

Original Paper

An Application of the Input Hypothesis to the Teaching Design of English Reading Class in Senior High School

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Abstract

Reading as a form of input can provide students with a good foreign language environment, allowing them to improve their vocabulary, master fixed expressions, use grammar rules flexibly and appreciate the beauty of cultural differences without having to leave home. To maximize the benefits of the English reading, this study is expected to explore the distinguished teaching design based on the author's own experience in the competition because there is still a long way to go given the fact that nothing is consummate. Krashen's "input hypothesis" are chosen to be the theoretical basis of the study for its sweeping impact on the area of second language acquisition and foreign language teaching. By clarifying the internal relationship between Krashen's "input hypothesis" and English reading teaching design, reflecting and summarizing the actual situation of English reading teaching in senior high school, the study tries to put forward the ideal pattern of English reading teaching design in senior high school and gives some inspirations to teachers-college students majoring in English.

Keywords

English reading class, High school, Krashen's "input hypothesis", teaching design

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

1.1.1 The Current Situation of English Reading Teaching

The cultivation of key competence is the concentrated embodiment of the value of education. In English, core competence encompasses four aspects: language ability, thinking quality, cultural character and learning ability (English course standard for high school, 2018, p. 13). As a carrier of language learning input, English reading is of great significance to the cultivation and development of students' language knowledge, language skills, cultural connotation and multiple thinking. Nonetheless, the goal is far more ideal than the reality. Influenced by the fierce competition in the social

environment, a host of teachers are trapped in the value of “exam-oriented teaching”, especially in high school, for the reason that high school children are faced with a precious opportunity—the college entrance examination—to break through the original social status and accelerate the economic mobility. It is against the above background that most high school English teaching is still adopting the 3P teaching mode, namely presentation, practice and product, which is outdated and not efficient enough in today’s continuously developing educational systems. In general, the traditional teaching modes make the input sources and approaches for students relatively single, the input language materials limited in textbook without sufficient extensive knowledge, which cannot meet the requirements of cultivating and improving the key competence of students in the new curriculum standard. There are several resulting implications related to the relative low-quality input information in terms of different dimensions. First, English reading teaching class puts more emphasis on language form instead of the function of language, leaving students knowing little about the application of ideal knowledge into real world experience. Second the pattern of the class is teacher-centered instead of student-centered, ignoring developing students’ initiative. Third, the mother tongue is taken as the medium of teaching in most case while the positive implications of foreign language environment are not taken into consideration. As time goes by, students’ interest in English is increasingly falling and their motivation to learn English becomes more and more utilitarian.

1.1.2 The Criterion of Teaching Design of National Contest of Teaching Skills for Teachers-College Students

Teaching design refers to the systematic process of transforming the principles of learning theory and teaching theory into specific plans of teaching process and teaching activities by using systematic approaches. To put it another way, it is an open and dynamic process and a “text” that can fully embody teachers’ creative teaching. The following is the standard of teaching design of the national contest of teaching skills for teachers-college students:

In terms of the analysis of teaching materials, the context before or after the teaching content should be correctly explained; the teaching content itself is no exception; the teaching focus and teaching difficulty should be explicitly analyzed. As for the selection of extensive knowledge, the exercises, assignments and discussions should be arranged in accordance with the teaching objectives, which help to strengthen students’ reflection, understanding and problem solving. More importantly, the overall design of the teaching design should be innovative, which better reflects the concept and requirements of the curriculum reform.

In terms of the analysis of target students, students’ cognitive characteristics and levels should be properly expressed, and their learning habits and abilities should be reasonably analyzed on the basis of teaching objective ought to be in line with the requirements of the curriculum standard, the characteristics of the subject and the reality of students.

In terms of the design of teaching procedures, first, the teaching content should be in line with the requirements of the curriculum standards and be systematic and logical. Second, teaching emphasis

should be prominent; Teachers need to grasp the difficulties accurately and do their utmost to find optimal methods to help students deal with difficulties. Third, the teaching method should be clear and appropriate, in accordance with the requirements of the teaching object, which is also conducive to the completion of the teaching content. Teaching aids should be clearly prepared by making use of modern teaching tools such as projector, slides and tape recorder. Forth, teachers had better combine theory with practice, pay attention to teaching interaction, inspire students to think and solve problems.

