liverpool showdown is 'must-win' in title race just eight games into 2024-25 season*" published by Goal.com on October 26, 2024, identifying ten metaphorical expressions. Using Lakoff and Johnson's theory of conceptual metaphor, the findings revealed a variety of metaphor types: five structural metaphors, one orientational metaphor, and four ontological metaphors. Further analysis with Cruse and Croft's image schema theory highlighted six distinct image schemas: four scale/path schemas, one force/compulsion schema, one force/balance schema, one existence/cycle schema, two container/containment schemas, and one existence/object schema. These metaphors enhance the article, providing readers with an experience that is not only informative but also conceptually rich and engaging, adding depth to sports narratives.

Future research could expand on this study by analyzing a wider range of sports media sources across various seasons to detect metaphorical trends in different contexts. A comparative approach examining sports journalism in multiple languages and cultural settings could also yield insights into the impact of linguistic and cultural diversity on metaphor use. Additionally, examining audience perceptions of these metaphors could shed light on how metaphor types affect readers' comprehension and engagement with sports content. Finally, incorporating alternative theoretical approaches, such as blending theory, could provide fresh perspectives on the cognitive processes behind sports metaphors, offering a more comprehensive understanding of metaphorical expression in sports journalism.

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