In terms of the design of extensive knowledge, the exercises, assignments and discussions should be arranged in accordance with the teaching objectives, which help to strengthen students' reflection, understanding and problem solving. More importantly, the overall design of the teaching design should be innovative, which better reflects the concept and requirements of the curriculum reform.

The aim of English reading teaching is to cultivate students' comprehensive reading quality. Therefore, the study defines the teaching design of senior high school English reading as: through certain organizational planning, paying attention to the psychological and physical characteristics of senior high school students, organically integrating the elements of reading teaching activities such as teachers, students, teaching content and teaching objectives, so as to cultivate students' comprehensive reading quality.

1.2 Purpose and Significance of the Study

English has always occupied a very important position especially in high school period, and it is known to all that although input is very important in foreign language learning, it is not easy to get access to various kinds of input information. Therefore, English reading has become one of the important input approaches. Considering the fact that reading, as one of the accesses to input, is easier to achieve than other input channels, and the large number of positive effects brought by reading, it is necessary for teachers to maximize the advantages of English reading classes.

The purpose and significance of this study is to explore a kind of English reading teaching design that embodies the good sides of input hypothesis, combined with the concept of China's new curriculum reform, as well as the grading standards made by the National Contest of Teaching Skills for Teachers-College Students for its authority.

The study also aims to provide reference for more normal university students who are willing to participate in teacher-skill contest and be a teacher in the future through my experience of participating in the national teacher skills teaching design. At the same time, it will inject fresh blood into the research of High school English reading teaching, promote the improvement of high school English reading teaching efficiency and learners' comprehensive language level, so as to achieve the purpose of improving the quality of high school English reading teaching.

2. The Theory of Krashen's Input Hypothesis

2.1 The Definition of Krashen's Input Hypothesis

Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics Dictionary put the definition of

input as what the language learners hear or receive from him or her to learn. After receiving the message, learners have the ability to construct a system of language input rules in their own mind. Krashen attempted to use the input hypothesis to explain the process of people learning a second language, which has aroused a wide range of heated discussions. For example, Ellis mentioned that the “input hypothesis” of Krashen is simple, clear and explicit, and can clearly explain many problems (Ellis, 2014, pp. 1140-1142). Brown pointed out that although the “input hypothesis” is too simple, we should appreciate that Krashen’s perspicacity and bold innovation (Brown, 2002, pp. 280-285).

In Krashen’s own input hypothesis, the only way to learn a language is by understanding the input materials or accepting “comprehensible input” (Krashen, 1985, pp. 105-117). It is formulated by Krashen as “ $i+1$ ”. The “ i ” means the learner’s current level of the learned language. “ $i+1$ ” refers to the next level of the learned language. “ 1 ” refers to the gap between the current level and the next level (Zhang, 2017, p. 5). That is to say, in order to acquire the knowledge of foreign language, learners need to clearly bear in mind what they are learning. Krashen points that people learn and use a second language have two completely different processes, the first known as “acquisition”, the second is called “learning” (Krashen, 1985, pp. 105-117). The differentiation between “acquisition” and “learning” is not clearly recognized by Chinese learners, but, according to Krashen, they are distinct. Acquisition can be regarded as a kind of unconscious activity, while learning is thought to be an explicit process of linguistic knowledge. Therefore, in line with Krashen’s point, comprehensible input is the only way to acquire language in essence.

2.2 The Four Characteristics of Comprehensible Input

In order to make input hypothesis come into effect, Krashen put forward four characteristics as follows: First, the quality of an input should meet the requirement of comprehensibility. As the core element of Krashen’s input hypothesis, comprehensibility plays a crucial role in improving the quality of input. Incomprehensible input is no less than noise to foreign language learners (Wang, 1997, pp. 49-52). In high school period, students have developed relatively mature cognitive abilities in a specific native language environment. Unlike newborns, they can not easily receive and acquire any new language. Therefore, for them to try to internalize incomprehensible information is like asking them to apply a formula they have never seen before. As a high school English reading teacher, heed should be paid to provide students with learning materials that are neither too easy nor too difficult. For example, it doesn’t make much sense for high school students to read college texts.

Second, the quality of an input should be interesting and relevant. If we break down this characteristic, two sub-elements can be seen. First, input information needs to be interesting. As the saying goes, interest is the best teacher. If English teachers can stimulate students’ enthusiasm and interest through interesting input content, it will surely bring a silver lining to the tedious life of high school. In addition, interesting input information can not only reduce learners’ psychological pressure, but also improve their learning effect. For instance, when the way of debate is used to consolidate the knowledge points learned by students in the reading passage, students will devote themselves to the interesting activities

for unconscious learning, so as to avoid the feeling of pain or boredom. The second sub-element is relevance. The content chosen by the teacher should not go beyond the cognitive range of the students, nor beyond the core ideas required by the specific reading passage, otherwise it will cause unnecessary confusion to the learners.

Third, the quantity of an input should not be grammatically sequenced. The central idea behind this characteristic is that input material need not be syntactically and grammatically centered (Xu, 2011, pp. 136-137). Traditionally, teachers attach great importance to the form of language while ignoring the content and function of language. Contrary to the output theory that focuses on form, Krashen believes that if grammar rules and form are too much emphasized, the amount of learning cannot reach the ideal state and learners' progress will be slowed down. More specifically, by merely mastering the rules without applying the rules to real life, the learner is not really acquiring the language. When explaining articles, high school teachers should first let students understand the article, and then explain specific language knowledge points.

Forth, the quantity of an input should be sufficient. Krashen believes that language acquisition is dependent on a large amount of language input, therefore, sufficiency should always be kept in mind by high school English teacher (Krashen, 1982, pp. 145-151). At present, the basic input of high school classroom in our country is concentrated on text book only, which is undoubtedly no enough. The problem teachers need to address is how to use some additional material to make it easier for students to acquire.

All in all, supposing high school English teachers take Krashen's input hypothesis and the four characteristics of comprehensible input into account when designing reading classes, students' learning effect will be greatly improved. In the next chapter of this article, the four characteristics of "i + 1" will be fully utilized in the teaching design.

3. Design and Implementation of English Reading Teaching in Senior High School Based on Input Theory

The third chapter of the thesis mainly expounds how the author applies the "input hypothesis" of Krashen to the teaching design of high school English reading after reflecting my own experience of the competition and understanding the current situation of High school English teaching. A complete teaching design includes several parts: the design of teaching objective, the analysis of teaching material, the analysis of target students, the design of teaching procedures. It should be noted that not all parts are closely related to input theory, so this study mainly focuses on teaching materials, students, teaching steps.

3.1 Teaching Design Based on Input Theory

3.1.1 Applying Input Theory to the Analysis of Teaching Material

Analyzing teaching material is a basic competence that every teacher should have since it is an fundamental step in the course of class preparation.

The criterion of the contest shows that not only the teaching content itself should be clearly illustrated, the co-text before and after it is also of great significance. After detailed analysis of the teaching materials, teaching key points and difficult points are accurately grasped. According to the criterion, a reading passage can not be separated from the theme of the whole unit or it is impossible to make all-round and multi-angle analysis, and find the relationship between different knowledge modules. Therefore, careful handling the teaching material, the input itself, is crucial.

Teachers should take the comprehensibility of input characteristics into account when dealing with materials. First of all, only when teaching material is presented systematically and logically, can students understand the central idea and cultural connotation of reading chapters more easily. Secondly, paying attention to the whole teaching material reflects the relevance of input characteristics. Reading passages in each unit is not randomly selected. In order to reflect the integrity of the unit, each text has its own unique meaning. Therefore, if the teacher can sort out relevant knowledge and find the internal relationship between texts, the learning effect will be twice as effective with half the effort.

3.1.2 Applying Input Theory to the Analysis of Students

The criterion of the contest requires that students' cognitive characteristics and levels should be properly revealed, and their learning habits and abilities should be reasonably analyzed.

In accordance with the criterion, teachers need to give priority to comprehensibility of input proposed by Krashen whose idea has been formulated as a "i+1", in which "i" is represented as the current level of learners. The current level includes students' cognitive characteristics as well as their learning habits and abilities. The depth, difficulty and breadth of teaching tasks are designed accordingly. Experienced and skilled teachers can also further analyze unique features of students, and adopt flexible teaching strategies. Another point is whether the input is interesting. Teachers should stimulate students' interest in learning in agreement with their specific conditions. Without considering the uniqueness of each student, the teacher should at least grasp the overall characteristics of the high school students. The intelligence and cognitive level of senior high school students have reached a relatively stable stage. Reading teaching in senior high school is an important part of language teaching in "listening", "speaking", "reading" and "writing". It can even be said that if this part is carried out reasonably and scientifically, it can promote the teaching of the other three aspects. If teachers find breakthroughs that can stimulate students' interest in learning, they can lay a good foundation for students and make English not become a weak subject in the three years of high school.

3.1.3 Applying Input Theory to the Design of Teaching Procedures

If the previous teaching material analysis and student analysis are preliminary preparation for a good class, the teaching steps then really reflect the teacher's construction of the whole reading class.

By referring to the new curriculum standards for reading class and the criterion of the design of teaching procedures of the contest, we can discern the importance of constructing each teaching activities. What the teacher should do is to apply the input hypothesis to every teaching step, which has reached the requirements and standards of the new curriculum standard and teaching design. The

reading class is usually divided into three parts, namely, before reading, during reading and after reading. Each part has its own focus. Therefore, the characteristics of comprehensible input in the input hypothesis need to be selectively applied to different stages. First of all, before learning the passage, the teacher's main job is to stimulate students' interest in order to better lead them into the teaching content. On this very note, the input information provided by the teacher must be Interesting and relevant. Secondly, in while-reading section, the form of language should not be put in the most important position as Krashen put that the quantity of an input should not be grammatically sequenced. Teachers' job is to design different teaching activities so that students can really understand the plot, main idea, cultural connotation of the article, etc. Only in this way can students improve their language ability and internalize knowledge. Finally, after understanding the whole passage, teachers need to strengthen the knowledge they have learned through certain exercises. The interest and relevance of exercises should be taken into account when designing exercises. At the same time, sufficient amount is required, otherwise quantitative changes cannot be achieved.

3.2 Implementation of English Reading Teaching in Senior High School Based on Input Theory

In the above content, Krashen's input hypothesis has been applied to some parts in teaching design theoretically. In order to test the feasibility and effectiveness of ideas in practice, the author shares his experience and ideas with the students who will participate in the teacher skills competition and suggests them to apply the teaching design based on Krashen's input hypothesis in the teacher-skill competitions they are going to face. In an effort to make the experimental subjects understand more directly how the authors apply input theory to teaching design of English reading class, the author gives a specific case as a follows:

Table 1. Showing Our Feelings

Stage	Senior high school Grade 1
Analysis of Teaching Materials	<p>The selected teaching material is a reading passage called Showing our feelings. The selected teaching material is a reading passage called <i>Showing our feelings</i> taken from unit 4 of New Senior English for China Student's BOOK 4.</p> <p>Book 4 contains 5 units. Topics range from women of achievement, body language to theme parks, which are close to real life, full of strong flavor of the times, wide vision and large amount of information. The topic of unit 4 is about cultural differences and intercultural communication. <i>Showing our feelings</i> is one of the reading passages in this unit. It is an exposition that gives a description and explanation of body language.</p>

Analysis of Students

The students are the first year of senior high school students, with the basic reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills of English. They are highly motivated in acquiring English and are gradually forming the ability to obtain information from the English text, handle information in a logical way, analyze and solve problems in English thinking pattern under the help of classmates and teachers. The topic of body language is familiar to students in their daily life. However, they lack deep insight of it, especially the profound cultural connotations behind it. Therefore, after the students learn that many body languages have universal meanings, the teacher designs many activities to help students know that the same body language may have different meanings, which may cause misunderstanding. Thus students are able to use it appropriately in intercultural communication.

Teaching Procedures

Time
Teaching Procedures

Lead-in
(5 mins)
Activity 1
Game Playing:

Ask two students to come to the front of the class to play a game. One student chooses one of the actions below and mime it to his partner (without speaking or making noises). The other guesses the action of his partner.

Activity 2
Brainstorming:

Ask students to think about words of different feelings as many as possible.

Pre-reading
(10 mins)
Activity 1
Self-checking:

Let students check whether they still remember the words that they have already previewed.

Activity 2
Skimming:

1. Ask students to skim the passage to answer the questions.

Q1: What is the type of the passage ?

Q2: What is the article about?

2. Ask students what the structure of the whole passage is. And the

teacher will illustrate the structure of the whole passage by a diagram.

While-reading**(20 mins)****Activity 1****Scanning:**

Let students find out how many ways to show our feelings in the text and what they are. And ask them to use the information that they have found to summarize what body language is.

Activity 2**Careful reading:**

1. Ask students to find out the importance of body language according to para.1.
2. Help students find the function of smile according to para 2.
3. Ask students to find other functions of body language from para. 3 to para. 6 by themselves and fill in the blanks below.
4. Ask students to read the passage carefully again to justify the statements that the teacher provides.

Activity 3**Discussion:**

Ask students to find more body languages that have universal meanings in the world. And let them discuss it with their group members. After that, the teacher will provide more examples of more body languages that have universal meanings in the world.

Activity 4**Conclusion:**

Help students analyze the conclusion part and restate the main idea of the whole passage.

Post-reading**(10 mins)****Activity 1****Summary:**

Use blanks to summarize the definition, importance and the function of body language.

Activity 2**Presentation:**

1. Ask students to think about whether all the body languages have the same meanings in different culture.
 2. Then the example of “thumbs up” will be presented by the teacher and some questions are asked about it. When students
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have a basic understanding, more examples about the same body language with different meanings will be provided in the table.

Activity 3

Practice:

Ask students to justify the statements that the teacher provides.

Activity 4

Read and think:

1. Provide a short story which shows that different cultural meanings of body language may cause misunderstanding.
 2. Ask students to think about why and discuss it in groups. After discussion, teacher will ask students to express their opinions.
 3. Guide students to analyze the reason again by introducing the different cultural background of America and Spain.
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As can be seen from the above cases, the author has fully combined Krashen's input theory with teaching plan design so that students' key competence will be improved from four aspects. Students' key competence will be improved from four aspects. Firstly, students can master the some new words and expression about body language and are able to apply them into reality. In addition to that, learners can practice reading techniques such as skimming, scanning, summarizing and so on. From this point of view, their language ability are developed. Second, their learning ability are improved by collaborative learning as well as searching and dealing with information. Moreover, thinking ability such as logical, critical and creative thinking ability of learner are taken into account. Last but not least, students cultural awareness are enhanced to some extent. For one thing, they learn about the cultural differences and similarities among different countries and learn to respect other cultures. For another, they enhance the awareness of proper use of body language in daily life in order to avoid misunderstanding.

4. Results and Analysis

Due to the uniqueness of each teacher-training student and the small number of teacher-training students who were able to obtain the opportunity to participate, this study mainly used the interview method. Interviews were conducted with English college students from Hubei Normal University who participated in the Teacher Skills Competition from October 2021 to December 2022. The author randomly selected three of several participants for the interviews. The interview before the implementation was conducted in September 2021 and the interview after the implementation was conducted in February 2022.

4.1 Interview before the Implementation

The interview prior to implementation was conducted primarily to understand the teacher skill

proficiency level of the experimental subjects and their attitudes toward input theory, with the following questions:

- (1) Do you use second language acquisition theory in the design of English reading instruction?
- (2) Do you know anything about Krashen's input theory?
- (3) How did you do in the past in the contest for teacher-college students?

Student 1: "I have not heard of any theories related to second language acquisition, let alone Krashen's input theory, so I rely heavily on my regular experience when I am teaching English reading. I participated in a teacher skills competition in my freshman year and won third place."

Student 2: "I have heard of Krashen's theory of second language acquisition, but I don't know much about it. I have not participated in teacher skills competitions in the past."

Student 3: "When designing an English reading class, I often don't know how to start, sometimes I feel very confused, and the last time I participated in a competition I was not awarded."

4.2 Interview after the Implementation

The interview after implementation focused on exploring the implications and problems of the design of English reading instruction based on Krashen's input theory:

- (1) Do you have a better understanding of Krashen's input theory?
- (2) Does designing an English reading classroom become easier with the guidance of the theory?
- (3) Did your instructional design based on Krashen's input theory help you do better than ever in the most recent contest for teacher-college students?

Student 1: "The four characteristics of Krashen's input theory can help me better design a English reading class, and I won the first prize in a recent competition."

Student 2: "Now I have a better understanding of Krashen's input theory. I have learned the importance of language input and was able to design a good lesson in accordance with the new standards and the authoritative grading criteria for teaching design, and I won the third prize in my very first contest."

Student 3: "I am now able to identify the key points of how to write a teaching design for English reading class, and I can apply the theory to practice."

4.3 Comparison and Analysis before and after the Interview

From the words of the experimental subjects, it is clear that the application of Krashen's input theory in the English reading class allowed them to make progress in the competition. The following table shows a set of comparisons:

Table 2. Student Progress after Using Krashen's Input Theory

Subject	Before	After
Student 1	Third prize	First prize
Student 2	No experience	Third prize
Student 3	Priceless	Second prize

It is evident from the table that all three students have achieved better results than before in their most recent competitions. In particular, Student 2, who had no experience in the past and was unfamiliar with Krashen's input theory, was granted the third prize in the first contest, proving the feasibility and significance of Krashen's input theory in the design of English reading class. Nevertheless, the final results show that some of the subjects still have room for improvement, partly because their teacher skills need to be further strengthened, and partly because this study did not fully consider the shortcomings of input theory and did not clearly explain the method of combining theory and practice.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Suggestions

Krashen believes that the classroom is particularly valuable for learners who have no other way to understand the input (Krashen, 1982, pp. 145-151). Thus, school provides the most important linguistic environment for Chinese students to learn English as a foreign language. Based on interactionist view, learners acquire the language successfully by complex interaction between human being's uniqueness and the external environment, for which teachers has their responsibility to make full use of the reading class so as to equip students with input information of high quality.

5.1.1 Selecting and Analyzing Teaching Materials Carefully

Krashen said, the input that could not be understood is useless, comprehensible input is a basic and necessary requirement (Krashen, 1985, p. 105). Therefore, teachers should single out the appropriate and applicable materials that are intelligible. If there are too many unfamiliar words and concepts beyond students' cognitive ability in a reading material, students' interest in learning will be gradually eroded and the learning effect will be greatly reduced. Additionally, according to the input hypothesis theory, if the input is sufficient, then language acquisition will naturally occur. Assuming that the teacher can provide authentic input, students are more likely to grasp knowledge and learn to apply it without realizing it.

5.1.2 Analyzing Target Students Thoroughly

The so-called analysis of students, more precisely, is the teacher's understanding and analysis of various subjective and objective situations that affect the learning process of students. The reason why we should do this kind of analysis in the whole process of teaching is that it is the inevitable requirement of carrying out the principle of "teaching students according to their aptitude" and is the premise of building student-centered classroom. Given the importance of learning, teachers should make full use of the input hypothesis to dig and maximize the potential of students (Dong, 2003, pp. 2-6).

5.1.3 Constructing Teaching Procedures Discreetly

Reading class has its own uniqueness, with the new curriculum standards for reading teaching in senior high school pointing out that teacher should pay attention to the cultivation of students' linguistic ability, learning ability, thinking ability and cultural character. Linguistic ability refers to the

comprehensive application of the target language in pedagogical or real life context; learning ability refers to the ability to use different learning strategies to deal with all manner of learning situations; cultural character refers to the requirement for students to understand the cultural background, values and norms of behavior of the country of the target language after learning an article, so as to deepen their understanding of the target language. After all, language is an integral part of social culture. When using input hypothesis, teachers should pay attention to the characteristics that distinguish reading class from other class types.

5.2 Limitations

At the beginning, the author's ultimate target is to find an ideal teaching design model, but in the process of writing, the author finds that it difficult to cover all aspects of the paper. The author did not take Krashen's input hypothesis into account in the teaching design at the beginning. After in-depth understanding of Krashen's input theory, the case provided is further modified. Although the case of the teaching design has improved compared to the original version, there is still room for improvement. Another limitation is that the author's original attempt to one-to-one correspond Krashen's ideal intelligible features with different parts of the instructional design turns out to be almost impossible. Although each part has its own focus, it is not absolute. Consequently, in the process of applying Krashen input hypothesis to teaching design, it is difficult for the author to achieve absolute clarity.

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